

MYSTICAL FUNCTION OF LEITMOTIFS WHICH INDIVIDUALIZE DIFFERENT CHARACTERS IN SYLVIE GERMAIN'S NOVEL "THE BOOK OF NIGHTS"

FUNÇÃO MÍSTICA DOS LEITMOTIVS NA INDIVIDUALIZAÇÃO DE DIFERENTES PERSONAGENS NO ROMANCE "O LIVRO DAS NOITES" DE SYLVIE GERMAN

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Abstract: The article analyzes the system of leitmotifs that individualize various characters in the novel "The Book of Nights" by the modern French writer Sylvia Germain. The research highlights the theoretical aspects of the mythologizing of the novel genre in the 20th century. The signs of a mythical novel and the role of leitmotifs in the plot and composition of the novel, their significance for characterizing personalities are highlighted. To characterize the heroes of the novel, the symbolization in nature and the environment, the combination of life and death, scream and silence, sensual and real, was theoretically revealed and practically analyzed. The use of leitmotifs of color and smell as psycho-emotional stimuli of imagination and memory to strengthen the general vision of key scenes and individualize the characters of the story is artistically evaluated. In this context, much attention is paid to the role of the leitmotif of the number "seven". Attention is drawn to the relationship to death, which is a constant companion of the Peniel family. The article emphasizes the artistic concept of Sylvie Germain. There is a strong connection between the leitmotifs of the novel "The Book of Nights", literary traditions and the innovative work of the writer.

Keywords: Leitmotif. Personality. Artistic world. Mystification. Individualize.

Resumo: O artigo analisa o sistema de leitmotifs que individualiza diversos personagens no romance "O Livro das Noites" da moderna escritora francesa Sylvia Germain. A pesquisa destaca os aspectos teóricos da mitificação do gênero romance no século XX. São destacados os signos de um romance mítico e o papel dos leitmotifs na trama e na composição do romance, sua importância para a caracterização de personalidades. Para caracterizar os heróis do romance, a simbolização na natureza e no ambiente, a combinação de vida e morte, grito e silêncio, sensual e real, foi revelada teoricamente e analisada na prática. O uso de leitmotifs de cor e cheiro como estímulos psicoemocionais

da imaginação e da memória para fortalecer a visão geral das cenas-chave e individualizar os personagens da história é avaliado artisticamente. Neste contexto, muita atenção é dada ao papel do leitmotiv do número “sete”. Chama a atenção a relação com a morte, companheira constante da família Peniel. O artigo enfatiza o conceito artístico de Sylvie Germain. Existe uma forte ligação entre os leitmotifs do romance “O Livro das Noites”, as tradições literárias e a obra inovadora do escritor.

Palavras-chave: Leitmotiv. Personalidade. Mundo Artístico. Mistificação. Individualizar.

1. Introduction

The prose of Sylvia Germain, a modern French writer of the postmodern literary direction, impresses with its special philosophy of using prose fiction. It is based not on the direct disclosure of the topic chosen by the author, but on the indirect coverage of what was conceived in the work through the mediation of numerous motives. They intertwine and create a surprising hierarchy of content. Her writing style is characterized by recurring motifs, i.e. leitmotifs. Much can be said about Sylvie Germain’s female text, but its leading feature is, without a doubt, the creation of a new literary strategy of the text, based on the transfer of semantic emphasis from the global theme of the story to marginal thematic elements. Each writer in his own way implements the principle of fragmentation in the postmodern novel. Sylvie Germain has invented such a unique narrative strategy that completely eliminates didacticism and any dictation and opens up infinite planes for the construction of meaning.

The novel “Le Livre de Nuits” (“The Book of Nights”) was written in 1985. Sylvie Germain describes the life story of the Peniel family from the Franco-Prussian War to the Second World War, which spans an entire century. The stories of different members of the family and even different generations are very intertwined. They are filled with births and deaths, triumphs and losses. This is the story of the human pursuit of perfection and vanity in life. The author successfully combines the historical with the supernatural, the comic with the tragic, the lyrical with the cruel, and the real with the unreal, which weaves into a mythical leitmotif and requires more detailed study and structuring.

