Uzbek Folktalemislabu: Motifs and Applicability of Propp's Functions

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Fairy Tale - a traditional story written for children that usually involves imaginary creatures and magic.[1]

ABSTRACT

Fairy tales are very important for developing the worldview of children. In many cultures, they are used as an early method of teaching kids the difference between good and bad, courage and cowardice, love and hatred, and many other basic concepts a human must be able to differentiate. To examine the very essence of the Fairy Tale, its history, morphology, and structure, specialists have been trying to classify it in many different ways. However, modern scientists conclude that none of the existing methods of classification can be considered absolutely accurate. For instance, the approach offered Wundt[2]supposes division of tails into 7 groups, but the definition of each group is vague and actual classification becomes a hard task, because a single fairy tale may possess characteristics intrinsic to several groups at once. The ten categories proposed by Volkov[3] also do not stand up to criticism due to mix-up arising, since one tale might contain elements allowing to attribute it to several categories at the same time. Aarne-Thompson classification or Vladimir Propp's functions are also not exhaustive as some scholars note.

KEYWORDS: *function, motif, fairy tale, classification*

One of the basic causes of the classification problems is the extremely vast variety of fairy tale types, elements, motifs and plots. Analyzing the fairy tales of different nations readers can notice that there is a significant difference in approach, philosophy and moral of tales. This is influenced by history, culture, traditions, religion, geography and many other aspects. However, attempts to classify fairy tales show that there are some basic points that belong to any folktale. Such points can be seen in Aarne's classification and Propp's list of functions, they are also noted by other scholars and literature specialists.

The analysis below will be dedicated to applying the categories proposed by Vladimir Propp to the Uzbek fairy tale "Mislabu". And their correlation with the motifs defined by Chernousova[4].

Propp defined the obligatory functions and their sequence within the fairy tale as follows:

1. Absentation	2. Interdiction
3. Violation of interdiction	4. Reconnaissance
5. Delivery	6. Trickery
7. Complicity	8. Villainy and lack
9. Mediation	10. Counteraction
11. Departure	12. Testing
13. Reaction	14. Acquisition
15. Guidance	16. Struggle
17. Branding	18. Victory
19. Resolution	20. Return
21. Pursuit	22. Rescue
23. Arrival	24. Claim
25. Task	26. Solution
27. Recognition	28. Exposure
29. Transfiguration	30. Punishment
31. Wedding	

In "Mislabu" the situation is a bit more complicated that in typical fairy tales. First of all, it consists of several seemingly unconnected episodes, developing in parallel. Also at the beginning it is hard to identify the main hero. In general, the main hero is the cruel king: he resolves hard task and finds the beauty he was willing to marry. The beauty helps him to escape from pursuers, but at the end a new main hero appears and defeats the cruel king and marries the beautiful Mislabu. However, motifs and functions can be distributed in relation to the cruel king, because the final winner did very little action.

First element: Absentation(Someone goes missing) appears in Mislabu not at the beginning of the story line. Actually there is no direct "missing" of something, but kings desire to find and marry Mislabu - a princess he had never seen – can be attributed to this element according to Propps classification. This element corresponds to motif of "Searching for beloved" defined by Chernousova. Unusual thing about this fairy tale is that the Absentation is described after a short story about an old gardener, who is not a main character of the plot but appears several times along the tale to interconnect various elements and motifs into a single action.

One more element of Absentation can be notice when the king can't find his parrot and asks people for help, promising gold and high position in the kingdom to one who finds and brings the bird. This part of the fairy tale can be considered as a short story within the story, and it is also used as a "connector" for general plot parts.

Element 2. Interdiction(Hero is warned). As soon as the main hero in Mislabu seems to be the cruel king, the motif of warning the hero should be addressed to him. Within the story king was warned twice: first, when the parrot told him that searching for the beautiful Mislabu will be a difficult task, and then, when an old man told him to give up the idea of marrying Mislabu, because many young and strong men

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[1] Cambridge Dictionary.dictionary.cambridge.org.

