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THE IMAGE OF THE HALF-SNAKE CHARACTER IN BRITISH AND KAZAKH FOLKTALES

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the motif of a half-snake character in British and Kazakh folktales of different genres, primarily in fairy tales and heroic tales. The purpose of the article is to contrast the image of a half-snake character in British and Kazakh folktales in order to identify the main attributes and accompanying elements of this motif. In the scope of the study, the images of dragons and snakes in world folklore are briefly considered. Western portrayal of dragons is primarily negative, and the Eastern one is positive, while snakes usually have a neutral representation. The wisdom and wizardry of half-snake characters are noted. The scientific significance of the work lies in the consideration of the half-snake character motif in the tales of category 425A, which has not been studied in the contrastive aspect. The article reveals fundamentally new attributes of this motif, which confirms its practical significance. The article uses the methods of motif analysis and contrastive analysis. For detailed study, the Kazakh folktale "Man in the serpent skin" and the British folktale "Enchanted Snake" are selected. British and Kazakh folktales show significant similarities in the plot, depiction of characters and the use of this motif. The key elements of the image of the half-snake character are highlighted. The results obtained show that these elements are wisdom, alienation, a tragic end and further transformation into a bird (a dove). Also, the adjacent motifs were revealed: the search for a lost spouse, memory loss, singing. The results show that the motifs of fairy tales are changeable structural elements that can have a large number of variations and make up complex systems. The practical significance of the results of the work lies in the possibility of their use for further research in the field of analysis of motives.

Keywords: folklore, imagery, snakes, dragons, dragonlore, motif, half-snake character, transformation

Introduction

A motif is the smallest element of the plot, as widely recognized. In folklore analysis and in folkloristics, motifs are believed to be crucial for finding similarities and differences between folktales belonging to different cultures and nations. In this article, the motif of a half-snake man acting as a lost husband is being closely examined. The representation of a half-snake character is closely

connected to the portrayal of snakes and dragons in folktales. These creatures have a variety of functions depending on the region, the cultural layer, the history of the nation, and its beliefs. Two opposite representations can be found: the Western portrayal where dragons are villains, and the Eastern portrayal where dragons are wise advisors and supernatural creatures possessing magic. When it comes to the image of a snake, it is believed to be rather neutral compared to the monstrosity in dragonlore. With this in mind, it might be assumed that the image of a half-snake character possesses more or less the same qualities. At the same time, there are numerous differences between dragonlore, “snake-lore”, and the tales involving half-snake or half-serpent characters.

The folktales which involve enchanted creatures who later become people are grouped under several different categories. One of these categories is “Search for the lost husband” in Aarne-Thompson’s Folktale Motif Index. In the Index, the category is saved under the title 425A, and it encompasses a vast number of tales from different regions. What unites those tales is a series of motifs which follow the same scheme.

Two articles are chosen for the analysis: a Kazakh folktale “Man in the serpent skin” and a British tale “Enchanted snake”. These folktales belong to the mentioned category, and there are numerous similarities between them. With the help of motif analysis, several motifs found in the tales are withdrawn and put in chronological order. It is revealed that the motif of an enchanted half-snake character neighbors such motifs as a tragic end, search for seven years, singing a song in an abandoned castle, memory loss, and, interestingly, further transformation into a bird.

The images of dragons and snakes have been present in folklore since ancient times. A dragon would normally act a villain whose battle with the hero is the culmination point of the story. According to the classification suggested by Vladimir Propp, dragons may belong to the group of villains: the role which they usually play in numerous tales, legends, folk ballads and other such folkloric works around the world [1]. However, what interests us is another role of dragons and snakes: not those fire-breathing harmful creatures which terrify entire villages and are beaten by heroes, but the characters which think and act reasonably and sometimes give advice. Such a representation, quite widespread in Chinese, Korean and perhaps Japanese folklore, is rare in Western folktales and even in Middle Asian and Eastern tales of magic. In the Merriam-Webster dictionary, “dragon” is defined as a huge serpent (which is an archaic understanding) or a mythical creature shown as a monstrous winged and scaly serpent having a crested head and enormous claws. As it can be observed, the connotation is predictably negative, with such words as “monstrous” or “enormous” being involved. Here the line of demarcation should be drawn between dragons (enormous and dangerous) and snakes (small, sometimes even harmless, tricky, usually wise). The article provides a brief examination of how both these characters are depicted in world folklore and in British and Kazakh folktales. The primary concern of

