Synthesis of the Fairy Tale and Science Fiction Genres in V.m. Rybakov’s Tale "His Weapon"

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Abstract: This paper examines modeling and synthesis of fantastic fairy tale paradigm V.M. Rybakov "His weapon." Methodological basis of the study are fundamental works V.Ya.Propp and subsequent work of scholars of folklore.

Key words: Fiction • Folklore • Fairy tale • Science fiction • Social modeling • Psychological analysis

INTRODUCTION

Synthesis process and genre integration is indicative for modern literature. Considering the issue of genre genesis, M.P. Shustov notes in his doctoral dissertation: "The genre of science fiction has long enjoyed great popularity, although a person's ability to believe in miracles is undergoing serious changes. Despite the fact that nature of fabulous and science fiction is different, they are likely to have things in common" [1]. In his opinion, currently the genre theory needs accumulation of local material and observations, as well as generalization of the genres evolution of a certain historical period.

Propp V.Ya. [2] considered a wonder-story as a typical primary genre and composed an orderly system, namely morphology, which is "description of fairy tale in constituent parts and in relationship of parts with respect to each other and to the whole". He studied fairy tales in terms of functions of acting characters and proved that the number of functions and the number of subjects of the wonder-story is limited. In the late XX century literary fairy tale was popular and lived an active life. Interest in fairy tales is explained by greatly increased artistic and aesthetic role of fairy genre in contemporary literature. Ovchinnikova L.V., in her doctoral dissertation states: "According to the researchers, literary fairy tale of 60-90s is focused largely on "genre memory", transformed according to the individual creativity and types of artistic thinking" [3]. It seems reasonable to analyze from this perspective the syntheses of science fiction and folk fairy tale genres in the tale "His weapon" (1990) written by V.M. Rybakov.

The Main Part: Oeuvre of fantasy writer Viacheslav M. Rybakov (born in 1954) is quite diversified. He is the author of screenplays "Letters from a Dead Man" (1987), "Chronicles of the Time of Troubles" (1998), "The Ugly Swans" (2006). He made a debut in the literature in 1979 with his fiction story "The Great Drought" [4]. His first authorial books, collection of stories "His weapon " and the novel "The Hearth on the Tower", were awarded the prize "Start", given for the best debuting fantasy book of the year. His following publications were distinguished by many literary prizes. V.M. Rybakov is the author of the following novels and stories: "The gravity flyer "Cesarevich", "Pull the string", "Next year in Moscow", " It's hard to become a God", "A Man Across", "In a Strange Feast", "Wormwood Star" and "Behold I make". Under the pseudonym of Bunny van Holm he co-authored together with I. Alimov in novels of the cycle "There are no bad people (Eurasian Symphony)". Rybakov V.M. is the author of a collection of essays "Whirling in Pursuit of Sense" (1994) and the translator of four-volume Chinese legal set of "Tang Lu Shu Yi" (1999).

In Rybakov’s pieces of art, phantasmal imaginations are organically woven into the frames of reality; the confines between real and unreal, possible and impossible, natural and supernatural are erased. All his pieces of art belong to the genre of science fiction. Fantastic elements help the writer to raise the moral and ethical issues to a new level. In the story "The first day of salvation" (1986) this is the image of a mutant boy, who embodied the conscience and common sense of mankind. In the story "Winter" (1987) this is the biblical image of Jesus Christ, who failed to save humanity against the
Some Rybakov’s pieces of art are related to fantasy fiction just by one storyline. Such is the novel "Water and Shiplets" (1992), in which the journey to the stars has allowed the author to move the contemporary protagonist to future fantastic humane society of telepaths. Such is the socio-psychological novel "The Hearth on the Tower" (1990). In this novel, following the tradition of A.R. Belyaev ("Amphibian Man") and M.A. Bulgakov (trilogy "Diaboliad"), V.M. Rybakov brings up the subject of scientific discoveries and moral responsibility of scientists. He simulates a situation, where the antitype scientist destroys the hearth of another protagonist scientist, built on the top of his generosity and talent “tower”. In such a way V.M. Rybakov sharpens the problem of a moral role of scientist responsible for the social implication of his discoveries.