[2] W. Wundt, Probleme der Völkerpsychologie, Stuttgart, 1921

[3] Волков Р.М. Сказка. Разыскания посюжетосложению народной сказки, Харьков, 1924

[4] Черноусова И. П. Структура и художественные функции диалога в русской волшебной сказке. Воронеж, 1994

lost their lives trying. Both of warnings were violated (the third element). However, it should be noted that, within the main storyline there is a short parallel story about the cruel king's son – Bakhadu, who transforms into the main character at the end of the story, and that short story also has a classical motif of Interdiction related to the king's son. He was warned not to open the last of the forty doors in the castle he lived in, and not to look under the mat, that was on the floor in the room behind that door.

The third element (Violation of interdiction), follows in all three cases depicted above, and in the first two cases, with the king involved, the villain appears – PeryYunuskhan (in conformance with Propp's classification), but in the third case, there is no villain, and the boy just falls in love with Mislabu after seeing her picture under the mat. Elements from 4 to 7 (Reconnaissance, Delivery, Trickery and Complicity) do not apply this tale, and the Element 8 - Lack of something, here closely relates to Element 1 – Absentation, since the king feels need for Mislabu. King's desire to search for Mislabu personally, his route and the appointment of vizier to rule the kingdom while the king is on a trip can all be classified as Propp's Elements 9,10 and 11 Mediation, Counteraction and Departure respectively.

When it come the Elements 12 and 13 (Testing: Hero is challenged to prove heroic qualities and Reaction: Hero responds to test)they can be attributed to the case when the king finds a way to get into the beauty's castle and make her agree to marry him. As a result, hero becomes able to benefit Mislabu's magical helpers and items (flying horse, giants, you the sizing water).

The description of the way how the king gets into the Mislabu's castle and her bedroom, the process of tying her hair to make her agree to marry, the swimming of the king in youth sizing water and the agreement of Mislabu to marry king can be attributed to Elements 15, 16, 17 and 18 (Guidance, Struggle, Branding and Victory) respectively. The transfer of Mislabu's castle to the king's city can be considered as the Resolution (19) and Return (20) element.

After returning back home, king has to fight an PeryYunuskhan's army that was chasing since he stole Mislabu. The chasing itself (Element 21 - Pursuit) is not depicted in the fairy tale, but it is noted that the chasers reach the king in his kingdom, and he wins them, with the help of Mislabu (Element 22 – Rescue).

Although the king swam in you the sizing water, his return was not unrecognized (Element 23). Everyone in the kingdom knew that the king has returned.

Elements 24-30 are not directly present within the plot, and the final episode of the fairy tale relates to the motif of father-son competition, in which the cruel king is defeated and expelled (Element 30 - Punishment). His son marries Mislabu and rules the kingdom (Element 31 - Wedding and ascending the throne).

The analysis of the above Uzbek fairy tale in accordance with the general classification of functions and motifs reveals that those rules apply to Uzbek folktales in the same manner as they do to English, Russian, and other tales.

Mislabu is considered a fairy tale with a complex structure. It differs from the traditional fairy tales by the presence of several plots, and the cruel main hero, who is finally defeated by his son, who never did anything heroic. But still the standard classifications match the storyline.

As a conclusion it can be noted that the assumption that all the fairy tales of different nation have common roots can be proven by classifying them and analyzing the outcomes. They all meet the same criteria (in general) and have similar structural elements. Even quite "unusual" tale as Mislabu, demonstrates features inherent in typical folktales of east and west. Analyzing fairy tales, Propp came to a conclusion that there are only 31 elements (functions) in tales all over the world. Keeping that in mind, along with the idea of the common origins of the fairy tales, a conclusion can be drawn that the motifs can also be classified and structured to simplify the research in this sphere.

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