The goals of the research are the search for cross-cutting leitmotiv lines in the mythological genre of Sylvia Germain’s novel “The Book of Nights”.

2. Theoretical framework and literature review

The mythology of novels of the 20th century has not yet found its specific name. T.V. Bovsunivska, researching genre modifications of the novel in the 20th-21st centuries in a

monograph, points out that “The emergence of the novel-myth as a special genre falls on the 20th century. and until now there were no genre justifications, but only scattered opinions about mythologism, mythopoetics, mythologemes of the novel” (Bovsunivska, 2015). L. V. Yaroshenko (2004) call it a “myth novel.” Mythology and archetypal images in novels were studied by Frye Northrop (Northrop, 2010).

Genre variations of the French novel were studied by B. Blanckeman (Blanckeman, 2000), J. Derrida (Derrida, 1972), new artistic and historical approaches that become diametrically opposed to the postmodern idea of the end are studied by L. Ruffel (2005). J. Landon critically assesses the development of the French novel at the end of the 20th century (Schoots, 1997). The modification of novel forms is studied by Dominique Viart (Viart, 2011). The ideas of keospomolitism and egalitarianism, which emerged as consequences of the tragedies of the wars of the 20th century, were deeply studied by V. Novarinb, P. Guyot, and O. Rolen (Derrida, 1993).

3. Research design and methods

In the course of the study, historical-genetic, structural-functional, psychological, comparative, temporal, compositional-plot methods of studying the novel were used.

4. Results

The theory of leitmotif in fiction originates from the borrowing of the term and performance technique from music. Leitmotif (German) – leading motive – is a short musical structure that is repeated repeatedly throughout the entire piece of music and highlights a particular character, phenomenon, emotion or concept. The term was introduced into musical theory and practice at the end of the 19th century by Richmann Wagner. D. William defines a leitmotif as “a short passage or theme that repeats throughout a musical composition and is associated with a certain person, situation, mood, etc” (William, 1986).

In the literary circulation, it is already traced as an outlined element with its own name by the Austrian writer Heimito von Doderer (1896-1966) (Surmak, 2014). The leitmotif has certain features that N. Lupak insists on and which correspond to both the musical and artistic interpretation of the piece:

- 1) cyclic form within the work;

- 2) the possibility of conducting several melodic lines at the same time;
- 3) own technique of performance (Lupak, 2007).

In the process of repetition, the leitmotif acquires various semantic shades and associations, which contribute to the in-depth interpretation of a certain phenomenon (Lupak, 2007). O. Surmak emphasizes that “for a leitmotif, it is important to “provoke” certain associations and be anchored in a certain place of the text” (Surmak, 2014). Symbolism is definitely characteristic of it. “Leitmotifs are motives that independently carry a content load. Expressing a certain concept is, in fact, an analogue of the topic. They are characterized by greater completeness and balance than in the case of ordinary motives” (Surmak, 2014). Z. M. Lastovetska-Solanska defines that “the leitmotif includes the concepts of motive, symbol, theme, repetition, archetype, but it is not identical to them. They may be similar at the functional level, but not identical in content” (Lastovetska-Solanska, 2011).

In literature, a leitmotif is a recurring feature or idea that helps develop a theme. The leitmotif of the story is created with the help of imagery, individual structural components, elements of language, etc. They contribute significantly to the narrative and are often associated with the theme of the story. Literary leitmotifs often help convey the story’s main message through repeated metaphorical representation. They also develop other aspects of the narrative and are used to build elements of plot, character, or setting.

