



The Fairy Tale As A Genre Model Of Folklore: Structural Stability And Variability Of Oral Tradition

Jalilova A.A.

Lecturer Gulistan State University, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

The article examines the fairy tale as a specific genre model of oral folk art, combining the stability of plot-compositional organization with the variability of concrete performance. The stability of the fairy-tale genre is ensured by the recurrence of plot situations, a system of traditional character roles, compositional formulas, typified space, and the mechanism of the hero's sequential trials. At the same time, the oral mode of existence of the fairy tale presupposes changes in specific details, the composition of characters, local realities, and linguistic expression. It is concluded that the unity of a stable genre framework and performative variability is one of the principal mechanisms for the preservation and development of the fairy tale within the folklore tradition.

Keywords: Folklore, fairy tale, folk tale, oral tradition, genre, variability, structure, plot, composition, folklore tradition.

INTRODUCTION

The fairy tale is one of the most ancient and stable genres of oral folk art. Over a long historical period, it existed predominantly in oral form and was transmitted from one person to another, preserving its basic plot and compositional features while simultaneously adapting to a specific linguistic and cultural environment. In the Uzbek tradition, the fairy tale is also among the principal genres of oral intangible heritage. In the official list of the intangible cultural heritage of Uzbekistan, fairy tales are characterized as one of the ancient and widespread genres of folk art, reflecting the worldview, national character, way of life, and peculiarities of the people's thinking. The history of the scholarly study of the fairy tale demonstrates a gradual transition from collecting and classifying texts to examining their internal structure. The works of V. Ya. Propp were of particular importance. In *Morphology of the Folktale*, the scholar showed that despite the variability of characters and specific circumstances, the magic tale preserves a certain sequence of character functions. This demonstrated the existence of a relatively stable compositional framework of fairy-tale narration. In his subsequent work, *The Historical Roots of the Wonder Tale*, V. Ya. Propp connected a number of fairy-tale motifs and plot situations with more ancient mythological beliefs and ritual complexes. This made it possible to regard the fairy tale not only as an artistic narrative, but also as the result of a long-term transformation of cultural tradition.

At the same time, the stability of the fairy tale's structure does not imply the immutability of its text. A folklore work exists as a set of variants. Each storyteller may alter individual details, shorten or expand episodes, and use realities and linguistic means familiar to a particular locality. For this reason, one plot model may exist in different national, regional, and local variants.

Materials And Methods

The analysis took into account different genre varieties: magic tales, everyday-life tales, and animal tales. The Uzbek tradition is characterized by the existence of several regional designations for fairy-tale narration: alongside the term ertak, the forms matal, ushuk, cho'pchak, and others were used. This indicates the broad dissemination of the genre and its rootedness in local forms of oral culture. The study employed structural-functional, comparative-typological, descriptive, and contextual methods. Structural-functional analysis makes it possible to identify recurring plot and compositional elements. The comparative-typological method is used to reveal common principles in the organization of Russian and Uzbek fairy-tale texts. Contextual analysis is applied in examining specific formulas, images, and plot situations.

Results

One of the main features of fairy-tale narration is the recurrence of typical plot situations. This is especially evident in the magic tale. The development of the action is often associated with an initial disruption of equilibrium: the loss of a person or object, a prohibition and its violation, the emergence of danger, or the necessity of completing a task. The hero leaves the familiar space, undergoes trials, receives assistance, enters into confrontation with a hostile force, and reaches the final goal. V. Ya. Propp demonstrated that the stable components of the magic tale are not the specific characters, but the functions they perform. Therefore, the same structural element may be realized through different characters and plot circumstances. Thus, the fairy tale is capable of preserving its genre structure even when its specific content changes substantially.

The stability of the fairy tale is supported by a system of typified characters. The central position is occupied by the hero, who may be opposed by a villain, a rival, or a false hero. Alongside them appear the helper, donor, dispatcher, object of the quest, and other functionally significant figures. The concrete realization of these roles varies nationally and historically. In one tradition, the helper may be an animal; in another, an old man, a magical object, or a fantastic creature. However, the functional necessity of assistance to the hero remains. Consequently, the variability of images does not destroy the fairy-tale model, because the character images are united by a stable system of functions.

Discussion

The results obtained make it possible to regard stability and variability not as opposing properties, but as mutually complementary mechanisms of the existence of the fairy-tale genre. If the text of a fairy tale were preserved in an absolutely unchanged form, it would gradually lose its immediate connection with living oral tradition. If each performer were to transform the work completely, the possibility of recognizing the plot and transmitting it between generations would disappear. Therefore, the fairy tale exists due to a specific balance: a stable plot-compositional framework plus a changeable concrete realization. The structural framework ensures the recognizability of the work. Variability ensures its adaptation to a new historical, social, and linguistic environment. This mechanism also explains the presence of similar plots among different peoples. Modern comparative-typological studies of Uzbek fairy tales in the context of world folklore likewise reveal a combination of universal plot regularities

and national specificity. Consequently, the genre nature of the fairy tale is determined not by staticity, but by the ability to preserve its basic model in the process of continuous reproduction and transformation.

Conclusion

The conducted analysis allows us to conclude that the fairy tale represents a stable yet internally dynamic form of folklore tradition. Its genre stability is ensured by the recurrence of plot functions, typified character roles, formulaic narration, traditional compositional schemes, and the completeness of conflict resolution. At the same time, the oral nature of the fairy tale determines the existence of multiple variants. Specific characters, realities, linguistic means, and plot details change, whereas the basic narrative principle is preserved.

Thus, variability does not destroy the folklore fairy tale, but is a necessary condition for its existence. The fairy-tale genre is capable of being transmitted from generation to generation precisely because it combines structural traditionality with the possibility of creative reinterpretation.

References

1. Afanasyev A. N. Russian Folk Tales: in 3 vols.
2. Kuchkarova S. T. On the Role of the Fairy Tale as a Genre in Folklore // International Journal "The Art of the Word".
3. Propp V. Ya. The Historical Roots of the Wonder Tale. – Leningrad: Leningrad University Press, 1946.
4. Propp V. Ya. Morphology of the Folktale. – Leningrad: Academia, 1928.
5. O'zbek xalq ertaklari: uch jildlik / compiled by M. Afzalov, X. Rasulov, Z. Husainova. – Tashkent: O'qituvchi, 2007.
6. Komiljonov J. The Fairy Tale: Genre, Origin and Order of Performance // Foreign Linguistics and Linguodidactics. – 2024.