



COMPARISON OF THE GENRES OF "FANTASY" AND "FAIRY TALE"

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Abstract

The problem of correlation between literary fairy tale and fantasy at different levels of poetics is studied. Among the common features, the nature of the miraculous and the principles of creating images of heroes are highlighted. The second nature of fantasy works in relation to folklore texts and the tendency to the formation of individual author's myths are considered as distinctive features of fantasy.

Key words: literary fairy tale, fantasy, miracle, miraculous, hero, individual author's myth, playful nature of the text.

The question of the relationship between a literary fairy tale and fantasy became relevant in the late 1980s. At this time, translated novels by D. R. R. Tolkien, W. Le Guin, R. Howard, marked with the word "fantasy", unusual for the Russian reader, appeared on the bookstores of our country. A few years later, original works by Russian authors labeled "fantasy" began to be published: Nika Perumov's Ring of Darkness, Svyatoslav Loginov's The Many-armed God of Dalayn, Mikhail Uspensky's Where We Are Not, and Maria Semyonova's Wolfhound.

Currently, the number of fantasy works published in Russia is not hundreds, but thousands; they win their readers and fans not only among teenage and youth audiences. At the same time, the general naming of "fantasy" is received by works that differ in subject matter and choice of material. This is the name given to texts whose action takes place both in modern Moscow ("Night Watch" by A. Lukyanenko), and in pre-Christian Rus' ("Sorcerer" by O. Grigorieva), and in a fictional world stylized as the Middle Ages (Richard Long Hands by Guy Julius Orlovsky).

Fantasy scholars, reflecting on the specifics of this type of fantastic literature, note the genetic connection of fantasy with myth and folklore tale. However, in domestic literary criticism, for a long time, another term was used to designate works oriented towards the traditions of folklore and constituting mainly children's reading - a literary fairy tale. The absence of clear criteria for distinguishing between fantasy and





literary fairy tale determines the relevance of their study, the need to identify common and different features.

A lot of articles, monographs, master's and doctoral dissertations are devoted to the study of a literary fairy tale. Experts emphasize the variability of the genre, its problem-thematic variability, which makes it difficult to create a universal definition. With all the national-historical originality and diversity of the literary fairy tale, a certain canon stands out in its poetics, correlated with the folklore basis. Deviations from this canon lead to the destruction of the boundaries of the genre.

Following M. N. Lipovetsky, we will understand a literary fairy tale as “works in which an axiologically oriented type of the concept of reality that has developed in a folk fairy tale is presented not as a fragment of the artistic world, but as its foundation and structural framework and is recreated through the system main and optional-nys carriers of the “memory of the genre” of a fairy tale” [1, p. 160].

There is no exhaustive definition of fantasy due to its recent appearance. Among the distinguishing features of this type of fantastic literature, critics call a focus on ethical, moral problems [2, p. 161; 3, p. 343], a special type of plot is a quest [2, p. 162; 4, p. 176], the presence of fictional, mythical characters [2, p. 161; 5, p. 1161]. Domestic fantasy includes works that are oriented to the author's model of novels by D. R. R. Tolkien, whom most science fiction scholars tend to consider the founder of this direction of literature.

Revealing the features of a literary tale and fantasy is complicated by the fact that historically they go back to the same source - a folk tale. This gives reason to bring them together at different levels of poetics.

A literary fairy tale and fantasy are united by the close nature of the miraculous. In both cases, the traditions of the folk fairy tale are inherited, for which a miracle in the structure of the fairy tale world is an integral part of reality and does not surprise the characters.

In the definitions of a literary fairy tale offered by researchers (L. Yu. Braude, T. G. Leonova, M. N. Lipovetsky), the genre-forming role of a miracle is emphasized, which influences the development of the plot, the images of characters, and the principles of organization of the chronotope. In turn, fantasy is traditionally referred to as works where “everything is possible”, and “fantastic assumptions can be as many as you like” [5, p. 1161].

In the conditional worlds of a literary fairy tale and fantasy, any miracle: the presence of magical objects, amazing creatures, magic, the intervention of the supernatural
Ya. V. Korolkova. On the relationship between literary fairy tale and fantasy





stvennygs forces in the course of events - everything is perceived by the heroes as the norm of life.

It seems that such a perception of a miracle in a literary fairy tale and fantasy is due to the fact that they reproduce not only the compositional features of a folk fairy tale, but also a special type of consciousness that gave birth to it - mythological. The bearer of the mythological consciousness felt the world as alive, changing, animated, and the person believed in the possibility of magical influence on it.

Writers of the 20th century again turned to the origins of culture, trying through ancient, archetypal images to comprehend what is happening in modern times. Literary critic M. I. Meshcheryakova, reflecting on the process of remythologization in Russian literature, calls fantasy “neomyth”, because in it the construction of a holistic picture of the world “is accompanied by the reconstruction of mytho-syncretic structures of thinking” [6].

The similarity of a literary fairy tale and fantasy can also be discussed at the level of creating character images. The images of the heroes of a literary fairy tale, from the point of view of modern consciousness, are rather schematic. Heroes are endowed with two or three qualities that invariably appear throughout the story and can determine its plot development. Pinocchio's adventures are connected with his curiosity; the old man Hottabygch, who does not understand the realities of life in the Soviet Union, finds himself in comical situations; the girl Ellie is always in a hurry to help others, etc. The images of the heroes are created by several large, bright details of behavior in unusual situations, thanks to which they are easy to remember.

