

General Concept Of Genre

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Abstract: This article examines the earliest roots of the fable genre and interprets English fabulism. It also investigates issues of fable theory in relation to European and English literature.

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Introduction: It is well known that English literature produced masterpieces not only in the twentieth century, but also in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. This venerable literary tradition includes many delightful poets, poetesses, writers, and philosophers. Especially when discussing the weighty, caravan-like genre of the novel, names like J. Joyce come to mind. The fable genre is likewise considered one of the ancient literary genres. Its socio-psychological character enjoys a very high status in the great French literary tradition. In this sense, Uzbek and English fabulism share broad generalizations in their deep comprehension of life's truths. One should not forget that the fable, as a didactic literature, is capable of filling a large part of this gap.

It is known that the body of mythological conceptions arising from human consciousness and feelings has long allowed primitive notions to be evaluated systematically. For myths and legends are grounded in the density of the relationship between the world and the human being. We can also see in world literature that mythology is a universal and timeless phenomenon; in particular, it became even more established within the segments of modernist movements that emerged after European critical realism at the dawn of the twentieth century. The true intellectuals of a world on the brink of social inequality and injustice did not easily attain that rank, of course. As the world changed and shifted in a grim era, they coped with a "survival instinct." If we attend to the maxim "the world is essentially a hospital," we may grasp that in the universality of interpretation pursued by Joyce and Kafka, Camus and Proust, there appears a

fragment of representing even the minutiae of the modern human being. This gradual process enables the maturation of any style.

The conflicts, injustices, and arrogance arising in various corners of the globe—together with the knocking of the First World War—led Joyce's generation to a "detonation" of a new culture of expression. In the literatures of America and England, France, Italy, Germany, and Spain, the presence of "migratory plots" (adventures) testifies to their becoming integral components of this prose. Myth demonstrated itself as a powerful, universal methodology for seeing and assimilating the world anew. At the same time, in James Joyce's works such as *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the dominance of mythopoetic interpretation—symbols, metaphors, and stylistic-formal distinctiveness—attested to the emergence of a new wave in world literature. In the creative explorations of F. Kafka and A. Camus as well, the symbols, myths, and their distinctive stylistic particularities signaled that this criterion was being renewed and taking a different course.

Myth is a phenomenon of universality for all times, and it showed itself to be an inseparable link of the epic both in the ancient Greek cultural tradition and in the literature of the Turkic peoples. If we take a deep look at the works of Alisher Navoi, Babur, and many of our classical authors, we see that mythological transformation is a universal phenomenon. "It should be said that although myths were created in periods when human consciousness was still undeveloped, they reflect ideas about many things that even today's

scholars have not fully grasped—premonitions that are only now coming true. It is no secret that the divine-popular weapons in myths, mirrors that show distant lands, flying demons and carpets, led to modern airplanes, television, and so forth. Therefore, the magical events and objects in myths cannot be dismissed as mere expressions of unconsciousness; they are the product of reason and intellect unique to humankind. Myths gave names to things for human thought, and by virtue of those names humanity ascended to lofty peaks of reflection. According to legend, because he learned the names of all things, Adam became dearer than all the angels. And the images in myth spurred the creation of art.” Consequently, as Prof. J. Eshonqulov notes, mythological thinking is helping to open a broad path to major development not only in prose but also in dramatic and lyrical works by strengthening its position there. In the new-era prose—moving from short story to novella, from novella to novel—the accumulation of growing symbolic metaphors demonstrates that myth exerts a powerful literary influence on both genre and form. Just as there is no literature without myth and no myth without literature, so too can we substantiate the immense impact, reaching back to the time of Adam and Eve, of absurdism and psychological experiences that have permeated our spirit. Especially noteworthy is that in twentieth-century mythology, alongside forces, ideas, and progress, world-shaping inventions also come to the fore. The generation of James Joyce thoroughly renewed this modification, contributing to its development as a distinctive interpretive methodology. In any reality perceived by the human mind, the predominance of mythological perspectives manifests itself. The echoes of the socio-psychological life of the early twentieth century in people’s inner experiences led to a considerable expansion of the formula of the literary work. These growths and changes proved that the expressive manner of the Joyce generation is a labyrinthine style that we still find difficult and complex to fully comprehend.

