

The Symbol of Mirror and its Main Poetic Functions in Fairy Tales



Literature

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Abstract

Article considers the issue of using symbol of mirror and its main functions in fairy tales. According to the article magic mirror is one of the traditional details which are encountered in genre of fairy tails and legends of world folklore and it is used as a main element to develop story events. The article identifies relation mirror with water and common features of these symbols. Also analyses of novels where the magic mirror is used are given.

We understand the symbol as a word or word combinations which is used in art speech as an aspect of figurative expressions to express real life events, notions and things conditionally and in figurative sense [1, p.279]. But today from its meaning of using a word or word combinations with figurative sense symbol has become as a text with deep philosophical meaning. Today symbol could be considered as a reflection of an artistic text which focuses on portable meaning and also embraces global and eternal problems of humanity and society.

Symbolic images in literature are not only rich and different but also complicated and mysterious. Only experienced reader can understand and feel the hided meaning behind the symbol.

Magic mirror is one of the traditional details which is encountered in genre of fairy tails and legends of world folklore and it is used as a main element to develop story events. If we address to uzbek fairy tales mirror and other things such as ring, sword, bowling jug, truncheon, tablecloth, stick and apple are “magic items” of supplementary force and they have the functions of assisting protagonist to achieve his/her aims. Z. Rasulova points out at four poetic functions of mirror in artistic construction of Uzbek fairy tales: they [2, p. 11].

1. inform: a) inform about main character and his/her condition. (“The secret of flowers”); б) inform the main character about his beloved in far. (“The princess of Gulozor”); в) inform the main character about world events. (“The mirror of the world”)
2. inform about character’s significant life events, warn about certain difficulties, provide uncovering the truth. (“Middle daughter”)
3. to shift things from far places to near one. (“Sultonhon”)
4. unmask the mystery of Liars. (“Kunugil and Oypari”)

In the interpretation of this symbol there is connection between mirror and water. This detail and motives and symbols related with each other have been using in Uzbek literature since

Ancient times. Because Ancient people saw their reflection initially on the surface of water. As Narcissus comes upon pool of water gazing into he catches the glimpse of his own face and falls in love with himself [3, p. 36].

In Uzbek folk tales especially in fairy tale “Jamila” the main character travails and escapes from an evil old woman (Yalmogiz kampir) [4]. At the moment when the old woman reaches him young man throws the mirror back then mirror turned into water and it prevents difficulties making distance long between the main character and the evil old woman. The main character escapes evil through mirror using it as a magic aid. The transformation of the mirror as water and acute changes of story events through this detail makes the plot of many fairy tales particularly spectacular. Another example of using mirror as arsenal or magic aid against evil is myth about Perseus who beheaded the Gorgon Medusa whose eyes turned people to stone with the help of a polished shield [3, p.85].

We can extend the analyses above according to Uzbek fairy tales. Historical basis of Folk views in Magic fairy tales relates with mythological beliefs of mirror of our ancestors. Widespread motive of discovering upcoming events through looking in the mirror of Uzbek, Middle East classic literature is based on folk conception of mirror. Initially it was reflected in folklore through periodically processing in different artistic acts it got form of independent sustained epic motive then it gradually came in written literature and was strengthened by impact of folklore traditions.

There are a lot of examples of magic mirror in world folk fairy tales. Some of them Czech (Mirror, Three apples), Korean (Mirror), Japanese (The mirror of Mazuyami), Ossetian (Heavenly mirror) and Latvian (Magic mirror) folk fairy tales. The mirror functions as a means of notification, as a symbol of truth or reflection of the soul and as a magic detail which makes wishes come true.

If we appeal to the interpretation of the symbol of mirror in nineteenth century Western literature we understand that authors continued traditions of classic literature, and reached original interpretation of using this particular symbol as a result it gained new meaning and functions.

Works of nineteenth century authors who wrote in fairy tale genre are especially significant.

Magic item – mirror is used as a detail which reveals the truth in “Little Zaches, Great Zinnober” by E.T.A.Hoffmann. For most people Zinnober is a perfect gentleman, poet, scholar, diplomat and lover. However two students manage to break the spell with the help of Doctor Prosper Alpanus. Alpanus shows the students all Zinnober’s dishonesty through magic mirror [5, p. 294]. Mirror shows how really Zinnober is little Zaches like a mandrake root.

“Snow White” by Brothers Grimm is based on the motive of step-mother and features the magic mirror. This element informs evil queen about her step-daughter’s life.

In artistic tales as well as folk fairy tales magic mirror is widely used as a mean of notification. Particularly, evil force is aware of their enemies through mirror. For example A.S.Pushkin’s “The tale of the Dead Princess and the Seven Knights”. The magic mirror represents harmony of the beauty and moral in this particular fairy tale. One of the main features of a mirror is telling the truth. All the truth about past is bitter and heavy. In this tale Stepmother has a magic mirror in her possession which talks back to tsarina, complementing her beauty. Eventually when the tsarina asks her magic mirror whether she is steel the sweetest and prettiest of them all this time the mirror points at young princess which drives the woman mad. Then she breaks the mirror and falls dead in agony.

