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Filologiya

EDWARD MATSIPOLO AS AN EXAMPLE OF CENTRAL ASIAN SCIENCE FICTION WRITER

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Introduction

Edward Matsipulo, a well-known author and highly successful science-fiction and fantasy writer, also known for his works of social and philosophical science fiction and for his scientific popular articles about the psychology of human beings. Edward Matsipulo is one of the most prolific science fiction writers of all time in Central Asia, having written or edited more than 50 books. He is widely considered a master of both science fiction and fantasy genres.

Research Methods: Approach and Design

Mostly theoretical methods were used in this research. The article makes use of qualitative research methods, where the research approach implemented has been that of interpretivism. This approach is implemented by the researcher in order to synthesize facts which are derived mainly from secondary sources, and which are qualitative in nature. He also observes that one characteristics of interpretivism is that these facts are abstract in nature, and governed by a variety of factors which are non-tangible and difficult to measure. These can be social and cultural factors. Therefore, for the purposes of this research, the author chose the interpretivist approach, rather than the pragmatist approaches, because abstract, non-quantifiable variables such as “culture”, “literature”, comparing “Central Asian science fiction and fantasy” with “prominent science fiction and fantasy themes” and analyzing whether performing techniques and their application into Edward Matsipilo’s science fiction can have positive influence on practice were part of the objectives of the research.

Analysis

To begin with, let us examine the nature of Edward Matsipulo's fiction. His oriental literature, including the “Kichik Mirgafur’s Treasures” and “The Underground Kingdom of Koshchei” are referred by some literary critics to realistic fantasy.

According to “The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction”, “any story set in the Far East and drawing upon indigenous beliefs, myths, magic or the supernatural is technically an Oriental fantasy” (Clute 2018), but a few more lines of definition can be drawn. Most Oriental fantasies are set in a Land-of-Fable Orient. Stories set in the contemporary East can be called as Oriental fantasies only if their veneer of reality is removed to reveal the fantastic; Oriental fantastic atmosphere must be central to the story – otherwise they are merely Oriental thrillers. Initially Oriental fantasy and Arabian fantasy were ill distinguished in Western eyes, especially as many stories in the Arabian Nights were drawn from more extensive lands than Arabia, including as far east as India. Most Oriental fantasies are written by Western writers drawing upon Oriental imagery, myths and legends. Oriental writers may draw upon the same myths, and such stories are also Oriental fantasies – although contemporary Oriental fantasy writers would no more tend to think of their works as Oriental fantasies than would Europeans regard their fiction as "Occidental fantasies", trying to combine realistic and fantastic matters (Fogal 2009).

Edward Matsipulo uses specific professional knowledge to create linguistic and literary connections between our real world and fantastic one. Nevertheless, whether the author himself thought of his works as fantasy? Traditionally, the genre of fantasy has been defined as stories concerned with things, which cannot, or could not, happen. This definition becomes problematic with regard to Edward Matsipulo: modern rationality tells us that much of the events described in these works could not have happened without the aid of supernatural forces. As it has been said, Edward Matsipulo’s literary works combine scientific, mythological, and mystical elements.

Two books of Edward Matsipulo were published in Uzbekistan. They are “The Cock-and-bull Stories Writer” and “The Hunting on Monsters”. These books were not in poor demand on the shop counters. It was not a pure accident: readers were attracted by the topicality and urgency of the problems raised in these books.

"The Cock-and-bull Stories Writer” is a classic fantasy tale by form. The author tried to create a certain symbiosis of folk fairy tales and psychological narrative about modern person’s philosophy. Such symbiosis is
typical for the majority of the modern Uzbek fantasy tales. According to the plot, a fairy “daeva” (or “daiva”) appeared in one ancient city. In Uzbek folk legends daeva is a fantastic creature, possessing unholy ability and more often personifying negative traits of human nature. However, daeva, appeared on the pages of Edward Matsipulo’s tale is not a monster, but shabby despicable man, pruning trees, nicknamed as Wet-Nose. In a filthy “chapan” (oriental wadded robe), girded with an old scarf, in old split rubbers, he is possessed by one desire – to build “duvals” (walls made of clay, canes, tree branches typical for ancient Asian constructions). He hurried to build as many duvals as possible so to isolate, disunite people. He cuts bushes and trees cheerfully, depriving them of natural beauty. Using the method of hidden irony, the author speaks about one positive side of daeva’s occupations: he does evil not just for fun, but also for salary since he is a workman of consumer services. There are several personages who are opposed to Wet-Nose: beautiful young Pary (symbolizes the Beauty), strong man Palvan (symbolizes the Power) and, finally, Cock-and-bull stories writer (symbolizes the Wit, the Creativity), one of those, whose behavior never packs in generally accepted frames, whose words return people’s minds to authentic humanity. Daeva, on the other side, reduces people. He reduces people both in direct and in figurative sense. He drives people’s souls in fashionable walls, new machines, and whispers: “values, first of all material values!” He deprives trees of leaves, but people - of reason.

