

HISTORICAL APPROACH TO FANTASY AS A LITERARY GENRE

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Articolul dat este un studiu al controverselor structurii din lumea fantasticului lipsite de echivalență în limba țintă. În cazul nostru perechea de limbi engeză-rusă diferă foarte mult atât din punct de vedere al structurii lexicale, semantice, gramaticale, stilistice, cât și istorice și culturale.

Iar rezultatele studiului au relevat cele mai frecvente dificultăți în traducerea acestor unități lingvistice și modalitățile depășirii acestora.

The historical approach to fantasy as a literary genre involves examining the development and evolution of fantasy literature over time, tracing its roots and exploring the various influences that have shaped the genre. By studying the historical context in which fantasy works were written, we can gain insights into the themes, conventions, and motivations behind the authors' creations.

One of the earliest examples of fantasy literature can be found in ancient mythologies and folklore, such as Greek and Norse myths, Arabian Nights, and the epic poems of ancient civilizations. Since ancient times in any culture fantastic elements have always played a big part in storytelling. These tales often featured supernatural elements, magical creatures, and heroic quests, laying the foundation for many future fantasy narratives. Gods, magic, monstrous beasts can be found in mythologies, folklore and religious texts around the globe [1, p.16]. However, fantasy as a literary genre has originated more recent and differs from its predecessors – the authors are known and the audience understands that these works and its heroes and events are completely fictitious.

During the Middle Ages, fantasy literature was intertwined with religious and allegorical elements. Works like Dante's "Divine Comedy" and Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" incorporated fantastical elements within moral and spiritual frameworks. This was the period of chivalrous European romances and tales, whose fantastical elements were still believed to be somewhat real. The concept of the Otherworld, a realm that is separate from our own, also emerged during this period [1, p.8].

In the 19th century, with the rise of the Romantic movement, fantasy literature gained renewed popularity and the history of modern fantasy begins. Romantics celebrated imagination, emotion, and the mystical, resulting in works like Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" [2, p.10]. The Romantic era also witnessed a surge in fairy tales, with the Grimm Brothers collecting and popularizing traditional folk tales.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the emergence of influential fantasy authors who laid the groundwork for the modern genre. Fantasy becomes a status of a genre not only for children, but also for adults with publication of novel “Phantastes” of Scottish author George MacDonald. This novel tells us about a man drawn into a dream world and his adventures there. George MacDonal, known also for “Lilith”, and Lord Dunsany, with his mythical tales set in the fictional Dreamlands, explored themes of wonder, imagination, and the power of myth [2, p.6]. The first complete fantasy world, in the meaning we understand now, was created by an English author William Morris, who is known for medieval fantasy and specifically for his novel “The Well at the World’s End”. He broke the ground of the genre by creating a world which existed beyond the known world.

The successor of MacDonald’s and Morris’ legacies is J. R. R. Tolkien, who is the author of the first high fantasy – “The Lord of the Rings”. It was a new born of the fantasy, being creatively and commercially successful, the genre begins to be popular. J.R.R. Tolkien’s works, particularly “The Hobbit” and “The Lord of the Rings”, marked a significant turning point in the development of fantasy literature. Tolkien’s meticulously crafted secondary world, detailed mythologies, and epic storytelling captivated readers and inspired a new generation of fantasy authors. Tolkien influenced a lot of writers to write their own fantasy books. His influence is still felt today in the genre. That makes Tolkien the father of modern fantasy. One of his contemporaries was C. S. Lewis (“The Chronicles of Narnia”) [3, p.154].

In the latter half of the 20th century, fantasy literature experienced a boom in popularity with the emergence of authors like Ursula K. Le Guin (“Earthsea”), Terry Brooks, and Michael Moorcock. The genre diversified and expanded, encompassing various subgenres such as high fantasy, urban fantasy, and contemporary fantasy. If not for them the genre might still exist only on the periphery of the literature [3, p.167].

Later fantasy continued to modernize, grow in quantity of subgenres and popularity. Terry Brook’s “The Sword of Schannara” becomes the first fantasy novel, which appeared on the trade paperback bestseller list of New York Times. J.K. Rowling’s “Harry Potter” novels become the best-selling book series of all time. Hollywood begins to adapt many fantasy stories into hit films and television shows.

The 21st century brought further growth and innovation, with authors like George R.R. Martin, Patrick Rothfuss, and N.K. Jemisin pushing the boundaries of traditional fantasy storytelling.

Fantasy is a literary genre that typically features imaginary or supernatural elements, often set in imaginary worlds or alternative versions of our own. However, there are some common narrative themes and features that are common for many of its stories. They are the following: 1. The heroic or villainous search for power or knowledge; 2. Tradition against changes; 3. The individual in comparison with society; 4. Human in relation to nature; 5. Human and himself; 6. Coming of age; 7. Love; 8. Betrayal; 9. Epic journey, adventures; 10. The unlikely and/or reluctant hero.

Of course, many of these themes are common in other literary genres as well. However, thanks to J. R. R. Tolkien's influential classics "The Hobbit" (1937) and "The Lord of the Rings", which describe us the adventures of small hobbits, saving the world, the epic journey of a reluctant hero who realizes their true nature is closely associated with fantasy [4].

Fantasy is very broad and diverse in comparison with other genres. While the specific themes, settings, and characters of fantasy stories can vary widely, there are some common elements and characteristics that are often present in works of this genre.

The historical approach to fantasy literature allows us to appreciate the genre's evolution, understand its cultural and societal influences, and recognize the ongoing conversations between authors across different time periods. It also helps us see how fantasy literature continues to evolve, reflecting contemporary concerns and exploring timeless themes of heroism, magic, and the human imagination.

References:

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Recomandat

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