

VERBAL INDICATORS OF PERSONAL IDENTITY IN *THE ROAD PAST ALTAMONT* BY GABRIELLE ROY

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Abstract. The present paper explores personal identity linguistic indicators detected in *The Road Past Altamont* by Gabrielle Roy. Works by this Canadian writer, public personality, and significant figure in French Canadian literature are of interest to a broad audience today in Canada, where almost all her books have been translated into English, and abroad. Written in a fluid, spare style, they are distinguished by lively narration and a keen sense of observation. Her literature approaches the world and people with clear sight and compassion. *The Road Past Altamont* (1966) by Roy is one of the most original in Canada, as varied as it is cohesive. The novel is dedicated to the coverage of the autobiographical narrative, the peculiarities of the personal identity crisis for different age groups, the succession of generations. These existential problems are actualized in crisis life situations. Despite containing four independent texts, *The Road Past Altamont*, each of which tells a finished story, is not a collection of short stories but a novel-saga. Its genre is both fragmented and unified, and it has a flexible structure based on the concept of the human life course. The four stories in this novel are connected not only by the main character at different points in her life but also by the themes that explore the changes, ageing, and society's relation to the elders. The study aims to single out verbal indicators of personal identity obtained from the second part, "The old man and the child" of the Roy's novel and the music album of the same name, created on its basis in 2021. Among the main findings are the defining psycholinguistic markers of time and space in the discourse of "The

Old Man and the Child” that encompass personal identity cognitive component. Hence, it is possible to treat the transformation of identity in the modern world in terms of constructing “self” as a reflexive project - implementing an integral, biographical story being changed in a polyvariant context of choice.

Keywords: *Gabrielle Roy, The Road Past Altamont, personal identity, verbal indicators, discourse, narrative, identity crisis.*

Кузікова Світлана, Вертель Антон, Зливков Валерій, Лукомська Світлана. Вербальні маркери особистісної ідентичності в романі Габріель Руа «Дорога з Альтамону».

Анотація. Статтю присвячено виявленню лінгвістичних маркерів особистісної ідентичності у творі «Дорога з Альтамону» Габріель Руа. Ця відома канадська письменниця і громадська діячка – одна з головних фігур у французькій канадській літературі. Написані простим і лаконічним стилем, твори Г. Руа сьогодні цікавлять широку публіку і в Канаді, де майже всі її книги були перекладені англійською мовою, і за кордоном. Роман «Дорога з Альтамону» (1966) присвячений висвітленню автобіографічного нарративу, особливостей перебігу кризи особистісної ідентичності у людей різного віку, спадкоємності поколінь, екзистенційним проблемам, що актуалізуються у кризових життєвих ситуаціях. Попри те, що твір містить чотири незалежні тексти, кожен з яких розповідає закінчену історію, він не є збіркою оповідань, а романом-сагою, – жанром, який одночасно фрагментований і уніфікований, має гнучку структуру, яка базується на концепції життєвого шляху людини. Метою дослідження є аналіз вербальних індикаторів особистісної ідентичності другої частини роману Г. Руа «Старий і дитина» та однойменного музичного альбому, створеного на його основі. Концепт особистісної ідентичності у тексті актуалізується насамперед в тому, що розповідь ведеться від імені Крістін, яка водночас є дійовою особою ("tâchedevivre") та спостерігачем за нею ("regarde" et "juge"), таке "doublingoftheself" тематично, структурно і стилістично створює цілісний автентичний автобіографічний нарратив, де виражається формування особистісної ідентичності та перебіг її кризи. Результатом дослідження є виокремлення в дискурсивному середовищі «Старого і дитини» психолінгвістичних маркерів часу й простору, які становлять просторово-часовий компонент когнітивної складової особистісної ідентичності. Доведено, що трансформація ідентичності у сучасному світі може бути зрозуміла лише у термінах конструювання «Я» як рефлексивного проекту – здійсненні цілісного, біографічного оповідання, яке постійно коректується у поліваріативному контексті вибору. У такому випадку досягнення ідентичності розуміється як розробка траєкторії «Я», що стає чи не найважливішим життєвим завданням усупільненого індивіда.

Ключові слова. *Габріель Руа, Дорога з Альтамону, особистісна ідентичність, вербальні індикатори, дискурс, нарратив, криза ідентичності.*

Introduction

Postmodernism literature is characterized by the use of unreliable narration, self-reflexivity, and intertextuality. Moreover, it has open and ambiguous endings, after which readers have more questions than answers. In addition, popular in the 30s of the XX century, the opposition of the female "Self" and all others in the 60s gives way to the interaction of female and male – "maternal and parental Self" in the ambivalent intersection of time and place of the story (Boucher, 1990). The literary heritage of Gabrielle Roy belongs to the literature of postmodernism, hence meaning that this empirical investigation is full of the personal identity verbal indicators.