The Evil is defeated in the tale. However, daeva is still nearby. He is in us, and people should do much to drive him away from their souls.

According to the final words, the book will be continued. What will be the continuation like? I don’t know. But “The Cock-and-bull Stories Writer” is certainly great success of Edward Matsipulo.

Quite powerful philosophical charge can be found in the collection of stories "The Hunting on Monsters": "The Blackening Lagoon", "The Height 735" and "The Invasion of Danjeens".

Thematic problem of the "The Blackening Lagoon" is directly connected with ecology. The author sinks the readers in the world, where ocean is turned into an enormous scramble. The inhabitants call it Stinking Puddle. Oil spots and multiple lawns constructed from old rags, rotten boards, plastic packages, tins, bloated dead bodies of the rats are waving on its waters. In addition, the most terrible thing is iridescent water surface with spots of chemical rejections and those gray barrels with nuclear wastes on the ocean side. The coast is a continuation of the scramble, on which the mountains of the imported rubbish are placed. The scramble divided population of the world into two camps. First one consists of people working around it and living in it (unacknowledged scientists, workmen of the scramble, homeless). Second camp is presented by scramble owners (clan of Kirtly).

Accidentally a certain Augusto, representative of Kirtly clan, finds himself on the coast of the scramble. Near the scramble, he meets a man called Yousef, who looks like a tramp. The dialogue between Augusto and Yousef opens the plot - Augusto is full of doubts, he decides to put an end to the scramble. Augusto begins to help Yousef and his friends conducting sabotages against those who surge departure in the Ocean. For the first time in his life Augusto faces the power of Kirtly. He is declared outside of law and soon, together with Yousef, falls into a special hospital, where such people as they are brainwashed. Augusto manages to run away, but only after terrible procedures and tortures have already been done. During his escape he falls in the Puddle and can’t get out of it. Before his death Augusto understands that, even if Kirtly is killed, the Blackening Lagoon will never disappear, it has already penetrated into people’s mind.

By the use of tragic ending, the author anyway hopes for better. In epilogue, he created quite optimistic image of a pelican that could fly in the sky even after getting in the Puddle: “Iren looked after him and cried to him. Let him see her. She can help him. She is his mother! Let his mother say her maternal word.

The story “The Height 735” is full of psychological tragedy. One man, named Yamasita, fraudulently brings Hiyama, an aristocrat, his servant Ciao Lee and monsterologist Ivanov on one of the island. There all three men fall into captivity to a mad soldier, who is engaged with digging trenches, pillboxes and ditches for the defense of the hill (Height 735). He does not know (but most likely - does not want to know) that the war has already ended. Possessing a specific ability to read people’s thoughts and to hypnotize them, Ivanov waits for a suitable moment. Moreover, the moment comes, monsterologist tries to invoke something good and kind, that was in his life, in the mind of the mad. For a long time, Ivanov cannot find anything in the mind of the soldier, only an anxiety for defense capacity of the hill.

"Then it chanced that the image of a certain woman appears in soldier’s mind. Her hair is grey, her eyes are sad, but calm.

- Let him see her. She can help him. She is his mother! Let his mother say her maternal word.

Then calm voice came:
- Die well, sonny. Be dead when come back.
- You are a mother! – I cried, sinking in darkness. - A Mother!
- Be dead”.

In a year or so Yamasita returns to the island with another two former militaries. They are going to inspect the defense capacity of the Height. Hiyama, Ciao Lee and Ivanov manages to blow their boat and seize those men arrived. "Inspectors" try to convince the soldier hidden by the rock that the war is finished, and Emperor himself has ordered to pack all weapon. At first, the soldier resists and calls everybody cowards. Then after one of the "inspectors" has called him betrayer, old soldier surrenders. In addition, before everybody’s eyes in a second or two this strong, unbending soldier turned into a shrunken oldster who can do nothing.

