



Section 3. Philology

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THE ANAGENESIS OF MYTH IN THE MODERN NOVEL

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Abstract

The new century has brought about unique changes in the previously existing literary trends and genres. Postmodernism has “dominated” the literary trend for a long time, although it has almost exhausted its capabilities. From the “death” to transformation of the traditional novel by the use of media tools in the plot of the text, through the intensification and alienation of a person’s “ego” by deep psychology, the reflection and presentation of global or local cataclysms in the XXI century, the writer, creator, and even the reader himself have reconnected with “bored themes” and returned to a kind of “revival” or “anagenesis” with ancient, Hellenistic, medieval, or oriental plots, with the use of fairy tales and fantasy, which also affected the novel in terms of genre. This explains the striving for a “new novel” in world literature (mainly English, German, and American literature), which some call “retelling,” “mythological novel,” or “fantasy,” and which, for the most part, involves presenting in a new form the “thoughts and reflections” of individual passages from Homer’s “Iliad” and “Odyssey,” well-known characters-people from mythology, or “characters-gods.”

This paper deals with a general hypothetical overview of this process, which was published in the form of translations by the Georgian publishing house “Palitra L” and attracted the attention of readers, despite the widely known news about Homer’s poems. It was expressed in the presentation of “the old in a new skin”. The questions raised concern the spontaneous attempt to spread this type of novels, their definition, perhaps a new direction, and the study of the reasons for their popularity based on a general overview of the works of the authors represented by two projects of this publishing house. The above-mentioned issue is hypothetical and aims to attract the attention of literary critics in order to explain this phenomenon, or rather random facts, against the background of the emergence of the novel, perhaps a “new direction” in the new, 21st century.

Keywords: *Mythology, new genre of the 21st century novel, anagenesis*

Introduction

At the initial stage of civilization, the social life and relations of people differed radical-

ly from today, and it is precisely because the “classical” era in a way presented “the greatest representatives of thinking and culture” (R.

Gordeziani). Ancient Greece gave rise to it. The cultural heritage of the Hellenes acquired its existence not only through the course of history, but also through its high, exemplary civilization. The Aegean-Greek model was formed in the I millennium BC and its main sign was the combination of mythopoetic and critical, scientific thinking characteristic of ancient Eastern civilization. As the Georgian researcher of classical philology characterized it, "Greek culture created its main heights, a world of events and things," which, according to R. Gordeziani, "it was simultaneously perceived as an animated "you" and an objective, unanimated "it"... It was precisely this that determined the fact that Greek literature and art, on the one hand, did not break away from the myth, but on the other hand, gained autonomy as a completely defined sphere of human creativity, which was based on its own special ideological, genre and artistic principles. The Hellenes so confidently recognized the existence of gods around them and at the same time persistently searched for a material channel or a primary source, so passionately gave in to mysterious ecstasy and at the same time were so inclined to establish an order in worldly life governed by human laws, were so irrational and at the same time surprisingly rational, so traditional and at the same time extremely innovative, that they created the most popular myths and at the same time freed thought from myth" (Gordeziani R., 1988: 14–15).

If we understand myth as "the dominant form of spiritual culture and worldview of the archaic era" (N. Abramashvili, Phil. Research. IV. 2022:112), the person of the mythic era himself "relying on internal and social experience, understands all the events of the world in a similar way to himself, which is why the mythic vision is completely permeated with emotions. In an emotional relationship with the world, objects come to life, they have a soul. Myth sees personal, spiritual power in everything. Everything in the world is charged with such human qualities as joy, sorrow, pain, fear, admiration, despair. Objects are either friendly or hostile to humans." (Abramashvili N., Phil. Vol. IV. 2022: 112), and this creates the conditions for the mythic archetype in itself, to be repeated in the plots of lyrical, epic or dramatic works at various stages of civilization development, to experience a revival.

Perhaps this is why the editorial board of the publishing house "Palitra L" in Georgia selected the project, the series of artistic prose texts of which were published under the auspices of "Anagenesis".