The novel “The Book of Nights” by Sylvia Germain is characterized by numerous leitmotifs of its structure, in the space of which the author’s concept of being, space, and man is built. The complexity of the leitmotif structure of Sylvia Germain’s novels is balanced by axiological affinity and the commonality of the theological task. Let’s try to identify the thematic groups of leitmotifs in the novel “The Book of Nights”. Including:

1) motives that individualize the heroes of the novel and determine the original author’s fiction. They are:

- the motif of quince-vanilla aroma, associated with the image of Vitalia;
- Noemi’s melancholy;
- seven milky tears together with the grandmother’s shadow, given to Victor-Flandren by his father;
- the roundness of being for Melanie;
- big blue eyes of Alma;
- Violetta’s birthmark;
- the symbolism of the number 7 in relation to Theodore-Fosten and others;

– every hero of the novel is accompanied by his individualizing motive.

2) motifs that characterize the universe and worldview of a person and owe their appearance to world artistic practice. They are motives: silence; weep; body; God; sin; beauty; dream dance; blood; solitude; war; dirt; rats; time etc.

Some of the leitmotifs in this novel exist as an antonymic relation. The active development of the leitmotiv system of the novel is characteristic of modernism in general, but the presence of antonymous paired leitmotifs in one work is evidence of a significant textological development of the prose phenomenon. For example, the literature of romanticism knew antonyms only at the thematic level. Great postmodern attention to once “worthless” thematic elements, in particular to reminiscence, leitmotif, mythology, became the reason for their polyfunctionality. Hence the increase in the area of content, which enabled the development of the leitmotif in oppositional unity with the opposite motive. The juxtaposition of leitmotifs in Sylvia Germain’s prose is characteristic not only of her female writing, but also of human thinking as such. Therefore, part of the leitmotifs can be considered in integrity with oppositional motives. They constitute an artistic whole, and therefore can be separated into a separate thematic group of leitmotifs with a double antinomic essence. They are as follows:

- cry – silence;
- silence – voice;
- body – incorporeality;
- silence – sleep;
- blood – someone else’s blood;
- childhood – old age;
- life – death.

Paradoxical in this structuring of leitmotifs is that most of them are a classic property of the world literary tradition (for example, motifs of silence, scream, voice, war, childhood, dreams, etc.). Indeed, only motifs symbolic of one or another hero are original in the novel. The rest of the motifs are the author’s transformation of those that have already been sufficiently and meaningfully developed. Silvia Germain strives not to degenerate the existing tradition, but on the contrary, relies on the reader’s awareness in this area and uses the reader’s experience, both cultural and life. Thus, using all the possibilities of the leitmotiv level of the artistic structure, the writer creates a fantastic world in the plane of secondary thematic development of the text, which is the motive for the story. A special semantic group consists of motives contributing to

the individualization of characters. In Sylvia Germain's prose, such motifs form the basis of the individualization of the character, the rest of the artistic means are only auxiliary material.

Individualization in the novel begins with the individuality of the Peniel family, defining their lifestyle, well-being, internal problems and achievements, tragedies and moments of happiness. The very first leitmotif, which permeates the entire novel *The Book of Nights*, is determined by water, water flows, the river, and the individualization of the entire Peniel family: "in those days, the Peniels were still fresh water people. They lived in some kind of canal underflow..." "The land was beyond their eternal horizon..." "As for the cities, they knew only their names, their legends, their markets and holidays, thanks to the stories they heard from the earthlings in places of rest" (Germain, 2013). In this emotional aspect, the separation of the Peniel family from earthlings can be seen, as if from mystical beings who touch earthly life with their affairs, but do not take part in them and earthly affairs do not touch their hearts. It was the "canal non-flow" that determined the separation of the family, its moderate canal life, defined by one path of a barge that transports coal. A life not marked by anything bright. And it is the dead, silent, hopeless "canal life" that leitmotically affects the birth of the dead babies of Vitalina and Tedor-Fosten, who did not even have time to scream and died immediately after birth. And when Theodore-Fosten was born, his cry from his mother's womb seemed to take away not only all his father's language, but also gave him the impetus and desire to get out of the "canal backwater", buy a new barge and go to other places for earning and sailing: "his father died at the helm of a new sloop bought a few months ago" (Germain, 2013). Flows of water, mixed with the blood of soldiers killed in the war, a dirty, marine presence until the end of the novel in the fate of Theodore-Fosten's grandchildren: "And even as the boy managed to get out to sea to board a ship there, with other companions of the darkness gathered in this escape, he dreamed that he was still running on the water" (Germain, 2013).

