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Мотив пути в романах Дж. Керуака

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена анализу мотивной структуры романов Джека Керуака «Бродяги Дхармы» и «Биг-Сур» на основе вероятностного подхода к изучению семантики мотива Игоря Витальевича Силантьева. Цель работы – выявление фабульных вариантов сюжетообразующего мотива пути в названных произведениях. Обращаясь к работам отечественных и зарубежных исследователей, автор рассматривает понятие мотива в рамках исторического, дихотомического, семантического, морфологического и других подходов. Научная новизна исследования заключается в том, что в статье впервые предпринята попытка анализа мотивной структуры романов Дж. Керуака, впервые определяются варианты семы (мотив восхождения, мотив падения и др.) сюжетообразующего мотива пути. Обозначена пространственная полярность, присущая названным романам Дж. Керуака: топос города реализуется в образах Сан-Франциско и Денвера, топос природы выражен в образах Биг-Сура и горы Маттерхорн. Впервые обозначена интермедийность романа «Биг-Сур» через внутритекстовую взаимосвязь с музыкальным произведением “Terence’s Farewell to Kathleen” Джона Маккормака. Делается предположение, что мотив пути как структурная основа романов Дж. Керуака является семантическим ядром мировоззренческой концепции автора. Результаты исследования позволяют проследить связь между сюжетной структурой романов и духовной философией Дж. Керуака как одного из создателей и идеологов литературы бит-поколения.

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Motif of the way in the novels by Jack Kerouac

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Abstract. The article deals with the analysis of the motif structure in the novels by Jack Kerouac “The Dharma Bums” and “Big Sur”. The aim of the study is to distinguish multiple plot variants of the plot-forming motif of the way based on Igor Silantiev’s probabilistic approach to the motif semantics. Referring to the works of Russian and foreign researchers, the author examines the concept of motif within the historical, dichotomous, semantic, morphological and other frameworks. The novelty of the study lies in the first attempt to thoroughly analyze the motif structure of novels by J. Kerouac, the plot-forming motif of the way, namely variant semes (the motif of ascent, the motif of fall, etc.). The spatial polarity inherent in many of Kerouac’s novels is identified. The topos of the city manifests itself in the images of San Francisco and Denver, while the topos of nature is expressed in the images of Matterhorn Mountain and Big Sur. The intermediality of the novel “Big Sur” is first revealed through the intertextual correlation with the song “Terence’s Farewell to Kathleen” by John McCormack. The article drives forward a suggestion that the motif of the way as a structural basis of the novels by Jack Kerouac is the semantic core of the author’s spiritual philosophy. The results of the study allowed the author to trace the connection between the plot structure of the novels and the spiritual philosophy of J. Kerouac as one of the creators and ideologues of Beat Generation literature.

Introduction

The object of the study is the motif structure in the novels by Jack Kerouac *The Dharma Bums* and *Big Sur*, the subject of analysis covers the functional and semantic features of the plot-forming motif, its probabilistic semes. The relevance of the article is conditioned by the fact that the interest of Russian literary critics in works by Jack Kerouac does not fade away, new studies devoted to different aspects of his works continue to appear. For instance, the article by N. A. Zhilyakov, E. G. Dotsenko *The Metatext of Beatnik’s “Autotext” (“Big Sur” by J. Kerouac)* (Жиляков, Доценко, 2023) is devoted to the analysis of the elements of postmodernism poetics in the novel. There are also works focused on the autobiographical and genre specificity of J. Kerouac’s work, for example, S. P. Tolkachev’s article *What Does the Name Mean? (Following the Footsteps of J. Kerouac’s Novel “Satori in Paris”)* (Толкачев, 2022),

N. A. Zhilyakov's article *The Fragmentedness of Memory in Beat Literature* (Жиляков, 2022); but the problem of the motif structure of the writer's novels is rarely touched upon in modern Russian science, though it is of undoubted interest, as it is closely related to the issues of plot and genre.

The article uses such research methods as the structural approach, which identifies the main approaches in the motif theory; the narratological one, which is used in the analysis of the main motifs of J. Kerouac's novels *The Dharma Bums* and *Big Sur*, the intermedial one, which allowed the author to draw conclusions about the musicality of the text, and the intertextual method, which helps to determine the semantic connection of J. Kerouac's and F. M. Dostoevsky's novels.

The tasks of the article are, firstly, to identify the invariant core of the motif structure of Kerouac's novels; secondly, to establish variants of the plot-forming motif of the way and reveal their individual and creative originality; thirdly, to outline the connection between the motif structure of the novels and the worldview concept of the Beat Generation.

