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THE GOLDFINCH BY D. TARTT: CERTAIN LINGUISTIC AND POETIC ASPECTS

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The study considers The Goldfinch, a novel by D. Tartt, as a special form of Bildungsroman aimed at researching the narrative of initiation as well as studying the stylistic features of the novel, i.e., “narration break”, “voices” of the narrator and other characters, language peculiarities. Consequently, the narrative model of the novel represents basic stages of the initiation rite. The type of the character, events, type of narration and chronotope are considered in the study as being based on the work of D. Tartt as the initiation novel with its place in the system of novel forms. Genetically it is related to the Bildungsroman, but there are specific poetic and linguistic features.

Methodology and research methods. *The comparative and narrative analyses were used as the main methods for the purposes of the study.*

The results of the study. *The study comes at the definition of initiation novel, the plot consisting of three parts: segregation, transition, incorporation; retrospective first-person narration, the type of the protagonist (age, social status, world outlook, and life course), the system of minor characters are also studied and described. In conclusion, a hypothesis is made about existential experience as well as special states of consciousness of the character and importance of the genre in connection with the main tendencies in the literary process of the 20th century.*

Practical implications. *The results of the work can be used in teaching English and American literature, the theory of literature.*

Keywords: *rite of initiation; segregation; transition; incorporation; style peculiarities; narration break; initiation novel; type of character.*

РОМАН Д. ТАРТТ «ЩЕГОЛ»: НЕКОТОРЫЕ АСПЕКТЫ ЯЗЫКА И ПОЭТИКИ

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Статья посвящена теоретическому и практическому рассмотрению жанра и стиля романа, исследуются сюжетно-композиционная организация, пространственно-временная структура, специфика повествования, воплощение авторского замысла, нарративный код текста. Также изучаются стилистические особенности произведения, выделяется прием «разрыва повествования», анализируются «голоса» нарратора и третьих лиц, обозначается прием «ложно-прерывистого» членения текста. На материале романа Д. Тартт «Щегол» роман инициации рассматривается как жанровая модификация романа воспитания, сравниваются специфические языковедческие жанрообразующие характеристики, тип героя, события, особенности композиционной структуры.

Метод (методология) исследования. *Исследование опирается на сравнительно-типологический и нарративный методы.*

Результаты. *Делается вывод о том, что роман инициации имеет ряд поэтологических особенностей: четкая трехчастная структура, совпадающая с обрядом посвящения, особый тип героя, хронотопа, способов повествования. Роман инициации обогащает жанровую форму и выполняет важные художественные и социальные функции.*

Практическое применение результатов исследования. *Результаты исследования могут быть использованы в преподавании курсов по английской и американской литературе, теории литературы.*

Ключевые слова: *роман инициации; стилистика романа; разрыв повествования; лиминальный хронотоп; сюжетно-композиционные особенности; тип героя.*

Introduction

The existing of novel in the literary process of the 20th century is extremely intense: various genre structures interact within one novel, syncretic forms are actively issued, new genres are appearing, autobiographical, epistolary, detective, picaresque novels are transforming and changing.

According to M.M. Bakhtin, the genre of novel always changes and this process will never be completed. We can see this evolution, but nobody can predict all its possibilities [2].

The story of initiation has a particular importance in literature of the 20th century, and it is becoming a separate genre. Literature works have a special event intensity due to a new relationship between writers and readers as authors are supposed to save the reader's time as well as shock and impress them. Initiation novel as a new form of Bildungsroman is quite important as it is devoted to growing up and can realize philosophical and social function in the modern world. Moreover, according to J. Campbell, all the literature is based on initiation, which reflects the essence of human being and from the depths of the unconscious gets into a work of art [3].

Conceptological framework

In the novel of initiation, we find a poetic reconstruction of certain essential archetypal patterns of interaction between person and society, attempts of existential understanding of one's place in the world. It should be noted that there are literary and historical reasons of appearing of the genre and its popularity: the script of initiation is based on epic tales, then it goes into a courtly novel, but as for ancient and medieval novels it is possible to speak only about the use of the narration of initiation, because a protagonist is invariable and constant in these types of the novel. In the epoch of romanticism, in connection with the development of personal space and opposition between the inner world of the person and social pressure the plot of initiation is becoming popular and important [5]. In the situation of the 20th century such peculiarities as development of the new concept of time, the depreciation of the social and historical

context, the understanding what is sacred, the mythical consciousness, the necessity of developing new criteria of being for that crisis time – all those features allow considering “initiation novel” as a separate genre. Initiation novel has specific language peculiarities: first-person narration, narration break, i.e. the protagonist can be observed in different time and conditions, the composition of the novel being nonlinear.