In general, the image of Victor-Flanders, with which the story begins, remains in the novel a secret figure not revealed to the end, who carried death, loneliness and did not want to live in his grandchildren. When Naomi gives birth to the third child, whom she carried for more than two years in the womb, and this boy, like a "salt statue ... crumbled into exactly seven pieces of salt crystals," Theodore-Fosten rages that "I wanted to give him his father's name. But the father wants to remain dead, to remain there, in oblivion, he did not wish to lend his name to the living. And he did the right thing" (Germain, 2013).

It should also be noted the incredibly mystical association of all members of the Peniel family with natural phenomena. Nature and they are described in it in such a unique and

harmonious way that it is not known what existed first - the emotional experiences of the hero of the novel, or the natural landscapes, colors of water, sky, night, which destroyed or calmed his doubts. In this context, the used symbolization of images that emphasize the individuality of the inner world of the heroes of the novel is clearly visible.

The leading line through the entire novel is the presence of horses with the heroes. Thus, at the birth of Theodore-Foustain: “seven times the baby screamed, and seven times the horses reared up, stretching their necks to the sky and shaking their heads” (Germain, 2013). Later, horses accompanied Theodore-Fosten as a teenager, and he looked into their moist, deep eyes, as if into space, and searched there for answers about life, which he did not receive from his parents: “The large eyeballs, when nothing scared them, stared at him with a look immeasurably gentler than his father’s look and his mother’s smile. Their eyes shone with tight metal and frosted glass, at the same time transparent and devoid of transparency. His own gaze plunged and penetrated into their very bottom; but could not distinguish anything there; he was lost in the sediments of sandy light, muddy water and smoky wind, deposited by piles of golden-cinnamon silt. For him, it was here that the hidden image of the world, the mysterious part of life during its transition into nothingness, as well as the abode of God – a haven of beauty, peace and happiness, hid” (Germain, 2013). Subsequently, the skull of a horse killed by Slipun after the death of his wife and mocking of her dead body: “Slipun stuck a horse’s head on the gable of the covered entrance to his yard...- the horse’s skull became the emblem of the Peniel farm for a long time” (Germain, 2013).

S. E. Hajduk, studying the images of animals in fiction, points out that “The prominent place of the horse in the system of animalistic images of romantic poetry is due to two circumstances. On the one hand, a horse is a domestic animal that is very close to man, and its symbolism is connected with the birth of civilization and economy. On the other hand, a horse, like no other domestic animal, represents unbridledness, independence, and freedom. It is precisely on this paradox of meanings that the romantic symbolism of the horse was formed, in which the semantics of will, freedom, wild nature are leading” (Hayduk, 2011). From this, we can decipher the author’s idea so that initially the horse in the Peniel family symbolized the birth of civilization, the development of the family economy. The horse was a humble assistant of Theodore-Fosten. But from the middle of the novel, the murder of the trusting cognac Esko symbolized the destruction of the freedom of the master of the Big Farm and his immersion in chaos, hopelessness and his own grief due to the death of his wife.

The inanimate mystical features of Sylvie Germain's novel *The Book of Nights* include the antagonistic combination of scream and silence. With a cry from the womb, Theodore-Fousten's lust for life makes itself felt (Germain, 2013). The son of Theodore-Fosten, conceived with his own daughter, is born with a cry: "it was a boy; when he appeared, he screamed and thrashed around so much..." (Germain, 2013). The novel is almost finished with Nikez's cry of hopelessness: "He wanted to call her, but instead of words, a scream escaped from his chest. This strange cry frightened him, it resembled the cry of a newborn. The cry was caught by the wells: it fell and reverberated in them with a gloomy loud echo, distorted by the wasteland" (Germain, 2013).

