



REFINEMENT OF THE FANTASY GENRE THROUGH THE WORKS OF URSULA LE GUIN

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Abstract

This scientific article talks about the improvement of the fantasy genre. This field is little studied in our country, but as a structural and important element of the work of Le Guin, one of the modern writers, the main attention is paid to the myth-based improvement of different worlds and cultures. The issues discussed in Le Guin's works relate to the fundamental human values that give special importance to his works in the modern world, which is experiencing a fundamental spiritual-civilizational crisis. The writer's works have gone far beyond the borders of mass literature and culture. We are raising "fantasy" to the level of classic fiction with strong philosophical and aesthetic potential.

Keywords: improvement, Ursula Le Guin, fantasy, definition, elements of the work, literature, concept of "fantasy", fantasy genre, characters, rational fiction.

Introduction

In modern literary criticism, there is currently no generally accepted definition of fantasy. Almost everyone who writes about fantasy tries to give their definition of this concept. As a result, a significant number of definitions have appeared, often unfounded and sometimes contradictory to one another. Each author, each critic derives his concept of "fantasy" and his classification of fantasy works. They often use the phrase "fantasy genre". This requires reasoned proof, since not a single source provides a denial for designating fantasy, for example, with the term "style".

Style is "the aesthetic unity of all aspects and elements of a work, possessing a certain originality," as opposed to "aesthetic inexpressiveness."

The integrity of style is manifested in the system of so-called "style dominants," which include verse and prose, monologism and heteroglossia, nominativity and rhetoric. All these are qualitative characteristics of the style in which artistic originality is expressed. Style categories are "phenomena of artistic style, covering all elements of form." One of the style categories is the type of artistic convention. One of the types of artistic convention, based on the concept of E.N.Kovtun, is fantasy: "We consider it possible to distinguish six independent types of artistic convention: rational fiction and fantasy, fairy tale, mythological, satirical and philosophical convention, more or less associated with genre structures literary or fairy tale, utopia, parable, mythological, fantastic satirical novel, etc."

In the afterword to the publication of the novels, Le Guin characterizes the artistic world of the cycle, highlighting the main points. He notes the skilful construction of the fictional world "so that this world seems surprisingly authentic to the reader: the narrative is equipped with geographical maps, diagrams of temples and labyrinths; on the described islands of Earthsea, animals and plants familiar to us are



found, which, however, get along quite well with the fictional representatives of “fauna and flora”, as well as with witches, dragons and other ancient and mysterious creatures and forces ”

Each hero has his name; a real name and a “substitute” name is distinguished. The first is given to a person during the ritual by the name of the position; this name cannot be revealed to everyone you meet; recognizing it, and communicating it to another is a sign of the highest trust. The problem of True Speech or the Language of Creation is connected with the name and title. These names are also hidden from prying ears; only people who can see the true nature of things have such knowledge; it is fraught with many dangers. The journeys made by the heroes are filled with special meaning. The author of the article points to ancient Chinese philosophy, some ideas and images of which were probably influenced by Le Guin’s creation of images of heroes and the entire atmosphere of the fictional world. In addition, the pentalogy reflected the sphere of the collective unconscious - myths, archetypes, etc.

The next source is Le Guin's article. In her work, she follows in the footsteps of her “Teacher” - J. R. R. Tolkien, speaking about the phenomenon of “escapism” (from the English escape - flight, departure), i.e. escape from reality into the world of fiction. The author gives an example characterizing the attitude towards fantasy as a phenomenon of mass literature: “Ten years ago I (an acquaintance of Le Guin) came to the reading room of the library of such and such a city and asked for The Hobbit.” The librarian replied: “We keep this book only in the adult room because we don't think escapism is good for children.” Le Guin talks about the type of people who equate escapism and fantasy, and therefore deny the latter as a fact of literature. The typical American family man, in the opinion of the author of the article, does not want to waste time on anything else, in addition to useful and soul-saving benefits. His wife, a typical sentimental person, lives from a “pink” novel to a “soap opera”. The writer has a feeling of erasure of their traits, oblivion, and loss of their true appearance. This is the main theme of many of Le Guin's works, not only fantasy but also science fiction. Awareness of oneself, following the call of the heart, the ability to recognize fear, and fight it - this is a list of problems that interest the writer. The danger that some adults see in a child's inherent sympathy for all sorts of cute fairy- tale creatures like fairies and dragons, in the sudden manifestation of the magical gift of fantasy - Le Guin recognized this and many other problems and embodied it in her works. If you compare the gifts used by the heroes of the fictional and real worlds, respectively - the gift of magic and the gift of fantasy - you can notice the commonality between them. They have a miraculous origin and manifest themselves in the creation of another dimension. Thus, by performing some kind of spell, the hero, with the help of his abilities, changes the order of things, sometimes the world itself. The same thing is observed with fantasy: out of non-existence, through the power of imagination, cities and universes, inhabited by unusual creatures are built. “There is nothing more pleasant than inventing new worlds. You forget how unpleasant the one we live in is. <...> Inventing new worlds ultimately leads to changing ours” – said Baudolino, the hero of the novel “Baudolino” by the outstanding philologist Umberto Eco. The law of pure fantasy - the law of intelligent magic - is one of the fundamental principles contained in the basis of Le Guin's artistic world. “Of course, fantasy is true... Normal children do not mix reality and fantasy - they mix them to a much lesser extent than we adults... Children know very well that unicorns do not exist, but they also know that books about unicorns are if they are good books, they are true,” says Le Guin.



