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MOTIVES FOR “SENDING” A BOGATYR: GENERAL AND DIFFERENT IN NATIONAL FAIRY TRADITIONS

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Abstract

When falling within new conditions, getting into a new folklore environment, adapting to another culture, any fairy story undergoes creative changes thus subsequently forming its national specifics and artistic distinctness. Various types of interaction of fairy plots such as interference and co-authorship, implemented in the “synthesis of cross-currents” and contaminations, replenished the world fairy fund with regional plots. This process makes the study of the nature of the same structural and substantial segments of a fairy plot in different traditions quite relevant. The paper studies the motivation for sending the hero who was fighting against a zoomorphic parent and facing some difficulties during socialization, which forced him to leave the community. Following the analysis of twelve fairy tales with a standard plot “a bear’s son”, we defined “reasons” and “purposes” of sending the hero from his community and tracked the range of variability of the motive as an element of a fairy plot. The fact of spatial movement of the hero is important as a compositional element for further development of a fairy plot: the hero shall get into another world, approve himself in a foreign land, cope with challenges and revive in initial kingdom, be recognized in it. Having failed to cope with challenges, the hero cannot become a full member of tribal community and marry, start a family with one of its members. These circumstances formed the nuclear basis for the motive of “sending the hero” and variability as a result of detailed motivation for departure.

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Keywords: Typology, national traditions, hero, sending, motivation.



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1. Introduction

A fairy tale is one of the entertaining genres of folklore on fictional heroes, events with involvement of the magic, antagonism between good and evil, belief in the triumph of justice and, as a rule, having a happy ending. This positive message served the main factor of active promotion of fairy plots and motives in space, a powerful tool that penetrated fantastic ideas and images into the society reflecting universal values that naturally influenced the typological similarity of fairy stories later reflected in various Indexes (Kerbelite, 2005; Uther, 2004). The typology is understood as “the logical repeatability in the nature and society caused by some objective factors, which finds itself in objects and phenomena, in properties and relations, in elements and structures, in processes and states” (Putilov, 1976, p. 66). The nature of typological similarity can only be defined through the careful study of all levels of repeatability, including the most “minimum narrative unit” of a folklore narrative in the form of a motive.

Folklore studies do not deny the possibility of transferring certain fairy stories from one country into another, from one nation to another. It considers not only the possibility of the borrowing, but also allows “once existing unity of the people” and coincidence of plots as a result of direct folk art developing in similar socio-historical, cultural and social conditions (Propp, 1996; Zhirmunsky, 2004; Putilov, 1976; Gatsak, 1967; Neklyudov, 1984; Kerbelite, 2005).

Transferring from one tradition, from one nation to another, acquiring new options, changing its artistic ethos, many fairy stories maintain their nuclear basis, which stability is ensured by a set of basic motives. They are easily distinguished in a fairy plot, their constructiveness promotes the formation of narrative types, which core assets are reflected in various Indexes (Kerbelite, 2005; Uther, 2004). Besides, by maintaining their constant basis in fairy traditions of different people these constructive models are not absolutely typical. This is especially often observed in the motives reflecting actions of the hero or actions directed to the hero.

2. Problem Statement

The problem of typology becomes ever more relevant in the context of extending interethnic communicative relations: folklore, cultural, social, etc. Passing from one tradition into another many fairy plots and motives maintain their nuclear basis promoting the formation of narrative types. Besides, by maintaining their constant basis in fairy traditions of different people these constructive models are not absolutely typical. In this context it seems urgent to consider the motive of sending the hero, which is typical for a fairy plot since the main events of the fairy tale happen with the participation of the central character and outside his ecumene. The reasons that induced the hero to take the road are important to understand the mechanism of the motive of “sending the hero” both in formal and contextual perspectives. It is important to track the nature of relations of the hero with society until his removal from family, home, tribal community, country and how it is illustrated in fantastic traditions of different people: genetically related and unrelated, but closely interacting throughout a long time (the Avars, the Circassian Adyghe, the Bashkirs, the Buryats, the Kazakhs, the Kalmyks, the Mongols, the Russians, the Xinjiang Oirots, the Tuvinians, the Uzbeks, the Chechens, the Khakas, the Yakuts).

3. Research Questions

The subject of the study is the motive of sending the hero born from a bear (she-bear) meeting a narrative type of a “young athlete”, and according to Uther H-J, “a bear’s ear”, “wonderful force or knowledge (ability)”.

The archaic plot on the zoomorphic hero, who is fighting against his zoomorphic parent, i.e. the one that broke with the past, died, and then revived in a new society, but in the course of socialization faced some difficulties, which forced him to leave the community, is considered in the context of the reason for leaving or exile realized in a plot at the level of the motive.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to consider the motive of “sending the hero”, which is typical for a fairy plot since the main events of the fairy tale happen with the participation of the central character and outside his ecumene; to define the reasons that induced the hero the hero to take the road; to track the nature of relations with society until his removal from family, home, tribal community, country and how it is illustrated in fantastic traditions of different people: genetically related and unrelated, but closely interacting throughout a long time.

