

## Fairy Tale Traditions in Amateur and Professional Young Writers' Creativity

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### ABSTRACT

The turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen Russian writers' increased interest in the genre of fairy tale. This paper discusses young Russian writers' approaches to fairy tale traditions in texts of their own. The subjects of the study consisted of the Debut Prize winners and the so-called amateur writers (fans of Tolkien's and Rowling's books, and gamers) and their literary works. The study is aimed at establishing main trends in usage of folklore traditions in the first two decades of the 21st century; the paper is also concerned with examining similarities and differences between two generations of modern Russian writers in the matter of their approaches to classical heritage. To compare fairy tale texts, Vladimir Propp's narrative model has been applied. One of the central claims of the study is that young authors tend to emulate literary samples by prominent contemporary Russian writers (mostly by Lyudmila Petrushevskaya). Thus, an efficient way of creating a contemporary fairy tale by a young author is to immerse its characters into the modern reality that is presented in a variety of its manifestations – from everyday routine to philosophic ideas. The young writers' texts display such traditional features of literary folklorism as genuine fairy tale plots and motifs, their structural and style models, characters, magical objects, and the artistic device of estrangement.

**Keywords:** fairy tale; literary traditions; narrative structure; Russian writers; modern literature

### INTRODUCTION

A number of recent literary works by Russian writers have shown a strong tendency to all kinds of artistic experiment. Searching for new forms, Russian authors resort to folklore heritage and the genre of fairy tale, in particular. The given genre appeals to modern writers due to its possibilities to fill traditional fairy tale schemes with some new content, to match miracles and routine, and to see an ideal fairy tale character in the modern man, and thus teaching him a moral lesson. Moreover, the fairy tale suggests a wide range of transformation of its narrative structure, and stylistic formulas. Consequently, the paper discusses ways in which modern Russian authors apply the traditions of a fairy tale.

Numerous scholars have conducted research on the genre of literary fairy tale and its connections to folk fairy tales and tale-like forms of professional creative work: Leonova (1965), Braude (1977), Neyolov (1987), Lipovetsky (1992), Krivoshchapova (1995), Medrish (1992), Ovchinnikova (2000), Aveling (2017). To date, considerable research attention has been paid to establishing boundaries of the literary fairy tale as a genre, its poetics, stages of development, and a range of authors. Moreover, every research presupposed establishing a writer's individual approach to the given genre. In one of their latest works Golovin and Nikolaev (2013) put forward a concept of the so-called *knot-record of folklorism*. The scholars develop a new typology of “pragmatic models of literary texts that have something to do with the folklore tradition” and pay considerable attention to “the author's reflexion of the tradition” and to “folklore and literary interaction and how it is expressed within a text, and the readers' presumable perception” (Golovin & Nikolaev, 2013, p. 16). Moreover, the concept takes into account the fairy tale as a model for literary versions of folk genres in books by such outstanding Russian writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as Zhukovsky, Pushkin and Yershov<sup>1</sup>, as well as a way to construct a mythological projection of the world in literary works by Ostrovsky. The scholars claim fairy tale mythology to be the basis of the modern novel's narrative.

At the turn of the 21st century the phenomenon of fairy tale has been alluded to by different kinds of modern art (literature, cinema, theatre, animation, computer games). Thus, Markova (2011) states that “it is the fairy tale, along with menippea, that gives a lot of opportunities for genre experiments and aesthetic games” (p. 43). Abasheva (2012) and Korolyov (2015) claim the fairy tale to effect the advent of fantasy – a popular genre of mass literature.

In recent years, the fairy tale has been inspiring young unprofessional writers (participants of various fandoms and subcultures) and beginning writers and poets. To the best of our knowledge, none of the professional literary critics has focused on this kind of creative work yet.

