



The Artistic Interpretation Of The Light And Darkness Motif In The Chronotope Of Ulysses And Gorogly, Or The Water Of Life

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a comparative analysis of the artistic-semantic functions of the light and darkness motif within the chronotope of James Joyce's "Ulysses" and Nazar Eshonqul's "Gorogly, or the Water of Life". The study takes motif theory and M. Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope as its methodological foundation. It is argued that in the literary text, light and darkness are not merely opposing symbols but a dynamic motif whose meaning shifts through interaction with the protagonist's consciousness, with space and time, and with the social environment. In "Ulysses", the chronotope of the city of Dublin and of a single day unites the characters' external movement with their inner stream of consciousness, whereas in "Gorogly, or the Water of Life" the socio-institutional space appears as an environment that constrains the individual's existential experience. The comparative analysis establishes that the light and darkness motif performs distinct poetic-semantic functions in the two works.

KEYWORDS: Motif, light, darkness, chronotope, "Ulysses", "Gorogly, or the Water of Life", James Joyce, Nazar Eshonqul, comparative literary studies.

INTRODUCTION

Motif is one of the key poetic units ensuring the thematic and compositional integrity of a literary work. In the studies of A. N. Veselovsky, B. V. Tomashevsky, V. Ya. Propp, Yu. M. Lotman, V. E. Khalizev and V. I. Tyupa, the relationship of motif to plot, composition and semantic system has been interpreted in various ways. In general, a motif may be regarded not merely as a recurring image, situation or action within a text, but as a semantic unit that interconnects various poetic elements.

Light and darkness constitute one of the universal oppositions formed within humanity's ancient cultural thought. In traditional interpretation, light is associated with life, truth, awakening and hope, while darkness is associated with death, the unknown, fear and spiritual despondency. In contemporary literature, however, this opposition does not possess an unambiguous character: depending on the author's poetic strategy and the protagonist's psychological state, both light and darkness may express contrary or inverted meanings.

M. Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope offers an important methodological possibility for studying the motif's relationship with space and time. The chronotope denotes the interconnected manifestation of time and space within a literary work; a motif, in turn, acquires concrete semantic content precisely within a given chronotope. In James Joyce's novel "Ulysses", the events unfold on 16 June 1904 in the city of Dublin. Within the external framework of a single day, the characters' inner and associative time expands immensely. In

the novel, Dublin is not merely a geographical space but an active chronotope that sets the characters' memory, perception and stream of consciousness in motion.

Within this chronotope, the motifs of light and darkness are bound up with the protagonist's perception of the external environment as well as with inner psychological processes. Open and well-lit spaces intensify movement, observation and connection with the outer world, while enclosed or dark spaces deepen inner experience, memory and psychological uncertainty. Yet in Joyce's poetics, light cannot be interpreted as an absolute positive phenomenon, nor darkness as an absolute negative one; their semantics shift according to the protagonist's particular situation.

In Nazar Eshonqul's novel "Gorogly, or the Water of Life", one of the defining features of the chronotope is the intensifying conflict between the individual and the socio-institutional environment. Although spaces such as the office, the neighbourhood, the city and the court appear outwardly open, they become semantically restrictive spaces for the protagonist.

From this perspective, the meaning of the light motif in the novel acquires a more complex form than in traditional symbolic interpretation. Within the official environment, notions such as documents, seals, law and external confirmation appear to be placed above a person's actual existence, generating a conflict between "appearance" and "existence." Darkness, in turn, brings to the surface semantic layers connected with the protagonist's inner world, alienation, and the rendering of the individual invisible by the social environment.

In comparing the two novels, the chronotopic function of the light and darkness motif proves to differ: in "Ulysses" the motif expresses the relationship between urban space, time and the stream of consciousness, whereas in "Gorogly, or the Water of Life" it intensifies the existential conflict between the individual and the social system. A shared archetypal motif thus acquires distinct semantic content within different cultural and poetic chronotopes.

Conclusion

In "Ulysses" and "Gorogly, or the Water of Life", the light and darkness motif does not manifest as a simple binary opposition but as a dynamic poetic unit that develops through interaction with space, time, the protagonist's consciousness and the social environment. In James Joyce's novel, this motif constitutes a psychological-semantic mechanism of the city and of consciousness in motion, while in Nazar Eshonqul's novel it becomes a device that reveals the individual's conflict with the institutional environment. The chronotopic approach thus makes it possible to identify, alongside the universal properties of the light and darkness motif, how it is reinterpreted within the poetics of a particular national literature and individual author. This approach may serve as an effective methodological foundation for studying the functional-semantic nature of motif within contemporary comparative literary studies.

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