this paper, however, is the image of a half-snake character in British and Kazakh folklore. The fairy-tales of this kind are grouped under the category of “Search for the lost husband” in Aarne-Thompson-Uther index of folktales. There are other categories such as “Supernatural spouse” and “Supernatural adversary” in the given index, yet they do not fully depict the half-snake character, focusing primarily on wives. Meanwhile the half-snake character usually acts as a husband and quite rarely – as a wife. A few folktales from this category are “On the white snake”, “Enchanted prince”, “The serpent prince”, “Black Bull of Norway”, “The goat” and “Man in the serpent skin”. Parallels are drawn between the images of the half-snake character in the mentioned folktales, and the main attributes of this motif are identified.

Methods and materials

The methods of motif analysis and contrastive analysis are utilized to reveal the essence of the motif of the half-snake character. The materials include the collections of folktales by Joseph Jacobs and Andrew Lang, and the collection “Kazakh folktales”.

Results

The examination of dragons, snakes, and half-snake characters in folklore leads to quite interesting results. These characters of world and local folklore were studied by Chernoyarova, Zarubkina, Leston Mayo, J. Simpson, Roy Snelling, Kaskabasov, and a number of other researchers. A dragon is a creature which perhaps never existed, and the representation of it depends on the descriptions provided by people. As a result, a certain level of bias is expected: narrators of folktales use specific words to describe dragons. For example, let us pay attention to the following phrases from “Batyр and Chige-Hursukhal”, a Chuvash heroic folktale about a young hero defeating a dragon:

a twelve-headed serpent

a beast of twelve heads

the beheaded monster

Chuvash tales are of great interest to the researchers of Turkic folklore: though their language belongs to the Turkic group, this nation is influenced by Slavic traditions as a result of their location. This can be seen in the name of the main character (Ivan) and other hints in the plot of the tale which show that this folkloric work is merely a mixture of many other folktales coming from different cultural layers [2].

Below are phrases from a Moldovan folktale titled “Fat-Frumos and the Sun”. According to the plot, a group of dragons steals the sun, making the entire country suffer. A curious thing about this tale is the presence of tricksters: the villains disguise themselves as a family of human beings, thus deceiving the main character. That is why the majority of dragons (Twilight-dragon, Evening-dragon, Midnight-dragon and their wives) are vaguely described as “snakes” or

even “horsemen”. When the wives of Twilight and Evening turn into different objects to deceive the hero, the only thing which is mentioned about their nature is their “black and thick snake blood”. The only real description which can be noted is the image of Mother-dragon:

*a huge black cloud coming from behind, with lightnings and thunder
her maw wide open, one jaw touching the sky, the other touching the earth
her fire-breathing maw
she devoured the stick*

It may be assumed that the images of dragons and snakes are somewhat merged in the mentioned tales. Indeed, the words “dragon” and “snake” are sometimes used interchangeably, which might be misleading. However, we need to consider the fact that the Russian language utilizes several different words to refer to the concept of “snake”, some of which are *змея*, *змея* and *змий*. Whilst the first word has a neutral connotation, the second word may be translated as “serpent” and refers to both dragons and snakes (yet predominantly dragons) [3]. When it comes to the last word, it is usually utilized in the meaning of The Serpent who deceived Eve and has a completely negative connotation (*змий-искуситель*).

