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THE DEPARTURE OF MYTHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS ON JOURNEYS IN FAIRY TALES

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Annotation. This work analyzes the function of mythological characters in Uzbek folk tales as initiators of the hero's journey. Special attention is given to figures such as fairies (*pari*) and dragons, who send the hero on epic quests and contribute to the development of the hero's character. The study examines the role of the journey motif in the structure of fairy tale plots and its compositional significance.

Keywords: fairy tale, mythological character, fairy (*pari*), dragon, journey motif, epic hero, folklore, plot.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu ishda o'zbek xalq ertaklarida mifologik personajlarning safarga yo'llovchi sifatidagi funksiyasi tahlil qilinadi. Ayniqsa, pari, ajdar kabi mifologik obrazlarning qahramonni epik safarga yo'naltirishi va bu jarayonda qahramon xarakterining ochilishi yoritiladi. Tadqiqotda safar motivining ertak syujetidagi o'rni va uning kompozitsion ahamiyati misollar asosida ko'rib chiqiladi.
Kalit so'zlar: ertak, mifologik personaj, pari, ajdar, safar motivi, epik qahramon, folklor, syujet.
Аннотация. В данной работе анализируется функция мифологических персонажей в узбекских народных сказках как отправителей героя в путешествие. Особое внимание уделяется таким образам, как пери и дракон, которые направляют героя в эпическое путешествие и способствуют раскрытию его характера. Рассматривается роль мотива путешествия в структуре сказочного сюжета и его композиционное значение.
Ключевые слова: сказка, мифологический персонаж, пери, дракон, мотив путешествия, эпический герой, фольклор, сюжет.

Sometimes this function can also be performed by mythological characters. O. Qayumov emphasizes that in Uzbek folklore, the figure of the fairy (pari) also serves the role of sending the hero on a journey. According to him, one of the artistic-compositional functions of fairies in Uzbek magical tales is acting as the character who initiates the hero's epic journey. The hero's departure to another world in order to fulfill certain epic conditions is directly connected with the presence of the fairy. The semantic role of the fairy as the initiator of the hero's epic journey is also an important artistic device for creating the poetic interpretation of the hero's character, because the hero reveals all his qualities and heroic traits while overcoming difficulties during the journey. In addition, in tales such as "Erkenja," "Forty Sons-in-Law," and "Prince Salmon," we observe mythological beings such as dragons sending the hero on a journey in order to bring back the girl they have fallen in love with.

In fairy tales that contain two or more journey motifs, the sender function appears in several different forms:

In some tales, the hero is repeatedly sent on dangerous journeys by one person as a form of testing. In tales like “Xipcha Mergan” and “Vospiroxun,” under the influence of a witch, the hero’s sister sends her brother on multiple dangerous quests to bring back magical objects such as a talking robe, a celestial horse, a mirror of the underwater world, a magical flower with a nightingale, a winged white horse, and a stone called Sangil. In “Xolmirzajon,” however, the hero’s brothers, out of jealousy, indirectly send him to his death through the king. Despite this, Xolmirzajon completes all tasks, captures magical creatures, and marries the princess. Although the king formally assigns the tasks, the true instigators are his brothers. In other tales, each new journey and task is assigned by different senders. In stories such as “Bulbuligo’yo,” “Lame Wolf,” and “Kenja Girl,” the hero breaks a prohibition during the first journey, is captured, and is then sent on a new journey with new conditions. Each sender demands something for their own benefit or to clarify something unknown, effectively “using” the hero. In “Flying Carpet,” for example, a poor young man wishing to marry the king’s daughter is sent on difficult missions based on the vizier’s advice. The sequence of senders and journeys is as follows: the king and vizier – first journey; an old couple living in a furnace – second journey; a grave-digger – third journey; a baker who throws bread into water – fourth journey; and a saddler – fifth journey. The hero travels to various distant lands to fulfill each request, which gives this motif a cumulative structure. The tale is built in a “story within a story” format, where each episode becomes the cause of the next journey.

3A. In some cases, a sender may send several people on a journey at the same time. For example, in “Three Brave Brothers,” a father sends all three sons at once to become experienced in life. In “Zulkhumor,” a girl sends three suitors on the condition that she will marry the one who brings the best item. Each suitor goes through different adventures and brings back a magical object: a mirror, a flying carpet, and a magic apple. In such tales, despite the number of people sent on quests, the main hero remains singular: he is the one who gives the wisest advice and succeeds in bringing the most extraordinary object. When their abilities are equal, additional trials are introduced to highlight the superiority of the main hero. In “Three Brave Brothers,” the equal strength of the three brothers is shown through their ability to overcome three nights of mysterious challenges and defeat three different enemies. However, the youngest brother’s killing of a serpent threatening the king and his unjust imprisonment due to a vizier’s slander creates an additional test.

3B. Journeys initiated by the sender’s demand may appear in different parts of the plot. In the tale “Malikjon,” the journey motif appears 21 times, seven of which are directly caused by the sender’s requests. The ruler of Havoron sends various people on missions such as proposing marriage to the princess, drawing and bringing her portrait, kidnapping her, visiting her parents, and rescuing the prince and princess from prison. Although these are not always the main hero’s journeys, each contributes to the development of the plot through exciting adventures.

During the study of Uzbek folk tales, an unusual type of sender not found in other tales was identified. In the tale “Poor Girl,” a woman urges her husband to bring another woman (a rival wife) from a distant land. In this story, the sender is not an enemy but a victim. She tries to free herself from her husband’s severe oppression and cruelty by directing him toward another woman, hoping this will separate him from her. However, later she herself follows him and succeeds in bringing both her husband and the fairy he has fallen in love with.

In conclusion, mythological characters in Uzbek fairy tales often play an important role in initiating the hero’s journey. Figures such as fairies (*pari*) and dragons are not only part of the magical world but also serve as narrative drivers who send the hero on epic quests. Through these

journeys, the hero's qualities, courage, and moral strength are revealed. Therefore, the function of mythological personages as journey initiators is a key artistic device in shaping the structure and meaning of fairy tale narratives.

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