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The Features and Functions of Medical Terminology in the Austrian Expressionist Literature

Anatomical and physiological vocabulary is used in Expressionism for a range of specific artistic purposes. The paper identifies the situations in which such lexical units are used and analyzes the purpose of their application in the context of Austrian Expressionist literature. Along with references to the most important theoreticians and experimentalists of Austrian Expressionism, the present research is largely based on the prose by Gustav Meyrink (1868-1932). The research demonstrated that the vocabulary of human anatomy and physiology in Meyrink's prose effectively implements specific Expressionist intentions: (1) anti-aesthetic strategy and revolt against the classical canons of beauty; (2) erosion of the frontiers between the literary discourse and non-textual reality; (3) designing the atmosphere of horror and shocking the burghers; (4) synaesthetic word-formation for the purpose of lexical "condensation" of images; (5) the motif of conflict between the father and the son; (6) development of the grotesque image of the City through the techniques of synecdoche and hyperbole; (7) reconstruction of the divine component that would unify people. In addition to a range of classical Expressionist intentions, Meyrink's prose also employs the anatomical vocabulary for the manifestation of intellectual sensualism which is typical of Viennese Expressionism. Thus, the analysis of Gustav Meyrink's prose demonstrated the author's deliberate choice of anatomical and physiological terminological units which gives us ground to conclude that the vocabulary of human anatomy and physiology constitutes an integral part of Expressionism in general, and a significant feature of Austrian Expressionist literature in particular. In our opinion, further research will be productive in terms of analysis of anatomical and physiological terminology in the writings of other Austrian authors of this literary period.