The materials of the article are the following works:

1. Kerouac J. *Big Sur*. 1962. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Big_Sur;
2. Kerouac J. *Book of Sketches, 1952-57*. 2006. https://issuu.com/lauraberdejo/docs/jack_kerouac_-_book_of_sketches_19;
3. Kerouac J. *Essentials of Spontaneous Prose*. 1957. <https://writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88v/kerouac-spontaneous.html>;
4. Kerouac J. *On the Road*. N. Y.: The Viking Press, INC, 1959;
5. Kerouac J. *The Dharma Bums*. N. Y.: Penguin Books, 1958.

The following dictionary was used as reference material:

6. Большая советская энциклопедия. 1970-1978. <http://bse.sci-lib.com/article119444.html>.

The concept of motif as the most important structural element of any fiction work is the theoretical background of this article. The problem of motif has been studied by many Russian scholars, such as A. N. Veselovsky (Веселовский, 1989), B. V. Tomashevsky (Томашевский, 1996), O. M. Freidenberg (Фрейденберг, 1997), V. B. Shklovsky (Шкловский, 1983), I. V. Silantiev (Силантьев, 2004), and others whose findings are the backbone of the present work. The most significant for the study is I. V. Silantiev's monograph *Poetics of Motif* (Силантьев, 2004), which methodologically and empirically presents a probabilistic approach to the motif analysis. The fundamental works of A. N. Veselovsky outline the semantic interpretation of motif (Веселовский, 1989), V. B. Shklovsky's studies reflect the thematic approach to the motif theory (Шкловский, 1983). The principle of motif is revealed systematically in the works of O. M. Freidenberg (Фрейденберг, 1997). The works of Russian scholars devoted to various aspects of J. Kerouac's prose are also important for this study. Among them are the theses *The Method and Genre of Jack Kerouac's Prose* by E. E. Oshin'sh (Ошиньш, 1984), *Antinomy 'Wisdom – Madness' in the USA Counterculture of the 1950-1960s* by O. Yu. Bondarenko (Бондаренко, 2009); the works by A. O. Shkolskaya *Genre Syncretism in Underground Literature (J. Kerouac's Novel "On the Road" and Ven. Erofeev's Poem "Moscow – Petushki")* (Школьская, 2021) and *The Bible and Mythological Images in Jack Kerouac's Novel "On the Road"* (Школьская, 2016), the thesis by I. V. L'vova *F. M. Dostoevsky and the American Novel of the 1940s-1960s* (Львова, 2010). The articles *Jack Kerouac's "Big Sur Adventure" ("Big Sur") and the Traditions of American Romanticism* by U. S. Akhmedova (Ахмедова, 2015) and *Peculiarities of Kerouac's Spontaneous Prose* by Yu. Yu. Vasilyeva (Васильева, 2014) are thought-provoking and contribute much to the present study.

The work's practical significance is the following: the research materials are applicable in humanitarian universities when studying specialized courses and seminars on theoretical, practical and comparative terminology. The data obtained can be used in the process of educational and methodological activities when creating textbooks and study guides. The research findings can become the theoretical base for lectures and practical classes dedicated to the study of the novels by Jack Kerouac.

Discussion and results

The theory of motif in Russian and foreign literary studies

One of the first scholars to consider the problem of motif in detail was Academician Alexander Veselovsky. A. N. Veselovsky used the comparative historical method and defined motif as "an elementary narrative unit that figuratively responds to various queries of the primitive mind or daily observation" (Веселовский, 1989, p. 305). Defining motif, the researcher emphasizes its semantic indivisibility: "By motif I mean a formula that at the first stages of community figuratively answered the questions that nature posed to a man everywhere or fixed especially vividly, seemingly important or repeated impressions of reality. The sign of motif is its figurative single-member schematism; such are the elements of lower-level mythology and fairy tales, which cannot be decomposed any further: someone steals the sun (eclipse), lightning-fire is carried down from the sky by a bird" (Веселовский, 1989, p. 301).

In his article *On Alexander Veselovsky's Historical Poetics*, I. K. Gorsky writes that Veselovsky "considers motifs to be the elementary formulas that could have emerged in multi-tribe communities" and that the researcher "tried to find out which motifs could have emerged in the minds of the early humans based on the reflection of their living environment" (Cit. ex: Веселовский, 1989, p. 25). I. K. Gorsky defines the task of A. N. Veselovsky's study as "to shed light on the history of transformation of rudimentary motifs into complex compositions extending up to the present day". Besides, he emphasizes that "for Veselovsky, who sought to interpret the history of literature as a deterministic process; the main thing in the study of plot was also to expose the repetition of elements, for only the stable components of phenomena abide their law" (Cit. ex: Веселовский, 1989, p. 25).