The detail of mirror in this tale is used as a mean of notification and the symbol of the truth as in Brothers Grimm fairy tale which we mentioned above. Evil stepmothers when they break their mirrors meet their death. Therefore the mirror is the symbol of truth and when the truth breaks life also ends. Here we comprehend this certain ideological meaning.

The motive of mirror in Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Snow Queen” is closely related to the motive of mirror of Eastern especially Uzbek classic literature which has sophisticated ideological meaning of Sufism. But Andersen’s fairy tale begins with the story where an evil troll, called devil has made a magic mirror that distorts the appearance of everything that it reflects. The magic mirror fails to reflect the good and beautiful aspects. The mirror is attempted to carry it into heaven in order to make fools of the angels and of God. The mirror shakes with laughter, and it slips from their grasp and falls back to earth, shattering into billions of pieces. The plot based on the story when one of this splinters gets into Kai’s eye and freezes his heart like blocks of ice and makes his eye like the troll-mirror itself [6, p. 336].

At first sight there is no connection between these two symbols, mirror in Andersen’s story and mirror in Sufism. On the other hand examining carefully and thoroughly harmonic idea could be find between two symbols which were created in different times and different historical period. According to Sufism doctrine God creates the mirror to admire its beauty and perfectness and this certain mirror is material world which is surrounded us [7, p. 150]. Andersen’s mirror is created by devil to distort everyone and everything. The mirror has connection with evil at night and with good in the daytime owing to Uzbek Folk creed.

To sum up, it is reasonable to acknowledge that the mirror has its positive and negative sides. Accordingly, the mirror in Sufism is connected with God and good but in Andersen’s story it connects with evil. The mirror in Sufism is our world around us and the diamond of this world is an individual’s soul. Consequently an eye is the symbol of one’s soul. Splinters of the

troll-mirror get into Kai's heart and eyes and he becomes cruel and aggressive and turns to the dark side.

It is known that the mirror shows right side as a left and left side as a right. It shows easily your second "I". Moreover, the reflection in the mirror is not material it changes with other thing. This kind of things were basis of Lewis Carroll's plot of the story "Through the Looking-Glass" where Alice enters a fantastical world by climbing through a mirror.

"... I'll tell you all my ideas about Looking-glass House. First, there's the room you can see through the glass-that's just the same as our drawing room, only the things go the other way.

I can see all of it when I get upon a chair-all but the bit behind the fireplace..." "... She was up on the chimney-piece while she said this, though she hardly knew how she had got there. And certainly the glass WAS beginning to melt away, just like a bright silvery mist.

In another moment Alice was through the glass, and had jumped lightly down into the Looking-glass room [8].

There are many mirror themes, including opposites, time running backwards. The description of Mirror world where everything happens opposite is used as the symbol of magic, holy life. At the end of the story Alice turns out in her initial place through this the author shows that the main character got moral "lessons". But this scene impresses as mathematic trick is hided here. Hence, mathematic mentality and artistic-philosophical means were used to express mirror mystery in Looking-glass world. Here Looking-glass world is a symbol of self-knowledge and knowledge of supreme truth.

J.R.R.Tolkien in his fantasy novel "The Lord of the Rings used magic mirror. "The mirror of Galadriel" is the seventh chapter of the second book in "The Fellowship of the Ring [9, p. 378]. Where Lady Galadriel shows Frodo and Sam her mirror, which is basin of water from a nearby stream. When she breathes on the water, Sam and Frodo see scenes from the past and the future. Here mirror acts as a means of notification. The theme of mirror of fantasy world with its nature and peculiar points goes back to Mythological viewpoint through mystical and occult lines. Another example of mirror usage is J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter and the philosophers's stone". In chapter twelve "Mirror of Erised" detail mirror is used as portal where Harry sees his parents [10, p. 269]. This detail assists Harry in the struggle with evil.

In conclusion mythological viewpoint related to mirror and its specification to reflect the world was significant in folklore. This certain sustainable epic motive with the same functions was used also in classic literature. There are common and unique features of using symbols of mirror in Uzbek and World literature. It is characterized with the period and national mentality. The mirror has functions of informing people about upcoming events, reflecting someone's life

events, showing the true reality, assisting people to reach someone's goal, making someone's wishes come true and etc. It also symbolizes heart, soul, truth, beauty and dualism. Many authors of twentieth century used this symbol in their works and enriched it in their own way.

These features have been used by authors originally with new characteristics. Optical capabilities, elements of mystics and fantasy are faced in modern literature. The symbol mirror colors the story with mystical element which makes the story events attractive to the reader. The symbol mirror has been used as the detail to open universal problems such as struggle between evil and good or psychological hidden sides of human nature.

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