This disambiguation leads to the fact that dragons and snakes which have different connotations and different conceptual areas are mixed in the folkloric discourse and in the cognition of a folktale narrator. The same situation is witnessed in the Kazakh language, where only three words depict snakes and dragons:

*Жылан
Аждаһа
Айдахар*

While the first word has Turkic origins and means “snake” in the most general and neutral way, the second word has its origins in Farsi and Pehlevi. In those languages, the word has a meaning of “a monstrous creature, a character of fairy tales, which hides in caves and acts as a villain”. It can be noted that the word *жылан* is used in the meaning of “dragon” in a number of Kazakh fairy-tales, whilst the second word *аждаһа* has a significantly more restricted utilization. This may be connected to the fact that the mentioned word was transitioned to Kazakh when many folkloric layers had already been formed.

When it comes to English, the words “serpent” and “dragon” are rarely used interchangeably. Serpents are usually depicted as villainous and tricky creatures whose main task is to deceive the main character and lead him or her to death. This representation is quite close to that of Bible. It is believed that the negative connotation of snakes mainly originates from the religious belief that Satan, having disguised himself as a serpent, convinced Eve to eat the forbidden fruit which led to the descent from Heaven. Dragons, on the other hand, have always acted as villains, quite rarely playing another role. Their monstrous exterior and such qualities as breathing fire turn them into schematic evil, the only purpose of

which is to challenge the hero. Such plots can be found in numerous epic tales, including Beowulf [4].

For instance, J. Simpson classifies 50 dragon tales of British origin into several categories by the role the dragon plays in them. Most of these tales show the same patterns as the bulk of Western folklore: dragons are shown as monstrous creatures which the hero defeats. In the folklore of Yorkshire, however, the trickery and wisdom of the dragons is also mentioned [5].

The images of snakes (not serpents) are less negative in both Eastern and Western folklore. In Kazakh fairy-tales, snakes quite often act as adversaries, suggesting solutions and sometimes even saving the main character. For instance, in *“The padishah who wished to unravel his dream”*, a king of a distant country wishes to know the meaning of his recent dream where he sees several animals. Those animals are a sheep, a fox, and a wolf. When the poorest man of the country is asked to solve the dream, he asks a snake for help, and it indeed provides the right solution. This repeats several times, until the man decides to kill the snake and take all the money which the king was offering. Offended, the snake leaves the man forever.

In this tale, numerous interesting motifs can be found. Firstly, the snake is acting as a wise adversary which is not interested in earthly matters: it does not accept the money offered by the poor man. Instead, the snake leaves a coin after drinking a cup of milk at the poor man’s house. The reasons behind its help are unclear, yet the tale has profound philosophic context and raises the questions of morality, egoism, and altruism.

Another noble snake of Kazakh origin is Bapy-khan who first swallows the hero but then releases him, thus presenting him with magical powers, as noted by Saifullina [6].

In the collection of German tales by brothers Grimm, there is a folktale *“White snake”* where a young servant learns the languages of animals by eating the flesh of a small white snake usually offered to the king. Snakes have been long depicted as wise creatures who know the secrets of the world. This image may have derived from *ouroboros* – the snake eating its own tail, which symbolizes the eternal repetitiveness of the universe. In Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece, snakes and small dragons eating their own tails represented the cycle of life which includes birth, death, and rebirth. In their turn, those understandings are connected to a belief in reincarnation, which is widespread on the East.

In other words, snakes might have symbolized the entire world with all its mysteries and secrets which are unveiled in case of encountering a snake, helping it, marrying it or eventually eating its flesh. Here we turn to the major concern of our article: the images of half-person, half-snake characters in Kazakh and English folklore.

Discussion

Perhaps one of the most unique and classical tales about a half-snake character

is “Shahmaran”, a legend of Arabic or Persian origin which was included in the collection “One thousand and one nights” under the name of “Shah-Maran”. Its tracks can be found in the Turkish tale of the same name which is widespread on the south of the country (in Adana and Mardin). Those regions are close to Syria, which is why, probably, the tale of Arabic origin was translated into Turkish and became a national folk legend. In the Kazakh translation of “One thousand and one nights” the name of the tale is “Malike-Maran”, as the translator wished to underline that the half-snake character was, in fact, a female [7].

