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AXIOLOGY OF THE PLOT OF INITIATION IN MODERN DOMESTIC PROSE FOR TEENAGERS

Research article

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Abstract

The paper considers the forms of actualization and functioning of initiation as a plot “matrix” of modern prose for teenagers in a value-semantic context. The scientific novelty of the study consists in determining the axiological content of the initiation plot associated with the psychological mechanisms of personality transformation in the rites of initiation and transition. As a result of the research, it is proved that the archaic roots of the initiation plot determine its creative potential in the field of artistic axiology. Initiation acts as a mechanism for accepting a social role: the sacred knowledge transmitted to the hero-neophyte must “germinate” into the value-semantic sphere of the individual, he must become their keeper and carrier. The new semantic and value reality changes the hero as a person.

Keywords: initiation plot, rites of passage and initiation, value-semantic structure, artistic axiology, prose for teenagers, “The Grey House”, “Ubyr” (Убыр).

АКСИОЛОГИЯ СЮЖЕТА ИНИЦИАЦИИ В СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ОТЕЧЕСТВЕННОЙ ПРОЗЕ ДЛЯ ПОДРОСТКОВ

Научная статья

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Аннотация

В работе рассматриваются формы актуализации и функционирования инициации в качестве сюжетной «матрицы» современной прозы для подростков в ценностно-смысловом контексте. Научная новизна исследования состоит в определении аксиологического содержания сюжета инициации, связанного с психологическими механизмами преобразования личности в обрядах посвящения и перехода. В результате исследования доказано, что архаические корни сюжета инициации определяют его созидательный потенциал в сфере художественной аксиологии. Инициация выступает как механизм принятия социальной роли путем посвящения: транслируемые герою-неофиту сакральные знания должны «прорасти» в ценностно-смысловую сферу личности, он должен стать их хранителем и носителем. Новая смысловая и ценностная реальность меняет героя как личность.

Ключевые слова: сюжет инициации, обряды перехода и посвящения, ценностно-смысловая структура, художественная аксиология, проза для подростков, «Дом, в котором...», «Убыр».

Introduction

In the context of the search for modern prose for teenagers, the initiation plot provides an opportunity for an ideal “growing up” situation. Since, from the point of view of psychological content, initiation is a personal crisis constructed artificially, when a person is put in a situation of choice, faces the impossibility of living as before. This crisis contains a unique opportunity for personal growth. In contrast to the “big” literature, the initiation plot is a “filmed” form of an individual personal crisis: putting the tests into the external plan levels their destructive power, emphasizing the work with meanings.

The purpose of the study is to identify the semiosis and axiological functional of the initiation plot, which allow us to characterize the features of the change in the character's value system in the context of the specifics of the initiation plot.

The goal requires a consistent solution of the following tasks: to consider the typologically stable, basic “radicals” of the initiation plot in the axiological aspect; to analyze the vectors of change in the value basis of literary heroes, to determine the specifics of the influence of initiation tests on the formation of personality consciousness.

The research material was the novel “The Grey House” by M. Petrosyan (2009), the novel “Ubyr” (Убыр) by S. Idiattullin (2012), in which the peculiarities of changing the value system of characters in the context of the specifics of the initiation plot are artistically convincingly represented and the trajectories of the role identity of adolescents on the way to adulthood are outlined.

Research methods and principles

The methodological tools of the cultural and historical analysis of the text from the standpoint of the axiological approach allows the author to identify the archetypal features of the initiation plot, which acquires the features of a meta-plot in the literature for teenagers, and the method of contextual analysis allows the author to draw conclusions about the ways of artistic manifestation of the change of the value paradigm.

The theoretical basis of the research was the work of Russian literary critics, which examines the genesis and semantics of age-related initiations in cultural studies (Turner [8], Vipulis [1], Katerniy [3]); in psychology (Mukhina, Basyuk [6]); the specifics of the initiation plot in the literary context (Vipulis [2], Lotman [4], Propp [7], Tyupa [9]); axiological methodology in literary studies (Minnullin [5], Filatov [10]).

Main results

Fairy tales in their main storyline follow the structure of the initiation rite, highlighting and interpreting its various elements in accordance with a certain historical context [7, P. 22-25]. The plot of the initiation imposes on the hero, as in a fairy tale, a certain scenario of events. As this scenario is implemented, a living history of personal growth unfolds in place of the scheme. The specificity of initiations lies in the special relationship of a teenager with a new social role, which does not remain something external. The norms and values associated with the new role are appropriated by the neophyte, becoming his personal understandings.