Being based on the fundamental research of A. N. Veselovsky, the present work has experienced the influence of Igor Silantiev's *Poetics of Motif* and his *probabilistic approach* to motif semantics. Speaking about the holistic model of motif semantics, I. V. Silantiev points out that the probabilistic model "does not reject the dichotomous model, but qualitatively expands it regarding the systemic meaning of a motif" (Силантьев, 2004, p. 103). According to the researcher, the bipartite semantic structure of a motif (its "dual nature") implies the semantic invariant of a motif ("the core of its meaning", or "function" according to V. Propp), whereas plot variants of the motif or semes constitute "the shell or periphery of the invariant semantic core of the motif" (Силантьев, 2004, p. 105).

In his work *The Theory of Motif in Russian Literature and Folklore Studies*, Silantiev considers and summarizes interpretations of the term given by Russian literary scholars representing various philological schools, such as semantics, the morphological approach, the psychological concept, the dichotomous theory, etc. As for the abovementioned paper by A. N. Veselovsky, I. V. Silantiev also dwells upon the semantic indivisibility of a motif, its semantic unity: "The integrity of a motif is not of a morphological, but of a semantic character; it is like the integrity of a word, the spontaneous disintegration of which into morphemes is also hindered by the unity of its meaning. The same happens here, a motif cannot be decomposed into elementary narrative components (narrative 'morphemes') without losing its integral meaning and the aesthetic function of 'figurative response' based on this meaning" (Силантьев, 2004, p. 17). However, despite the motif's semantic indivisibility, I. V. Silantiev points at its morphological variability, which does not violate "the integrity of its semantics": "...the morphological decomposability of the motif is quite obvious for A. N. Veselovsky, as evidenced by the above definitions of the motif; there is 'schematism', so there are parts in this scheme; there is a 'formula', so there are components in this formula" (Силантьев, 2004, p. 18).

Allowing for the variability of the motif, I. V. Silantiev refers to the work of A. L. Bem (Бем, 1918) analyzing the motif's semantic structure. The researcher considers A. L. Bem's approach as one of the first attempts of "component analysis" followed by identification of the motif's invariant meaning. I. V. Silantiev summarizes the principle of A. L. Bem's work as follows: "...what we have is the analysis of the motif, which implies determination of its plot variants and their subsequent comparison that leads to revealing an invariant and the system of differential features that semantically vary in such a motif" (Силантьев, 2004, p. 20). I. V. Silantiev repeatedly remarks that being far ahead of their time, A. L. Bem's ideas underlie modern literary studies on motifs. First of all, this applies to the idea of plot as a "complicated motif": "A motif potentially contains the possibility of development, of further intensification, of being sophisticated by side motifs. Such a complicated motif is actually a plot" (Силантьев, 2004, p. 20).

According to I. V. Silantiev, another important researcher of the motif problem is O. M. Freidenberg. She wrote about the inseparability of the concepts of motif and character: "Essentially, speaking about a character, we had to look into the motifs crystallized in it; the whole morphology of a character is the morphology of plot motifs" (Cit. ex: Силантьев, 2004, p. 21). In his turn, I. V. Silantiev emphasises the significance of this thesis against the modern literary process: "...the semantic connection between a character and a motif is to a certain extent specific of the contemporary literature, especially when a literary character acquires a quality of a 'cultural myth' and 'accumulates' its distinctive motifs, and in this sense becomes a character of the 'mythological plot' of today (Pavel Korchagin, Ostar Bender, etc.)" (Силантьев, 2004, p. 22).

An important work on the development of the motif's dichotomous theory is written by E. A. Meletinsky, who "raised a question of the *semantic structure* of the motif as a *unity of invariant and variant*, thus combining the elements of semantism, dichotomism, and structuralism" (Силантьев, 2004, p. 50).

Considering the plot-forming potential of the motif, which is crucial in the context of this work, I. V. Silantiev cites G. A. Levinton, namely the article *On the Problem of Studying Narrative Folklore* (1975). Levinton understands a motif as an invariant element, which complies with the dichotomous theory, at the same time he sees plot as a variant element, "the eventual unfolding of the invariant motif being the leading motif, the key motif for the plot and the piece of literature as a whole" (Силантьев, 2004, p. 56).

Noteworthy stages in comprehending the nature of the motif include its consideration within the framework of intertextual and pragmatic approaches. In the works of M. L. Gasparov, the concept of *plot* is likened to the concept of *text*, which is a "grid of motifs" that ensure "semantic connections both within the text and beyond" (Гаспаров, 1994, p. 288). Thus, "motifs represent meanings and link texts into a single semantic space..." (Силантьев, 2004, p. 62). The pragmatic approach, in its turn, suggests integrating the semantic and thematic interpretations, thereby considering motif "from the point of view of the *current artistic task* and the *meaning* of the piece" (Силантьев, 2004, p. 68). This adds new questions to the traditional ones of motif studies: "Why was this motif used? What is the present meaning of the motif used? What is its communicative intention? Evidently, the pragmatic interpretation of the motif turns out to be the most appropriate for contemporary fiction studies..." (Силантьев, 2004, p. 70).