As translated from Persian, “Shah” means “king”, and “maran” means “snakes” (the plural form). In other words, Shah-Maran is the king of snakes, the most precious and the most desirable creature as it knows the secrets of the world. While there are some differences, the plot of most adaptations is pretty much the same. A young man named Jamasap (or Jamsap) makes a living by selling woods. One day he and a few of his fellow woodsmen go to the forest where they find a pit full of extremely tasteful honey. They start selling honey instead and soon become middle-class salesmen, which irritates the friends of Jamasap who wish to take all the profit. As the pit increases, the woodsmen now need to hang themselves on a rope in order to reach the honey. When it is Jamasap’s turn to go down and get the honey, his friends abandon him in the pit, causing Jamasap to travel to the underworld where he meets Shah-Maran.

Let us take a look at the description of Shah-Maran in the variant of “One thousand and one nights”:

A small snake, all white, wearing a crown

In other variants of this tale the description is as follows:

A half-snake, half-woman creature wearing a crown

Huge snakes who inhabited the underworld were all the servants of Shah-Maran. In “One thousand and one nights” they take her to Jamasap on a small golden plate which must have been her throne. In other variants Shah-Maran’s size is equal to that of a human, so she sits on a golden throne in the middle of a meadow. She and Jamasap soon become lovers (in Persian and Turkish variants), and Jamasap spends a few years underground. In the variant of “One thousand and one nights”, the snake does not have any human features except for the face, and her relationships with Jamasap are rather friendly than romantic. Again, Jamasap lives with the snakes and soon starts missing his home, to which Shah-Maran and Malike-Maran both respond with sorrow. In all the variants the snake cannot liberate Jamasap because she is afraid for her life. After a while, however, Jamasap is sent home with a few instructions which include not taking a bath as his spine is now covered in serpent scales. Jamasap does not follow this order, and his encounter with Shah-Maran is soon revealed. The king of that country is ill, and he must eat the flesh of Shah-Maran to recover. Jamasap is taken to the vizir of the country who torments him until Jamasap reveals where Shah-Maran is hiding. Eventually the snake is cut in three pieces (Turkish variant), boiled and eaten by the king. Jamasap drinks the broth and becomes a widely known scholar

who is familiar with the secrets of the world, and vizir dies after drinking the snake oil.

While this story does not fall under the category of “Search for the lost husband”, it may have influenced the Kazakh folktale “Man in the serpent skin” where the main character’s name is Shahimardan. “Mardan” and “maran” are practically the same word, and “Shah”, as it has been mentioned before, stands for “king”. The plot of this magical tale is, however, entirely different.

According to the tale, there are old spouses who have never had a child. Suddenly the wife gets pregnant and wishes to eat dragon flesh (a motif which can be met in Giambattista Basile’s *Tale of Tales*). The old man is lucky enough to find some dragon meat which his wife devours before giving birth to a snake with a human face. The couple raises the snake, and when the serpent boy reaches a certain age, he starts asking for marriage. He wishes to marry no one but the king’s daughter, and then we encounter quite an interesting motif: the boy’s father goes to ask for that three times, and all the three times the king kills him, and all the three times the serpent man manages to revitalize his father. The motif of rebirth is quite common in folklore. This may contribute to the fact that the serpent man has magical powers and is, therefore, a non-human creature.

After getting reborn for the third time, the old man continues to ask for the king’s daughter’s hand, and the king gives a magical task which the serpent man successfully fulfills. After the wedding, the daughter is sent to a room where her husband lies in the form of a snake. Terrified, she touches the skin of the serpent, and he turns into a handsome man (the motif of transformation). Happiness, however, does not last for long: the king’s daughter accidentally loses the serpent skin, and her husband flies away, having turned into a dove. The wife searches for him for seven years and eventually finds the serpent man, and the tale ends. There is also a subplot of a woman held in captivity by a giant: the woman helps the king’s daughter, and Shahimardan liberates her in return. It is not rare for Eastern tales in general and for Kazakh tales in particular to be a mixture of different legends and have a variety of subplots [8].