In the context of the initiation plot, the significance of the trial motive is usually emphasized, it is this motive that is associated with the development of endurance, willpower, self-control and is presented as the main content of initiation rites [1, P. 33-37]. But physical “difficulties” are not the main tool of initiation as a mechanism of socialization: the transformation of the neophyte's personality is associated with the liminal stage of the initiation rite. Physical trials provide a neophyte with a liminal status: during this period, a teenager should be a “blank sheet” on which knowledge, wisdom, and a system of values that determine his new status will be “recorded”. The point of the tests is kenosis: “they should be shown that they themselves are clay, dust <...>, the material that society gives shape to” [8, P. 177]. The path of formation of a new personality during initiation passes through the “desert” of liminality, through the total leveling of the hero's former values, through zero status, where liberation from old norms, stereotypes of behavior is accomplished.

To form a “block” of new knowledge, mentors are assigned to the initiates, constantly supervising them, explaining how to behave in certain situations, explaining new duties towards fellow tribesmen, and explaining tribal morality [2, P. 65-70]. Mentors act as guides of sacred knowledge and educate a hero as a guardian of cultural values.

In the mystical thriller “Ubyr” (Upiór) by Sh. Idiatullin, the main character, a teenager Nail Izmailov, goes through the stage of learning from the keeper of ancient knowledge named Karlygachbikya, the “big mother” – in the sacred past the forest old woman – in the present profane time. Karlygachbikya tells the hero the story of the initiation rite. The reader finds out about it in Nail's retelling: the teenager remembers that he saw similar rituals on TV, but he completely forgot the foreign word that serves as the name of such a system of rituals. Describing the mysteries of initiation among the Tatars, the teenager places special emphasis on the fact that the guardian made men out of boys “not in the sense in which it is customary to speak and laugh, but in the tribal, or something” [3, P. 98].

Age-related initiations, common primarily in non-written cultures, whose memory, as Lotman showed, seeks to preserve information about the order of the world, not about its violations, about tradition, not about excess. The role of written evidence in archaic non-written cultures is assumed by rituals, myths, emblems, various products of human activity – signs, symbols, which are folded mnemonic programs of texts and plots stored in the oral memory of the collective [4, P. 5-11]. Such memory is sacralized, it is associated with a ritual and involves a cyclical repetition of value-significant events for a given society. The meaning of such a symbolic sign is built up in the process of active internal work of the perceiving subject.

The “maturation” of the consciousness of the main characters in the novels “Ubyr” (Upiór) and “The Grey House”, as in non-written cultures, occurs as a process of building new knowledge. Each of the initiated heroes experiences the initiation in his own way. In M. Petrosyan's novel, the catastrophe of the “St. Bartholomew's” graduation night falls on all the characters of the novel, but everyone undergoes a test in their own way, so its content appears to the heroes to be different. Personal understanding of the same experienced events is unique, each character has their own, the difference is due to internal spiritual work and a system of values. The situation of the transfer of sacred knowledge in the novel “The Grey House” is identical to the transfer of knowledge in non-written cultures: it is impossible to give a “neophyte” Smoker who does not understand at all by what principles the collective which has become his new “pack” lives to “read” a certain explanatory charter.

Socio-historical experience in the plots of the novels by M. Petrosyan and Sh. Idiatullin is transmitted not as alienated knowledge, but as living knowledge, acquiring emotional and personal coloring. The plot of the initiation activates a psychological process that leads to the transformation of the inner world of the personality, to the achievement of a semantic correspondence of consciousness and being – this is a process of intense experience, a kind of antagonist of psychological defense. Concentrated experience does not protect the subject from negative traumatic circumstances, but also does not bring down into the blindness of affect, allowing you to work with new emotions and meanings.

The hero's trials become a tool that regulates the influence of the experience. Access to sacred memory (the mythological-forming history of the House or folklore-national in the “Ubyr” (Upiór)) is closed to the indifferent: new knowledge must be experienced at the bodily-mental level, with your whole being. Sacred knowledge enters the inner world of a teenager, transforming him as a person – the only way they will work, will not be forgotten, will not turn into information noise or background. In this regard, the transfer of sacred knowledge is the central moment of initiation, important not only for the teenager, but also for the society into which he should enter in a new social status, as a whole: initiation mechanisms are an effective way to connect the younger generation to historical cultural memory.

The main character of the novel “Ubyr” (Upiór) learns his ancestry, the language of his ancestors, and joins the innermost secrets of ancestral memory during training. This helps the teenager to gain access to the wisdom of previous generations, the boy does things that he would not have been able to do before, begins to speak an ancient version of the Tatar language fluently. The language of his ancestors helps him defeat evil spirits; it is not by chance that Karlygachbikya tells the neophyte that language is a “weapon”.