Gabrielle Roy was a Canadian author from St. Boniface (Manitoba) and one of the major figures in French Canadian literature. She lived on rue Deschambault, a house and neighbourhood in Saint Boniface that would later inspire Roy to create one of her most famous works. She is considered by many to be one of the most important Francophone writers in Canadian history and one of the most influential Canadian authors. In 1963, she was on a panel that gave the Montreal World's Fair, Expo 67, its theme *Terre des hommes* or in English *Man and His World*. It was her suggestion to use Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's 1939 book title as the organizing theme. In 2016, Margaret Atwood, Canadian poet, literary critic, and novelist who had read Roy's books as a teenager, wrote an essay about her own career and noted that her works were still more relevant than ever. A tormented and solitary personality, afflicted by numerous contradictions and a longing for her western roots, fragile and endearing at the same time, Gabrielle Roy is one of the greatest contemporary writers on the human condition.

First published in French in 1966, the book's title is lifted from the last story "La Route d'Altamont" ("The Road Past Altamont"). It is a wonderful old-fashioned coming-of-age-themed 4-group of stories: *My Almighty Grandmother*, *The Old Man and the Child*, *The Move*, *The Road Past Altamont*. The novel is about a young francophone girl Christine, growing up in lonely, windswept, pioneering Manitoba at the turn of the twentieth century. The subject of the novel penetrates to the heart of a child's in-depth world, forming a subtle yet considerable linkage of impressions, feelings, and relationships. Christine is an autobiographical character, based on G. Roy; hence, one must speculate that the protagonist's memories and responses are the author's own. The four stories in this novel are connected not only by the main character at different points in her life but also by the themes that push the issues of change, aging and relation of society to the elders.

The Road Past Altamont was simultaneously published in French and translated in English by J. Marshall. G. Roy herself collaborated closely with J. Marshall on translating her work. As a result, English translation represented a significant contribution of her own English-language writing about the Canadian highway in the 1960s.

Roy's novels are filled with images of childhood and aging, family, rural and urban French-Canadian settings; the generation gaps present themselves in many human relationships and thread themselves throughout Roy's works. In G. Roy's novels, life stories of the heroes' change, expand and become more complicated in the process of their maturation, gaining life experience and distance from the mother figure (Gilbert, 1993). For example, in *The Road Past Altamont*, the development of Christine's life is gradual: from playing with dolls at home, where the social networks are limited to the mother (narrative "doll") as well as dreams of seeing something new, to the expansion of the social contacts (narrative "lake"), acquaintance with a male figure, but also to realizing the maternal function (narrative "movement") to discover a completely new world, opposite to the usual, but no less attractive and fascinating. This gradation is observed from the Manitoba prairies to the hills of Winnipeg (narrative "mountain"). Despite the logic of the description of the life

cycle, G. Roy highlights an important psychological problem - the loss of control over life events - the main feature of the personal identity crisis. When Christine realizes that not everything in her life can be controlled, including natural life cycles such as aging and death, she reflects on her feelings and verbalizes them, thereby reducing anxiety over the course of her later life. It is clear that Christine resembles Gabrielle Roy herself and has strong biographical elements.

It is true that the novel is an "adult" fiction not because of separation, mourning, and consolation but because of the maturity of its message; it covers psychological and socio-philosophical topics. Researcher of G. Roy's heritage Fortier adapted the text of Roy's story especially for the music album "Le vieillard et l'enfant" ("The Old Man and the Child", La Montagne secrète, 2021), which made it possible to understand it for children from 3 years of age, while preserving its basic problems, namely: childhood, family, self-discovery and the world at large, the desire for independence and adventure. According to the Canadian novelist and translator, "Childhood and ageing - moments of wonder and peace, at the same time – are transitional stages of the life, when there is an encounter with the immeasurable – a kind of window into what awaiting people: the future life of the child and the inevitable death of the elderly" («L'enfance et le grand âge sont des moments d'émerveillement et d'apaisement. En même temps, on sent que ce sont des moments de transition... Cette rencontre avec l'immensité est en quelque sorte une fenêtre sur ce qui les attend : la vie future de l'enfant et la mort prochaine du vieillard»).

If we consider the novel in general, its protagonist Christine is presented in such age periods as in early childhood, at 6, 8, 11, 14 years and in youth. Thus, the stages of her psychological maturation can be observed. Musical album, realized in 2021, does not specify the girl's age; it is probably 8-11 years when she develops the ability to reflect, think about herself, her past and future, as well as about the probable death of family members and her own. It is here in the novel that the cyclical nature of life asserts itself. Mothers and daughters – frequently portrayed in the relationships of three generations – lend themselves par excellence to illustrate Gabrielle Roy's belief in the cyclical nature of life. Christine opposes the social expectations that burdened women, especially at that time. Travel, adventure, setting off for the unknown – everything that allows space to expand entails rejecting the traditional subservience of women. Christine does not adopt a rebellious tone in her narrative, for that was forbidden to women of the time.

The concept of personal identity in *The Road Past Altamont* is actualized first of all in the fact that the narration is conducted on behalf of Christine, who is both an actor ("tâche de vivre") and an observer ("regarde" et "juge"), such as "doubling of the self". Thematically, structurally, and stylistically, focalization creates a holistic authentic autobiographical narrative, which expresses the formation of personal identity and the course of its crisis («... et il est vrai, parfois aussi, pour la communication. je suis devenue peu à peu une sorte de guetteuse des pensées et des êtres et cette passion pourtant sincère use l'insouciance qu'il faut pour vivre... » (La Route d'Altamont, p. 239).

