***Кобзарь Л.***

**MYTHOLOGICAL ALLUSIONS IN THE NOVEL BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË «VILLETTE**

Without a doubt, mythology, especially of ancient Greece, has always been the basis of world is literature. Novels written by the famous Victorian author Charlotte Brontëare not an exception. The main objective of my report is to research an influence of different mythological systems on the Charlotte Brontë’s latest and most mature novel called «Villette».

From childhood Charlotte Brontë lived mainly in an isolated English village, with highly educated father and talented sisters and a brother. She received good family education. Her father, Patrick Brontë, was Cambridge graduate - a well-read, clever and intelligent man. It was he who had the strongest influence on the development of all his children, and in particular on Charlotte. From the earliest age they had regular literature lessons at home. With their father, they read in original and in translation on English such ancient Greek authors as Homer, Horace, Virgil, Aesop and Aeschylus. The great family library also had a rich collection of another classic literature. On their bookshelves there were such authors as Walter Scott, Lord Byron, Edward Young, Jean de La Fontaine, John Milton, James Macpherson, Thomas Moore, Friedrich Schiller and many others.

Obviously Charlotte had learned about Greco-Roman mythology from numerous family’s books, but she was also aware of another nations’ mythologies due to her faithful servant, Tabby. On nights Brontë children gathered in the fire-lit kitchen to hear fairy stories and old legends from their servant, who was rather the member of the family. There were old beliefs, legends and myths. All these sources of knowledge and inspiration became the basis for the Charlotte Brontë writings. The strongest influence of mythology reflected in her early works, poems, essays and even personal diaries. But it is especially noticeable in the novel «Villette» the last Charlotte’s writing, the most mature and the most critically acclaimed. The novel «Villette» was the culmination of her career and it is filled with allusions not only to Greco-Roman mythology characters, but also to Irish, Scottish, Indian, Persian and Islamic ones. In this writhing beside such well-known characters as Hebe, Minos and Rhadamanthus, Charon, Penthesilea, Sphinx, Lares and Nymphs, there are also interesting but less known characters, such as Banshee, Basilisk, Juggernaut, Changeling, Peri and Azrael.

Here are just a few examples of mythological allusions from the novel.

According to the plot, the main character, Lucy, one time worked as an elderly lady’s companion. Shortly before the death of her mistress, a strange event took place. The author recalls the legend of presaging death. In Irish mythology, it’s considered that Banshee is a woman spirit whose mournful screaming at night is held to foretell the death of some member of the household visited.

A similar case is repeated at the very end of the novel. Lucy is waiting for her close friend, Paul, who must return from a long trip. But again she hears mystical sounds of the wind, raging sea storm which breaks any hopes of saving the ship with Paul. Beside the Banshee here is mentioned an image of Juggernaut – the character from Indian mythology that embodying relentless rock. In English language the word «juggernaut» means a person or power that crushes everything on his way.

As the daughter of a clergyman, naturally Charlotte knew intimately the Bible; in Brontë family each owned their own copy. But as the novel «Villette» shows, she knew not only the basics of Christian region and mythology. For example, in the 17th chapter the narrator speaks of the Angel of Death from Muslim mythology - Azrael.

As it was mentioned above, there are a lot of allusions on Greek and Roman mythological characters in the «Villette». One of the novel’s chapters even named after the forest’s nymph - «The Dryad». In this chapter the narrator describes mystical case in the Pensionnat garden, which author connects with the birth of mythological creature, dryad.

Using of another mythological character - basilisk is quite remarkable. Its image used in the description of the novel’s central personage Paul Emanuel. Basilisk is a legendary reptile - the king of serpents. His single glance is said to have the power to cause death (like the Gorgon). Paul Emanuel was a dramatic, eccentric and choleric person. The author draws an analogy of his glance and behavior in anger with the look of basilisk.

In the 3rd chapter the main heroine Lucy is compared with the changeling because of her strange character. Changeling is a creature from the British islands mythology. It is an offspring of a fairy, or elf which secretly was left instead of a kidnapped human child. It usually has a weird appearance and behavior. That is why such a metaphor in reference to the strange nature of the main heroine is quite relevant.

Certainly this particular richness of mythological allusions in the novel «Villette» reflects the extensive reading, eclectic interests and eventually, the talent and skill of Charlotte Brontë as a writer.

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