The silence becomes a counterweight to the scream and erupts suddenly: "Mikael and Gabriel, huddling on the fourth floor of the mansion on Prince Albrecht Strasse,...suddenly stopped shooting. They just felt how something indeterminate, cutting through the rumble of shells and the cloudiness of the sky, the color of purple soot.. moved towards them... It was a tank, a huge tank" (Germain, 2013). She comes individually to someone from the family: during the dying agony: "She wanted to speak, but she just opened her mouth, not a single sound came out of it..." (Germain, 2013); after the loss: "Slipun, after the death of Melanie, shut himself up like a savage in his mourning, not speaking to anyone of his own..." (Germain, 2013).

Mystically, the novel describes death as a living being, although its name is lowercase. Death comes unexpectedly to Victor-Flandren: "It crept into him so stealthily that he did not even flinch..." (Germain, 2013). Death "bent a big hook [ie, was far away - author]" (Germain, 2013) for Thaddeus. And Thaddeus "made a promise to himself to resist yet another call that death threw every day, every hour at the camp auction" (Germain, 2013). Death became apparent without mentioning it to Ruth and her children: "...their disappearance got a name. But the name is so difficult to pronounce and understand that Slipun-Siromanets did not know how to approach it... Sachsenhausen. The name is so devastating that it crossed out the names of Ruth, Sylvester, Samuel, Yvonne and Suzanne with one stroke. The name is final... This name, like hundreds of others, was riddled with barbed wire, black smoke, towers, dog fangs and human bones" (Germain, 2013). Death becomes a friend and salvation for the woman in labor: "She smiled faintly; death put on beautiful gilded shoes, real ball shoes, to come and invite her to go with her" (Germain, 2013).

The end of the 19th - the beginning of the 20th century in the history of literature is marked by the juxtaposition of small and large time, which is combined in artistic works. For example, T. P. Vorova (Vorova, 2008) focuses on epochal influences (great time) on internal

events (small time). Until the end of the 20th century, temporal determinants are mystified in novels, transporting the reader from an event from one century to another, very often mixing them, thus creating a mystical combination. Sylvia Germain does not create temporal chaos, without tiring the reader with time crossings and guessing in what time the event takes place. But she uses the numerological function to create accents on those events that she considers significant and imposes them on the reader.

The leitmotif of the number “seven” is the most common in the novel. This is connected with the character of Theodore-Fosten. The symbolism of the number 7 is repeated before the birth of Theodore-Fosten. It should be noted that the numbers 3, 4, 7 in the system of modern culture are symbols of Light, Life and Unity. The sacred coding of the life cycle in modern religions is most often associated with the number 7. The artistic world of Sylvie Germain is, first of all, integrated into the Christian-Jewish tradition of interpreting the “seven”, in which the thorough actualization of the symbolism of the number “seven” goes back to the times of Noah, the Book of Genesis. Here we read: “Of every clean animal you shall take for yourself seven, a male and a female thereof, and of an unclean animal two each, a male and a female thereof. And of the fowls of the sky seven each, a male and a female; to keep the seed alive on the face of the whole earth. For there are still seven days, and I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights”.

The meaning of the hidden seed and future birth is one of the leading in the symbolism of the “seven”. “Seven” was considered by the Pythagoreans to be a sacred number, because everything human reaches its maximum realization from it. Ancient philosophy preserved the idea of seven forces of earthly and lunar nature. Sylvia Germain deliberately revives this archaic mystical plane of the number “seven” to create a halo of hidden fertility around Theodore-Fosten and the beginning of the great end of the Peniels’ earthly history in the cataclysm of World War II. Thus, Theodore-Fostenes, like the biblical Noah, gives life to the entire family of Peniel. Its leading function is preservation and procreation.

