ON THE BORDER OF MAGIC AND REALITY:
ON MAGICAL REALISM IN R. ANAYA'S THE MAN WHO COULD FLY

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ABSTRACT
Rudolfo Anaya’s 2006 collection of short stories The man who could fly presents the complete picture of the world, cultural peculiarities and basic problems of ethnic group, which is located at the crossroads of two cultures: Mexican and American. Moreover in the preface of this collection the author revealed his aesthetic concept, reflecting the features of his work. R. Anaya opens the main secret: «All artistic endeavors are like that: understandable, enjoyable, puzzling, challenging, but always partly shrouded in mystery. The mystery of life and good stories moves us forward.» [1] Thus, we can conclude that in the stories of R. Anaya special role played by the magic ingredient that is woven into the fabric of realistic stories. In each story, the author uses the method of «magical realism», based on the mythological consciousness and the collective unconscious.

Keywords: chicano literature, magical realism, myth

INTRODUCTION
Since the second half of the twentieth century an interest in ethnic literature has been increasing due to the general rise of ethnic consciousness of various ethnic groups of America. It manifested itself in a sharp of increase in their social and political activity and the rise of creative energy. The works of these writers have begun to demonstrate a high degree of artistic skills, thus it became impossible to speak about a single American literature. The traditions of different cultures coexist in literary world of the USA. As we mentioned in one of our works, «Multiculturalism is the only possible approach to teaching and studying contemporary American literature. It directly correlates with a postmodern paradigm and the specific features and principles of Postmodernism in fiction» [13]. That is why the works of Chicano writers play an important role in the contemporary literary process of the USA since it has become a phenomenon synthesizing the achievements of two cultures and demonstrating Postmodernist tendencies.

Mexican-American literature was unknown until the 1970s. R. Anaya is considered a pioneer of Chicano literature. In his trilogy people from Aztlan he fully disclosed the features of this ethnic phenomenon. The novels Bless Me, Ultima, Heart of Aztlan and Tortuga are the most well-known works of Chicano literature because they reflect the perception of the world, cultures and basic problems of this border ethnic group, located on the crossroads of two cultures. Yassen Nikolayevich Zassoursky in his researches called him «The Godfather and spiritual mentor of Chicano literature». However, it should be noted that a special place in the works of R. Anaya occupy not only the novels, but also the short stories. Moreover, he is the creator of an anthology of contemporary short stories of Chicano literature.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
In the preface of the collection of short stories The Man Who Could Fly R. Anaya opened its aesthetic concept, highlighting the most important features of his work. For example, the author thinks that every
story begins with a «sudden image». It can be a character or just «a word, a scene, a face, a smell, a sound, a dream, a landscape, a history, a thought» [2]. Moreover, the story should contain not just fiction, but a myth, from the oral traditions of the past. In this preface Anaya gives a little response to several stories from this collection of short stories, bringing the readers to the secrets of the creation of their works. So, the idea of the story *The Village That the Gods Painted Yellow* came to him during his trip to Uxmal, there he was led by a guide-dwarf through the ruins. Also, the author argues that the Mexican part is magical, because «the spirit of the past fused with the present» [3]. Because of it, the special role of stories by R. Anaya played by the magic part.

R. Anaya uses the double meaning of *myth*. For him, it is both, a legend, a story, and something unbelievable and far from fact. Such a perspective breeds R. Anaya's magic realism based on folklore and mythological contentiousness with the addition of Christian elements. Such vision is the result of bordiness of the Chicano paradigm.

Initially, magical realism emerged in Latin American literature in the twentieth century. The appearance of this artistic method is caused special irrational, mythological perception of the world of Latin Americans, where the real and the magical «blend». It is no wonder that magic realism is a frequent phenomenon for Chicano literature, because Mexican-Americans remain the irrational type of attitude through the communication with folklore and Indian beliefs. They are mainly connected with nature and the fact that a man associates himself with premature elements, such as Land Fire, Water and Air, which are included into ethnical concept sphere, as we in the work of Dr. O. Palutina [15].

The researchers identify some fundamental features of magical realism: the inclusion of the supernatural element in the realistic narrative, the image of two coexisting and interpenetrating artistic worlds (real and unreal), the mandatory use of the elements of folklore, mythology, creating the effect of presence of magical world in everyday life, achieved by the introduction of unusual images or situations through the realistic description.

The collection of short stories *The man who could fly* consist of eighteen different stories. We will focus our attention on the first three stories: *The road to the Platero, Children of the Desert, The Village that the Gods Painted yellow*. On the one hand, we can mention many facts and historical events in each story that create a realistic picture of the world and make the narration true-to-life. Thus, the main plot line of the story *The Village that the Gods Painted yellow* is the journey of the protagonist Rosario in Uxmal (the ancient city of Maya ruins). The main character with a tour group travel and visit different historical centers of the Yucatan Peninsula. Earlier Rosario visited many historical sites, heard a lot of legends, but no places of his traveling did really affect him. «But the true revelation he sought in those moments, the miraculous epiphanies the Native experienced, had never come to him» [4]. Due to the preface to this collection, we understand that there are a lot of autobiographical details. For example, the author himself the has visited the center of the Yucatan Peninsula and his guide was a dwarf. Exactly this journey inspired the author to write the story.

