SPECIFIC FEATURES OF MAGICAL REALISM IN F. KAFKA'S CREATIVITY

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Annotation

This thesis analyzes the specific features of magical realism in the works of Franz Kafka, one of the most significant representatives of modernist literature. Although Kafka is not traditionally classified as a magical realist writer, his narratives demonstrate key characteristics of this literary mode. The study explores how Kafka integrates fantastical and absurd elements into realistic settings, presenting them as ordinary aspects of life. Special attention is given to his major works such as *The Metamorphosis*, *The Trial*, and *The Castle*, where symbolic transformations, irrational events, and bureaucratic absurdities reflect deeper psychological and existential realities. The research highlights Kafka's unique narrative style, which combines objectivity with surrealism, and emphasizes his role as a precursor to magical realism. The findings show that Kafka's creativity represents a distinctive European interpretation of magical realism, characterized by philosophical depth, psychological complexity, and a critique of modern society.

Keywords: *Franz Kafka, magical realism, absurdism, existentialism, transformation, symbolism, narrative technique, modern literature, bureaucracy, psychological realism*

Introduction

Franz Kafka occupies a unique place in world literature due to his innovative narrative techniques and profound exploration of human existence. His works are often associated with themes such as alienation, anxiety, and the absurdity of life. While Kafka is commonly categorized within existentialism and modernism, his literary творчество also contains significant elements of magical realism.

Magical realism is a literary mode that blends realistic and fantastical elements in such a way that the extraordinary appears ordinary. Unlike fantasy, magical realism does not create a separate imaginary world; instead, it incorporates magical elements into everyday reality without explanation. This genre is most often linked to Latin American literature, but its characteristics can be observed in Kafka's works long before its formal recognition.

The aim of this thesis is to identify and analyze the specific features of magical realism in Kafka's creativity. The research focuses on how Kafka constructs a narrative reality in which the irrational coexists with the ordinary, how he uses symbolism to convey psychological and social meanings, and how his works reflect existential concerns. By examining Kafka's major texts, this study seeks to demonstrate his contribution to the development of magical realism.

Main Part

1. Theoretical Foundations of Magical Realism

Magical realism is a complex and multifaceted literary concept. It emerged in the twentieth century as a response to the limitations of realism and the need to represent a more complex and ambiguous reality. The term itself suggests a fusion of two opposing elements: the magical and the real.

Although Kafka wrote before magical realism became a recognized literary movement, his works demonstrate many of these features. His narratives create a world where the boundary between reality and the absurd is blurred, making him an important precursor of the genre.

2. The Normalization of the Absurd

One of the most distinctive features of magical realism in Kafka's творчество is the normalization of absurd and fantastical events. In *The Metamorphosis*, Gregor Samsa's transformation into an insect is presented as an ordinary occurrence. The narrative does not provide any explanation for this घटना, nor do the characters react with the expected shock.

Instead, Gregor's family quickly adapts to the situation and begins to treat him as a burden. This reaction reflects a key principle of magical realism: the acceptance of the extraordinary as part of everyday life. Kafka uses this technique to challenge conventional perceptions of reality and to highlight the irrational aspects of human existence.

Similarly, in *The Trial*, Josef K. is arrested without any clear reason. The legal system operates in a confusing and illogical manner, yet it is accepted as a normal part of society. This creates a sense of surreal realism, where the absurd becomes an integral part of reality.

3. Symbolism and Transformation

Symbolism plays a crucial role in Kafka's magical realism. The fantastical elements in his works often serve as metaphors for psychological and social conditions. Gregor Samsa's transformation, for example, can be interpreted as a symbol of alienation, dehumanization, and loss of identity.

Kafka's use of transformation extends beyond physical changes. His characters often undergo psychological transformations as they confront incomprehensible situations. These transformations reflect the inner struggles of individuals in a complex and often hostile world.

In *The Castle*, the protagonist's endless attempts to reach the castle symbolize the human desire for recognition and belonging. The castle itself represents an inaccessible authority, emphasizing the distance between individuals and power structures.

4. Bureaucratic Absurdity as Magical Reality

Kafka's portrayal of bureaucracy is another important aspect of his magical realism. In his works, bureaucratic systems are depicted as irrational, complex, and almost supernatural forces. These systems control individuals' lives in ways that are difficult to understand or challenge.

In *The Trial*, the legal system is depicted as an endless and incomprehensible process. Josef K. is unable to understand the charges against him or to defend himself effectively. The system operates according to its own mysterious logic, creating a sense of helplessness and confusion.

Similarly, in *The Castle*, the bureaucratic system prevents the protagonist from achieving his goals. The authority of the castle is distant and elusive, yet it exerts complete control over the characters' lives. This portrayal transforms ordinary social institutions into elements of magical realism

5. Narrative Style and Tone

Kafka's narrative style is characterized by simplicity, precision, and objectivity. He describes extraordinary events in a calm and detached manner, which enhances the effect of magical realism. The lack of emotional exaggeration makes the fantastical elements appear natural and believable.

This narrative technique creates a sense of ambiguity, as readers are forced to accept the coexistence of reality and the absurd. Kafka does not provide clear explanations or resolutions, leaving his works open to interpretation.

The use of a neutral tone also reflects the psychological state of the characters, who often accept their situations without resistance. This acceptance reinforces the idea that the magical is an inherent part of reality.

6. Existential Dimensions of Magical Realism

Kafka's magical realism is deeply connected to existential philosophy. His works explore themes such as the search for meaning, the nature of identity, and the individual's relationship with society.

The absurd events in Kafka's narratives reflect the unpredictability and irrationality of life. Characters are often placed in situations that defy logic, forcing them to confront the limitations of human understanding.

For example, Gregor Samsa's transformation can be seen as an expression of existential isolation, while Josef K.'s trial represents the struggle for justice in an unjust world. These themes add depth to Kafka's magical realism and distinguish it from other forms of the genre.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Franz Kafka's творчество contains significant features of magical realism, despite his classification as a modernist and existentialist writer. His works demonstrate the seamless integration of the magical and the real, the normalization of absurd events, and the use of symbolism to explore psychological and social issues.

Kafka's portrayal of bureaucracy and authority further enhances the magical realism in his narratives, transforming everyday institutions into sources of mystery and confusion. His objective narrative style and existential themes contribute to the depth and complexity of his works.

Therefore, Kafka can be regarded as a precursor to magical realism, whose innovative approach has influenced later literary developments. His творчество continues to be relevant in contemporary literature due to its profound exploration of human existence and the nature of reality.

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