The aim of the paper is to establish main trends in usage of folklore traditions in the first two decades of the 21st century; the study attempts to reveal similarities and differences in interpreting fairy tale plots and images by two generations of modern Russian writers where the younger generation consists of participants of fandoms and the Debut Prize winners. Another objective is to examine young writers' traditional and innovative approaches to classical heritage.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The subjects of the study consisted of literary works by winners of literary prizes (Debut Prize, Triumph). Among them there is Ganieva (the collection of fairy tales “Strange Tales” originally published in the Independent Newspaper in 2008-2011) (Ganieva, 2011), Babushkin (Tales for the Poor, 2012), Akhmetshin (“Nightlights”, “Short Tales”, 2015). The second source of material is the so-called fanfiction created by the Harry Potter and Tolkien fan communities and published on the Internet platforms Fanfiction.net and Tol Eressia. Works by fan writers were selected according to their high ranking within their community (fandom). Findings concerning the mythological ground of computer games are based on the analysis of a series of games called Mystery Trackers released by Elephant Games and Big Fish companies (since 2010 to the present moment).

The comparison between original fairy tales, texts by acknowledged, beginning and amateur writers is based on the narrative model developed by Vladimir Propp. The study

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<sup>1</sup> Zhukovsky V., Pushkin A., Yershov P., Ostrovsky A. are famous Russian writers of the 19-th century.

carried out by Propp (1969) revealed that the narrative structure of a folk fairy tale contained 31 basic plot units (the so called functions), from the protagonist's absention to the wedding, and typical characters (hero, villain, princess, dispatcher, helper, donor, false hero). A literary fairy tale can reproduce all the traditional functions and characters or reduce their usage to a minimum. In the given study, texts by modern Russian writers are compared to the traditional fairy tale narrative structure. Special attention is paid to such units of the narrative as the character's encounter with a donor, winning through the donor's test, the character's victory over the villain (winning a battle or a contest). Presence or absence of the given components and a degree of their transformation suggest a writer's ability to master the genre and to be genuine in its usage.

On the whole, the complex method of research includes the comparative-historical, typological method and functional methods. The latter is applied towards fanfiction materials to reveal their functions and impact on the reader (Rabinovich, 2017; Hasanov, 2017).

### FAIRY TALE TRADITIONS IN AMATEUR WRITING

Our previous study shows that in amateur writers' works the fairy tale functions both as a structural model and an independent genre (Zolotova, 2014). The given fact gives birth to a great variety of connections between youth communities' verbal creativity and the fairy tale. Besides, the nature of these interactions is directly correlated with the features of the so-called subculture generator / community. Works by fans of a cult book have as much to do with folk fairy tale models as the cult book does. Thus, it is the genuine text (the source of a fandom, *canon*) that connects fans' creativity and the fairy tale. In other words, Tolkien's and Rowling's fans are not focused on any particular fairy tale or mythological basis but on the substrate offered by the author of a cult book. In this case, folklore universals may either retain their traditional nature or undergo various kinds of transformation. Notable among them are the so-called "conversions" (turning a sample model inside out to achieve a new / opposing meaning or impression). Among them there is defacement of well-reputed and highly evaluated characters through their participation in erotic scenes, drinking and doing dangerous and / or silly things. Another way of conversion is adding romantic traits to a controversial and disagreeable character or even to a villain. Moreover, positive and negative characters can end up in complete identification (a dragon fighter IS a dragon) (Abukaeva & Zolotova, 2013). The study of such applications lets us understand how a community (fandom) interprets this or that fairy tale code, whether it is inclined to restore or destruct traditions of the genuine culture. In relation to the latter, fans of cult books seem rather loyal and tend to retain the values from the source. Namely, fans' texts that serve as a continuation of the Harry Potter series are considered worthy if Rowling's traditions have been preserved, while parody works, still causing some curiosity, are regarded as a by-product (Efimova & Zolotova, 2014). However, representatives of different subcultures have a different attitude to the balance between their own national traditions, codes of other cultures and the nature of their interpretations within cult books. For example, the Tolkien fandom, unlike the Harry Potter one, does not restrict itself to J.R. Tolkien's canon text, but often resorts to the British mythological and fairy tale tradition that serves as a boundless source of inspiration and interpretation (Efimova & Zolotova, 2014). In general, both Russian and English-speaking fans prefer mythological eclecticism, creating "folk" and "mythological" characters combining mythological systems in one and the same literary work or even in one and the same character. However, such a possibility, as well as the reliance on universal folklore archetypes, has already been embedded in the original works of cult authors.