Methods

Our theoretical research question is: “What kinds of verbal indicators do characterize personal identity following the example of Gabrielle Roy's novel and the musical album based on it?” The aim of the current study is to investigate the links between personal identity verbal indicators based on data obtained from Gabrielle Roy's novel *The Road Past Altamont*, the second part of “The Old Man and the Child”, and the music album of the same name created in 2021. This empirical study is focused on the methods of discursive and narrative analysis of the novel and the musical album “The Old Man and the Child”. The main task of discursive analysis is to understand the concept of texts – a set of ideas and representations, through which the author explains and forms reality using illustrations and music. The basis of this method is the study of the structure of the text, followed by analysis of its semantic elements: the meaning of words and sentences, the relationship between sentences, as well as the stylistic and rhetorical formations of meanings.

Discourses are not merely linguistic phenomena, but they are always shot through with power and are institutionalized as practices. It should be noted that while audio recordings are the primary medium for linguistically oriented discourse analysis, it is not uncommon to draw on textual or video data as well (Schilling, 2013). One of the most important focuses of the study of text semantics is the local coherence of the novel: how individual parts of the text are related to each other; for example, in our study, the four parts of the novel are connected by matching time, conditions, reasons, circumstances (Thomas, 2014). As a result of discursive analysis, the situational / event model of “The Old Man and the Child” was formed. This model not only provides information expressed in the text, but it is also based on existing knowledge of readers, their culturally determined scenarios and experiences of social life.

Narrative is one of the most frequently occurring and ubiquitous forms of discourse. Narrative analysis is a qualitative method of research aimed at interpreting the story, which pays special attention to the chronological sequence that the narrators follow when talking about their lives and surrounding events (Kutkova, 2014). Narratives represent storied ways of knowing and communicating; there are several types of narrative analysis: thematic analysis – emphasis is on the content of a text, “what” is said more than “how” it is said, the “told” rather than the “telling”; structural analysis- shifts to the telling, the way a story is told; interactional analysis – the focus is on the dialogic process between teller and listener; performative analysis – is an extending the interactional approach, interest goes beyond the spoken word and, as the stage metaphor implies, storytelling is seen as performance – by a “self” with a past – who involves, persuades, and perhaps moves an audience through language and gesture, “doing” rather than telling alone. For narrative analysis, the following is important: the presence of the narrator, viewer, reader or listener; the sequence of events experienced by the character; the narrator's attitude to what is being said. Accordingly, we have identified verbal markers of personal identity based on such parameters as the narrator, characters, time, events, space, relationships

between categories (dichotomies), intertextual connections and cultural presuppositions.

Results and Discussion

In the discursive environment of “The Old Man and the Child”, we identified the following psycholinguistic indicators: time and space, which are the spatio-temporal component of the personal identity cognitive representation. Particularly, we noted that the feature of this music album is the illustrated picture book accompanied by recordings of the narrated story and 13 songs.

The first stage of the study implied reading the novel and its adapted version in the music album and thorough investigation of the texts. This approach allowed the authors to identify the words and phrases most often found in these texts (in French). The repetitions were further translated and analyzed.

At the second stage, students and teachers of higher educational institutions of Ukraine joined the study; the total sample is 312 people, and the average age of the subjects – 42.7 years. The study involved respondents who speak French at the level of A2-B2 (from basic to independent users). Hence, it is obvious that the sample of the study ensured quality results because of the number of participants, their experience due to the age category, and language proficiency.

All words and phrases were translated into Ukrainian. Students analyzed words and phrases and determined their impact on emotional state (positive, negative, neutral) and associations with space and time. To assess the emotional effect of words and phrases that reflect the temporal and spatial components of identity, we used semantic-differential scale.

The semantic-differential scale consists of two opposing adjectives put at the beginning and end of the scale for the respondent to identify their choice on it. This questionnaire rating scale helps to obtain negative and positive evaluations (Henerson et al., 1987). The respondents were asked to rate each item within the frames of a multi-point rating option: 1 – 2 = negative response, 3 = neutral response, and 4 – 5 = positive or affirmative response. The collected responses from the questionnaire were coded and entered into SPSS 21.0 to run the analyses. We conducted statistical processing of the data obtained using the SPSS 21.0 in order to identify the correlations of the respondents' answers and determine statically significant differences in the representation of personal identity in the novel and in the music album. In particular, we used Fisher's ϕ * criterion that helped to describe the tendencies in the distribution associations of experimental groups.

To comply with the ethics of research that includes human participation, we sought ethical approval from the publishing house “La Montagne secrète” prior to the data collection. To analyze the content of the associative field, we used six main semantic zones of the associative gestalt: subject, object, characteristic, action, state, and locus. Table 1 below shows the associations selected by more than 51.0% of the subjects; * the associations that are statistically significantly different in the novel and in the music album are indicated at $p < .05$.