5. Research Methods

The study of a fairy narrative of different ethnic traditions is based on comparative and typological method (Putilov, 1976) revealing analogies and differences in genetically related and unrelated fairy tales, which are adjoining and not having close contacts throughout many centuries. The analysis of the motive takes into account methodological approaches allowing considering it as a “minimum narrative unit of a plot” (Veselovsky, 2006), studying the motive from its structural-semantic perspective (Meletinsky, 1994), revealing the nature of its variability and stability.

6. Findings

In the plot of considered fairy tales the “sending of the hero” is based on the following motives: “miraculous birth”, “zoomorphic ethos”, “miraculous growth”, “exceptional force”, “fight against the father bear (she-bear)”, “accession into society”, “Christening”, “departure” (in Buryat, Kalmyk, Xinjiang-Oirot, Kazakh versions). In Avarian, Adyghe, Bashkir, Tuvinian, Uzbek, Khakass, Chechen, Yakut versions of fairy tales the motive of “fight against the father bear” is dropped out of the above narrative chain, in Avarian, Adyghe and Chechen – the motive of “Christening”. In the studied fairy tales, the hero grows fast, gains power, gets out of a bear’s cave, kills (leaves) a zoomorphic parent, comes to people, receives a name, but his dissimilarity causes certain inconveniences for both the society and himself. This situation is typical for all versions, but the motivation for departure of the bear’s son is implemented differently. Generalization of revealed motivations, which induced the zoomorphic hero to take the road, i.e. to leave the community, allows identifying the following options:

1. Desire to see the world (Buryat, Kalmyk);

2. Search for equal (Xinjiang-Oirot, Kazakh);
3. Conflict with peers (Bashkir, Kazakh, Tuvinian, Uzbek, Khakass);
4. Conflict with the power (Uzbek, Avarian, Adyghe);
5. Discontent and complaints of tribespeople (Bashkir, Kazakh, Tuvinian, Uzbek, Khakas);
6. Gluttony (Tuvinian);
7. Immediate risk of loss of life (Kazakh, Uzbek, Avarian, Adyghe);
8. Burning of a bear's skin by the bride, young wife (Yakut, Chechen).

The above list shows that the motivation for sending the hero has dual character: the hero takes the road voluntarily and with a definite purpose (in the fairy tales of the Buryats, the Kalmyks, the Xinjiang-Oirots) and the hero takes the road involuntary under some circumstances for a purpose, sometimes aimlessly, i.e. "up hill and down dale" (in the fairy tales of the Bashkirs, the Kazakhs, the Tuvinians, the Uzbeks, the Khakas, the Avars, the Adyghe, the Yakuts, the Chechens).

It is noteworthy that the first group included fairy tales of genetically related Mongolian people once living in a single nomad space (the Buryats, the Kalmyks and the Xinjiang-Oirots), and the second group – fairy tales by the Bashkirs, the Kazakhs, the Tuvinians, the Uzbeks, the Khakas, the Yakuts, the Avars, the Adyghe, the Chechens – genetically related and not related nations. The narrative links revealed in different traditions "have many common features and can be considered within a single context despite language, cultural, economic, social differences" (Klyaus, 2001, para. 8).

The detailed study of fairy tales of the first group displays situations preceding the departure of the fairy tale hero at his own free will.

The hero happily lives in the Buryat fairy tale, but over time it becomes boring for him and he takes the road to see the world and other lands. Nobody holds him, he is seen off with parting words and kind wishes.

In Kalmyk fairy tales the bear's son has a name, plays with children, is loved by the family, a blacksmith makes him a staff. When testing the staff, the bear's son bends it with one hand. Having said goodbye to the family he goes to see the world.

The hero of the fairy tales of the Xinjiang-Oirots orders to make him an iron weapon, then peacefully leaves the family.

The motivation for sending the hero in the considered versions of fairy tales cannot be qualified as an exile of the bear's son from the society or its freedom: the hero is accepted by the family, they are happy, nothing constitutes danger. The similarity of the initial situation motivates the similarity of further actions: the hero takes the road upon his own will and with a definite purpose: to get to know the world, to find worthy opponents.

The second type of motivation for sending the hero is based on the fact that the hero takes the road under forced circumstances (the Bashkirs, the Kazakhs, the Tuvinians, the Uzbeks, the Khakas, the Avars, the Adyghe, the Yakuts, the Chechens), with a definite purpose, sometimes aimlessly, i.e. up hill and down dale. We revealed several types of motivations for sending (exile) the hero from the society: conflict with age-mates (the Bashkirs, the Kazakhs, the Tuvinians, the Uzbeks, the Khakas); conflict with power (the Uzbeks, the Avars, the Adyghe); discontent and complaints of tribespeople (the Bashkirs, the Kazakhs, the Tuvinians, the Uzbeks, the Khakas); gluttony (the Tuvinians); direct threat of life (the Kazakhs, the Uzbeks,

the Avars, the Adyghe); anticipatory flight (the Adyghe); burning of a bear's skin by the bride, young wife (the Yakuts, the Chechens).