Edward Matsipulo borrows from Asian mythology as well. It can easily be seen in “The Invasion of Danjeens”. This story is full of Tibetan symbolism. The story "The Invasion of Danjeens" is mystical fantasy both by form and content. The action of the story takes place in the jungles of Himalayas. The monk - Bikram, his assistant - former poacher Chris and monstrologist Ivanov try to rescue the last representative of the mountain royal tiger named Yellow from poachers. Soon it becomes clear that the ways of saving are quite different. The monk wants to suppress the consciousness of the tiger, his love of freedom, turn him into tamer "danjeen", and lead away from poachers-taurans in his temple. Ivanov, on the other hand, is sure that it will be enough to lead Yellow away from so-called “protected territories”; that destroying the consciousness of the beast they will kill his nature, and only stuffed animal will be left. However, Ivanov cannot prevent the monk from realizing his plan, monstrologist’s abilities are equal to those of the monk, and there is Chris too, who has the same opinion with the monk. They seize the tiger and hold on their ritual. Then the monk and Chris take Ivanov temporarily in captivity and move in mountains to the temple. On their way to the temple, they fall into a trap, made by taurans. In the bustle of fight and exchange of fire, Ivanov manages to free Yellow and return a piece of his natural consciousness. Then he makes his way into the woods. Having noticed this, Chris shoots at monstrologist, who, then, loses the consciousness. Having come to normal, Ivanov realizes that someone drags him along the ground by the belt. The rescuer turns out to be Yellow, who stops again and again, licks his wounds, but persistently makes his way to the borders of the “protected territories”.

The Name of the book of Edward Matsipulo - "The Hunting on Monsters" - is not accidental. In spite of the varieties of the problems raised by the author, each story of the collection plays a definite role in opening the image of the Monster. Successive events of the stories taken as a whole help reveal a certain stage of the process of turning a person into a monster. In the story "The Blackening Lagoon" it is a possessed by longing to boundless power Kirtly, in the story "The Height 735" - a maddened soldier, in “The Invasion of Danjeens” - a monk Bikram. The reasons of the conversion of the person into a monster, brought by the author, differ. In some cases, it is because of the external circumstances, in other cases - a weakness of the human consciousness, and, sometimes, both of them. The agents of evil (monsters) have been destroyed, of course; but at the same time, active, in some way good has been banished as well. The writer brightly reproduces the internal sufferings of the personages, often uses dynamic dialogues. In such kind of plot environment, the urgent problems of our modern society take interesting outlines; as if the author leads the reader to some familiar problems, but from other perspective. Moreover, that is the reason of him to be one of the prominent fantasy writers in Uzbekistan.

Results

And this is the whole point: Edward Matsipulo’s science fiction combines not only different literary aspects (scientific, fantastic, mythological, mystical), but different types of the world outlooks (European, Central and East Asian). From a strictly literary standpoint, this is an astonishing experiment magnificently and fantastical realized. The author’s concept is based on the idea of the progressive freeing of Man from the influence of demons to work out his own destiny.

References


Аннотация

ЭДУАРД МАЦИПУЛО - ЎРТА ОСИЁ ИЛМИЙ ФАНТАСТИК АДАБИЁТИНИНГ ВАКИЛИ
СИФАТИДА
Р. Ш. Ахмедов

Маколада Ўрта Осиёниг кўзга кўринган илмий фантастик ёзувчиси Эдуард Маципулонинг бадиий ижодиёти хусусида фикрлар юритилган. Ёзувчи ўзининг асарларида илмий фантастика ва фэнтези жанрларини муфофилик билан бир бирига боғланган. Маколада ёзувчининг энг машхур иккита асари тахлил қилинган. 
Таянч сўзлар: илмий фантастика, ижтимоий, фантазия, Шарқ адабиёти, туғма онг, монстр.

Summary

EDWARD MATSIPULO AS AN EXAMPLE OF CENTRAL ASIAN SCIENCE FICTION WRITER
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The article covers the creative work of Edward Matsipulo, one of the most prominent authors of the science fiction in Central Asia. His works are characterized with harmonious combination of science fiction and fantasy. Two of his books are taken as an example and analyzed here.

Key words: science fiction, social, philosophical, fantasy, oriental literature, natural consciousness, monster.