

Course Title: Close Reading II (講読 2) “Images of Racial /Sexual Minorities in American Movies”

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Black Stereotypes / Useful English Expressions in the movie, *The Green Mile* (Ch. 18–20)

Introduction

The purpose of this presentation is to examine Chapters 18 through 20 of *The Green Mile*, focusing on ① stereotypical images of blacks & ② useful English expressions.

Ch. 18 Paul is Cured

Paul Edgecomb comes home from work. On this day, his longtime-illness is cured through the supernatural power of John Coffey. Paul is at the kitchen door, while his wife, Jan, is cooking at the kitchen counter. (1:06:09—1:06:20)

Jan: Hi, honey. How do you feel? (お帰りなさい、あなた。具合はどう?)

Paul: Umm. . . Not too bad. (ううん...まずまずだよ。)

The next morning, Jan is surprised to discover that Paul has totally recovered. She wonders why. (1:08:03—1:08:08)

Jan: Want to tell me what's going on? (一体どういうことか、説明してくれる?)

Ch. 19 Burt's Stereotypical View of Blacks

Paul visits an attorney, Burt Hammersmith, to ask about John, one of his clients. Burt's wife, Cynthia, asks if Paul would like a cold drink. (1:09:11—1:09:26)

Cynthia: Can I offer you a cold drink? (冷たい飲み物でも、いかが?)

Paul: Yes, ma'am, a cold drink would be fine. Thank you. . . Mr. Hammersmith. Your office said I might find you at home today. I hope I'm not troubling you. (ええ奥さん、頂きます。恐れ入ります。一中略— ハマースミスさん、今日は家におられると事務所で聞きまして。ご迷惑でないといよいのですが。)

Burt: Well, that depends. (ええと、それは、話によりますね。)

Burt shows his extreme racism and stereotypical view of blacks: He says that blacks and dogs are alike in their savage-like nature.

(1:12:14—1:12:25)

Burt: Well, in many ways, a good mongrel dog is like a Negro. You get to know it. Often,

you get to love it. It is of no particular use. . .but you keep it around because you think it loves you. (そうねえ、いろんな意味で、忠実な雑種のイヌはニグロに似てますよ。知れば知るほど、情が移ります。とくに役に立つってもんでもないけど、そばに置いておく。向こうも自分を愛してるって思うからです。)

(1:13:11—1:14:08)

Burt: That dog attacked my boy for no reason. Just got it in his mind one day. The same with John Coffey. . .Maybe he'd never done it before. My dog never bit before. Is Coffey guilty? Yes, he is. Don't doubt it, and don't you turn your back on him. You may get away with it once or even a hundred times. . .but in the end you'll get bit.

(イヌは、わけもなく息子に噛みついた。ある日、ふとその気になったんですな。コフィだって同じことです。—中略— ヤツはそれまで一度も、そんなことやらなかったかもしれない。うちのイヌだって、それまで噛んだことはなかった。コフィは有罪か、ですか？ええ、そうです。それを疑っちゃいけません。あとね、ヤツに背を向けちゃなりませんよ。1回目は、いや、100回でも、事なきを得るかもしれませんがね…でも、最後には、噛まれるはめになる。)

Ch. 20 John Coffey's "Magical Negro" Nature

Paul hands some cornbread to John in a cell, saying it's a sign of his and his wife's gratitude for John having cured Paul. However, John doesn't understand why they should give him anything. He helped Paul without expecting any reward. He wants to share the bread with another prisoner, Del, whose cell is across from John's. Paul brings two loaves to Del saying: (1:15:59—1:16:02)

Paul: Courtesy of the gentleman across the way. (向かいの紳士からの御好意です。)

Conclusion

Chapter 19 depicts Burt's stereotypical view of blacks. Chapters 18 and 20 reveal John's "Magical Negro" nature; John heals Paul's disease using his supernatural power, and he feels exhausted after doing so. However, he is happy to help Paul (Ch. 18); John is very happy to have the cornbread but he doesn't think he deserves it. His innocence, his devotion to supporting white people, and his healing powers identify him as a Magical Negro.

Bibliography

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