An important point is that the basis of the plot of initiation novel is Bildungsroman, it also interacts with the structures of thriller, sensation novel, adventure and criminal novel and detective due to the specificity of the narrative organization of the novel of initiation [1]. Consequently, initiation novel has a parabolic composition, where the top of the parabola is a symbolic death of the protagonist and extreme points are separation from the old world, where the character used to exist; the losing of their former status; the transition in the liminal world, and then rebirth in a new status and incorporation.

Moreover, forms of time and of the chronotope play an important role in the novel of initiation, as there is an antithesis of the two worlds, where the horizontal linear (objective) time of the profane world is opposed to a vertical non-linear time of the sacred world (subjective). The protagonist (neophyte) exists in own time, being independent of the coordinate system; it is simultaneously both objective and subjective [11].

Describing the genre of the novel of initiation, it is necessary to give a structural analysis of its elements, which according to N.L. Leiderman “work for “construction” [5]. These elements are: a. plot and compositional features; b. specifics of the narrative: types and forms; c. organization of space and time (according to M.Bakhtin, “the chronotope”) [2]; d. intonation and speech identity of the character.

Initiation novel is devoted to the story of the character, but the most important is not the protagonist’s way, their growing and maturing but an existential possibility of their formation as a subject.

Classic Bildungsroman represents a logic structural process of formation, while in initiation the old “I” dissolves, depersonalizes and as a result of this reconsideration a new identity appears. If the type of Bildungsroman can be defined as the novel about the formation of the

character in diversity and complexity, where the gradual evolution of the image can be found, the novel of initiation is dedicated to the testing of the character, especially willingness to be an adult.

The novel of initiation fail to provide us with psychological and mental justification of the protagonist, thinking in the paradigm of good and evil, the most important is the ability to act and change. Traditionally, the character of the novel of initiation is a prodigy child, the protagonist is “worthless” (Holden Caulfield, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger) or, on the contrary, the protagonist has unusual, sometimes frightening abilities (Frank Cauldhame, *The Wasp Factory* by I. Banks). Ralph (*Lord of the Flies* by W.Golding) immediately standing out for the ability to think, make decisions, their willingness to take responsibility.

The main idea of Bildungsroman is the birth and development of a dynamic personality [6]. The dynamism of the protagonist of initiation novel and Bildungsroman is in constant search [2]. The category of character is not a static one, is constantly changing under the influence of psychological, social and cultural factors. The composition of Bildungsroman has such features as stepping structure and monocentrism. In initiation novel a three-part structure can be noted, being similar with stages in the rite of initiation. Both the narrative scheme of the novel and scheme of the tale have three parts, the movement of the character is symbolically correlated with stages of the rite. Initiation consists of three stages [3]:

- Segregation as separation from the old environment and disconnection with the past life;
- Transition as an intermediate stage with the rite of initiation;
- Incorporation (aggregation) as subsequent inclusion of the individual into society in a new status.

In initiation novel the plot is connected with these stages because there is transition from childhood to adolescence and maturity, “first experiences, which are connected with physiological growth and first sexual experience, self-awareness and life purpose, understanding the borders between childhood and adult existence, realization of such categories as life and death, good and evil, discovering “the whole complexity and ambiguity of the world” [1, p. 502].

Problem statement

The main idea of Bildungsroman is the birth and development of a dynamic personality, but for the novel of initiation it is to show the character in action which is of paramount importance.

Bildungsroman has a autobiographical model, it consists of intellectual discussions with confrontation of ideas, relative and static forms, dynamic content. These features are reflected in the novel of initiation, where there are plot schemes of initiation rite with a step-by-step structure and dynamic content. A general formula of initiation is an existential revolution in the mind of the character. Its expression can be existence/gender transformation of the character (*The Wasp Factory*), mental change, and efforts to find him in surrounding world (*The Catcher in the Rye*), civilization of the character and the possibility of rational organization of space, responsibility (*Lord of the Flies*).

