

The Formula of the Success of Fantasy Works

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Abstract - The article considers the problem of escapism of fantasy literature. Particular attention is paid to the spatial category of the forest in fantasy stories. The works of foreign and Russian authors were selected as the object of study.

Keywords - Fantasy, Escape, C. S. Lewis, J. K. Rowling, J. R. R. Tolkien, M. Semenova, O. Gromyko.

In modern literary criticism, a significant place is occupied by studies devoted to the artistic identity of the works of mass literature. The problem of studying this area of the literary space has repeatedly become the subject of discussion by the largest scholars of philology. Y. Lotman notes that a literary critic cannot only be interested in creations of elitist literature, which, in fact, make up a very small part of the entire literary stream.

In the article "Mass Literature as a Historical and Cultural Problem", Lotman argues that mass literature is extremely susceptible to all the innovations and experiments that take place in serious (large) literature. It is obvious that popular literature uses these innovations in its own way, often simplifying them, since accessibility is one of the main criteria for the existence of such works. However, the ability of entertaining literature to quickly respond to current trends in the modern literary process arouses a certain scientific interest, forcing a closer look at the mechanisms for creating such texts [See: 10].

Another important feature of entertaining literary genres, according to Yu. Lotman, is that at the turn of the epoch, when the literary and aesthetic paradigms are changing, mass literature becomes a kind of buffer that ensures the development of the literary process, plays the role of "imitator and criticism of literary dogmas and theories." "Mass literature more steadily preserves the forms of the past and almost always represents a multilayer structure." [3].

The problems associated with determining the reasons for the popularity of entertaining works stand apart in the studies of mass literature. And the most interesting in this regard are the works of the fantasy genre, because, despite their obvious stereotyping, "formularity", they do not lose their position, but are constantly transformed, absorbing elements of other genres of literature (Hence the emergence of such genre varieties of fantasy literature as "Detective", "postmodern", "female" and other fantasy).

As a rule, scientists associate the success of fantasy literature with the principle of escapism, which consists in the reader's ability to escape from reality into the world of illusions.

The first to speak of this phenomenon was Oxford professor and writer John Tolkien. In the essay "On Magical Stories" (1947), he writes: "Struck by the ailment of our time, we acutely sense both the ugliness of our creations and the fact that they serve evil. And this causes a desire to run away - not from life, but from modernity ... To realize the Great Flight from reality, and therefore from death" [9, p. 209, 212]. The escape, of which Tolkien speaks, takes place through the literature of "sword and witchcraft." Fantasy opens for us a kind of "door" into which a person hurries to enter in order to hide from "modernity". This "door" leads to a world of illusions, existing according to completely different laws compared to reality. Thus, fantasy literature offers us original ways for a person to escape from many unsolvable problems.

The idea put forward by John Tolkien, and today does not lose its relevance. The famous Russian science fiction writer of the late XX - early XXI centuries. Nick Perumov in an interview with the magazine "PARADOX" notes: "Fantasy is a reflection of human longing for the world simple, clear and clear" [5]. Perumov's words indicate that the works of this genre create a space of a new dimension that can bring spiritual satisfaction. Wars, terrorist attacks, all kinds of crises cripple the consciousness of modern man, and he is forced to look for "other universes" in which he seeks to find refuge.

Here we should mention some other reasons why the art worlds recreated in fantasy works have become a kind of "refuge" for many people. The works of the fantasy genre contain a clear value structure of the world. They are devoid of any uncertainty: the reader sees the boundary between good and evil, the goal of the struggle and the choice of a hero, which express true universal values. Perhaps this is something that is lacking in the modern literature, which is usually called "serious".

What is this fictional world? What makes the reader again and again find themselves in unknown cities and countries described in fantasy works? What salvation is in the literature based on pure fiction? How does this principle, called escapism, work?

Let us turn to the characteristic of a large spatial category in the works of fantasy literature - the image of the forest. Forest is an integral part of the life of fantasy characters. The forces of light and good worship him and protect him from enemies. In the forest, the heroes feel calm and peaceful. The forest, as it were, confronts the usual space of a civilized society (city, village) and takes the heroes to a place full of secrets.

So, Digory's boy from the novel by K. Lewis "The Sorcerer's Nephew" (Chronicles of Narnia), finding himself in the forest, forgets who he is and begins to think that he spent his whole life under the crown of trees: "... The silence of the forest was luxurious and warm, and you could hear the trees growing in it, and a powerful and kind life was felt in it ... The strangest thing is that while Digory looked around, he had half forgot how he was here, who he is and what he needs here ... Ask him someone: "Where did you come from here?" - he would most likely answer like this: "But I have always been here" [4, . 28, 38].

The forest is an important constituent part of nature in which fantasy heroes live, and it should be noted that central

characters always painfully endure moments when some harm is done to nature.

Prince Corwin from the novel "The Nine Princes of Amber" by R. Zhelyazna (The Chronicles of Amber) could not restrain his indignation when he discovered that the forest, which he had loved since childhood, was burning in fire: "... I rode through the Ardennes Forest, hunted in lying on his back under his massive trees...