In this leitmotif digital context, “Vitalia Peniel gave birth to seven children, but the world chose only one – the last one. All the others died on the day they were born, before they even had time to scream. And the seventh cried even before birth” (Germain, 2013). The amazing power of the baby in the author’s presentation is exaggerated by the symbolism of “seven”: “Seven times the baby cried, and seven times the horses stood on their heels, raising their necks to the sky and shaking their heads. Father cried all the time and felt his heart stop seven times” (Germain, 2013).

With the birth of Theodore-Fosten, the role of his father ends. “But he could not find a word to say to either mother or child, as if the tears he had just shed had purged him of all speech. And from that day he did not speak again” (Germain, 2013). From birth and in later life, the leitmotif of seven accompanied Theodore-Fosten: “His voice always seemed to want to be silent, to die in the whisper of his own breath, and it had strange resonances. Whenever he finished speaking, the last words he had just uttered continued for a few more moments as an imperceptible echo that rippled seven times into the silence” (Germain, 2013). When Theodore-Foustain’s father dies, the boy approaches the bed, leans against him and kisses him, again, seven times: “Theodore-Foustain kissed his father’s face three times, on the eyelids and on the lips, and kissed his shoulders and hands four more times” (Germain, 2013). The seven-fold repetition of various actions of Theodore-Fosten is noted in the crisis moments of his life, for example, after returning from the war: “But the most terrible was his laughter; an evil laugh that seized him seven times a day, shaking his body into disfigurement” (Germain, 2013). Thus, the epochal nature of the period experienced by the character is emphasized. Not everyone is aware of the global nature of this event, and only the symbolism of the number “seven”, which causes pain in the people surrounding Theodore-Fosten, draws their attention to something incredible nearby.

The curse of the number seven is passed down from generation to generation, for when Noémia, the wife of Theodore-Foustain, gives birth to a stillborn child, holding it in her womb for two years until the end of the war, the infant’s “completely frozen, crystallized body” disintegrates into “seven pieces of salt crystal” (Germain, 2013). Theodore-Foustain also bequeaths seven milky tears to his son Victor-Flandrin: “And when he (Victor-Flandrin) came closer to the bed, he saw how seven milk-colored tears flowed from the closed eyes of the deceased and fell on his face” (Germain, 2013). One day, Vitalina tells her grandson Victor-Flandrin to leave the land where he was born, the mine where he worked, and look for another place to live where he can build his destiny and his happiness. Victor-Flandrin does as she asks him to, but “He took with him a single legacy: seven father’s tears and his grandmother’s smile that lit up his shadow (Germain, 2013). Later, he recalls that “his only memory is the slow gentle waters of the canals in which he spent his childhood and the black bowels of the earth into which he had to descend for seven years” (Germain, 2013).

The mystical petrification of the father’s tears, like the seven stone fragments of the baby, is the materialization of a mystical idea based on the hypertrophic emotionality of the heroes. There is a miracle of the magical transformation of tears into stone, but it does not surprise anyone, because the line between the probable and the real is blurred in the painful world of the

Peniels. Melanie sees her father's mysterious stone tears around Victor-Flandren's neck, but never questions him about the strange necklace. The restraint of visible mysticism, embodied in realistic images and details, is one of the specific writing techniques of Sylvia Germain. It not only creates mystical effects in individualizing motives, but also allows them (the motives) to develop according to the internal logic of their own structure. Thus, each individualizing motif turns into a mystical phenomenon similar to a romantic chamber grotesque.

The legacy of Victor-Flandren also has a protective function. When the villagers come to his house "with an effigy of Peniel made of straw and rags" (Germain, 2013) to take revenge, there is a strange spectacle of fire that terrifies them. "To the great joy of those present, the straw figure immediately caught fire. But when the fire had already burned down, seven thin yellow tongues of flame, which were almost white, suddenly flared up from the pile of ashes, rose to the height of a man, lingered, and then died down again and quickly spread like fires in the night. The anger of the peasants went out like a flame, and fear took hold" (Germain, 2013).

