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MYTH ABOUT HYPERION IN AMERICAN LITERATURE OF THE XIX – XX CENTURIES

The aim of this study is to investigate the specificity of interpretation of the traditional myth by such American writers as romantic author Henry Longfellow in his novel “Hyperion”, 1839 and postmodernist Dan Simmons in his eponymous novel, 1989. In American literature the myth about Hyperion is represented by only two novels, unlike European literature, where it gave a large number of interpretations.

The topicality of the work is caused by the increasing interest of scholars to mythologism, embodied in literature work, together with the lack of scholars’ attention to Longfellow’s prose as well as to Simmons’s novels. There are very few fundamental works devoted to them, but mostly reviews. Thus, we are the first in Ukraine to trace the dynamics of American interpretations of the myth, the sources of myth creation by Longfellow and Simmons, and distinctive features compared to the European tradition of myth interpretation.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the work are both fundamental and cutting-edge investigations, concerning mythologism, romanticism and postmodernism, especially Longfellow’s and Simmons’s novels. We use the ideas and concepts of such scholars as B. Adams, A. Auramo, J. Clute, G. Couzens, H. Sachs, J. Stein, and many others.

Henry Longfellow was the first American writer who interpreted the myth of Hyperion. His novel represents a romantic interpretation of the myth. It shares such features of a romantic story as personalising the text, trend to include extracts from poetic works in order to highlight the author’s point of view, paying much attention to depicting nature, emphasising the leading role of poets in society and romanticising the idea of struggle. Longfellow's novel is partly autobiographical [6, p. 135]. So, we can say that the image of the main hero Paul Fleming is partly the Longfellow’s image, moreover, the protagonist transmits the author’s ideas concerning creativity, life and death, divine forces.

Longfellow's novel is not only a philosophical and romantic novel, but also the novel of travels[3, p. 217]. Historical monuments in Germany, depicted in the novel, become the symbol of the lost past for the author. Longfellow states that the most glorious pages of human history are over, human culture is coming into decline, Americans abandoned their past, history and culture. This is one reason why he appeals to the culture and sights of Europe, not native America. Longfellow’s opinion is that writers do not have enough support in young American cultural tradition [1, p. 64]. But European tradition is just the model for the author to create American culture and literature.

The author offers his own solution to the problem of loss of spirituality by humanity. Longfellow leads us to the conclusion that the nature is divine, but the main task of man is to find God in himself, because God is hidden inside each of us. This

means that the writer shares pantheistic prospect of the world, and is a carrier of the mythological worldview, which gives him the opportunity to create his own literary myth.

The parallels with the ancient myth about Hyperion are present in Longfellow's novel on three levels. The first is a history of spiritual evolution of the protagonist, which correlates with the story of titans' fall and defeat. The second layer is associated with a landscape. The author points out the titanic grandeur of nature, when compares clouds with Hyperion [5]. The third level appeals to literature. Longfellow compares the change of Titans for the new generation of gods with changing old geniuses by new talented writers. Thus he claims the divine essence of the artist. But all these parallels are applied to the author's epoch, and are meant to bind the art of Longfellow's time with the deepest roots of literature, and prove the necessity of continuity of cultural tradition.

Longfellow appeals to many European literary works; but for him the world of human emotions is much bigger and brighter than it can be expressed on paper. Thus, the greatest value for Longfellow is the human soul that hides all the wealth of the world in itself. Thus, he created a typically romantic myth glorifying a man, strong and creative.

"Hyperion" by D. Simmons, like Longfellow's novel, is a new myth. But this is a typically postmodernistic piece of literature. This is a novel, containing such features characteristic to postmodernistic prose as intertextuality, double coding, genre syncretism, pastiche, authors playing literature, irony, fragmentality and epistemological uncertainty, because of the crises of faith in science and technical progress.

The novel is connected to mythology on the level of text and problematics [2, p. 15]. But compared to Longfellow, the author's outlook shifts to scientific-mythological, as his mythological prospect of the world is completed with scientific details taken from physics, biology and astronomy. This is a trait, typical to postmodernistic texts, as these days not intuition, as it was in romantic era, but facts help us understand the world.

The most important problems of the novel are realised in the revival of romantic poet John Keats, who is the brightest example of a poet for Simmons, and becomes a character in the novel. With the help of Keats's images and ideas the core of the problematics of the novel is created [8] as it was with Longfellow's quoting European poets, transmitting his ideas. But the difference lies in applying the artistic legacy to the text. Longfellow used to provide quotations whereas Simmons uses allusions and reminiscences, giving the author a chance to add the new senses. The antique and Keats's motive of the fall of titans is realised by Simmons in the form of SF and concerning the topical problems characteristic to post-industrial informational society: the threat of changing humanity by AIs [4, p.6]. Simmons shares Keats's view of evolution as the only right way of development for the humankind and it reminds Longfellow's thought about necessity of constant motion and development.

Like in Longfellow's novel, the problematics of the novel includes the problem of relationships between the creator and the society, the problem of losing historical memory, the problem of irreversibility of time and the problem of immortality. With the help of allusions on classic literature texts, Simmons also touches upon the problem of cultural level of mankind and the decay of reading culture, as well as the status of

classical literature nowadays. The ironic modus of Simmons's pastiche appeals to the mass literature and the false values of the consumer society.

In his novel, Simmons comes to the conclusion that poets are the most important members of human society because they create the existing reality with the help of their word [7, p. 357]. Thus they are the only ones who can obtain immortality. And this is similar to Longfellow's idea about immortality of a man, leaving something behind, but specified.

Thus, the two "Hyperions" are related not only by name. The main problems worrying American writers have not changed for a century, but the new aspects were added. Both novels, each through the prism of its time, deal with the problems of culture decline, life and death, human striving to achieve immortality, relations between creator and creation. Besides, both novels proclaim the sole and unique role of literature and the writer in society, both authors refer to the search for God and found him in nature and in man, as the highest creation of nature. Both works are a matrix in which the fragments of literary works are inserted for better implementation of authors' aims. The novels give the reader optimistic prospects for the future and hope that people will find the right way. To conclude, the two novels both leave the main core of the myth but give the variations characteristic to the period.

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