"How I like it here!" I said, almost not realizing that I was saying these words out loud ... Ignite such an old forest! It seemed to me blasphemy" [2, S. 47, 102].

But the image of the forest is also the focus of dark forces. Some writers paint pictures of the forest that cause nothing but fear. Trees in these forests grow gigantic sizes. Often, giants have intelligence and are free to move around the earth. Such, for example, are the Ents from the Tolkien saga of The Lord of the Rings.

Representing the forest in this way, the writer emphasizes that man is not the master of nature. Compared to giant trees, people are negligible, they have nothing to oppose to nature equal in strength and power. All that remains is to bow your knees obediently.

In the novel "Istovik-Kamen" by M. Semenova, we observe a formidable, frightening forest: "... Take at least the road ... Only a notorious liar would say about her as if it had been laid here. Oh no! She humbly lay where the forest allowed her. For her sake, no trees fell. On the contrary - this road reverently and cautiously skirted the monstrous trunks!" [8, C. 9].

However, the stay of fantasy heroes in the forest can serve as the basis for creating a comic, humorous situation. In the ironic fantasy of O. Gromyko "Profession: Witch", the heroine Volha Rednaya, getting into the country of vampires Dogev, is surprised that this country is surrounded by an aspen forest: "Elves have tall grasses. Dwarves have rocks. The Wadlaks have piles of land thrown to the surface. ... And here are the aspens. Some mockery, especially when you consider that the inhabitants of Dogeva are vampires" [1, C. 8]. The humor in the novel by O. Gromyko is precisely based on the destruction of the canon, a game with reading expectations.

It should be noted that the image of the forest in fantasy works has folklore sources. This statement in its entirety illustrates the artistic space of the series of novels by J. K. Roling "Harry Potter".

Forest in the fantasy world, Rowling performs the function of the “border” between life and death, common in the artistic system of a folk tale [6, P. 151-152]. In this regard, we should mention the story of the main antagonist - Voldemort, which reveals some details of the existence of the hero after the failed attempt on the life of Harry Potter. The death spell that Voldemort applied to a helpless child had the opposite effect: “I was torn out of the body, I became smaller than the spirit, than the seediest ghost ... What I was, I don’t even know ...” [7, P. 592]. In this state, and in fact, on the verge of survival, Voldemort settled in the forest - a space that, according to folklore canons, most closely matches this position of the hero.

The “border” function in a fairy tale, as V.Ya. Propp is primarily associated with the ancient rite of initiation. The ceremony is the main event in the life of a young man and involves its symbolic degeneration (transition to a full-fledged adult life), which must certainly take place in the forest. Here, the beast swallows the young man, and then eats it back, thereby the boy experiences a temporary death and returns to life again, but in a new quality [6, pp. 147-150]. The main components of the initiation rite can be observed in the last novel of the cycle - "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows."

In the year of adulthood, Harry goes through the initiation rite. The hero goes to the forbidden forest, where Voldemort settled, directing from there the attack of the dark army on the Hogwarts School. Voldemort again uses a deadly spell, which should mark the victory over his most important enemy - Harry Potter. It should be noted that Voldemort has already lost all human appearance, he cannot belong to the world of people, his soul, split into many parts, is unable to show any feelings except anger and thirst for blood, and the serpentine appearance of the hero literally testifies to the process of his degradation. It Voldemort is a symbolic prototype of a monster devouring a young man, he is a key link in this action. Harry is experiencing a temporary death and returns to life again to end the struggle with the dark forces, but in a different quality. The hero reveals simple earthly truths, about which he always knew, but did not realize their true strength (love, self-sacrifice).

However, it should be emphasized that the apparent connection of the culmination scene of the entire fantasy story with folklore motifs does not give a complete picture of the author’s ideological concept. The main semantic result here lies in the very decision of Harry Potter to confront the dark wizard, in the hero’s readiness to sacrifice his life for all people. Here, perhaps, the main Christian

thought is hidden - love for all of humanity. The hero in some way repeats the well-known path of the character of biblical mythology, this path lies through overcoming earthly suffering and strives for true good.

If we again turn to the previously discussed story of K.S. Lewis “The sorcerer’s nephew”, we can also find here that the forest between the worlds, where the heroes of Digory and Polly find themselves, performs, as in the case with the works of J. K. Rowling, the function of the “border”. It is no coincidence that the space that connects many worlds, and also represents a transitional, border place, is located in the forest. And the heroes feel peaceful in this forest, forget about everything.

To summarize, we note that people flee to a world where nature rules, where everything is subject to its laws. The works of the fantasy genre help a person to find harmony with the environment. And this is why many of our contemporaries are ready to leave reality.

In addition to the above reasons, people will have many reasons to escape from reality into the enchanting world of fantasy. It is regrettable that modern reality makes a person want to “run away” from it, but, nevertheless, this is a fact. Fantasy gives the reader the opportunity to take a break from everyday life, to “visit” a world where everything is simpler and more honest, where ideals still exist. Therefore, fantasy creations are a stunning success worldwide.

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