In the twentieth century, we can observe that writers in various corners of world literature—especially in Latin America, Europe, and the United States—did not turn to mythological interpretation by chance. They proceeded along the path of typifying the myths they themselves had fashioned. These were portrayed with such distinctive psychological-social nuances that a person needed a strong “immunity” to decode their codes, strokes, and signals. In many of these works, the harmony of belief and creativity was reflected; they understood early on that there was no world other than the artistic world they themselves created, and that the formulas of life—changing and shifting by the

hour in the surrounding world—were exceedingly complex. While the authors of the realist novel of the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries helped consolidate a great ethic of depiction, by the twentieth century that manner of depiction seemed to have grown old. From then on, in order to bring forth an idea, writers increasingly turned not to vast epic canvases but to compact forms of expression, writing prose capable of answering the questions in their hearts. Gradually this principle turned into a concept. The Russian critic E. Meletinsky calls this “unconscious poetic creation.” The Latin American writer and philosopher Jorge Luis Borges drew attention to the idea that “the beginning and the end of literature consist of myth,” emphasizing that we must rest on this criterion. As the criteria renew themselves, people’s imaginations and their distinctive ways of apprehending and expressing the world also diversify.

Humanity, from the time when the skills of reading, writing, and imagining were formed, has paid special attention to developing its moral-enlightenment world and its thinking. From the eras when it came to understand that God placed reason and intellect, gentleness and humility, nobility and generosity in the human heart, it has matured in a spirit devoted to wisdom. Both the specificity of literature and the historical, gradual development of genre have attained completeness in harmony with this cultivation; for people of those times, this was of great importance. In the most ancient Greek culture—those distant chains of the past where reason and feeling meet—it becomes clear that by nature the human being, living under the sway of contemplation, set about creating myths, legends, tales, and other examples of oral creativity. Of course, it is difficult to picture before our eyes the eras in which the distinctive facets of inner, esoteric need were understood! Aristotle was absolutely right in saying that every genre is manifested in a triad of reality, action, and emotion. Consequently, the historical development of any genre is measured by the way it occurs in connection with the inner needs of its time. The fable belongs among the most ancient genres; it first developed in the form and appearance of folk oral creativity, and later advanced by passing into written literature. Although the earliest standard-bearers in our era were Babrius and Phaedrus (I–II centuries CE), it is associated with the name of Aesop, who lived and created in the 6th century BCE. At the root of the dynamic development of genres, the formal-expressive interpretations carried over from Aesop’s fables later appeared in new forms in Indian, Uzbek, Russian, English, and related literatures, and, in the 15th century, in the works of the great thinker of Turkic literature, Alisher Navoi. By the 18th century, in

the Kokand Khanate, Gulkhani's Zarbulmasal developed in even more distinctive forms. The conceptual essence of the genre is determined by the fact that, primarily, behind the lives and deeds of animals stands the human person, and that didactic and philosophical-aesthetic facets emerge through subtle hints, hyperbole, and the art of personification.

Distinctiveness of genre development and culture of expression. It cannot be denied that the philosophical-psychological conditionality of the fable genre in English literature drew sustenance from Aesop's fables in ancient Greek culture. For if in Uzbek literature this genre arose in the 15th century during the era of Alisher Navoi and passed through a phase of development on the basis of strict rules, in France it is referred to with the name of Jean de La Fontaine. Although La Fontaine created later than Navoi, he inaugurated a new period in Russian and, in general, European fabulism.

Jean de (1621.8.7, Château-Thierry, Champagne – 1695.13.4, Paris) — English poet, fabulist. Member of the French Academy (from 1684). His famous novella "The Love of Psyche and Cupid" (1669) was based on the One Thousand and One Nights tales and Apuleius's (2nd c. CE) *Metamorphoses*. La Fontaine's works in the fable genre won greater renown. In the collections *Poetic Tales and Stories* (Books 1–5, 1665–85) and *Fables* (Books 1–12, 1668–94), he emerged as a sharp satirist, a major thinker, and a continuer of Renaissance traditions in literature. His fables—created under the inspiration of ancient, European, and Eastern literatures (Kalila and Dimna, etc.) as well as folk wisdom—enriched the treasury of world satirical literature with their modernity, biting satire, and vivid descriptions. La Fontaine's work also has an important place in the development of Uzbek and Russian fabulism. The fable "The Cobbler and the Merchant" has been translated into Uzbek (1984).

The tradition of fabulism, which is one member of the pearls of classical Eastern literature, is of particular importance in that it grew out of folk oral creativity. This very concept emerged in the literature of Latin America, Denmark, and other peoples in the form of animals' engaging and intense adventures. The poetic fables of the Russian fabulist I. Krylov shine in a didactic spirit, in harmony with the earlier artistic explorations found in the Indian *Kalila wa Dimna*, Alisher Navoi's *Hayrat ul-abror* and *Lison ut-tayr*, as well as the works of Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, Yamin Qurbon, Sami Abduqahhor, and Mukhtar Khudoyqulov. Thus, the socio-psychological foundations of the genre become apparent when fabulism establishes itself as a single aesthetic criterion.