Analyzing the motif structure of J. Kerouac's novels, we, first of all, define the semantic convergences and connections that show Beat literature as a single semantic space, as well as determine the creative meaning of certain motifs. During the analysis, we define the motif of the way as semantically *invariant*. Regardless of the formal and genre features of the novel, the motif of the way operates as a *semantic core*, "acquiring" *variant semes*, or *plot variants*. One of the tasks of this article is defining the probabilistic semes of the motif of the way that constitute its periphery as an invariant semantic core.

Foreign literary studies also pay attention to the motif theory. For example, speaking of a motif as "the smallest element of a fairy tale", the folklore narrative tradition researcher S. Thompson (1955, p. 7-8) highlights its "narrative" status and the "unusualness" of its meaning in the narrative. I. V. Silantiev remarks that adherence to the dichotomous

theory was also specific of the American scholar A. Dundes and the Bulgarian researcher L. Parpulova, semioticians A. Greimas, J. Kurte, and L. Dolegel, as well as Israeli folklorists I. Elstein and A. Lipsker. Several works by German literature researchers, such as W. Kaiser, E. Frenzel, H. Demmrich, I. Demmrich, R. Grübel, analyze the motif as “a recurring and semantically significant element of literary narrative” (Силантьев, 2004, p. 73) and provide comparative analysis of motifs in European and Slavic literatures.

Similar to the works of Russian researchers as a whole and A. N. Veselovsky's fundamental works in particular, ideas were expressed by the American researchers of the 1990s, such as W. Friedman and T. Ziolkowski. The latter clearly outlined the increasing interest in the problems of themes and motifs in American and European literature studies, as well as the changing goals of such studies that seek not only to systematize motifs and themes, but also to identify the key thematic peculiarities in the works of a certain writer “in order to reveal the connections with the narrative tradition” (Силантьев, 2004, p. 74).

Since the motif of the way is an invariant core of the motif structure of these works alongside the variant semes of this motif, we also rely on the archetypal meanings of motifs in world literature.

Turning to the concept of *archetype*, we are guided by the traditional definition given by C. G. Jung in *Psychological Types*: “The **archetype** is a symbolic formula, which always begins to function when there are no conscious ideas present, or when conscious ideas are inhibited for internal or external reasons” (1976, p. 528). C. G. Jung relies upon the concept of the collective unconscious as an extra-personal cultural and spiritual experience of the mankind expressed in certain images, motifs, plots. In the present article, we consider archetypal motifs exactly as generalized formulas that become part of the Beat literature cultural code.

The works by E. M. Meletinsky are of great importance for the comprehension of C. G. Jung's theory of archetypes by Russian literary scholars. The researcher explains the definition of the archetype given by C. G. Jung using several variants of its interpretation: “Jung proposed the concept of the *archetype*, which is close to the concept of a mythological motif; Jung stumbles at the exact definition of the archetype. For him, it is a complex of extra-personal experience, as well as an image that concentrates psychological situations around an object, and the possibility of representing some kind of action, and some structures of primary images of the collective unconscious fantasy, and, finally, a category of symbolic thought that organizes representations coming from the outside” (Мелетинский, 2001, p. 17). E. M. Meletinsky also discusses the repetitiveness of archetypes, thus touching upon the concept of an “archetypal motif”, substantial for us in the context of this work: “A large number of mythological motifs are repeated in the archaic folklore of various countries. These are archetypal motifs” (Мелетинский, 2001, p. 25).

In addition, E. M. Meletinsky briefly covers the issue of the origin of the *archetype* in the works of C. G. Jung: “Jung attributes the term *archetype* to Philo of Alexandria, and then to Irenaeus and Dionysius the Areopagite. Conceptually, the term is related to Plato's *eidōs* and is popular in the Platonic tradition for a reason. C. G. Jung considers archetypes to be a phenomenon close to ‘motifs’ in mythology or ‘collective representations’ and ‘categories of imagination’ in French sociology, also thought as ‘elementary ideas’ by A. Bastian”. The scholar notes that C. G. Jung provides several definitions of archetype that are not always akin: “The archetype appears to be either something like a ‘complex’ but beyond personal experience, [...], or an imaginative reproduction of psychologically irreversible instinctive reactions, or a motif, a type, a prototype, a model, a structural psychic element” (Мелетинский, 2000, p. 62). Hence, the researcher makes a general conclusion about the concept of archetype, summarizing various arguments of C. G. Jung: “...archetypes are certain structures of primary images of the collective unconscious fantasy and categories of symbolic thought that organize the representations coming from the outside” (Мелетинский, 2000, p. 62). Such definition is one of the theoretical foundations of the present study in interpreting archetypal motifs in the texts of the Beat Generation writers.