The following motifs can be found in the tale, in chronological order:

Long-awaited pregnancy

Dragon flesh

Half-snake child

King’s daughter and peasant

Rebirth of the father

Magical tasks for the son-in-law

Transformation of the spouse

Lost (burnt) skin

Transformation into a bird

Search for the husband

Wearing boots of steel

Wandering for seven years

A woman and a giant

Lost husband sings a song

Curing the blind parents

There are numerous tales which share the same motifs in the “Searching for the lost husband” category. Some of them are listed below:

Der Eisenofen (The iron stove), a German tale.

Lo Romani (The sprig of rosemary), a Catalan tale.

A menina e o bicho (Maiden and the beast), a Portuguese tale.

The Enchanted Snake, an English tale from the collection of Andrew Lang.

The Black Bull of Norway, an English tale from the collection of Joseph Jacobs.

La Colomba Ladra, an Italian tale from the collection of Italo Calvino.

O bilem hadu (About a white snake), a Czech tale from the collection of Božena Němcová.

There are also Norwegian, Russian, Irish, Israeli, French, Neapolitan, and Greek tales. Eastern folklore is demonstrated by a single Japanese tale; apart from that, the entirety of this category is represented by Western, Northern, and Mediterranean folklore. A Hungarian tale “The serpent prince” utilizes the same motif of an animal as a bridegroom, yet its content is darker and the resolution is less positive than of other folktales of this category. From this it might be assumed that the tale “The serpent prince” led to the creation of “Man in the serpent skin”. Still, such presumptions should be made with caution, as the two tales share little in common except for a few motifs and the presence of a snake character. “Man in the serpent skin” is closer to the tales of “One thousand and one nights” by its narration type, the characters, and the positive resolution. In “The serpent prince”, the bride of the serpent man is kept hostage in a dark underground room till she agrees to marry the snake – a motif more common for the medieval Western folktales with their naturalistic portrayals of cruelty.

While most of the mentioned tales share the same plotline, similar characters and motifs, the closest to “Man in the serpent skin” is “Enchanted snake” from the collection of Andrew Lang. The English origin of this tale may be doubted because of the names of characters (Sabatella, Cola-Mattheo) which are rather Mediterranean. It may be assumed, however, that the tale is an adaptation of a Neapolitan or a Sicilian tale [10]. The similar situation often occurs in Kazakh folklore, where the names of characters are Arabic or Persian due to the overlapping in folkloric layers. In “Man in the serpent skin”, the male character’s name is Shahimardan, which is not a Turkic name, while the female character is called “Nursulu”.

The plots are quite similar in the beginning, with a small difference: the mother and father of the serpent skin man find him in a basket in the forest near which they live. The motif of adopting a snake and raising it as a child can be met in pretty much all the mentioned tales: in “O Bilem Hadu”, a Czech folktale, a woman finds a white snake in the forest. In “The snake prince” from

the collection of Andrew Lang, a poor woman decides to kill herself by letting a snake bite her; however, the snake turns out to be an enchanted little boy. In “The serpent prince”, a Hungarian folktale, a queen finds a snake and raises it as her own son. As it can be noticed, a motif of giving birth to a half-human creature is quite rare in the category “Search for the lost husband”. Mostly, the snake (bull, bear, goat, fish, lion etc.) is revealed to be an enchanted prince who lives in a distant kingdom with his real parents. This fact makes “Man in the serpent skin” unique, as it appears to be an only folktale where the half-snake character has human parents.

As the plot progresses, more differences emerge. It has been mentioned that Shahimardan turns into a dove after his wife loses his serpent skin. The wife searches for him for seven years without success, and then she finds her husband in an underground castle where he is singing a sad song (close to Arabic *beit*). She is able to retrieve her husband from the castle without any obstacles, while in other tales it becomes quite difficult.