In an interview with the news portal "Ambebi.ge", the author of the project, Anna Kopadze, says that "a few years ago (meaning 2020/2022 – T.G.) we first published Madeline Miller's "Circe" and "The Song of Achilles" (with the bestseller series of the year). Everyone was skeptical and thought that this direction was not of interest to Georgian readers, but these books had a special response. The reader fell in love not only with the author, but also with the genre, and I think it is important to keep up with the trends in other countries and give this genre a boost" (<http://www.ambebi.ge/miceqebul-pas//seria-romelic-antikuri-mitologiis-miviceqebul-pas/>), this is how the series "Anagenesis" came to Georgian readers with translated novels, in the most difficult Covid era, but what is this novel genre itself, which is not historical, does not belong to postmodernist novels? Different readers or researchers give definitions such as "mythological novel fantasy", "retold myths", etc. The authors of the novel (most of whom we studied in the series "Anagenesis") are writers from England, Germany, and America, and have received various awards: Claire North (1986) (England) "Ithaka", 2022; Natalie Haynes (1974) (England) "A Thousand Ships", 2019; Jennifer Saint (England) "Ariadne", 1988; Constance Cassatt (1995) (America) "Clytemnestra", 2023; Christa Wolf (1929) (Germany) "Medea Stimmen"; Madeleine Miller (1978) (America) "The Song of Achilles", 2022, "Circe", 2018.

All novels convey the stories of individual episodes or characters of ancient myths, the Iliad and the Odyssey, in a different style, but questions arose in the research process, the answers or hypotheses of which will be presented in the main part of the work.

Main part

Myth invaded art and such ancient monuments of genius as Homer's poems: the Iliad and the Odyssey were born.

"On the one hand, the knowledge that the humanized gods presented in traditional

myths were only the fruit of human imagination, and on the other hand, the belief that divine forces really direct events on earth, finds quite an interesting poetic expression in the Homeric epic.” (Gordeziani R., 1938, 97). Thus, the original Greek poetry “Iliad” and “Odyssey” remain in world literature as a model and a starting point for further creation, and here, at the turn of the XX–XXI centuries, a kind of revival begins in the prose genre of literature. It is already being developed independently by many writers in the form of separate episodes of Homer’s poems or plots depicting the lives of characters. This is how the novels of Dan Simmons, Hannah Lynn, Scarlett St. Clair, Claire North, Rick Riordan and others are created. A Livelib reader notes, “Contemporary authors often turn to fairy tales, legends, and myths. Some of the ‘new’ readings are successful, some are not, but their number is growing.” Another reviewer of Stephen Frey’s “Greek Myths Retold” wonders what it takes for a reader to be interested in reading, and the skill of the writer is essential here.

A novel is created in which everything that we read in the Iliad and the Odyssey is retold, but why is the reader interested in what is old, or what is new by retelling the old? This is how authors go a long way, using anthropology, history, archeology, so the authors study Greek and even give lectures, travel to the mythological world of ancient Greece, visit the excavations of Troy, which were discovered by Schliemann, develop their imagination... Each of these authors is young, born in the XX century, except for Christa Wolf, but the history of novels inspired by this mythology still comes after the 80s of the XX century; Jennifer Saint’s “Ariadne” was first published in 1988, Christa Wolf’s “Medea. Voices” in 1996, the books of the other authors of the “Anagenesis” project belong to 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, that is, they are mainly part of the creative harvest of the 21st century, so a hypothesis arises: is there a kind of revival of the forgotten novel genre? To substantiate this, a record of the publication of all new novels was made, which could not be done at our stage of re-

search. We based our research only on the information about the first edition of the novels published by the Georgian publishing project in the original. This issue is important in connection with the emergence of a new wave in world literature with the publication of novels based on mythology.

The question arises: is there a strengthening of these novels in the postmodern era, and since when?

The German philosopher Wolfgang Weil “connects postmodernism with the politics of pluralism, democracy, the protection of cultural languages, and the struggle for multicultural freedom” (Postmodern... 1999: 150).

In the XXI century, the popular trend touched almost all genres of literature, and this turned out to be somewhat attractive for both the creator and the reader, although the turn to mythology was more pronounced in the novel, and this somewhat called into question the longevity of postmodernism.

The project “Anagenesis” made it clear that the well-known “old” is not forgotten, and the revival, which is not at all uniform, taking into account the style of the writer, itself creates a model of a “new world” in which, thanks to human passions, eternal issues are resolved with extreme fascination.

Methods

Comparative-typological.

Conclusions

The “new novel” that emerged in world literature, which used mythology to revive the world given in Homer’s poems and myths, has created a desire to return to it again, which demonstrates the attempt to revive the novel. The project “Anagenesis” of the Georgian publishing house “Palitra L” serves this purpose, thus once again touching the reader with a new phenomenon through translated literature. We take the 80s of the XX century as the starting point in this regard. The new mythological fantasy developed in the novel genre or the “anagenesis novel of mythology” raises the hypothesis, should not the vision of researchers of the history of literature be directed towards the birth of a new direction?

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