One of the early Rybakov’s stories " His weapon " [5] is unique in its own way to the literature of 90’s of the XX century. Its uniqueness is rooted in its synthetical genre. Following the tradition of E.T.A. Gofman, H.K. Andersen, V. Gauf, A.N. Tolstoy, Yu. Olesha and E.L. Shvarts, the writer introduces into the narrative the elements of folk fairy tale. In due time. American critic E.Wilson sharply commented upon writings of J.R.R. Tolkien: "There are people who keep a lifetime love of reading infantile matter" [6]. This argument is not new; Tolkien was given a response back in 1938, when he spoke at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland with the lecture "On Fairy Tales" in memory of Andrew Lang. Ideas that he expressed in this lecture (published later in the form of an essay [7] and included to the book "Tree and Leaf" [8]), appealed to treat the heritage of the past with due care and not distort its aesthetics, creating "secondary worlds".

"We are the successors of many generations of ancestors"- proclaimed professor, - "Inherited wealth poses danger; it can become bored or cause desire for originality and then there will be hostility to the beautiful pattern, intricate design, pure color, or a simple rearrangement and over-deepened development of skillful and soulless old motifs. Effective way to avoid fatigue of the inheritance concludes not in advisedly ungainly, clumsy and shapeless portraying; not in expressing all in dark or in being in a constant frenzy; not in mixing colors and getting monotonous grey out of nice shades; and not in complicating the forms fantastically, reaching stupid and even crazy ones" [8, 56-57]. The author makes an emphasis on the role of craftsmanship and great style in oeuvre: "To make the secondary world authentic, where the sun can shine green, is a task that probably needs a lot of work and thought and certainly require special skill" [8, 48-49]. Tolkien managed to create a new mythology.

Superstitious thinking in folk tales, religious stories and literary interpretation of history is an attempt to explain, separating from the empirical evidence, the implications and trends of invisible laws that are taken on faith. Marshall Brown asserts that the concept indicative to the Gothic philosophy applies also to metaphysics of superstition: "The cause-and-effect relationship, as the core of Kant's gnoseology, as well as the ideological meaning of the narration, are based on comprehension of unequal forces of both natural and supernatural beings. Obsession by supernatural, peculiar to Gothic novels, can be considered as a study of philosophical and scientific issues about performance of the nature" [9]. According to Robert F. Giri, "a new synthesis of science and the supernatural " initiated "a major change in relation to the supernatural" [10]. Calling for social change was not always safe, therefore such stories often ended with the proclamation that it all was "a dream". On the other hand, these references are of interest for the post-Freudian essay [11]. Therefore, J.R.R. Tolkien presents only one requirement to the "secondary world" in a wonder-story: it must have the "inherent consistency of reality" [8, 54], its manifestations cannot be arbitrary; they must obey the laws, fair just within this world. Otherwise it will be unreliable; in other words, simply would not exist.

In this regard V.M. Rybakov can be considered as a direct successor and illustrator of J.R.R. Tolkien's ideas. According to him, science fiction as a genre has grown out of folklore, raising a point on socio-philosophical problems, as well as moral and ethical issues. The story "His weapon" written in the genre of science fiction, is a version of the literary fairy tale, in which there are similarities and differences with traditional folk wonder-stories. Based on studies of M.N. Lipovetskiy, A.N. Veselovskiy, A.A. Potebnya and M.M. Bakhtin, who drew attention to the problem on "memory of the genre", M.P.Shustov writes: "As one of the basic concepts of historical poetics, associated with "memory of the genre", the concepts of foretype or archetype are used commonly. <... > Exactly archetype or foretype are original stable units of genre, whereas original genre, in turn, becomes a source of "memory of genres" [1, 22-23].

The exposition of Rybakov’s story presents some inhabited space. In this space, though not on the surface of a planet, but under the earth, in a city, convenient for
living, there live people like Terrans. They are generally satisfied of their life: prosperity and order prevail in their city. All this corresponds to the fabulous locus of the "Father's House", or "Background Situation", according to Propp [12].