The writer uses the mystical function of fire for the first time and only within the leitmotif of seven. Therefore, mysticism is clearly realized only within the leitmotifs that individualize the heroes of the novel. These leitmotifs create the basis of the plane of the symbolic development of the content. In total, the leitmotif of the number "seven" is mentioned 23 times in the novel "The Book of Nights".

The depth of Sylvia Germain's authorial intention to vividly show the images of the heroes of the novel is expressed not only in the use of musical (leitmotif) and temporal (numerology) basis, but also through the excitement of the reader's color imagination and taste memory. M. Krupyak emphasizes that "color is a conscious, carefully thought-out technique that helps the artist express his thoughts and feelings with words" (Krupyak, 2019). L. I. Shevchenko and D. V. Dergach are convinced that "to understand the meaning of colors means to penetrate into the depths of the writer's subconscious, to understand the uniqueness of his creative laboratory, his individual features of the author's vision. It is clear that each outstanding artist has his own skills in using colors, his own interpretation of these problems" (Shevchenko, Dergach, 2011). Smells and aromas in the theory of fiction are considered to be an elastic cultural model. Therefore, smells can be markers of a certain era or a series of events of the same type (Sydorenko, 2016).

For example, the individualizing leitmotif of Alma's image became blue eyes: "Her eyes were so big that they cast a blue reflection on the entire wall of the cowshed" (Germain, 2013). As she watches the Germans kill her family, Alma's suffering increases and her eyes turn a dark

blue. “The blueness of Alma’s gaze was now reflected on every wall, even the snow, as far as the eye could see. That was all Benoit-Quentin could see, nothing else he could hear or feel. Only this: pours from Alma’s eyes, until everything around is permeated with it, the slate-blue color that trembled in his own body, like a long silent cry” (Germain, 2013). Only the bullet shatters Alma’s blue eyes. “The next time she was hit by a bullet, in the throat. Her song ended with a gulp of blood, and she sank very slowly to the ground among her brothers and sisters, whose shoes were soon dyed red” (Germain, 2013). The image of Alma, symbolizing the beauty and childhood of the world, merges with the blue color, defines absolute purity, divine and sublime.

Each woman in the novel “The Book of Nights” has a motif that accompanies her and is most often associated with taste and smell. It is a continuation of the woman’s presence as a continuation of her physicality. At the same time, physicality is somewhat abstract. It becomes more mystical and, finally, after the death of the heroines, it remains as a memory of them, as a mystical message.

Vitalina Peniel is accompanied by the leitmotif of quince and vanilla: “Theodore-Fosten was enveloped by an almost nauseating smell of sweetness wafting in the semi-darkness. In this tight atmosphere, there was a strong trace of tart quince and vanilla. This smell deeply disturbed Theodore-Faustin, who could taste it even in his own flesh and in his mouth” (Germain, 2013). Reflecting on her loneliness in widowhood, Vitalia “thought of those long-ago nights, so vivid in her memory and still raging on her flesh, when her body, buried under her husband’s body, whitened under the sheets like a great tub of milk flavored with quince and vanilla” (Germain, 2013). Vitalya recalled: “And the dawn always came to him as a rebirth of his own body, fused with the body of his wife, whose breasts, since the birth of her son, had been constantly producing milk with the taste of quince and vanilla. And he drank this milk” (Germain, 2013).

Characteristically, the father’s tears smell of Vitaly’s quince and vanilla when Victor-Flandren takes them in his hand. “He gathered them in his palm. They were small white pearls, very smooth and cold to the touch, giving off a vague smell of quince and vanilla” (Germain, 2013). When Vitalya’s husband died, “She tried to warn her son, but her tears prevented her from shouting. White tears, with a taste of quince and vanilla” (Germain, 2013). The death of Vitalina’s husband brought into the air of the room where he lay, “a strong spirit of sour quince and vanilla” (Germain, 2013), symbolically showing the coming of the sunset of Victor-Flandren’s life.