Table 1

Quantitative Analysis of the Associative Field Content of the Temporal and Spatial Personality Identity

Semantic fields	“The Road Past Altamont”	“The Old Man and the Child”
SUBJECT		
Person associated with time	Old man (99.4%), child (99.7%), mother (89.5%), grandmother (54.2%) *	Old man (99.7%), child (99.7%), mother (90.9%)
Person associated with space	Traveler (86.7%), housewife (61.8%) *	Traveler (92.9%), neighbor (79.1%)*
OBJECT		
Specific items associated with time	Clock (71.1%), time (97.2%), sand (88.5%), bell (61.8%)*, eternity (64.1%), lighthouse (59.4%)*, information (77.1%)*, doll (99.4%)*	Time (99.4%), gray hair (78.2%)*, bald head (59.5%), beard (96.9%)*, doll (87.3%)*
Specific items associated with space –	Train (99.2%), cart (62.6%)*, lake (99.7%), emptiness (58.9%)*, plain (99.4%), hill (86.4%)*	Train (99.7%), wagon (85.3%)*, lake (99.7%), sea (96.6%), plain (99.7%), water (58.9%), wheel (83.9%), clouds (82.7%)*, waves (85.6%)*, space (80.4%), territory (85.3%), air (96.4%)
ACTION, STATE in time	Life (95.8%), death (92.4%)*, past (99.2%), future (98.8%), present (61.8%)*, cycle (86.7%), transience (63.4%), flow (86.7%), sadness (62.6%)*, anticipation (63.7%), choice (85.3%)*, change (88.1%)	Life (99.7%), past (93.5%), future (99.1%), present (84.1%)*, cycle (64.1%), transience (62.6%), flow (82.7%), friendship (99.2%)*
ACTION, STATE in space	Movement (95.2%), stop (57.2%)*, journey (92.9%)	Movement (96.6%), pause (70.6%)*, travel (57.2%)*, play (60.9%)*, journey (96.9%)
LOCUS in time	In the evening (71.1%),	Far from the clock

	in the morning (74.8%), in the afternoon (62.6%)	(64.4%)*, at afternoon (67.7%)
LOCUS in space	On the road (93.5%), on the shore (94.1%)	On a train (96.6%), on a lake (99.2%), under a tree (95.8%)*, on the shore (92.4%)
CHARACTERISTIC of time	Positive (31.7%)* Neutral (28.1%)* Negative (40.2%)*	Positive (70.5%)* Neutral (27.1%)* Negative (2.4%)*
CHARACTERISTICS of space	Positive (52.5%) Neutral (43.6%) Negative (3.9%)*	Positive (53.9%) Neutral (45.9%) Negative (.2%)*

Note that the subjects assessed the characteristics of time and space not by associations but by their personal attitude towards them; in general, the attitude towards all the above associations with time and space can be designated as neutral, negative, and positive. Obviously, it is the characteristics of the musical album that are positively colored for the subjects, while the novel as a whole is neutral and partially negative, especially when it comes to associations with time.

Time as a verbal indicator (prospective identity)

An important psychological view clearly reflected in "The Old Man and the Child" is the value of being in a situation "here and now". The meeting of past (old age) and future (childhood) occurs in the present. According to Marcotte (2001), it is here that the two contrary points of life cycle intersect.

Assumptions about the presence of temporal "modes" in the structure of "Self" are traditional for psychological studies of personality. Undoubtedly, it has been a central concept within symbolic interactionism since these seminal writings of Mead (1934), Cooley (1902), and James (1890). Beginning with the classic works of James, "Self concept" laid not only a relevant idea of self but also the way the individuals assess the possibilities of their development in the future. The research of the last decade has not only continued and developed it but also made it one of the central problems related to the "Self". First of all, this is due to the introduction into active scientific circulation of the concept of "possible self", which reflects not only the predicted future but also the unrealized past. It is not identical with the "ideal self" given by social norms because it contains negative self-characteristics. It also differs from the "desired self" directly determined by human motivations, as it includes a reflection of moments of involuntary self-development.

Today, the traditional problem of "time of self-concept" in its motivational meaning is increasingly realized through the study of so-called prospective identity. It

contains those identification characteristics of the individual that are related to the future (Nezlek et al., 2007). Prospective identity is understood as an image of "Self-in-the-future", which includes the future personal and social identity of the subject. In essence, this is the actualization of one of the "possible self", taken from the social environment. Continuity, presented as the unity and integrity of human existence in the process of time, reflects the temporal nature of identity. The individual develops his or her self-theory to assist in the maintenance of a favorable pleasure-pain balance, assimilate the data of experience, and maintain self-esteem. The described criterion of identity is provided by the process of transformation of any changes that occur with human and in human, into a continuous, consistent integrity (Zinn et al., 2020). As a result, conceptions of the future self transform intertemporal choice.

Returning to the results of our empirical study, we note that the key actors who, according to respondents, reflect the temporal nature of identity are old man, child, mother, grandmother. They are the main characters of the novel and music album which differ primarily in age. Instead, the objects aimed at making the reader (listener) better imagine the time perspectives of the works are clock, time, sand, bell, eternity, lighthouse, information, and doll. Characters in their environment perform certain actions which in the temporal component are expressed by words and phrases such as life, death, cycle, transience, flow, anticipation, choice, and change. The time locus reflects such characteristics as – in the evening, in the morning, in the afternoon. In general, the temporal component of identity is represented in the novel by 26 words and phrases and in the music album by 18.