Among all other protagonists author names just one lead protagonist- Salt (that means "salt of the earth") and subsequently refers to the name of Salt’s beloved – Jale (from Persian "dew"). Another protagonist, Jale’s father, who is also director of the city, is outlined schematically.

Among the fabulous narrative motifs, such as the miraculous origin of the protagonist, salvation of magic animals, hate of stepmother towards stepdaughter and moral examination of the protagonist, V.M. Rybakov selects for his story the last one.

Following the description of "background situation" in a wonder-story, certain functions come into effect. The need to implement an artistic idea of the story led the author to reproduce the following fabulous features, emphasized by V.Ya. Propp:

- The function "one of the family members leaves the house for some reason" is implemented by leaving Salt to the upper world to pass a test, which would result either in redemption or moving down his town (this is a "fair" solution of the age-old challenge of world overpopulation);
- The function "one contacts with the ban to the protagonist, who has left the house" is implemented in the upcoming competition rules: "do not do what you do not want to do " (106);
- The function "protagonist violates the ban" is implemented in the protagonist’s action, which is unnatural for him, though, in terms of the general psychology laws, is so natural in reality: finding a shooting iron, Salt has tested it;
- The function "antagonist is trying to make an exploration" is implemented in the appearance of large birds, quite similar to a pair of ravens, which served as spies to Odin, the presiding deity of Norse mythology;
- The function "antagonist is given information about his victim" is realized in understanding by protagonist that he was being followed and his desire to make openly and honestly just "the right things";
- The function "antagonist is trying to deceive his sacrifice in order to possess it or its property" is implemented in the primordial unbreakable faith of protagonist and his neighborhood in highest authority of Hidden; the protagonist is under misapprehension for a long time and does not accept Hidden for antiprotagonist; V.M. Rybakov intentionally blurs the distinction between the protagonist independence and his subordination; protagonist does not realize that one submits to top sovereigns automatically, without hesitation, therefore, they can do with him as they please;
- The function "victim is easily hoodwinked and thereby is unwittingly assisting the enemy" is implemented in the unconditional obedience of protagonist until his enlightenment;
- The function "enemy (saboteur) damages or harms one of the family members" is implemented based on general humane motives: as a result of painful moral reflection, Salt begins to take his competitor as a kindred spirit and realizes that beating the competition, he will cause him harm.

From here, the other functions of the wonder-story are moved to the inner experiences of the protagonist. Internal conflict makes protagonist not just grow up, but become wiser. V.M. Rybakov, basing on humanistic ethics rules, builds fabulous art analogies. The mysterious world of fairy tales conceals protagonist reincarnation levers. According to E. Trubetskoy, "there is a fundamental change in the human form and above all, a wonderful transformation in his world perception" [13].

In a studied piece of art there is no function #16: "a protagonist and antagonist come into direct struggle" due to the fact that the antagonist is not objectified in a fabulous reality, but as the conflict is moved to the field of psychology, the presence of this function can be found out symbolically.

"Magic things" traditionally play a special role in the fairy tale. In Rybakov’s tales they transformed from tinder box into carbine and from Pandora’s box – into the ordinary chest, which gradually opens up many of its compartments like matryoshka (the fact that they were not open completely leaves the reader feeling of unsolved mystery). Despite emphatic earthiness and ordinariness of these "magic means" (and perhaps because of this), the author achieves a convincing psychological reaction of the protagonist and indirect appeal to the reader: think about what multipotent "magical" power we possess at the end of the XX century and what responsibility this power imposes on ourselves.
The Final Part: Simulating characters of "His weapon", the writer has limited number of protagonists. Whereas the traditional scheme requires the reconstruction of the ideal protagonist, his assistant, the sender, the presenter, the saboteur, the false protagonist and the stolen object, V.M. Rybakov depicted just protagonist and antitype. Author strengthened explicit tense opposition through different ways of describing the antagonists. Protagonist Salt is characterized fully, in detail, his inner world is represented with the smallest nuances of his experiences. At the same time, his opponent is maximally disguised, unclear, undefined (even the number of opponents is indefinite; just one or many?). These are kind of mysterious Hidden- the symbol of super influencer for the inhabitants of the fantastic world.