The smell also individualized each child of Theodore-Fosten by gender. So, “Noemi began to smell of ivy and bark again, as when she was waiting for Honore-Firman; when she

wore Germaine-Victoria, her skin smelled of rye and honey” (Germain, 2013). So, the author shows that as a legacy, the children of the Peniel family inherit the phenomenological ability to guess a person by his smell, that is, they are very close to the primary abilities of their ancestors.

The war smelled of blood and tears: “From his mother’s wet dress came a musty and nauseating smell – the mixed blood of his father and younger brother” (Germain, 2013). The era described by Sylvia Germain is full of atrocities, troubles, and military events. Therefore, the smell and color of the era of the Peniel family’s life are clearly visible here: the smell and color of blood.

5. Discussion

After studying critical literature and reading Sylvia Germain’s novel “The Book of Nights”, it seems clear to us that the only leitmotif connecting all family life is the birth or shelter of children, who every time revive the family, return the tortured souls of both men and women from complete deep dark hopelessness and suffering and give them new strength for development, dreams and expectations. Children save families, maintain invisible ties between its members, despite all the epoch-making events of the late 19th and mid-20th centuries, namely two great world wars. In the context of the environment, nature also always finds strength and opportunities to give new life and motivation for revival.

6. Conclusion

So, the presence of leitmotifs in the structure of the novel “The Book of Nights” is the author’s intention to convey to the reader some secret, but extremely relevant information. The leitmotif in this case appears as the possibility of reader decoding, since the truth is hidden from the characters, but accessible to the reader’s perception. This way of functioning of the motif ensures the competence of the reader and his superiority over the competence of the heroes.

The effect of textual mystification occurs on the border of the verbal-symbolic and pictorial-symbolic levels, which in itself is calculated more on the reader’s subconscious than on his analytical abilities. The elusiveness of textual mystification at the leitmotiv level is due to such an orientation to the subconscious and to the archetypes of certain ideas, constructive in their essence, rooted in the depths of memory. Therefore, Sylvia Germain uses the technique of mystifying the text with a leitmotiv based on the reader’s ability to read the coded archetype.

At the same time, her myth corresponds to a number of features that are characteristic of a novel of the 20th century written in the genre of mythology, namely: 1) it supplants logical thinking and introduces the reader to the logic of the miraculous, paralogy; 2) the myth occupies the tangible textual space of the novel, or rather – permeates it from the first line to the end; 3) the system of images resonates with mythological images; 4) thinking by analogy becomes dominant (the fate of heroes within the same family is followed); 5) a clear archaism is observed in the initial separation of the family from the land, later – in the combination of land and water, at the end – in the final grounding of the family on the earth and its elevation above all in a strong wall (at the Great Farm – an analogy with Noah’s ark). There is a biblical repetition of the creation of the world and people. At the same time, Sylvia Germain’s novel does not fulfill the genre functions of mythologizing in terms of features, namely: 1) the miracle is not presented as a consequence of mythological thinking; 2) the principle of the game is not fulfilled. The novel realistically and very closely, colorfully shows birth and death, which immediately go hand in hand, especially with the birth of children in the family. The author, on the contrary, debunks the myth about the presence of a large number of children in a family in the 19th and early 20th centuries due to the ability of women to give birth constantly. Shows female and child mortality during childbirth and complete lack of medical care. And in this case, mythologizing does not work; 3) the mythology revived in the novel, associated with the flow of water, the transition to the earthly world, the exit of x freshwater to the sea coast of the heroes at the end of the novel, has not been repeated anywhere until now and thus brought Sylvia’s novel to a new archaic level of mythologizing in the genre.

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