In the dialogues, there is a communicative interaction between the characters; the lyrics and illustrations reflect the key points of G. Roy's story - "movement", "journey", "plain," lake" ,"intergenerational interaction", "reflection". The autobiographical narrative is emphasized by music using exclusively acoustic instruments. D. Lavoie said that he wanted to reflect the simplicity of the text through music, "The idea was to illustrate the tale with music in a fun, playful and bright form [...] I wanted it to be quite acoustic, close to folk".

A time paradox is an apparent contradiction which is basically associated with the idea of time travel. Confronting / combining childhood with old age is a key aspect of the paradoxical concept of time reflected in the novel, and especially in "The Old Man and the Child" (Gilbert, 1993). Thus, opposites that can neither agree nor cancel each other are united in a paradox in which they can coexist simultaneously. Indeed, through the characters of Christine and Saint-Hilaire, G. Roy illustrates the paradoxical course of time. It occurs in the form of pauses and jerks as well as in a circular motion where opposites combine. Hence, childhood and old age, the two extreme poles of life, meet and merge into one point at a given point in time ("temporalité et paradoxe", Fortier, 2002). When Christine asks Monsieur Saint-Hilaire what the distant coats of Winnipeg Lake are –

"Its end or its beginning?", the old man replies, "The end, the beginning? You ask a strange question! The end, the beginning ... What if it was the same thing! ... Maybe everything ends in a big circle, in which the end and the beginning converge" (La fin, le commencement? Tu

en poses de ces questions! La fin, le commencement... Et si c'était la même chose au fond! Peut-être que tout arrive à former un grand cercle, la fin et le recommencement se rejoignant).

Indeed, while people tend to be linear and relentless over time, it seems that children and the elderly belong to another time or even sometimes go beyond it. Just because they do not have time does not mean they have to hurry but rather that time does not belong to them. The subtle boundary that separates life from death or being from non-existence, when time is nearing its end or just beginning its countdown, should be abstracted from it and lived, albeit for a moment, in a realm that does not belong to eternity. Traveling with Monsieur Saint-Hilaire, Christine asks herself a question that for us is key in this story, "What does it mean to live life?" answering himself: "It is to rediscover the joy of childhood at a time when you are on the verge of death." Such a concise description of a child's life is strikingly similar to the definition of an autobiography or any work based on autobiographical inspiration, the purpose of which is to find and resurrect lost time through memories of childhood and adolescence.

In «The Old Man and the Child», the phrase «rediscovered time» (*temps retrouvé*) is found several times. In the whole novel, it is found much more often, i.e. it is important in the intergenerational interaction of grandmother Christine, her mother Evelyn, actually Christine and Monsieur Saint-Hilaire. This is not a real past that can be resurrected by awakening memories, but it is an idyllic place that belongs to a completely different time or, more likely, a place that is beyond time and more controlled by imagination than memory. While the traditional autobiography deals with the «I» itself and tries to recreate an individual and unique past, *The Road Past Altamont* is a language from «we», which combines several «I»; it is essentially a polyphonic story in which several voices complement each other to reach agreement in the multiple but, nevertheless, single perspective of personal identity.

Another important psychological aspect revealed by G. Roy in «The Old Man and the Child» is memory selectiveness. People remember events that had a strong emotional impact, but subsequent life circumstances in one way or another affect the change in the view of them, as they will be retold in a few years. In telling her story, Christine uses words such as «peut-être», «je pense», «je crois», «j'imagine», «je suppose», «il me semble», which emphasize her uncertainty in her memories – “maybe it was so...”, i.e. by telling others a story, we control the story (keep control of our past), consciously or unconsciously omitting certain details that seem insignificant or vice versa - traumatic, emotionally stressed, which are difficult to talk about and therefore easier to create a new narrative where the keyword will be «probably».

The linear movement from childhood to old age is illustrated by the change of seasons during the four stories. The action of the first takes place during «beautiful autumn» (le bel automne), which ends with the first snowstorm of winter, the second – in the middle of hot summer, and the third – in late spring, early summer, before the heat, the fourth – in autumn. Winter is present in the novel by its absence. Grandmother Christine died in the winter, but in the second story, this fact is only

mentioned; the death of grandmother is an expected event but one that requires understanding. Christine, experiencing grief, asks herself the question: «What does it mean to expect death?» Unable to ask her grandmother, she asks her mother and Saint-Hilaire, while seeking her own answers, comparing death to the onset of winter. Christine has a reoccurring vision of her dead grandmother that brings her to feel fully the impact of her loss (Carr, 2001). The older narrator tells us that as a young girl, she has not yet known the meaning of death. She had only experienced it as «une absence,» as «une disparition.

Consolation can be seen as occupying the middle and concluding stages of what is now called grief work or it can be seen as a distinct approach to mourning. It is thus necessary to keep in mind three somewhat overlapping levels. Firstly, within the fiction, Christine and the other characters seek consolation for the losses and separations they experience. Secondly, by recasting the separations of her youth into fiction, Roy herself seeks consolation for the stresses her family life caused and continued to cause her, even as she wrote; her letters and essays can give further insight into this personal search for consolation that in turn is reflected in the kinds of consolation she proposed for her characters in her fiction. Finally, readers of the novel may not come to it seeking consolation, but if they enter into its spirit, they will be forced to grapple with issues of loss and the quest for relief.