This phenomenon is brightly represented in gamers' community. Developers of computer games are not confused, but, on the contrary, encouraged by the fact that

mythological realities they use belong to different eras and cultures and represent acts of collective and individual creativity. Nowadays, some of them have already mastered the principle of involution, or reduction, of the cultural text, turning it into a microform, a micro model (Efimova & Zolotova, 2010). Developers of such projects consider the fairy tale to be able to bring a character from one game location to another instantaneously, to inhabit a location by new characters, to set the most improbable tasks that are, however, typical for a fairy tale's logic, tasks that become more complicated as the action moves on.

### LYUDMILA PETRUSHEVSKAYA'S WORKS AS A TOPICAL EXAMPLE OF MODERN LITERARY FAIRY TALE

Active inclusion of folklore texts in the field of art is one of the remarkable trends of the modern literary process. Famous writers and aspiring authors experiment in their works, creating a large number of transitional forms (from elite forms to mass ones, from traditional forms to mass ones, etc.). L. S. Petrushevskaya's works are also prominent in this respect. Her fairy tale works are selected by the young audience as a specific sample to create their own models of literary fairy tales. The writer, who presents herself in many genres, released her collection of "True Fairy Tales" in 1997. On the one hand, it clearly shows a reference to the folk tradition (the genre of folk prose is stated in the title of the collection). On the other hand, L. S. Petrushevskaya, partly guided by folklore traditions, uses them in a new quality and with different attitudes and goals.

The folklore context of "True Fairy Tales" by L. S. Petrushevskaya is complex and diverse both in its composition and functions. In the book there are works that represent a relatively complete implementation of Propp's model of a fairy tale (see "Anna and Mary", "Mother Cabbage", "Father" and others) or involve only some of its most important components: meeting a giver ("The Girl Nose", "Princess Belonozhka" and others), testing the hero ("The Prince With Golden Hair", "The Tale About The Clock", "Grandpa's Picture", etc.), visiting another world ("The Island of Pilots", "Golden Rag", "New Adventures of Elena the Beautiful", etc.). It is particularly easy to recognize the fairy tale protagonist: traditionally, like in a fairy tale, his status is marked through the name / nickname ("Prince with golden hair", "Princess Belonozhka", "The Girl Nose", "Father", "Mother Cabbage"). In addition to the functions, it is also possible to identify the concept of the motif (for example, elements that make up a biography of the hero), the phenomenon of the traditional characters (givers), as well as folklore artistic (stylistic) devices in the writer's works.

At the same time, the writer expands the border-line of the fairy tale using closely related genres of fantasy and of peasant and urban legends, as well as the elements of myths and rites. Doing so, however paradoxical that may sound, the writer somehow "roots" them in real life. She also refers to a variety of folk narratives of the modern city (stories about celebrities, gossip and rumors, family traditions, scary or funny legends about various objects in a city, children's "horror stories").

However, not only the transformation of the fairy-tale tradition and its rooting in the urban realities are significant in "True Fairy Tales". It is no accident that researchers of Petrushevskaya's works write about her fairy tale *parody* or a *game* with fairy tale canon (Koltukhova, 2007). The features of modern Russian reality are clearly and convincingly presented in the writer's fairy-tale space: topographical realities of cities and towns, recognizable social types, their lifestyle and speech culture, surrounding objective world, powerful influence of the media, advertising and fashion. However, resorting to the models of popular literature, L. S. Petrushevskaya also confronts it, due to the use of universal motifs (life and death, misery and apocalypse, etc.) and to the idea of a miracle that is not possible in

reality (a true miracle that has nothing to do with the Cinderella effect so popular in mass literature) (Plotnikova & Zolotova, 2012).