The motif structure of J. Kerouac's novels “The Dharma Bums” and “Big Sur”

Jack Kerouac is an undoubtedly iconic figure in American culture of the second half of the 20th century. The author was called the “father” and the “king” of the Beat Generation even during his lifetime (Хаустов, 2020, p. 7). Ben Giampo, a researcher at the University of Notre Dame, in his book *Kerouac, the Word and the Way: Prose Artist as Spiritual Quester* characterizes the writer as “one of the most soulful, inventive, idiosyncratic, and misunderstood literary figures in American letters” (2000, p. 9). Most of the modern studies analyzing J. Kerouac's prose concentrate on genre or cultural aspects, while the issues of motif poetics in J. Kerouac's novels remain virtually unaddressed.

Let us turn to J. Kerouac's novels *The Dharma Bums* and *Big Sur*. The novel *The Dharma Bums* was written in 1958. The main characters of the novel are Ray Smith (J. Kerouac) and Japhy Ryder (Gary Snyder). Gary Snyder is an American poet, essayist and professor at the University of California. The novel describes Kerouac and Snyder's joint ascent to the top of Matterhorn Mountain in California. Like *On the Road*, *The Dharma Bums* and *Big Sur* are written in a style of “spontaneous prose” based on the principle of freedom of writing, which means capturing the flow of events, thoughts and real-life experiences on paper. The term “spontaneous prose” was coined by J. Kerouac (1957) himself, who believed that in the process of writing the author should not interrupt in order to select words or expressions, while the main attention should be paid to associations and improvisation: “Time being of the essence in the purity of speech, sketching language is undisturbed flow from the mind of personal secret idea-words, blowing (as per jazz musician) on subject of image”.

Unlike *On the Road*, *The Dharma Bums* makes more references to Eastern philosophy and less to Christianity, but the relationship between these worldview concepts is certainly inherent as one of the distinctive features of Kerouac's poetics. The main attribute of the novel from this point of view is the duality of the inner state of the characters. The plot-forming motif of the novel is the motif of the way: the characters are on the road again, overcoming certain obstacles.

The plot-forming motif of the way in this novel is interesting from a spatial point of view: compared to *On the Road*, where the characters were physically moving inland in a straight line, the way in *The Dharma Bums* is manifested in a somewhat different manner. Here, such plot variants of the motif as the ascent (conquering the Matterhorn peak) and the descent (going away or down to the city) come to the fore.

The “up – down” antinomy in this novel is understood in the context of the author’s spiritual philosophy, because it reflects the premodern worldview metaphorically and archetypically. The top is heavenly and unearthly, it is a metaphor of purification, a departure from the drunkenness that immolated the hero, a cherished merger with the sacred mountain Matterhorn. The bottom is infernal, a metaphor for hell, a return to the torments of the swaggering, “corporeal” life of the city. Thus, the plot structure of the novel resembles the model of a *tree* in the context of traditional philosophy. Throughout the narrative, we see the character’s constant moves from chaste abstinence and doleful powerlessness to the city’s temptations. The way down is also associated with another plot variant of the motif which is the motif of illness in the descriptions of the character’s extreme state of brokenness and devastation in the urban environment, such as hangovers, hallucinations, the consequences of drug use, etc.

The motif of ascent is associated with a completely different state of the character. While climbing the Matterhorn, Ray Smith is in a peaceful, “wise” mood, in harmony with nature and the world around him. It should be noted that Ray is also somewhat influenced by Japhy Ryder, whom he perceives as his teacher. Matterhorn Mountain is seen by the characters not only as a material, but also as a spiritual peak that must be conquered to achieve purification. Here is what Japhy Ryder says about it: “Yeah man, you know to me a mountain is a Buddha. Think of the patience, hundreds of thousands of years just sittin there bein perfectly silent and like praying for all living creatures in that silence and just waitin for us to stop all our frettin and foolin” (Kerouac, 1958, p. 48).

