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РЕАЛИЗАЦИЯ МИФОЛОГЕМЫ ФАУСТ В РОМАНЕ А.М.ГРЕЕЛИ “CONTRACT WITH AN ANGEL”

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Аннотация

В статье рассматривается сущность термина «мифологема» и ее роль в художественных текстах жанра магический реализм. Уточняются характерные черты жанра. Анализируется использование мифологемы на примере романа современного американского автора Эндрю М. Грили “Contract with an Angel”.

Ключевые слова: миф, мифологема, магический реализм, реальное, нереальное.

MYTHOLOGEM FAUST IMPLEMENTATION IN THE NOVEL “CONTRACT WITH AN ANGEL” BY A.M. GREELEY

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the nature of the term “mythologem” and its role in magic realism works. The main characteristics of the genre are specified. The author analyzes mythologem usage in the novel “Contract with an Angel” written by modern American writer Andrew M. Greeley.

Keywords: myth, mythologem, magic realism, real, unreal.

Introduction

Scientific research of myth source of the foreign (J. Frezer, K.-G. Yung, N. Fry and others) and Russian (A.Y. Lotman, A. Losev and others) critics show that interest to the theory of mythological analysis of the fiction is increasing. A lot of novel written by modern writers is full of myths and mythological plots. It is connected with the fact that mythology due to its symbolism has become the convenient source to describe the models of any person public behavior.

However the problem of the definition of the term “mythologem” which is the main structural element of the myth theory especially author’s mythological conciseness.

The aim of the research

Nowadays myth is represented in many books written by modern writers of all genres. In our article we are going to analyze the usage of mythologem in the works of magic realism.

Materials and methods of research

Material of the research is the novel "Contract with an Angel" written by the modern American writer Andrew M. Greeley which to our mind is a vivid example of myth representation in magic realism tendency. The methods applied in the research are typological, sociological and theoretical poethics.

Myth has been the topic for discussion among the scientists of different fields for many years. For example, there are myth research in Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, History, Cultural Studies and Literature. Although the first definition of the term "mythologem" was presented in Psychological Analysis by K.-G. Yung.

The psychologist used it to describe the resistant constructs "which repeat in the massive public imagination that summarize and represent the reality in the specific sensual personification of different creatures that were perceived by the archaic conciseness as real ones" [2; 50].

In Literature there are many definitions to the term "mythologem". However the full and the most convenient definition to our mind was given by Y. Vyshnitskaya : "Mythologem is the independent author's image made on the system of traditional cultural and literary paradigm the structure of which is formed on the long-standing mythological basis" [2; 233].

Literary Encyclopedia gives another definition : "Mythologem is the chip of the myth, the mythem that lost its authctonous its characteristics and functions and is included into the folklore text where it is accepted as the fiction; figurative decoration or plot scheme which has become traditional" [3 ;54].

In the article we are going to describe mythologem Faust in the novel A.M. Greeley "Contract with an Angel". A. M. Greeley (1928-2013) was a Catholic priest, sociologist, a scientist and a popular writer. More than thirty fiction novels were written by that talented person. His works are mostly connected with religion. Although he was a master to combine religious problems with routine ones. By his fiction novel A.M. Greeley wanted to teach people to love God and others.

The author tried different genres. Among them was fantasy (his novel "Magic Cup" is about a young king who was intended to help Ireland become a Christian country), fiction (novel "The Cardinal Sins" about two friends whose lives vary because of their controversies connected with religion interpretation), magic realism ("Contract with an Angel"), Easter trilogy and others.

The article deals with myth interpretation in magic realism works. Magic realism differs by the combination of reality and fantasy as a whole. The tendency matches the elements of real routine and irreal fantastic. However the border between them is not clear and the reader feels the fantastic events as routine ones.

Moreover, magic realism novels are characterized by the detailed description of the fantastic events and fiction world.

The main characteristics of the artistic world of the magic realism books are:

- 1) coexistence of real and irreal worlds. The vivid border between the worlds is absent and only some of the characters are able to pass the border.
- 2) existence of real and irreal characters. Among irreal ones there can be people with extraordinary powers.

3) existence of real and unreal events.

One more essential characteristic of magic realism books is that the plots that authors use have mythological sources.

The novel "A Contract with an Angel" has the same plot as Goethe's "Faust". The epigraph to the book is:

"Doctor Faustus signed a contract with the devil.

The consequences were disastrous.

This story is about a man who, without much choice in matter, signed a contract with an angel. It is a risky business to get involved with angels." [5; 1].

From the beginning we can see that A.M. Greeley uses just the plot but he changes the sense fully. Dangerous devil is transformed into helpful angel.

As for the system of characters the author uses people both for real group and unreal one. Although while reading the book we understand that one of the people is an angel with unusual appearance.

Raymond Neenan, a businessman, has made a great career and has got a lot of money. At the same time, he is not happy in his private life. Being on a business trip he meets an extraordinary person. "He glanced at his companion, the only other person in the first-class section of the plane - a large black man in a brown homburg. He was perhaps six feet six inches tall and as solid as an apartment building, an NFL linebacker or an NBA power forward. He was wearing a large diamond earring" [5; 2]. According to the description we can see that the role of the angel is given to the ordinary American. "My name is Michael," said the black man, "not Mike, not Mickey, but Michael. As in Michael Jordan. You got the problem with that?" [5; 2].

Then the person tells him many facts about his life. Neenan can't believe his eyes and wants to check his assumptions so he asks the attendant to come.

"She can't see me, Ray," - the black man said in a rich baritone voice. "Or hear what you're saying when you talk to me. Very few people are able to see us unless we want them to" [5; 2].

He also tries to explain to Neenan the sense of his existence. "I am a seraph. ...I am the boss seraph" [5; 2] and "We're like flash batteries. When we run out of energy, people throw us away and get new ones. There's nothing beyond this life. So we enjoy this one as best we can." [5; 3].

The main character agrees to sell his soul to solve his family problems.

"- What's the deal?

- You agree to sell your soul to me and maybe we save it.

- What do you mean to sell my soul to you? Am I supposed to be Faust to your Mephistopheles?

- You shouldn't take the opera version too seriously. Nor Goethe either. We bailed that idiot out at the last minute, but only because Marguerite wanted us to." [5; 6].

As we mentioned above magic realism works represent fantastic items and events as real ones. And even the contract that Neenan and the Angel signed looked like the real legal document.

"Michael produced a legal-looking document bound in a gold ribbon" [5; 6]. So was the text. "I the undersigned, Raymond Anthony Neenan, also known as "R.A.," do hereby admit that I am a worthless piece of excrement. I do also hereby agree to entrust it to the supervision of

Michael, chief of the heavenly hosts. I will follow all the instructions of said Michael to the best of my ability, so help me God.” [5; 7].

The author makes the reverse scenario of Faust. Goethe shows us the story where the devil turns the good man bad with the temptation of illicit love. A. M. Greeley transforms the story in such a way that an angel turns a bad man good with licit love.

Conclusion

All in all, magic realism novels specifically interpret the topic of the afterlife world. Transforming the plot of Goethe’s “Faust” A. M. Greeley shows how an angel turns the main character into a good man. At the same time the Angel is seen only by the main character which is the peculiar characteristic of magic realism works.

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