Now, that is the primary difference between “Man in the serpent skin” and other folktales of the given category. Mostly, the main female character needs to fulfill a number of tasks before she is able to reunite with her husband. These tasks may vary: usually they are reduced to house cleaning and other chores. In some cases, however, the female character undergoes a different type of quest: she finds out that her husband married another queen (often vile in nature), and she needs to give away her precious possessions to be able to see the male character. In a variety of folktales, such encounters give no result, and the female character gradually loses all her belongings before her husband recognizes her. After the recognition, the new wife of the male character is usually punished (decapitated or exiled). When it comes to “Man in the serpent skin”, the narrative is closer to the style of “One thousand and one nights”, and the ending does not involve the punishment of the villain as the tale itself contains no evident antagonists except for Kara-Dau.

Conclusion

Dragons, snakes, and half-snake characters have different depictions in world folklore in general and British and Kazakh folktales in particular. Dragons quite often act as villains or obstacles. Snakes are sometimes also depicted as negative characters, but their role of wise adversaries prevails in the examined folktales. A snake carries out a variety of functions, from helping to unravel the meaning of a dream to being a companion and a friend (Kazakh folklore). In Western folktales, eating the flesh of a white snake leads to possessing enormous knowledge about the secrets of the world (“The white snake”). In Eastern folklore, insulting a snake in vain might lead to deadly consequences, which shows the respect towards these creatures.

When it comes to the figure of a half-snake character, it generally falls under the category “Search for the lost husband” in Aarne-Thompson Index.

However, the scope of this motif is broader, and in some cases the half-snake character possesses powers which go beyond helping the main hero or heroine. While the Western variants of the tale about a man in the serpent skin contain the similar motifs as the folktales about other animal characters (bulls, goats, bears), the Kazakh variant might root in the tale about Shah-Maran. This explains the differences in the narrative, the presence of beits and the distinct ending of “Man in the serpent skin”. Despite being seemingly different, the tales exhibit a variety of similarities which help reveal the additional attributes and further motifs used alongside the motif of a half-snake character.

The attributes of a half-snake character are:

1. Being wise.
2. Being capable of reviving people.
3. Possessing extreme magical powers yet not using them.
4. White skin (in some cases).
5. Human head and a snake’s body.
6. Lying in a circle (which might be an allusion to ouroboros).

Another peculiar finding about the nature of the half-snake character is that it usually transforms into a bird after the female character burns, loses or destroys his serpent skin. This takes place both in “Enchanted prince” and “Man in the serpent skin”. The motif of further transformation into a bird may have certain connection with the nature of snakes and the beliefs associated with them.

To summarize, the article examined a variety of folktales from world, British, and Kazakh folklore containing the images of snakes, dragons, and half-snake characters. It is assumed that the portrayals of a half-snake character in British and Kazakh folklore have different roots which explains the distinctions in the sequence of actions and in the depiction of the character. At the same time, the exhibited similarities help unravel the role of the half-snake character in folklore. As it can be noticed, the scope of motifs is extremely wide, and surprising connections can be found in the folkloric works of seemingly distant and different cultures.