In the story *Children of the Desert* the main character (has no name) works at the oil field in south Texas. He has an ordinary life, but once a year at Christmas he visits the brothel of Juarez, going along the road which runs through the desert. «He sometimes drove into the desert alone, not looking for anything in particular, perhaps, testing some inner fear he felt of the vast landscape» [5]. This story has a certain space – Texas, where the action takes place. This particular area has a special role. This place is typical for the Chicano people, but the author uses it as a special mythological space that emphasizes the illusion of verisimilitude. At first glance it is difficult to find something unusual in the job description and in the characteristics of main character that is why, it is the creation of realistic narration.
The plot of the story *The Road to Platero* is built on the stories told by a boy. It is the story about his family, or rather of his mother – Carmelita, who is worried about her son's destiny, because she believes that her husband, one of the vaqueros, killed her father. The description of Carmelita is given in details and in some cases shows her experience not only on a spiritual level, but also on the physical and even physiological. So, when Carmelita recalls the past, her son says: «Purple veins rise on her temples, and I can almost see the images of violence and love that stir in her blood» [6]. Thus, we see that the stories are full of detailed descriptions. They have not just the exact characteristics, but also the contain inclusions of historical facts, the real places that do not allow us to doubt that the events could take place in reality.

At the same time the narration in each story is retrospect, it includes elements of supernatural and the paranormal forms. In all three stories the elements of «magical realism» appear on the level of plot. So, from the first pages of the story *The Road to Platero* the image of Carmelita's ghost-father is included into the narration. The story begins with the fact that everyone in the village knows that the ghost rides on horseback on «the road to platero». However, at the end of the story the realistic and magical levels are mixed. «I swear I saw him! Always before, it was only a shadow, but tonight I saw him» - says Carmelita’s husband [7]. The ghost becomes the factor of reality for all. It also operates the principle of the collective unconscious, when the action of each individual character is carried out together with the other: if one sees a ghost, then everyone sees a ghost.

An important aspect of the story *Children of the Desert* is the image of the desert itself. The author animates it, comparing with a woman, brother and lover in different situations. One day, the main character is lost in the desert, coming back drunk from Juarez. He passed through test in the form of thirst and constant winds of sand, he returns home as a different man, which identify himself and all that surroundshim with the desert. «After that week of debauchery, he would feel empty, like the unsatisfied desert» [7]. At the end of the story the protagonist meets a woman who sees his heart as dry as a desert. She starts to explain to him the meaning of life through the schematic drawings on the ground, blurring the boundaries between the words «hombre» and «mujer», drawing the word «amor». Thus, we see that the desert in this story is a symbol of the borderland between two cultures, the motive of searching yourself and the motive of self-identification. It is difficult to pass the desert; you need to understand it properly and to synthesize knowledges in your «heart».

In the plot of the third story we can find a typical mythological narration. Rosario is looking for a real magic feeling. He with his guide Gonzalo goes to visit with the gods. «Now is time to do our work» [9]. They go through the jungle to the village painted yellow by the gods, where Gonzalo has promised to show how one can build a pyramid for the night «as a gift to the gods». The characters start singing ritual songs, and all immersed in magic. «They were immediately swallowed up by the semidarkness and the sweltering, humid heat» [10]. At this moment the main character thinks that he is in the Hell described by Dante. They go to the sacred place, there are «a small altar stood beneath a large ceiba tree, a sacred tree to the Maya» [11]. And after several rites people killed Gonzalo and cut off legs of Rosario. «They had made him their new dwarf, the new magician» [12]. Here we can find a motif of continuity, because the main character, after all that had happened with him, understood his purpose in life. He decides to go back to the village a year later, when again the day solstice is on the Yucatan Peninsula, because only at this moment he can continue the path, which had begun by Gonzalo. Christian associations are interwoven with pagan mythological motifs.

**RESULTS**

Thus, analyzing the first three short story of the collection *The Man Who Could Fly*, we understand that in every story the author raises the question of identity. The problem of border consciousness and coexistence of the two cultures (Mexican and American) creates the appearance of method «magical realism». The author reflects this problem on the plot level, consisting of a retrospective narrative, realistic descriptions of events, in which the elements of magic are penetrated. The myth, folklore and ancient
beliefs create a single, indivisible picture of the world. As a result the realistic and the magical levels are 
mixed into a single story. Moreover, a three-level space-time structure is shown. It is also characterized by 
the method of «magical realism». The first level is a historical time-space, which is a collective and helps 
people to describe the reality of the human consensus; the second level is a private, i.e. individual 
psychological and personal time; third level is a mythological time-space that combines personal and 
historical [17]. According to the analysis of short stories The road to Platero, Children of the Desert and 
The Village that the Gods painted yellow, we can conclude that the «magical realism» is an inherent part 
of these works, in particular, and of ethnic literatures in general.

CONCLUSION
All these aspects are typical for Chicano literature, as well as for some other ethnic literature, such as 
African American, Native American etc. The representatives of these ethic groups still have the 
subconscious level associated with folklore and mythology, and these features are reflected in the 
literature as «magical realism». Thus, we can conclude that the Chicano literature can be considered in the 
context of «magic realism», which includes not only the American and Latin American writers, but 
European authors of borderness, such as, for example, Salman Rushdie. This mythological aspect is an 
important part of such kind of literature.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The authors confirm that the presented data do not contain any conflict of interest.

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