When creating a special artistic world, the writer took as a basis the philosophy of Taoism and the teachings of Lao Tzu. This determined the genre and theme of Le Guin's prose.

The American nation, which does not have ancient traditions, is characterized by self-identification through the cultures of other countries. A significant role here is played by an orientation towards the exotic, especially in the East, which is heavily played up by mass culture, and a sense of inner freedom and success cultivated from an early age. What are the main features of ancient Chinese philosophy and their transformations in the Earthsea novels?

Yin and yang are two opposite principles of ancient Chinese cosmogony. At first, they denoted the very first of the observed opposites: mother and father, earth and sky, bottom and top. Only later were they comprehended in a general sense - as a symbol of all possible opposites. Their opposition was expressed in a conventional graphic design: a solid line and a dashed line, respectively.

Over time, the symbol takes the form of a trigram: a combination of three features located one above the other. The sum of all possible trigrams depicted the entire life cycle: emergence, maturation, extinction, i.e. was the law of the movement of life. "Over time, the trigrams were combined into pairs and formed hexagrams. In even later times, they were provided with commentaries that tied their meaning to new philosophical concepts and the phenomena of social life."⁶² This system was used for mystical purposes - the priests predicted destinies based on the occurrence/non-entry of a particular phenomenon into the natural course of things.

Perhaps, based on this, the most interesting attribute of Earthsea was created: the Language of Creation, True Speech or the ancient Language. Words related to this language are written using True Runes. They are "not just symbols; they are capable of materializing any object, or, say, condition... To write such a Rune means to already commit an act, and the power of the impact of such acts on the world around them depends on the circumstances... But it is better to say that Runes are not words, but magical spells or actions enclosed in the form of a symbol." Unfortunately, not a single outline of Runes is found in the works, for example, the Pyrrhus Rune, most often mentioned by Le Guin. However, it seems likely to see the origins precisely in the philosophy of Lao Tzu. The symbols of yin and yang represent the accomplished division of non-existence into parts: yang - light and warm; yin - cloudy and cold. Yang formed the sky, yin formed the earth. From their subsequent interaction, other phenomena and things were born.

Usually, in Chinese philosophy, the active masculine principle of yang is placed in first place, although formally yin and yang are equal and complementary to each other. In Taoism, the Tao is often compared with the feminine passive principle; the feminine principle prevails over the masculine, the malleable (for example, water) over the strong, the weak over the strong, the soft and flexible over the hard; peace is above movement; passive - above active; the secret is above the obvious. It is no coincidence that the sage is outwardly passive, detached from the world, in a state of peace and emptiness of consciousness, unnoticed by other people, and always puts himself behind them. "The sage settles in a deserted region, among mountain streams hidden in the depths of thickets. Free, he wanders among wide lakes and wanders in rocky gorges."



The problem of genre in Le Guin's works should not remain outside of any research, especially since in fantasy this issue is always especially interesting. In this case, readers are dealing primarily with a philosophical novel. The formation of a person, his relationship with the world around him, his ideas about life in this world and after - all this allows us to draw such a conclusion. But the encrypted, veiled nature of this complex material brings the cycle of tales about Earthsea closer to the genre of parable. A parable is an epic genre, which is a short edifying story in an allegorical form; reality in it appears in an abstract form, without chronological and territorial signs, and there is no attachment to specific historical names of the characters. The claim to a deeper, universal generalization is a phenomenon characteristic of Le Guin's novels, from which follows the unobtrusive elevation of the problems of the world of Earthsea to the rank of "universal," philosophical ones. As for the depiction of reality, all the events described in the novel take place somewhere, but it is not clear where exactly; in Earthsea, essentially a fictional country. These facts took place everywhere, but nowhere in particular. The principle of allegory is also quite obvious and speaks in favor of the parable genre. But still, you can accurately define what kind of genre Le Guin presented to readers using the word "fantasy." It combines all the experience accumulated by literature, many trends and genres are mixed, creating truly magnificent works of art. If we talk about the degree of correlation between the real world and Earthsea - and the problem of dual worlds in fantasy is one of the key ones - then the first feeling will be this: the author copied everything from the modern structure of the universe, embellished the result a little, and here you go - he called it all fantasy. And everyone can do this. The ease of creating such works is only an appearance. There is a clear, thoughtful construction of the Universe that existed in Le Guin's imagination, but proposed in such a way that everything was and is here and now: "I had to ... spend some time in the Central Archives of the Archipelago."

Undoubtedly, the sociocultural, linguistic, and topographic structure of the Earth sea is all a reflection of the process of life on Earth. The problems that concern the inhabitants of Earth sea are in one way or another inspired by the consciousness of man living on our planet. So, for example, a very common disease of drug addiction could well manifest itself in a fragment of the novel "On the Last Shore": one of the characters, who has lost his magical qualities, finds solace in taking a certain substance - hazia. Another parallel: the closed island of Rock, where all sorts of tests of magical power take place - "witchcraft tricks" - this phenomenon had its origins in real facts about medieval alchemy. A further search for analogies, allusions, and reminiscences is a favorite pastime of the century passing under the sign of postmodernism. And if all of the above can be found, then this already speaks of the writer's skill. By offering us specific texts, W. Le Guin simultaneously invites readers to create with her, since each new reading provides the opportunity to open new horizons. Active co-creation allows us to develop our imagination without fear of the consequences of this process.



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