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БРИТАН ЖӘНЕ ҚАЗАҚ ЕРТЕГІЛЕРІНДЕГІ ЖАРТЫЛАЙ ЖЫЛАН КЕЙІПКЕР БЕЙНЕСІ

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Аңдатпа. Мақала әртүрлі жанрдағы британдық және қазақ ертегілеріндегі, ең алдымен сиқыр туралы ертегілер мен қаһармандық ертегілердегі жартылай жылан кейіпкерінің мотивіне арналған. Мақаланың мақсаты – осы мотивтің негізгі атрибуттары мен ілеспе элементтерін анықтау үшін ағылшын және қазақ ертегілеріндегі жартылай жылан кейіпкерінің бейнесін қарастыру және салғастыру. Зерттеу аясында әлемдік фольклордағы айдаһар мен жылан бейнелеріне қысқаша тоқталынады. Батыс фольклорында айдаһар әдетте жағымсыз, ал шығыс ертегілерінде жағымды мағынаға ие болса, жылан бейнесінің бейтараптығымен ерекшеленетіндігі байқалады; жартылай жылан кейіпкерлеріне келетін болсақ, олардың даналығы мен сиқырлы қабілеттері атап өтіледі. Жұмыстың ғылыми маңыздылығы - бұрын салыстырмалы аспектіде зерттелмеген 425А санатындағы ертегілердегі жартылай жылан кейіпкерінің мотивін қарастыруда. Осылайша, мақалада бұл мотивтің жаңа атрибуттары ашылады, бұл мақаланың практикалық маңыздылығын көрсетеді. Мақалада мотивтерді талдау және салыстырмалы талдау әдістері қолданылады. Толығырақ зерттеу үшін қазақ «Жылан қабықты жігіт» ертегісі мен британдық «Сиқырланған жылан» ертегісі таңдалды. Британдық және қазақ ертегілерінің сюжетінде, кейіпкерлерді бейнелеуінде және осы мотивті қолдануында айтарлықтай ұқсастықтар бар. Жартылай жылан кейіпкерінің бейнесінің негізгі элементтері айқындалады. Алынған нәтижелер бұл элементтердің даналық, қашықтық, қайғылы соң және одан әрі трансформация (құсқа, көбінесе көгершінге айналу) екенін көрсетеді. Атрибуттардан басқа, көрсетілген мотивке іргелес мотивтер

де анықталды: жоғалған жарын іздеу, есте сақтау қабілетін жоғалту, ән салу. Алынған нәтижелер ертегілердің мотивтері өзгермелі құрылымдық элементтер болып табылатынын, көптеген вариацияларға ие және күрделі жүйелер құра алатынын көрсетеді. Жұмыс нәтижелерінің практикалық маңыздылығына келер болсақ, нәтижелер ертегі мотивтерін зерттеу саласындағы жаңа ғылыми ізденістерге негіз бола алады.

Тірек сөздер: фольклор, бейнелеу, жылан, айдахар, айдахар ертегілері, мотив, жартылай жылан кейіпкер, трансформация

ОБРАЗ ПЕРСОНАЖА-ПОЛУЗМЕИ В БРИТАНСКИХ И КАЗАХСКИХ СКАЗКАХ

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена мотиву персонажа-полузмеи в британских и казахских сказках разных жанров, прежде всего в волшебных и богатырских сказках. Целью статьи является рассмотрение и сопоставление образа персонажа-полузмеи в британских и казахских сказках для выявления основных атрибутов и сопутствующих элементов данного мотива. В рамках исследования кратко рассмотрены образы драконов и змей в мировом фольклоре и выявлено, что если в западном фольклоре драконы обычно имеют отрицательную коннотацию, а в восточных сказках - положительную, то изображение змей в целом нейтрально; что же касается персонажей-полузмей, отмечены их мудрость и магические способности. Научная значимость работы заключается в рассмотрении мотива персонажа-полузмеи в сказках категории 425А, изучение которого в сопоставительном аспекте ранее не предпринималось. Таким образом, статья выявляет принципиально новые атрибуты данного мотива, что подтверждает ее практическую значимость. В статье использованы методы анализа мотивов и сопоставительного анализа. Для более подробного изучения выбраны сказка казахского происхождения «Джигит в змеиной коже» и британская сказка «Заколдованный змей». Британские и казахские сказки обнаруживают значительное сходство в сюжете, изображении персонажей и использовании указанного мотива. Выделяются ключевые элементы образа персонажа-полузмеи. Полученные результаты показывают, что этими элементами являются мудрость, отчуждение, трагический конец и дальнейшая трансформация (превращение в птицу, чаще всего в голубя). Помимо атрибутов, выявлены мотивы, соседствующие с указанным мотивом: поиск утерянного супруга, потеря памяти, песня. Полученные результаты показывают, что мотивы сказок – это изменяемые структурные элементы, которые могут иметь большое количество вариаций и составлять сложные системы. Практическое значение итогов работы заключается в возможности их использования для дальнейших изысканий в сфере анализа мотивов.

Ключевые слова: фольклор, образ, змея, дракон, сказки о драконах, мотив, персонаж-полузмея, трансформация

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