Fantasy heroes also appear as a schematic embodiment of certain qualities, properties of a human character, types of behavior: a heightened sense of justice (“Wolfhound” by M. Semenova), simplicity and good nature (“Zhikhar” by M. Uspensky), a penchant for adventures (“Volkha” by O. Gromyko). As in a literary fairy tale, in fantasy, the given properties of the characters remain static, being repeatedly confirmed in the process of plot development.

And this feature of the creation of images of heroes can be explained by the orientation of a literary fairy tale and fantasy to the traditions of a common source - a folk fairy tale. Its researcher V. Ya. Propp singled out seven invariant types of fairy-tale characters who perform certain functions strictly assigned to them in the development of the plot: a hero, a pest, an assistant, a giver, a princess and her father, a sender, a false hero. The named types of folklore characters are indeed universal, since their comparison for various reasons (the hero is a giver, the hero is a pest, the hero is a false hero, etc.) makes it possible to describe the stages of development of the action, serves as a source of plot formation for later literary forms.





It seems that one of the secrets of the attraction of a literary fairy tale and fantasy for a naive consciousness, especially for adolescents, lies in the fact that the images of modern heroes correlate with the subconsciously assimilated archetypal behavior model of the hero, the type of hero and actualize the process of recognition, facilitate the development of new material.

However, the literary fairy tale and fantasy have not only common, but also different features. In addition to traditional fairy tale plots, motifs, images, fantasy focuses on mythological experience. It is no coincidence that the English professor, linguist J. R. R. Tolkien, who creatively rethought European mythology and based on it created a unique, individual author's myth about the fictional Middle-earth, is considered the "father-progenitor" of fantasy.

In the already mentioned work, M. I. Meshcheryakova emphasizes the inclination of fantasy authors "to recreate, rethink the mythical archetype, as well as form a new myth within its ("secondary" artistic reality. - Ya. K.) boundaries" [6]. Conditional worlds created in fantasy works are presented as an objective reality, they have their own characteristics: their history, geography, customs of the inhabiting peoples are described in detail. Quite often, mythological images and motifs already familiar to the reader within the boundaries of the author's worlds receive new content, turning into elements of an individual myth.

At the end of the XX century. in line with Russian science fiction, the so-called Russian ("Slavic") fantasy began to actively develop. One of its distinguishing features is the appeal to the material of Slavic myths and folklore. In the works of M. Semyonova ("Wolfhound", 1996), O. Grigorieva ("Sorcerer", 1997), Y. Nikitin ("Three from the Forest", 2000), E. Dvoretzkaya ("Fire Wolf", 2006) and others complete pictures of the worlds are built, which reflect the author's understanding of the history, mythology of Ancient Russia, although in this they can differ significantly.

The Polish science fiction writer Andrzej Sapkowski, in his article "Varenik, or No Gold in the Serygs Mountains", discussing the features of the "Slavic" fantasy, argues that this direction of science fiction cannot exist at all, since there is no material for it. Historically, Slavic mythology in the early stages of its formation and fixation was called paganism and was persecuted by the authorities who converted to Christianity. In culture, pagan and Christian traditions are so closely intertwined that Sapkowski finds it difficult to identify the original Slavic archetypal images and motifs.

However, Russian folklore and literary criticism has a large number of academic works in which attempts have been made to reconstruct Slavic mythology (A. N. Afanas'eva,



N. Veselovsky, V. Ya. Propp, B. N. Rybakov and others). The question of the degree of formation of the system of myths remains controversial, but every general reader is familiar with their echoes thanks to various genres of folklore known since childhood. It can be assumed that in the minds of the Russian reader, the idea of the mythology of the ancestors is formed at the level of unconsciously intuitive perception.

The terms "Slavic" and "Russian" fantasy are often used interchangeably in critical articles. It seems that it is necessary to take into account the genus-species relationships between these words and use the term "Slavic fantasy" in relation to the corresponding literature of the Slavic countries, and "Russian" to call a variety of domestic fantasy.

The appeal of fantasy authors to the experience of myth leads to the complication of the artistic world of works: the fairy-tale model of narration is combined with mythological plots, motives (initiation, snake fighting, duality)

For fantasy, fairy tales and myths can serve not only as a source of plots, motifs, heroes, but also as an object of play, an ironic rethinking of traditional images. In M. Uspensky's novel "Where We Are Not" (1995), the game principle is extremely enhanced, the conditional world is woven from hundreds of unquoted quotes, recognizable stylizations, well-known images and plots of world culture. In O. Gromyko's story "Say a Word About Poor Koshchei" (2006), the story is told from the perspective of Vasilisa, who, wanting to get rid of the stupid Ilya Muromets who is wooing her, marries Koshchei the Immortal. The plot about Koshchei and Marya Morevna, known since childhood, is unexpectedly interpreted: in the interpretation of O. Gromyko, Marya is an evil sorceress who has captured the good sorcerer Koshchei and is trying to take away his magical power. Vasilisa and her husband successfully pass the test, and at the end of the story, the traditional "feast for the whole world" is described.

It seems that we can consider the literary fairy tale and fantasy as two independent trends in modern literature, going back to a common folklore basis, but assimilating its experience in different ways. For a literary fairy tale, folklore serves as a kind of foundation on which "the image of the world contemporary to the artist is built" [1, p. 160]. For fantasy authors, archaic material serves as a source for creating new, individual myths or as a formal object of a game with the reader in guessing cultural allusions and reminiscences.





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