Christine has a reoccurring vision of her dead grandmother that brings her to feel fully the impact of her loss. Christine recounts her visits to the little grove of trees near her home where she recalled «le visage dur come pierre» of her grandmother in the open coffin. At that point she maintains that she did not yet understand that death awaited every human, «nous tous». Later with Monsieur Saint-Hilaire, she visualizes her grandmother not as dead but busily sewing, and the main character experiences her grandmother's death as an abandonment. Her death is not just an absence but a diminishment. When she finally realizes the universality and finality of death, «la verite de la vieillesse et quoi elle mene», she is struck by a generalized sadness, «un chagrin,» that leaves even the beauties of nature «ternes et comme delaissees".

However, this knowledge is only the first stage of a greater insight. At the opening stage, not yet knowing «what death is», Christine first sees a cross on her grandmother's grave. In the second story, the girl associates death with a coffin because she often mentions her grandmother lying in a coffin. The view of Lake Winnipeg in the company of Mr. Saint-Hilaire, memories of his grandmother, raises her questions about the meaning, origin and finality of life. Deciding to leave home and acting against her mother's will for the first time, Christine makes a new conclusion: «This morning I left the known world and entered a new one» (p. 167). Forced to choose between fidelity to her mother and herself, Christine sets the priority: «something must die to make room for the new» (p. 165). She understands that despite her young age (11 years), death has already affected her. In a hurry to get away from the «horribly gray» and «dead end» existence, there is the desire to return and come back with a new experience or in the memory of future generations.

Space as a verbal indicator (space-symbolized personal identity)

Peculiarities of personality identification are considered by the representatives of symbolic interactionism in close combination with the processes of symbolization. Symbol is something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance, especially a visible sign of something invisible (Olderr, 2012). Zhayvoronok (2004) notes, “Through feelings and modal relations, man is closely connected with nature (environment) and the world in the broadest sense of the word. At the same time, the world for her appears in two dimensions - real (external) and unreal (internal)...”. It is significant that the bearers of the corresponding symbolic categories are mostly the names not of abstract concepts but of the realities that always accompany a person (Kononenko, 2001). Man's cognition of the world begins with sensory contact with the world, with a «living gaze.» «Living contemplation» implies the sensory reflection of reality in such forms as sensation, perception, and imagination. All these forms, as well as cognition in general, are mediated and conditioned by practice (Olderr, 201).

In the works of G. Roy, geographical landscape symbolizes a certain age of human life. So, in the novel, the plain is a metaphor of childhood, and it is not just a geographical concept, but through memories, it reflects a sense of belonging to a cultural community, Christine's social identity. Her return to the plains after traveling to the lake (adulthood) and hills (old age) shows reconciliation with their past, which is manifested in the internalization of living space, transformed into a symbolic place, the complexity of which is consistent with the psychological development of the protagonist.

In the novel and in the music album, according to the results of our empirical research, the key subjects that reflect the spatial component of identity are traveler, neighbor, and housewife. Instead, the objects aimed at giving the reader (listener) a better idea of the spatial environment, the place where the actions of the characters occur are train, wagon, lake, sea, plain, water, wheel, clouds, waves, space, territory, and air. Actually, the actions of the characters in the spatial perspective are expressed in words and phrases, such as movement, pause, travel, play, and journey. And the spatial locus reflects such characteristics as on a train, on a lake, under a tree, on the shore. In general, the temporal spatial component of identity is represented in the novel – 12 words and phrases and in the music album – 23.

Landscape, or rather geographical contrasts, such as hills and plains, are used to describe protagonists such as Christine or her mother in the book. The journey made by two women to the hills of Altamont is characterized by wanderings, adventures and self-search. Landscapes and characters merge because G. Roy abstracts from real geography and reduces the personality's temporality: past, present and future, old age and youth, departure and return. Then each form of landscape is identified. The road to Altamont very clearly illustrates the fusion of character and landscape with metaphors such as «huge desires» («vastes désirs»), «mysterious sky» («ciel énigmatique»), «waiting space» («espaces en attente»), «Mirage» («bien dans ses mirages»). In «La route d'Altamont», the geographical landscape is gradually

transformed into an indefinite universal space – a stage for the unfolding of life stories.

Importantly, the following three characters are presented differently in the novel and the music album: «plain» (zone of comfort and discomfort at the same time, the desire to change residence and fear of change), «lake» (something new, unknown, related to adventures), and «hills» (not listed in the children's album, as they characterize the socio-philosophical aspect of the finiteness of life, the discovery of another world «over there»).