Such a simple understanding of the essence of Buddhism is characteristic of many of Kerouac’s characters, the same applies to the writer himself, he called himself and his fellow Beatniks amateur philosophers. Though keen on a great diversity of literature, J. Kerouac was mostly interested in Eastern, and in particular, Japanese poetry, as well as Russian prose, especially works of F. M. Dostoevsky. These literary interests and even some features of F. M. Dostoevsky’s poetics can be traced in the writer’s novels, letters and sketches (Kerouac, 2006). On the pages of *On the Road*, we come across the name of the Russian classic, though in a slightly modified version – *Dostioffski*. It is mentioned in a conversation between the protagonist and Remi Boncoeur, his school friend: “What’s the name of that Russian author you’re always talking about – the one who put the newspapers in his shoe and walked around in a stovepipe hat he found in a garbage pail? [...] Ah, that’s it – that’s it – Dostioffski” (Kerouac, 1959, p. 43). The fact that J. Kerouac indeed “kept talking” about F. M. Dostoevsky to his friends is confirmed by the writer’s letters addressed to Neal Cassady and Sebastian Sampas. To illustrate this task, in a letter to S. Sampas, the writer calls F. M. Dostoevsky “one of us”, and in a letter to N. Cassady – “the Russian Christ”: “Listen Do you realize that a new literary age is beginning in America? [...] With the advent of Dostoevsky the Russian Christ, we, young Americans, turn to a new evaluation of a man: the essence of his ‘position’, personal and psychic” (Cit. ex: Львова, 2008, p. 121). The name of F. M. Dostoevsky is constantly mentioned by J. Kerouac not only in his letters, but also in journalism and fiction. The writer admitted that some of his works were written under the influence of F. M. Dostoevsky (for example, he compares *The Subterraneans* with *Notes from Underground* (Львова, 2008, p. 137)). A distinctive feature of F. M. Dostoevsky’s philosophy is the interpreting of suffering in the Orthodox Christian context, which implies a way to salvation. F. M. Dostoevsky’s characters undergo suffering in its variable forms including enmity toward God, lack of faith, moral degradation, murder, etc. The motif of falling/descent is typical of F. M. Dostoevsky’s prose and is also close to the motif of illness: only after falling, after “recovery”, the character seizes a chance to get back on his feet.

It is worth noting that J. Kerouac’s novels though not directly, but still are noticeably similar in plot to *Crime and Punishment*. Obsessed with his “illness”, his idea, Rodion Raskolnikov constantly goes out and wanders around unconsciously without thinking of his direction. As we know, the most important meetings (the rescue of the drunken maiden, the death of Marmeladov, etc.) occur unintentionally, while the conditions and objects necessary for the fulfillment of the “deed” also come to the character as if by chance (an overheard conversation, an axe, etc.). The characters of several of J. Kerouac’s novels find themselves in a similar state: they are continuously moving around, not knowing in advance where they are going, whom they will meet, where they will spend the night. Like Raskolnikov, J. Kerouac’s characters are often penniless, having spent their last money accidentally in some unforeseen situation. It becomes clear that J. Kerouac is attracted to F. M. Dostoevsky’s characters exactly by this state of painful loss, “brokenness”, and abandonment, which is inherent in Kerouac himself. As mentioned above, such state is also commonly found in the works of existentialist writers among whom F. M. Dostoevsky himself is often numbered.

In the novels under consideration, some “Russianness” and asceticism of J. Kerouac, his characters’ longing for silence, humility, tranquility are intertwined with the Eastern admiration for nature and its spiritualization. In the novel *The Dharma Bums*, the characters often compose hokku (or haiku – “a genre and form of Japanese poetry; a triple verse consisting of two five-syllable verses and one seven-syllable verse in the middle” (Большая советская энциклопедия, 1970-1978)), enjoy the serenity and quietude of mountain landscapes, meadows, and lakes. We see epitomized, spirit-endowed nature as a sacred and divine being, superior to a man, as it has achieved the highest degree of tranquility and unpretentiousness in its solitude. In Kerouac’s view, a man is a part of nature, which at certain moments of life can be like it in its purity and grandeur. A man is polar, and a harmonious alliance with the world around him is accessible to him only in rare moments of enlightenment. In this regard, the character that is in a constant spiritual search swings between two poles: spiritual and secular life. Each of these poles is characterized by specific markers.

While the character's spiritual life is spatially connected with being out in the wilds (hiking in the mountains, working in the mountains, spending a night in the open air), immersion in worldly life relates to the topos of the city, a closed space. The city is always a place of non-stop crazy movement overwhelming the characters. This is also typical for the novel *On the Road* with Denver being such a place. As regards motif poetics, Denver episodes are characterized by such variant semes as the motif of illness and the motif of death. They are the ones that embody the vector of the hero's falling: "It was the Denver Night; all I did was **die**. Down in Denver, down in Denver all I did was **die**" (Kerouac, 1959, p. 105).

At the beginning of *Big Sur* (1962), the author describes a miserable morning of the character waking up after yet another party, this time in San Francisco: "The church is blowing a sad windblown 'Kathleen' on the bells in the skid row slums as I wake up all woebegone and goopy, groaning from another drinking bout..." (Kerouac, 1962).