The conflict of the novel of initiation in changing the perception of the world from being childish to an adult and harmonious one, it is the existential upheaval and changing of the consciousness of the protagonist. The criterion for passing the initiation is always individual-dependent.

Event characteristics in the novel of initiation are quite ordinary. These are relevance, unpredictability, consecutively, irreversibility and repeatability [10, p. 156], but the criterion for passing the rite of initiation is an existential change of the character's consciousness, it is similar with the transition from a neophyte to a proselyte during the initiation [4].

Linguistic comparison of the speech portraits of characters of Dickens, Salinger, Tartt is possible through the prism of confessional narration as it has reflexive and narrative functions [7]. Chronotope of the big city plays the same role, it emphasizes the loneliness and loss of the protagonist. Donna Tartt adopts Dickens' way to express Theo's growing through the prism of his perception of the city. Theo's maturing is described as homeless wandering in a cold city, such words as "to wander", "fog", "dream" prove it.

In Bildungsroman we can see the character from the first moments of life, we know the backstory, it explains the peculiarities and the reasons

of acts, and in initiation novel we see a character in the most important moment, i.e., the moment of initiation. The reader is unaware of the history of his development or knows it from his point of view. Moreover, the reader does not know the end of the story, the climax is often open.

Discussion

The Goldfinch is the third novel of Donna Tartt, it brought The Pulitzer prize to the author. In Russia it was published in translation of A. Zavozova by Corpus Publishing in 2014. The protagonist is a thirteen-year-old boy Theodore Decker. *The Goldfinch* is told in retrospective narrated from the first person by Theo, which is typical for initiation novel. His life was dramatically changed when his mother and him visited The Metropolitan Museum of Art to see an exhibition of Dutch masterpieces, including their favorite painting, Carel Fabritius's *The Goldfinch*. After that Theodore Decker wanders, lives in foster homes and families in New York, Las Vegas, Amsterdam.

The Goldfinch is similar with J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* due to its confessional tone, the dualism of the protagonist, his constant game with the reader [8]. The liminal stage of the character's life is accompanied by essential, classic attributes of the novel of initiation: the death of the closest person, the journey, where he changes names (one of his nicknames is Potter, it refers us to Harry Potter), difficult mental states (post-traumatic syndrome, drug-induced delusions), different sides of life and trying on social roles.

Theo has a friend (a double, anti-hero, magical helper), Boris. Moreover, like a fairy tale character he has a magic item (like Holden Caulfield's red hunting hat). Theo has the masterpiece of Carel Fabritius, i.e., *The Goldfinch*, it is a truly sacred and important thing, while using it, he passes the initiation, overcomes the substitution of concepts and dichotomy of consumer culture and possession culture.

The Russian theme is very important in the novel: the characters have Russian names (Theodor, Kitsey, Boris), one of the key chapters of the novel is called *Idiot*, characters read Dostoevsky and Pushkin, the novel contains Russian characters, Russian words. *The Goldfinch* is written like a novel of

the 19th century but on the material of 21st century [9]. There are typical for initiation novel features: the plot of the story, liminality of the chronotope, a three-part structure of the novel, the type of the main character.

Conclusion

It is necessary to designate the criterion for passing the initiation. It is always an existential revolution in the mind of the character and the return to society in a new status, so Frank passes it when he understands that he is actually a woman, Ralph does that when he saves civilization and survives, Holden passes it when he feels true beauty and happiness and gets sick (illness is the most important semantic and axiological moment), and Theo passes initiation when he rethinks his values and realizes what he really loves.

Narrative model of the novel of initiation is based on the ritual scheme. The character has an ontological and existential orientation. The plot of initiation is connected with stages of initiation and shows growing up of the protagonist. The character is a teenager, who loses home and faces with painful challenges (concepts “loneliness”, “fear”, “hunger”) tries on different social roles and names. The place in initiation novel can be a big city, a crowded one or, on the contrary, being barren and soulless, or it can take place on an island. All in all, the place of the novel of initiation is a historical, cultural and mythological phenomenon. Thus, the novel of initiation is a modification of the genre of Bildungsroman with a special type of the character, conflict, liminal chronotope and narrative strategies.

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