The wonder-story is usually characterized by the main narrative motif-a dangerous expedition (quest). Quest by V.M. Rybakov is quite unusual. Fairy tales protagonists make their feats for the sake of getting something tangible. Salt is going to the upper world to acquire the right to life, at that, not only and not so much for himself, but for the entire population of his native city, a kind of Middle world. This motif is the epic; more precisely, it is inherent to the heroic epos.

The challenge of science fiction is almost always global: the salvation of worlds. Salt also has to save the world; his world. This is not the Universe, not the Galaxy, not the star system and even not the planet. This is just the city. But his hometown is symbolically situated in the mythological "Middle world" and symbolizes the earthly humanity. Somewhere in a depth there is a terrible unknown area, where "losers" are sent for a punishment, for a final sentence- expulsion from the comfortable environment. And above there is a home of beautiful mysterious Hidden.

"Fairy tale is a deliberate and poetic fiction. It is never passed off as a reality", – lays emphasis V.Ya. Propp [14]. On the contrary, in "One’s Own Arms" V.M. Rybakov consistently produces fiction for reality. Scene of "reality" that appears here is predominantly the epic, although is given intimately. The presentation is made preserving the illusion of reality that is not typical for a fairy tale.

Certainly, in the story there is a function #18-"antagonist is vanquished". Fairy tale is impossible without the "happy end". Though in the literary fairy tale, which is approached to reality, to the "happy end" it is still very far. The optimistic closing of Rybakov’s story "One’s Own Arms" is expressed by the fact that the protagonist has changed, steeled his will and, destroying the myth of Hidden’s super authority, is ready to take responsibility for solving vital problems. V.Ya. Propp proved the binarity of most functions of fabulous story: a ban- a violation of the ban, a shortfall- the elimination of shortages and a fight- a victory. This principle is observed in Rybakov’s story as well.

CONCLUSIONS

The story "His weapon" is characterized by features of genre genesis typical for wonder-story, heroic epopee and fantastic story. Thus, the conducted analysis confirmed the thesis about synthetical character of a genre. In this moral and philosophical work the underlying idea is embodied in the evolution of the protagonist. The genre of "His weapon" is a science-fiction story with elements of fairy tale and heroic epopee. Salt is the symbolic protagonist, resulted from the process of "preservation of favorite fairytale characters that is peculiar to all nations and all ages”. These characters would not been saved in the folk’s memory if they would not been expressed the enduring, never-dying values of human life. Only things that one way or another are valued by mankind are memorized and passed down from generation to generation” [13, 187-190].

In general, the fairy tale is characterized by psychology that is unusual for typical folk tale. The psychological analysis in Rybakov’s fairy tale "His weapon" is the main way of incarnation the author’s idea. Unlike the folk fairy tales, the protagonist of Rybakov’s fairy story is independent, endowed with his own unique, complex and psychologically motivated temper. Author’s evaluation of the protagonist, his behavior and the situation in general gives Rybakov’s story kind of emotional tonality. Moralistic stance, peculiar to this fairy tale ("tale is a lie, though it hints and gives a lesson to benign fellows"), provides the writer an opportunity to express his authorial understanding of life. Literary tradition, from Pushkin's "Tsar Saltan" to "Real Tales" of L. Peturshevskaya, prefers existence of the happy end. In the end of the story "His weapon", V.M. Rybakov, as an author, is happy himself, as his protagonist is morally perceived, hardened and became ready to fight to self-sacrifice for justice at any cost.

REFERENCES

11. Julius Heuscher explains that neither dream, joke, nor fairy tale should be dismissed during psychoanalysis: “A therapist would not allow a dream to be sidestepped with the remark that it is ‘only a dream’; and he must not allow a joke, a reference to a myth, or the mention of a fairy tale to be dismissed as ‘only a joke,’ ‘just a myth,’ or ‘simply a fairy tale.’” Julius Heuscher, 2003. Psychology, Folklore, Creative and the Human Dilemma. Springfield, Thomas.