The musicality of the text plays a central role here. The melody mentioned in this passage is "Terence's Farewell to Kathleen" by the famous Irish singer John McCormack (1884-1945). The piano notes reminding of ringing bells and the singer's chanting voice full of the lover's grief convey the yoke and suffering of the character reinforcing the motif of inner brokenness. "I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen' being bellroped so sad", coupled with the image of Satan, draw our attention to the sacredness, bringing forward the religious level of the text: "...terrified by that sad song across the roofs mingling with the lachrymose cries of a Salvation Army meeting on the corner below 'Satan is the cause of your alcoholism, Satan is the cause of your immorality, Satan is everywhere workin to destroy you unless you repent now'" (Kerouac, 1962).

In this novel, as in *The Dharma Bums*, the spatial polarity is unquestionably clear: the topos of the city lies in the image of "gloomy and hangover San Francisco", while the topos of nature is expressed in the majestic images of Big Sur: "I gulp to wonder why it has the reputation of being beautiful above and beyond its fearfulness, its Blakean groaning roughrock Creation throes, those vistas when you drive the coast highway on a sunny day opening up the eye for miles of horrible washing sawing" (Kerouac, 1962). We see the same plot variants of the motif of the way – the motif of descent (staying in San Francisco) and the motif of ascent (staying in Big Sur). However, the motif of ascent is taken to the extreme: it acquires an ascetic, if not monastic, embodiment, because the hero makes a choice to go into exile without any companions, friends, or spiritual teachers.

This decision is not taken immediately; the journey is again preceded by breakdown and a painful fall. Instead of leaving and settling in a hut in Big Sur's forests as he decided, the hero went on a bender again, delaying his departure. Here comes the motif of illness (in the episodes of his severe hangover torments): "...instead of going thru smooth and easy I wake up drunk, sick, disgusted, frightened, in fact terrified by that sad song across the roofs [...] 'One fast move or I'm gone', I realize, gone the way of the last three years of drunken hopelessness which is a physical and spiritual and metaphysical hopelessness you can't learn in school no matter how many books on existentialism or pessimism you read" (Kerouac, 1962). Creaks, groans, the abomination of desolation, physical and spiritual hopelessness, all these details of the artistic world reflect the painful state of the hero who flees from such a condition being eager to change his life, to pass the test of abstinence and loneliness. Purification is achieved either by the way of the summit or during a long period of lonely life in the mountains, in a secluded hut, often asking for some help from the guiding character. In *Big Sur*, the hero passes the test alone, and in *The Dharma Bums*, the guide is Japhy Ryder, directly identified as Ray Smith's teacher. In the scene of night camping on the road to the Matterhorn, sleeping Japhy appears to Ray as someone to aspire to, a small ray of light in the darkness: "His little huddled form was the only thing I could see for miles of darkness that was so packed and concentrated with eager desire to be good. I thought, 'What a strange thing is man... like in the Bible it says, Who knows the spirit of man that look upward? This poor kid ten years younger than I am is making me look like a fool forgetting all the ideals and joys I knew before, in my recent years of drinking and disappointment [...]. And I promised myself that I would begin a new life'" (Kerouac, 1958, p. 55).

However, at a critical moment of the ascent of the Matterhorn, the hero realizes that he is not yet capable of reaching the summit: "I nudged myself closer into the ledge and closed my eyes and thought 'Oh what a life this is, why do we have to be born in the first place, and only so we can have our poor gentle flesh laid out to such impossible horrors as huge mountains and rock and empty space' [...] The saying made my hair stand on end; it had been such cute poetry sitting on Alvah's straw mats. Now it was enough to make my heart pound and my heart bleed for being born at all..." (Kerouac, 1958, p. 60). The Matterhorn itself seems to put everything in its place. The life's journey of each character is unmistakable in the face of a heavy spiritual and physical trial: "Now there's the karma of these three men here: Japhy Ryder gets to his triumphant mountaintop and makes it, I almost make it and have to give up and huddle in a bloody cave, but the smartest of them all is that poet's poet lyin down there with his knees crossed to the sky chewing on a flower dreaming by a gurgling plage, goddammit they'll never get me up here again" (Kerouac, 1958, p. 60).

Inner excruciation and propensity for extremes is inherent in many of J. Kerouac's characters, as well as the writer himself. The images of Sal Paradise, Ray Smith and other characters are an autobiographical portrait of a man of Kerouac's time, a Beatnik whose crazy life embraces both madness and peace, holiness and sin. The Beatnik's worldview is rooted in a mix of cultures and religions, and is imbued with irrepressible b-bop melodies, ringing bells and prayerful hokku. However, this pile does not fall apart thanks to the very idea of endless search and movement, to which the Beatnik subordinates his life.

