

Conference track «20.11 The Global South: its Position and Role in the English-Speaking World»

South America as an ecological paradise in the USA's animated movies: "Rio", "Up"

Academic supervisor – Аникян Тамара Сергеевна

Клишина Елизавета Михайловна

Student (bachelor)

Lomonosov Moscow State University, Филологический факультет, Кафедра истории русской литературы, Moscow, Россия

E-mail: klishinalimi@gmail.com

This work is devoted to the image of South America in US animation, with a primary focus on intercultural relations. The concept of the “ecological paradise” [1,2] is examined in detail from the perspectives of religion, ecology, and psychology.

Humans occupy an intermediate position between nature and culture [5]. Erich Fromm, in his book «The Art of Loving» [4], argued that a person who has become detached from the wild world is unable to return to it, so they compensate for the lost harmony through the development of reason [3]. The aim of the study is to analyze how attempts to overcome alienation and regain the “lost paradise” are reflected in the selected works.

Films "Rio" and "Up" contain allusions to biblical stories about Adam and Eve and Noah's Ark. Religious imagery helps to explore the themes of life and death in greater depth. The jungles of South America serve as the backdrop for addressing existential problems: in «Rio», the action takes place in Brazil, and in «Up», in Venezuela. These locations are portrayed as teeming with life and harmony, with the natural environment contrasted against the destructive activities of humans and their desire to subjugate the Earth's resources. From the perspective of ecocriticism, the animated films raise issues of consumption, urbanization, loss of biodiversity, animal cruelty, and so on. The conflict between humans and nature is resolved through peaceful coexistence, which is also presented as the means to achieve true fulfillment in life.

Let us explore «Rio» in greater detail. The carnival-like atmosphere of the jungle, where anthropomorphic birds live in harmony with nature, contrasts with the threat of human interference. The film addresses the issue of poaching, which has placed the blue macaws on the brink of extinction [7]. The climax is the carnival scene: people achieve their greatest happiness when they dress up in animal costumes and imitate their behavior [6], yet at this same celebration of life, a crime against the planet occurs — rare birds are secretly transported on a platform for export. Flight becomes a metaphor for freedom; the main character, parrot Blu, is incapable of it until he unites with other birds and chooses to save Jewel, his beloved — the last female of his species. Thus, South America becomes an “Eden” for Blu, who was previously exiled from it, and his found “Eve”. The ending shows a harmonious interaction between birds and humans, confirming that Brazil is indeed depicted as an “ecological paradise”.

Next, we shall consider the film «Up». The waterfall in Venezuela [8] serves as an archetype of the “lost paradise” and is contrasted with the urban landscape. The construction going on around Carl Fredricksen — the main character of the film Up — prompts him to pursue the dream he once shared with his late wife Ellie (an analogue of Eve). The search for “paradise” in the film takes on a more metaphorical character: it functions as a space of initiation and the acquisition of profound insight. When Carl reaches the paradisiacal waterfall, he realizes that true life lies in closeness to other beings. The symbolic act of discarding material possessions (the furniture in his house) in order to take flight and save the bird Kevin reflects the hero's transformation: he lets go of the burden of the past and adopts an ecocentric mindset. This shift

is confirmed by his reconnection with the dog Dug and the scout Russell (Carl's companions on his journey). In South America, Carl overcomes his existential isolation and attains the "lost paradise" through unity with nature.

To summarize, South America emerges as a place relatively untouched by human influence. The US entertainment industry uses the image of countries on this continent to reflect on the nostalgia for a sense of unity with nature and to demonstrate the detrimental impact of human activity on the planet.

Источники и литература

- 1) Rai, J. P. N. Ecological Consciousness in Disney Movies / J. P. N. Rai // International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research. — 2024. — Vol. 6, Issue 1. — P. 1–18. — DOI: . — License: CC BY SA.
- 2) Madureira, M. A. V. Ecocriticism in Disney/Pixar Wall-E and the De-Greening Cycle: Master's thesis / M. A. V. Madureira; University of Coimbra, Faculty of Letters, Department of North American Studies. — Coimbra: University of Coimbra, 2012. — [111] p.
- 3) Fromm, E. To Have or To Be. 1976. Digitized by Goa University, sourced from Goa University Library. Abacus Classic Library. Digital Library of India Collection. Identifier: dli.ernet.236788. Accessed: 7/10/2015.
- 4) Fromm, E. The Art of Loving / E. Fromm. — New York : Harper & Row, 1956. — 10 East 53d Street, New York, N.Y. 10022. — Library of Congress catalog card number: 56–8750. — Printed in the United States of America.
- 5) Фрейд, З. Недовольство культурой / З. Фрейд ; пер. с нем. А. М. Руткевич // Психоанализ. Религия. Культура : сборник. — Москва : Ренессанс, 1991. — С. 65–134.
- 6) Letaief, R. Stereotypes in Disney's Classics: A Reflection and Shaping of American Culture: Thesis for the Degree of Master of English in English Civilization / R. Letaief ; supervised by Dr. M. S. Harzallah. — University of Manouba, Faculty of Letters, Arts and Humanities, 2014–2015. — [127] p.
- 7) Sick, H. (1980). About the blue macaws, especially the Lear's Macaw. In: Conservation of New World Parrots. Proceedings of the ICBP Parrot Working Group Meeting in St. Lucia (pp. 440–443).
- 8) Angel, K. Why the World's Tallest Waterfall is Named Angel Falls / K. Angel. — Terrae Incognitae, 2012. — Vol. 44, No. 1. — P. 16–42.