L. S. Petrushevskaya's innovations are willingly used by representatives of young Russian prose of the 21st century. Namely, the winner of a number of modern Russian literary awards (the Debut Prize in the category "Discovery of the Year", "Triumph" and others), the author of prose works in a wide range of genres (from critical articles to novels), Alice Ganieva created a collection entitled "Weird Fairy Tales" in 2011 that includes stories published in the Independent Newspaper (2008-2011). The finalist of the young drama competition "Lyubimovka", the winner of the "Debut" in the category "Flash fiction" (2012), Evgeniy Babushkin wrote stories "Tales for the Poor" that were mistakenly called "Winter tales" by critics (Noskova, 2015a). The third author whose works are discussed in the study is Dmitriy Akhmetshin, the author of the collections "Short Tales" and "Nightlights", a finalist of the Debut Prize (2013 & 2015), the winner of literary prizes established by the journals *Youth Wave* and *Russian echo*.

### FAIRY TALE IN ALICE GANIEVA'S LITERARY WORKS

In Ganieva's fairy tales, like in Petrushevskaya's works, modern Russian reality is presented clearly and convincingly, "her characters act in recognizable social situations and typical environment, facing the problems similar to the common reader" (Chernyak, 2009, p. 286). Key moments in the plot development that are important in terms of the characteristics of the characters take place in modern institutions: hospitals ("Akuchi-makuchi", "Wet feet"), at police stations and on building sites ("A boy with a yellow face"), in shop warehouses ("World Tour"), on public transport ("Talking things", "A boy with a yellow face"), in the kindergartens ("A girl-thread", "Wet feet"), at schools ("Marusia the Beauty").

Alice Ganieva, like Ludmila Petrushevskaya, also preserves the most important features of the genre, but, at the same time, she creatively changes widespread plots and motifs in her tales. First of all, our attention is drawn by the motif of the hero's return after his adventures (301 \* C CIOP<sup>2</sup>): the boy returns home with his teddy bear ("Round the World Bear"); the moody girl called Marina who had enough of independent life, ("Wet feet"); the boy with a yellow face, who was called "the spirit of the sand" (Ganieva, 2011, p. 18) ("A boy with a yellow face") and others.

Some elements of the traditional plots are also found in such fairy tales as "Wet feet", "The girl and the light", "Laughter in the forest", "Hapu and Hart" and others. For example, the motif of *Journey to the destiny (happiness and the sun)* can be identified as the main motif in the story "Wet feet" (460V CIOP): the heroine leaves home for nowhere with a desire to acquire happiness and peace; the motifs of *Wonderful boy* (\* 671I CIOP) and *Wonderful children* (707 CIOP) are used to complicate the action. Such a constituent of the plot as the motif *Forest House* (431 CIOP) is one of the key components in the fairy-tale narratives "Laughter in the forest" and "Hapu and Hart". Besides, the young heroine in the fairy tale "The girl and the light" has a remarkable appearance: "When she came into the room, the room got immediately lit" (Ganieva, 2011).

The protagonists of "Strange Tales" by A. Ganieva, like L. Petrushevskaya's ones, are children and adolescents ("Mums and Dads", "The girl and the light", "Ordinary boy Egor", "Round the World Bear", "Talking things", etc.). The writer speaks openly about their shortcomings which, in most cases, are eliminated: in the fairy tale "Marusia the Beauty" a girl is becoming an adult under her relatives' unwanted protection: "let's imagine that Marusia was going to pick up mushrooms. Hardly had she decided to take the basket, when

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<sup>2</sup> Plot 301\*C CIOP is given by [Andreev, 1929], all the rest by [Barag et al., 1979].