Age-related initiation captures an identity crisis – a change in the social status of a teenager and a unique opportunity for personal growth: finding your new self through dedication and familiarization with the norms and values of ancestral memory. The knowledge that opens becomes new value orientation for the initiate, forcing him to build relationships with other people

and with the world around him in a different way. Overcoming the crisis occurs with the help of trials, which make it possible to feel, understand, not only speculatively, rationally, but “with the whole body”, involvement in new values, in a new circle of their own, through experience at the physical level.

In initiation rites, each action of a neophyte on the path has its own sign – an external designation of what should happen in the inner world of a person. Such signs include a name change. Almost all initiates receive a new name associated with the transition to a new category: changing their own name fixes a new personality status. For the main characters who inhabit the House, the death of Moose – mentor, teacher, elder friend, spiritual father of Blind and Grasshopper – becomes a trial, an abrupt growing up, a school of self-understanding and personal education. Grasshopper loses his name and becomes Sphinx (the new name absorbs the tragedy of the prom night, becomes a “mystery”, a “riddle” of Sphinx, who radically changed the value system); the former authoritarian leader Athlete becomes philosophizing Black; Stinker turns into trickster-jester Tabaki; Death becomes Redhead (personal struggle with the body, with the disease develops into a struggle with the collective body of the pack). Only Blind retains his former name – axiologically, Blind is equal to his former self: having found Moose, he is faithful only to him, with his whole being. The disastrous ordeal did not change his value system, but only strengthened it in the existing one. The name change emphasizes not only the change of status, but also the difference between the neophyte and his former self, who did not survive the test. The name contains the quintessence of the corresponding behavior scenario and acts as an external sign involved in the transformation of the inner world of the hero.

The plot of the initiation unfolds a crisis set by human nature: adolescence is associated with a common transition situation for everyone. The main purpose of the trials is to introduce neophytes to certain values of society, the collective, opening the old individual boundaries and collecting them at a new level. Catastrophic trials become a school of humility and wisdom for the heroes, forcing them to search for a deeper meaning of life than before. Initiation acts as a mechanism that ensures the continuity and reproduction of traditions, unfolds the plot of the birth of a new personality. The sacred knowledge gained as an experience of the beyond is revealed as a new dimension of the world or a new frame of reference, which allows to understand what was known before in a different way. Thus, initiation into the “sacred history” of the “Fourth” is analogous to the acquisition and realization of the metaphysical roots of the genus, the foundation of new knowledge. Sacred knowledge unfolds before the hero as a sacred perspective behind everyday life, hidden from uninitiated eyes: a new dimension opens to the hero. For the heroes of the novels “The Grey House” and “Ubyr” (Upiór), it is important not only to know about the past, but also to relate to it. The past does not disappear, but remains forever: it was, is and will be – the mythologized history goes into the world of the sacred, which exists parallel to everyday profane life. The hero, who is involved in the new knowledge, is introduced into the general world order and becomes, as it were, an intermediary between the ordinary and the sacred, a conductor of meaning and takes responsibility for the proper world order. In this regard, the main function of the initiation plot is not so much educational (in terms of the volitional qualities of the individual) as ontologically significant: changing the worldview and value system.

Discussion

In the plot of teenage initiation, new semantic horizons open to the neophyte hero along with sacred knowledge that acquires the status of revelation: the value of this knowledge is not in its special informativeness, but in the fact that it represents a system of values and meanings that regulate the life of the collective into which the hero should be accepted. This knowledge reflects the individuality of the social group, its mythology (the inhabitants of the House as a collective subject), cultural memory associated with the ancestors (“Ubyr” (Upiór)). During the initiation, the sacred “biography” of the flock in the novel “The Grey House” and the Tatar ethnic group in “Ubyr” (Upiór) becomes part of the heroes' own biography. The events of sacred history, the understanding of the secret laws reigning in the world – all this acquires a subjective personal coloring, is melted into the motives and values of the personality, according to which the life path of the heroes will be laid in the future. This is the main result of initiation in terms of existential, encompassing deep personal structures.

Conclusion

Initiation radically changes the social situation of the individual's existence – it changes the system of relationships and activities in which the teenager was included, and this is the basis for the transformation of the deep value orientations of the individual. The very fact of changing a social position is only a condition for possible personal growth and a reassessment of values. The content side of the upcoming personality changes is set by those norms, meanings, semantic horizons that open up to the hero in a new life situation and can become decisive for his value system.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Рецензия

Все статьи проходят рецензирование. Но рецензент или автор статьи предпочли не публиковать рецензию к этой статье в открытом доступе. Рецензия может быть предоставлена компетентным органам по запросу.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Review

All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.

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