The life of Christine and her mother unfolds among the endless Manitoba prairies, vividly described in D. Lavoie' song «Jours de plaine» («Days on the Plain»). It is noteworthy that the characteristics of everyday life of G. Roy and D. Lavoie in Manitoba almost overlap (“Y'a des jours de plaine où dans les nuages on voit la mer, Y'a des soirs de plaine où on se sent seul sur la terre” - “Days of the plain, when in the clouds you can see the sea, Evenings of the plain, when you feel yourself the only person on earth»), and therefore, the reader can clearly imagine how the heroes of the novel feel, what their everyday lives are. Christine asked: “Connaissez-vous les petites routes rectilignes, inflexibles, qui sillonnent la prairie canadienne [?]” et enchaîne : “Je vous le dis, ces routes composent comme une sorte de vaste jeu troublant” (“Do you know the small straight, inflexible roads which crisscross the Canadian prairie [?]” And continues: “I tell you, these roads form a sort of vast, disturbing game»).

The plain is a symbol of anticipation, an eager desire to receive news from afar. It is on the plain that Christine first ponders existential questions: “What is movement?, “What is death?”, “Will a person live in the memory of others after his death?”... It is fatigue from the plain that motivates a girl not to wait passively, but to meet a new one. Just like D. Lavoie, he left Manitoba to discover the world outside of it, wrote the song «J'ai quitté mon île» («J'ai quitté mon île», matin vous verrez les voiles de mon voilier» – «I left my island, I left it quietly, without songs and tears. One fine morning you will see the sails of my ship going out to sea»). In the work of D. Lavoie, there are concepts «island» (île) («the village of Danry, where he spent his childhood» and «sea» (as opposed to the hot plain, but just as large). For G. Roy, similar concepts are «street» (rue) and «lake» (lac). If the first is presented more in her previous novel «Rue Deschambault», where the main character is the same girl Christine, the second is symbolized in the story «The Old Man and the Child» as well as vividly illustrated by a music album. There was an idea that lakes are sacred places where the gods live, femininity, purification and healing, as well as the source of life in general. In addition, water is always associated with the relationship between deep and superficial, external, and internal. For Christine, the lake becomes a symbol of insights, answers to important questions for her, and finally, understanding the issues of aging, death, memories and life history. The music album pays a lot of attention to preparing for a trip to the lake, the road to it and your own stay on the shore. The authors emphasized that the search for answers to complex existential questions requires long preparation. At the same time, it is needed to be alone and share their

thoughts with the significant Other. Hence, autobiographical narrative is impossible in a hurry, as it takes time to comprehend and reproduce.

The symbol of «hills» (collines) is presented in the novel *The Road Past Altamont*, but it is not covered in the music album, probably because of its focus on children. Although, as noted by the authors and the sample of the study, the album is very close to the story. In such a way, it is accepted by all age categories. Returning to the symbolism of the hills, we note that in general the mountain, the hill, and the top of the mountain are associated with the idea of meditation, spiritual elevation, and transcendence (Renée, 1998).

Another concept-symbol of the novel and the music album is «road» (route). The formation of his or her identity is impossible without the gradual advancement of his or her life; it is the symbol of the road that allows the reflection of their own experience on the plain, lake, and hill. Referring again to the work of the musical album «The Old Man and the Child», we define a notable song that the composer includes to the list – «O route la route mène». It clearly describes the movement of a resident of the Manitoba prairies to their own peaks (including career). This movement is based on self-confidence and significant Others («Je me laisse aller, Où la route mène», - «I allow myself to go where the road leads»). It is important to allow yourself to go on a journey, to take the first step from one comfort zone in search of another but unknown.

Another concept-symbol of the novel is the horizon. It is a horizon that represents the future, a set of opportunities which are poorly understood and often turn to be utopian. It is a kind of universal ideal state that one person can never achieve completely. As an adult, Christine remembers: «How many times as a child I tried to get to him! You always think that you are about to reach the horizon, but as soon as you approach it, it will move away from you by a certain distance. With age, we become sad and aware that there is something that pushes us to move forward, even if the ideal horizon is never reached by us» (Franzen, 1996). Hence, the novel introduces the paradox that makes the reader give pause and challenge mind.

To look beyond the horizon, Christine since childhood has repeatedly tried to rise above her fulcrum which each time as if was shifted further. This attempt to change perspective by raising the bar is necessary for people who have decided to make a profound psychological development in their personality. Christine, as a child, demonstrates this existential need by repeatedly substituting the concepts of «attitude» (habit) and «altitude» (height). Here the fusion of space-time, plain and height becomes very specific. It includes self-development and self-improvement as well as self-realization that is the search for an authentic «Self» which is impossible without changing the usual to the unknown. The constant contrast between horizontality and verticality in the work of G. Roy implies a dichotomy of immobility and motion. Infinite horizontal space expresses the forced expectation, the desire for change which Christine calls «boring». However, if in some cases it can be reconciled, then the boring motive becomes the key that motivates girl's departure. It is notable that the concept of boring is also presented in a music album because it is the cause that fascinated journey to Lake Winnipeg.