In fiction, this idea is expressed through the plot-forming motif of the way, because it is this motif that allows the author to reflect the spiritual transformation of the characters going through different trials. Despite the duality natural for J. Kerouac's characters, it is worth emphasizing that they never abandon the idea of returning to the road, to their path, and start anew. The author's religiosity, given a certain uncertainty in his faith and his switching between

Buddhism and Christianity, is the spiritual core of his characters. This faith is hard to achieve, but still real and existing. In this regard, in the end of *The Dharma Bums*, Ray Smith, who is on the Desolation Peak, on Mount Hozomeen, gets a vision of his “guide” Japhy Ryder in the form of a Chinese bum: “And suddenly it seemed I saw that unimaginable little Chinese bum standing there, in the fog [...] It wasn’t the real-life Japhy of rucksacks and Buddhism studies and big mad parties at Corte Madera, it was the realer-than-life Japhy of my dreams, and he stood there saying nothing. ‘Go away, thieves of the mind!’ he cried down the hollows of the unbelievable Cascades. It was Japhy who had advised me to come here and now though he was seven thousand miles away in Japan, [...] he seemed to be standing on Desolation Peak by the gnarled old rocky trees certifying and justifying all that was here” (Kerouac, 1958, p. 172).

This image emerges as a symbol of purification giving spiritual meaning to the life’s journey of the protagonist. The novel ends with a celestial landscape description, against the skies the hero addresses God in prayer: “Down on the lake rosy reflections of celestial vapor appeared, and I said ‘God, I love you’ and looked up to the sky and really meant it. ‘I have fallen in love with you, God. Take care of us all, one way or the other’” (Kerouac, 1958, p. 172).

Here Kerouac’s character reaches the main Christian truth – the love for God. Being in the city and reading hokku while visiting friends, he felt like a poet and a philosopher, but he did not see the main thing – the clear sky above his head. The sky as a philosophical category is interpreted differently in various religious teachings, but it is always associated with the sacred, the divine. In the finale of the novel, we see that it is the upward spatial orientation that leads the hero to the truth, that is, to love, and it is again connected to the motif of ascent.

After this revelation, Ray Smith decides to go down to the city to travel, to “feel the road” again. It becomes clear that a Beatnik’s life consists of constant ups and downs: he/she will endlessly fall, returning to the “world”, but then again find the strength to rise to the top. His/her path is difficult and endless, but his/her goal will always be the spiritual “pearl”, enlightenment and truth.

Summing it up, the semantic constituent of the plot-forming motif of the way in J. Kerouac’s novels *The Dharma Bums* and *Big Sur* unites the motifs of ascent and descent, illness and death. They are expressed both at the spatial level (summit ascent, taming of the elements, premature descent to the city, manifestation of weakness, etc.) and at the level of ideas and reflections of the Beatnik heroes. These features of the motif of the way reflect the worldview polarity and heterogeneity of the Beatnik phenomenon itself.

Conclusion

Thus, we come to the following conclusions. As a result, the search for and discovery of the sacred in ordinary life is one of the features of Kerouac’s worldview, which is found in the plot structures of these novels. They are based on a journey that has not been planned, in which the Beatnik characters are subject to initiation. They find spiritual truth while overcoming difficulties, but they are not always able to possess or retain it. In some variants (as, for example, in *The Dharma Bums*), the character stops before the last step, as he considers himself unprepared for the spiritual sanctity that has been revealed to him. The invariant core of the motif structure of the novels is the archetypal motif of the way. In terms of physical movement, it is a hike up the Matterhorn in *The Dharma Bums* and a retreat in a hut on the precipice of the Santa Lucia Ridge in *Big Sur*. In both texts, the motif of the way is a plot-forming motif and becomes a dynamic force of the narrative. The variant senses of this motif in these novels are similar; these are the motifs of ascent and descent, which have their own plot variants, such as leaving the city, spiritual resurrection, purification and, respectively, illness, drunkenness, abandonment, death. The motif of illness is the most important motif of the state. It plays the role of a certain breaking point in the plot: it is the painful, dead-end self-perception, which generates the impulse for action, movement, and search. The endless hustling movement within the city, which sooner or later will turn into a phantasmagoric jumble of events, meetings, parties, eventually remains an outward movement devoid of any internal dynamics.

The hero’s painful self-perception is the result of an inner spiritual stagnation, which gives rise to an acute need to seek, or rather, to continue the way in the existential, worldview sense. It is the constant desire to continue his journey, whether it is a journey to another city, to Mexico, or to the top of the Matterhorn, that is the driving force in the plot of the texts. These features of the motif poetics are not accidental, as they form a special, in some ways even Russian-type philosophy of J. Kerouac, in addition to an ambiguous, eclectic worldview of the Beat Generation authors in general. This worldview is based on the tragic realization of one’s own imperfection, on the eternal struggle with sinfulness for the sake of finding maybe not always the whole truth, but still the only spiritual one.

We consider it promising to further scrutinize the motif structure of little-studied novels by J. Kerouac, together with the works of other important authors of Beat Generation literature to identify the plot-forming motifs and their plot variants.

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