all her relatives started to wail as hard as they could: “Do not take the basket, you’ll break your hands” (Ganieva, 2011). The strangers didn’t get on well with her: “Children disliked Marusia” (Ganieva, 2011). The reason is a physiological feature of the heroine – *thin hands, “in short, a continuous torment”* (Ganieva, 2011). Dramatic changes happen in people’s behavior and their perception of Marusia when a strange man appears in her life who, however, falls in love with her and proposes to her: “*Marusia’s sweet life began. Every day a new gift*” (Ganieva, 2011). However, such a life didn’t bring any happiness to Marusia and others – “*except Marusia, there was not a girl, or a woman, or an old lady left in the world. <...> And it happened because of the fact that all women were jealous of Marusia’s thin hands and ashamed of their own hands*” (Ganieva, 2011). The absurd situation is easily solved with childlike innocence. After the marriage the grown-up Marusia finds a solution: “*Now I’ll give birth to three million daughters, let them live and laugh*” (Ganieva, 2011), and immediately does what she has planned – “*she sat down and gave birth to exactly three million daughters*” (Ganieva, 2011). However, the main character feels guilty – “*I realize that it is my punishment, I’m so arrogant that I forced all the girls to envy me*” (Ganieva, 2011).

A significant problem of A. Ganieva’s fairy tales is the one of generation gap. The “Merry Rent” represents a story of an impoverished family that takes their neighbour’s advice to let their children like rooms or houses seriously. It is incredible from the point of view of moral and family values, and the situation results in the destruction of kinship ties between relatives. “*The children went from hand to hand, business was launched*”. They got material benefits, “*father and mother moved to a three-storeyed house*” (Ganieva, 2011). When their children grew up, they became as insensitive as their parents and at some point they got the upper hand: “*Go and be rented yourselves! <...> And the children took all the money they had earned*” (Ganieva, 2011). We have to admit it is the cruelest fairy tale in the collection; in other stories parents love their children and accept them as they are (“A boy with a yellow face”, “Akuchi-makuchi”). Children, in their turn, appreciate their parents (“Mums and Dads”).

Ganieva (2011) also touches upon the problem of adolescence. In the fairy tale “Wet Feet”, the girl, Marina by name, literally harasses people with her constant whims, and, after the birth of her younger sister, she leaves home. “*It became very uncomfortable to live with such a savvy sister. She collected her things and went aimlessly*” (Ganieva, 2011). During her wanderings, the girl was in hospital and in the woods. Only her younger sister was able to bring her back home.

Ganieva resorts to the technique of estrangement that was elaborated in relation to Petrushevskaya’s fairy tales. For example, in the fairy tale “Vasya, Hera and Golden Aunt”, the child, with all his naivety and categoricalness, explains what love is and why he denies it: “*Don’t you want to be loved by everybody?*” – *asked the golden aunt. “No, then everyone will start to bother me, comb my hair, make me eat porridge, lisp and lace my shoes. But I’m a big boy*” (Ganieva, 2011). The fairy tale “Talking things” explains that “*a boy party is a tree where boys grow*” (Ganieva, 2011) and the tale “A boy with a yellow face” gives us an explanation of an unusual color of his skin – *he is the spirit of the sand* (Ganieva, 2011).

Such a feature of children’s consciousness as a peculiar attitude to the miracle is conspicuous in “Strange Tales”. Zueva (1985), exploring the specified category in children’s folklore, allocates an idea of dual worlds which is intuitively expressed in a child’s mind (Zueva, 1985). For example, in the fairy tale “Vasya, Hera and Golden Aunt”, the meeting of the common (Ganieva, 2011) boy Vasya and a fabulous “*good aunt <...> in the golden dress*” (Ganieva, 2011) takes place in a grocery store and is taken for granted. In the fairy tale “Akuchi-makuchi” the protagonist, Misha by name, not only visited the magical land, but

also learnt to speak its language (Ganieva, 2011). The literal belief in the miracle saves the characters and helps them out of troubles (“Girl-thread”, “Wet feet”, “Hapu and Hart”).

Magic in the fairy tales by Alice Ganieva (similar to Petrushevskaya’s tales) has children’s motivation and is perceived as an integral part of a child’s existence and consciousness. For instance, in the fairy tale “Mums and Dads” the protagonist sits down on the bed and thinks, “*When will the magic start? The fact is that magic often happens in fairy tales and Tisha hoped that something like this would happen to him too*” (Ganieva, 2011). In the fairy tale “Akuchi-makuchi” magic breaks through the child’s language which adults do not understand. The fairy tale “Talking things” shows us a child’s ability to hear and understand the language of things and nature (the most important motif of the fairy tale plot “Language of animals” CIOP 670, “Three languages” CIOP 671, also CIOP 672D \*, CIOP 673 and “Crafty lore” CIOP 325).