The social-political pathos in Aesop's fables did not sit well with oligarchs and officials. The pressures and opposition he faced only deepened the creator's worldview. It is known to all that he served in the court of Croesus, king of Lydia. He was killed in Delphi and had been enslaved. Yet he created fables rich in profound psychological depiction, to the point that fables produced up to that era and as late as the 10th–15th centuries CE were attributed to Aesop. These fables are suffused with the density of life's truths and human relationships. Although they concern animals and their ways of life, at their core the human phenomenon stands out conspicuously. The didactic mood, spirit, and pathos that one draws from them lead toward perfection, calling on people to live free of errors and shortcomings.

If we turn to the theoretical facets of the genre: "masal (fable) is an Arabic word meaning 'model, example'." Likewise, "a fable is an important figurative station situated between humankind's earliest primitive tales about animals and the proverbs, sayings, and modern anecdotes that arose much later. Its age is measured in millennia."

One of the rare literary sources of the 15th century, Ato'ulloh Husayniy's *Bada'i' al-sanayi'*, states the following: "Irsal in language means 'to send forth.' Those tales and narratives that became famous among a community, and which that community frequently mentioned in its speech by way of analogy and example to various matters, are called masal (fable)." Indeed, if one approaches the essence of the fable seriously, because of the strong didactic spirit in disciplines and fields close to one another such as religion, philosophy, and history, the layers of meaning (the "example") in the fable broaden. In literary studies, when analyzing an artistic genre it is common to separate it and, in naming it, to narrow it into a tight literary concept. In this sense, one can also observe that the fable has appeared broadly, in mixed forms across various genres.

When speaking about the new interpretation of fabulism in English literature and its system of images, what first comes to mind is its systemic-structural character. The critic Igor Klekh's following observations support the points above:

"In France, during the country's Golden Age under Louis XIV, we know more about La Fontaine than about Aesop. Although the 'Sun King' did not particularly favor the great fabulist, at any rate he did not let him starve, and—even if after some waiting—admitted him to the Academy of Arts and Sciences of England, known as the 'Immortals,' which consisted of forty members. The point was not that La Fontaine came from a low

estate (though once, when they noticed he had overstated his lineage, they wanted to fine him, later raising him to the rank of serving nobility), but rather his unruffled bearing and lack of obsequiousness (which, in an era of absolute monarchy, was practically an act of rebellion). Within that literary circle that brought him closer to the court, La Fontaine stood out like a piebald crow among the official masters of the arts of the time—the classicism whose founder was Boileau, the master of tragedy Racine, and the creator of comic stage works Molière. When they admitted La Fontaine among them, they nicknamed him ‘simple and candid.’ This nickname served as a pass and protective token for entry to the highest portals. Boileau at first exalted him for his skillful imitation of antiquity, but once French fables began to appear, his estimation declined in comparison. Molière, however, highly valued La Fontaine’s fables and believed that from then on in France no creator of sharp and wise sayings could surpass La Fontaine.”

In the Dictionary of Sources of Classical Literature, four meanings of this word are explained:

1. Word, speech. A lie will not stand in the place of a parable (zarbulmasal).
2. Proverb. What falls at your feet every moment are tresses— / It’s like the saying: the base of the lamp is dark.
3. Rumor; to become talk, to pass into common speech. With love I became a parable, with trade an anecdote as well; / Thanks be to God, I am again a lover—and a madman too. (Navoi)
4. When it appears in a phrasal construction, it bears meanings such as “like, similar.” If the wind, as a parable, turns the sphere, O poor Mashrab, / Not casting a glance at the tipsy black eyes is good. (Mashrab)

As can be seen, fabulism and the interpretations of this tradition that have come down from ancient times testify to its diversity. The views on the term masal (fable) in these sources truly allow us to grasp more deeply the nature of a literary genre that arose under the influence of life’s contradictions.

Likewise, Kh. K. Baranov explains dozens of meanings of the term masal. In the words of Uzbek literary scholars N. Hotamov and B. Sarimsoqov: “It is most often a short, poetic, figurative tale, and it has types such as the fable-epigram, fable-dialogue, fable-fairy tale, fable-novella, fable-story, fable-pamphlet, fable-novel, and fable-drama.”

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, among Arabs and other peoples, when discussing the aesthetic essence of the genre, it was

often understood in conjunction with other literary forms. The Ottomans, for their part, used masal in the sense of a fairy tale. Accordingly, in Turkic literatures the term also bears a mixed (syncretic) character. Because the philosophical–aesthetic and didactic pathos present in certain classical genres is close to the fable—as well as to symbol and metaphor—scholars have at times hesitated in distinguishing it.

As the Turkologist H. Beydemir notes, in his doctoral dissertation “Uzbek Folk Fables” he explains the terminological meanings of the term among the Ottoman Turks and Uzbeks and writes about how, in Uzbekistan, the masal type is used in a blended way together with qissa (novella), fables, fikra (anecdote), and other legends. Indeed, the term masal has sparked lively debates in literary studies, and we come to understand both literature’s genuinely educative function and that the fable is among the oldest reliable sources concerning human destiny and ways of life.

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