

FOLKLORE BORROWINGS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Рассматриваются фольклорные заимствования в произведениях английской литературы разных периодов.

Ключевые слова: фольклор, легенда, сказка, рифмовки (стишечки), заимствования.

It explores folklore borrowings in the works of English literature belonging to different periods.

Keywords: folklore, legend, folk tale, rhymes, borrowings.

Folklore takes various forms. In the document of UNESCO “The Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore” we can find the following definition of folklore: “Folklore (or traditional and popular culture) is the totality of tradition-based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group or individuals and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect its cultural and social identity.... Its forms are, among others,

language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts" [4].

The relations of folklore to literature are important, but not always easy to trace. Works of literature of different periods are full of elements taken over from folklore, and some knowledge of folklore is often an aid to the understanding of fiction.

The Renaissance revolved around folklore. For example, William Shakespeare seldom invented plot himself. He widely used folk material for his plays. Besides plots the playwright often made use of different folklore elements in different episodes of his plays. The rather childish love-test in "King Lear" refers to the motif, which was already familiar one in folklore. In the folk tale "Cap of Rushes" a rich man had three daughters and asked each one how much they loved him. Misinterpreting the third girl, he declared to her that she did not love him at all and for this reason drove her out. Shakespearean Cordelia alludes to the heroine of "Cap of Rushes".

"Shakespeare did not invent the story of Hamlet and his attempt to avenge his father's death. He borrowed the plot and the major characters from a twelfth-century Scandinavian legend" [3, p. 5]. In "Hamlet" Ophelia says, "they say the owl is a baker's daughter". It refers to popular legends in which Christ (or fairy) transforms a baker's daughter into an owl after she has denied him (her) a piece of bread. It is possible to understand mad Ophelia's words as speaking about crime and penalty [2].

Romanticism (also known as the Romantic era) rested upon folklore. In "Queen Mab" by Percy Bysshe Shelley one can trace borrowings from folklore. The poem is written in the form of a folk fairy tale that depicts a future vision of the earth. Queen Mab is a fairy which alludes to different folklore images.

Realistic literature of the XIX th. cent. calls attention to folklore. Lewis Carroll quotes nursery rhyme in "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland". In the chapter "Who Stole the Tarts?" the trial is based on an absurd accusation. Instead of any real arguments the White Rabbit reads as follows: "The Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts, / All on a summer day: / The Knave of Hearts, he stole those tarts, / And took them quite away!" [1, p. 158].

Muriel Spark, the famous realistic writer of the XXth. cent., used a nursery rhyme in her story "The Portobello Road" to create the atmosphere of innocence and juvenile happiness. The story begins with an account of how Needle got her nickname. She and her friends were lolling upon a haystack. Suddenly she found a needle in the hay and it went deep into the thumb cushion. George, one of her companion, said, "She put in her thumb and pulled out a plum" [5, p.73]. These words allude to the nursery rhyme "Little Jack Horner". It goes: "Little Jack Horner sat in a corner, /Eating his Christmas pie; /He put in his thumb, and pulled out a plum, /And said What a good boy am I !" [5, p. 178–179]. George took the occasion by taking a

photograph, which serves throughout the story as a memento of friendship, devotion and their desire for being children forever.

As we have seen, folklore can be found in fiction of different centuries and of various movements.

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