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THE MOTIF OF “HAPPINESS” IN RAY BRADBURY’S NOVEL “DANDELION WINE”

Happiness is one of the most important human values. The desire for happiness is significant for every person. It is an integral part of human existence. Happiness can be searched for in various ways. Some people find it in their career, material possessions and self-development while others find it in relationships, children, the well-being of their family and living in peace and love. This feeling varies depending on an individual. Throughout their life people strive to become

happy. Despite the fact that for many people happiness is the meaning of life it can be quite difficult to gain and retain happiness. Unfortunately, there are so few who are truly happy.

The motif of “happiness” is often present in literature. Motifs are used to get the readers immersed into the story and help them understand some key concepts in a particular work. Motifs come up again and again at important moments in a story. Their meaning is typically clear and unchanging throughout the course of a story.

Ray Bradbury was an author whose mature understanding of human character has won him an international reputation. He was a master of emotional literature. He knew how to evoke real emotions in the reader’s heart by describing simple everyday situations by giving them wonderful philosophical insight. Bradbury frequently commented on the autobiographical qualities of the novel “Dandelion Wine”.

The relevance of the research work is conditioned by the importance of being happy for everyone in this life.

The goal of the research work is studying the motif of “happiness” in Ray Bradbury’s novel “Dandelion Wine”.

The objectives of the research work are:

1. to define the role of motifs in literature;
2. to identify the examples of the motif of “happiness” in the novel “Dandelion Wine”;
3. to interview the students of our gymnasium about happiness in their lives;
4. to create a Happiness Calendar based on the results of the research.

The object of the research work is the novel “Dandelion Wine”.

The subject of the research work is the motif of “happiness” in the novel “Dandelion Wine”.

The novelty of the research work is in identifying what happiness is for Belarusian teenagers of the 10th form of the Educational Establishment “Kostyukovich District State Gymnasium”.

The research work has been conducted by using the following methods: the descriptive method, the comparative method, analysis and the interview.

In literature, motifs are recurring images, quotes or concepts that take on a figurative or symbolic meaning throughout the story. They are important to spot so that readers can get the most out of a work of fiction and fully understand the characters' journeys.

To understand motifs better they are often compared to themes and symbols.

A motif must recur throughout the story but a symbol can appear just once. A theme is an abstract concept that underlies the entire story. A motif is a recurring element throughout the story that points toward that a theme. A motif can reveal something about the work’s characters, settings, or theses and themes; contribute to the emotive content of the work; help describe the action of the story. The role of a motif in literature is to suggest a mood, theme, or even a moral.

We have studied the chain of stories that constitute Ray Bradbury’s novel «Dandelion Wine». The motif of personal happiness is present in all these stories. The main heroes are of different ages: teenagers, elderly people and middle-aged

people. They are all looking for happiness and find it in their own way. Their happiness is in small things around them, like spending time with their family, having a new pair of tennis shoes or picking up dandelions. Grown-ups teach the kids in the story to love everything that surrounds them. Altogether, we have found 30 examples of the motif of “happiness” in the novel. The motif of “happiness” is a valuable tool in the novel as it draws the reader’s attention to the main themes: time, nature, technology and death. The novel “Dandelion wine” is a kind of a guide how to learn to be happy.

We have also conducted an interview among the students of our gymnasium. The results of the interview show that the students are also happy in their own ways but we have some common answers too. We have also compared the answers of the interviewed students with things which make the characters of the novel happy. Unfortunately there are few people who see happiness in simple things such as watching a good film, walking with pleasant people or going to a café with one’s family.

We have created our own Happiness Calendar. On the International Day of Happiness on 20 March we are planning to organize an event devoted to happiness where we will use all the materials we got conducting this research. Our Happiness Calendar will teach students how to find small bits of happiness in each day.

The materials of the research work can be used when studying the units “Family”, “Books” and “Leisure Time”. The tips from our Happiness Calendar can be used on the International Day of Happiness and also as inspirational ideas in the classroom as well as for extra-curricular activities throughout the year.