The review of each motive separately was productive in view of the fact that "the previous links of the narration prepare the central moment, serve as explanation and motivation" (Gatsak, 1967, p. 45). It showed that the conflict situation with peers happens for various reasons:

- the bear's son, playing a ball from an oak shelf fungus, strikes the ball so that when flying over the aul it takes down the heads of children and destroys houses (the Bashkir fairy tale "Ayugolak" (Ayyugolak);
- at competitions in agility and force the rivals of the bear's son faint and sustain injuries (the Kazakh fairy tale "The Bear's Son" (Ayubala);
- the play with children becomes the reason for their death (the Kazakh fairy tale "Ayualpan, Sudysalpan, Taudytalpan" (Ayualpan, Sudysalpan, Taudytalpan);
- when playing with children of neighbors, he breaks their bones (the Tuvinian fairy tale "The Bear's Ear" (Adyg-Kulak);
- he knocks down and hurts his peers when playing knucklebones with alchik from cast iron, each weighing ten poods (the Uzbek fairy tale "Bogatyr Medved" (Ayikpolvon);
- playing cards with peers for slapping in the face, he makes one of them unconsciousness (the Khakass fairy tale "The Bear's Ear" (Aba Hulakh).

The list of options demonstrates that the conflict mainly occurs during a game, more rarely – during the competition. It is shown differently: in the course of the game or the competition; it is directed to game participants or a subject of a game (an oak ball, a cast-iron alchik). As a result of the "game" an ordinary child sustains injuries, faints, dies, which is perceived by tribespeople as the potential danger proceeding from a special (ugly, hairy, clumsy, with bear's ears) child.

The conflict with the power also serves the motivation for the withdrawal of the zoomorphic hero from the community (the Avars, the Adyghe, the Uzbeks). The motivation for sending the special hero is based on contradictions in relation to social-class problems. A young man acts as the defender of socially unfortunate sectors of society that inevitably leads to a conflict with rich authorities, then the exile of the hero from the society by some ruler. Propp (1996) noted that the "exile can be based on the nasty character of the hero" (p. 73) and is given the nature of legitimacy. If the hero causes mischief, he is complained of, does something foolish, then shall be punished. In the considered cases the rebelliousness of the protagonist and failure of an individual for conformism is regarded as a negative feature by the community, which does not recognize him in view of his special origin.

Specific features of the bear's son and a person give reason for discontent and complaints of tribespeople that also serves as motivation for his leaving from the community. This type of motivation for sending the hero found reflection in the fairy tales of many people (the Bashkirs, the Kazakhs, the Tuvinians, the Uzbeks, the Khakas).

The model of discontent and complaints of tribespeople serving the reasons for sending the hero are only reflected in the fairy tales of the Turkic people (the Bashkirs, the Kazakhs, the Tuvinians, the Uzbeks, the Khakas). In Russian fairy tales with a similar plot the main reason for exile are also the complaints of fellow villagers. The Ukrainian and Belarusian fairy material in general corresponds to Russian (SUS

650A).

The similarity, which was even confirmed by the most mobile, variable part of the narration – in the motivating motive segment (in this case, sending the hero) proves the stability of an ancient nuclear basis of the fairy plot actively occurring throughout many centuries among related (Turkic-speaking) and the neighboring people, including the east Slavs.

Burning a bear's skin by the bride, young wife in a fairy tale (the Yakuts, the Chechens) is regarded as a threat of life and serves the reason for hero semi-person to leave people (family). This option significantly differs from the above reasons: the hero does not leave the tribal community; he leaves his wife (bride) because of losing a bear's skin. Depriving the hero of his animal features can be treated as the loss of bear's force and "animal spirit", and hence the magic protection of the primogenitor.

Thus, the studied material gives the general picture of the situation with the hero before he decides to take the road and what induces him for resolute actions. This ensured the uniformity of a nuclear basis of the motivation for "sending the hero". The uniformity is broken during detailed motivation: in fairy tale traditions of the Mongolian people the hero takes the road at his own will to see the world and to find worthy opponents, he takes the road with iron weapon (the Xinjiang-Oirots) and a shod staff (the Kalmyks), without a weapon – the Buryats fairy tale. The insignificant discrepancies observed in the motive model do not influence its meaning, at the same time they reflect local features (Khabunova, 2017).

In the fairy tale folklore of the Bashkirs, the Kazakhs, the Tuvinians, the Uzbeks, the Khakas, the Avars, the Adyghe, the Yakuts, the Chechens, the Russians, the Ukrainians, the Belarusians the sending can be considered as an exile since the zoomorphic features of the hero cause inconveniences and the strive to get rid of the hero causes threat to his life. The exile based on hostility and rejection of the hero by the society fosters variability of a peripheral part of the steady model of "sending the hero".

7. Conclusion

The studied motive shows the general picture of the situation with the hero before he decides to take the road and what induces him for resolute actions. The fact of spatial movement of the hero is important as a compositional element for further development of a fairy plot: the hero shall get into another world (die), approve himself in a foreign land, cope with challenges and revive in initial kingdom, be recognized in it (accession). This ensured the uniformity of a nuclear basis of the motivation for "sending the hero", which is broken during detailed motivation.

The elements indicating the discrepancies of motivations for "sending the hero" can indicate the level of mobility of the motive structure.

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