The process of formation of personal identity is not simple. This fact is demonstrated by the following episode: “the plain, flat and submissive, seemed to have risen, cracks and blurred cracks appeared at the beginning; then from it grew elevations, which gained height, surrounding me on all sides, as if, freed from its heavy silence, my familiar world began to move» (p. 191). A similar thing happens with the lake in the story «The Old Man and the Child». Lake Winnipeg –Christine and Monsieur Saint-Hilaire trip purpose – first appears as a real geographical formation. Then, over time, it loses this role, and like the plains, it turns into an indefinite mass, into an interior landscape that embodies changes in personality: «... waking up, I was infinitely surprised to find myself on the sand next to this a horrible dark mass, which a few steps away from us shook and growled deafly ...» (p. 146-147). Again, the image of the landscape acquires a dual function: first, the reflection of the inner state of the main character – the child; then, a symbol of the inevitable entry into a new world, a reality never known before which is symbolized by the play of light and darkness on the water mirror. The expression «immensely surprised» (*immensément étonnée*) here marks the gradual erasure of characteristic landscape contours. Like the prairies, the lake is always presented by Christine as space itself: mysterious and meaningless: «This mysterious lake, at the same time changeable and calm, like the sea, is a real symbol of human life, also full of great mysteries: birth, death» (p. 197). The impossible task of defining its boundaries raises the question of beginning and end. Obscurely, the beginning and ending of the lake symbolize the unfolding of life in a circular shape: «If it were the same! ... Maybe everything eventually forms a big circle, the end and the beginning are connected together» (p. 121). And again, in addition to the characters of the old man and the child, a universal vision of time and space, a cyclical way of life and death in terms of departure and return is formed.

Conclusion

The novel *The Road Past Altamont* is an autobiographical narrative which emphasizes impossibility of being authentic. Hence, this life story tells the readers that one is unable to have a formed personal identity and the ability to effectively overcome crises without accepting their own life experiences, understanding key events and their emotional recycling. At any age, a person has his or her own life narrative that is conscious and, therefore, controlled; hence, the formed personal identity is not least in maintaining control over their past. Personal identity can hardly be acquired without making the choice of individual freedom as well as without finding one's place in a changing and unpredictable world. The instability of the world encourages freedom of choice, taking responsibility for their actions.

In essence, both the novel and the music album are varieties of telling the same story in different ways (text and a combination of text and music). Hence, our analysis of variation begins by noting that two or more linguistic forms are “different ways of saying the same thing,” (Schilling, 2013). However, if the content as a whole

in these works is similar, then from the perspective of personality psychology, they emphasize different components of identity – temporal or spatial.

The main character G. Roy demonstrates reflexivity through the image of her as “the author of the narrative” and as “his witness”. Hence, one of the means of overcoming the identity crisis is reflexivity.

Ananiev (1968) emphasized that the individual is a «contemporary» of his own epoch, pointing to its specific historical character. Faced with problems, uncertainty, and stress, a person is able to «rise» above the situation, look at himself and herself as if from the side, constructing its model; in fact, it is reflexivity that allows a person to master their way of life, development as well as improve the subjective position in social relations. The differentiated approach to the definition of reflexivity offers three forms: 1) introspection associated with a focus on their own condition and experiences; 2) systemic reflection, i.e. self-distancing, looking at oneself from the side which allows both the subject and the object poles to be covered; 3) quasi-reflection aimed at an object that does not relate to the actual life situation. The transformation of identity in the modern world can be understood only in terms of constructing the «Self» as a reflective project - the implementation of a holistic, biographical story, which is constantly adjusted in the multivariate context of choice. In this case, the achievement of identity is understood as the development of the trajectory of «Self», which becomes perhaps the most important life task of the socialized individual. Thus, the novel is more focused on revealing the temporal aspect of personal identity, and the musical album is more focused on the spatial one.

Music album has been recommended for study in elementary school in Canada and France since the next school year. Note that the symbolization of experiences, the expression of identity not in words but in symbols, is not new to G. Roy. So, in the story «Un jardin au bout du monde» Marta, an emigrant from Ukraine, answering the question of who she is in Canada, said “I will never be able to express my feelings in words, and therefore keep them in the most secret corners of my soul”. She conveyed herself non-verbally in creating a flower garden that symbolizes her personality, which she has no opportunity to realize. And in the album “The Old Man and the Child”, most of the experiences are symbolically expressed by music, which helps the characters to reveal their life stories, and listeners – to better understand them.

The formation of personal identity always occurs in the social context. At first glance, it seems that the story of Christine in “The Old Man and the Child” lacks key figures in her environment, which significantly influenced the formation of her worldview. However, as noted by Fortier, this aspect is given enough attention in the previous novel *Street of Riches* by G. Roy. In *The Road Past Altamont*, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, neighbors, and friends are absent. The novel is so focused on Christine that even close family members do not play a special role in it. So the author completely ignores the identity of the father who, however, played an important role in the girl's life in the novel *Street of Riches*. Moreover, less attention is paid to the figure of Christine's mother, thus limiting the range of communication between the girl's grandmother (not for long) and Monsieur Saint-Hilaire (too long). We note that this moment is vividly depicted in the film, where both Christine and

Saint-Hilaire are shown as persons without their own stories. The interpretation of the social context of Christine's life in the music album is even more interesting: owing to the voices of different singers (also of different ages), the listener can imagine that the girl's personality was formed not only in communication with her mother and elderly neighbor in interaction with dad, cousins, and friends. This aspect is an indication that the music album "The Old Man and the Child" has not only its own musical value but also a strong psychological content, thus transforming it from "childish" to an album for people from 3 to 103 years.

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