Peculiar magic can be also observed in the fairy-tale “Christmas joy” where the child disappears, turns into dust (a kind of realization of the idiom “turn into dust”), but not voluntarily, but rather implementing a secret and unconscious desire of his parents. That’s why parents’ “joy” is so bitterly colored at the end of the fairy tale (the child became a New Year’s fir tree which they decorated with toys).

Ganieva has genuine ways of working with subtitles. Many texts contain a genre nomination – “a fairy tale”, then, as a rule, the main character or characters are categorized (a boy, a girl, happy cats, about people, animals and inanimate objects). If a hero or a heroine are indicated in the title, the subtitle provides a moral imperative (good deeds make people better), a rule of behavior (one cannot move around the town without adults), a prediction (what this or that child can become), a moral paradox (how uncomfortable it is to be too good). In some fairy tales the interaction between the title and subtitle introduces the main artistic principle of Ganieva’s tales that can be defined as a synthesis of reality and fairy tale. Indeed, the title “Mums and Dads” is neutral and rather common, but the subtitle “A fairy tale about the boy who swapped parents” destroys this familiarity. The same concerns the fairy tale “Wet feet” with the subtitle “A Tale about the girl who constantly changed her names”, “Akuchi-makuchi” with the subtitle “A Tale about a boy named Misha, a magical language and his persistent parents”.

## FAIRY TALE IN EUGENE BABUSHKIN’S LITERARY WORKS

Eugene Babushkin is another writer who puts his characters in the contemporary reality despite the presence of the word “tales” / “fairy tales” in titles (“Tales for the Poor”, 2012). However, this reality is extremely gloomy, even terrible. As Yudaev (2012) states, Babushkin’s fairy tales “convey the atmosphere of hopeless suburbs and eternal outskirts very accurately.” Evgeniy Babushkin considers his works to be in the sphere of “new proletarian prose”. The characters of his fairy tales, no matter whether they have a job or not, as a rule, are very poor people whose inner world is very primitive. The author is convinced that none of them can be blamed for the fact that their lives are so unspiritual and bleak, moreover, they do not even suspect the nightmare they exist in. “The collision of the monstrous social reality and a fairy-tale, a warm language, which gives hope and forgiveness – that’s what Evgeniy Babushkin aims at in his works. These nine very short stories are colorful patterns of concentrated prose, almost poetry. Hence a new model of his proletarian literature: the terrible truth about the society is a background; the foreground is represented by the music of poetic language” (Yudaev, 2012).

The most significant in terms of the opposition of a vile reality and a vile character to *a human destiny* are, in our opinion, four stories, “The tale about arithmetic”, “The tale about

the wire”, “Winter tales”, “Pancakes”. It is important that three of them contain the word “tale” in the title (Noskova, 2015b).

The fairy tale “About arithmetic” presents the life of three brothers – Ivan, Matthew and Mark (the characters’ names are symbolic – these are the apostles- evangelists’ names). They decide to kill each other, so that one of them could inherit their “mother’s rotten two-room flat” (Babushkin, 2012). Pursuing this plan, the brothers completely forget about family relations, goodness and conscience. Nut, a contract killer, who “*loved the truth in everything*” (Noskova, 2015b) gathered them together and asked them to decide whom he had to kill. But the brothers did not give any answer, they “*just stood there and blew on their fingers*” (Noskova, 2015b) and didn’t understand what to do and how to continue living.

“Winter tales” tells us a story about an unexpected fortune of three brothers (Peter, Andrew and Fyodor). They got rich by selling Chinese tights (“*tangled, looking like entrails*”), which were sold in bulk by an old woman in rotten clothes. The life in a cold city is so weary and monotonous that people seemed to believe the advertising saying that “*your life is like a movie in “Marilyn” tights*” (Noskova, 2015b).

“The tale about the wire” is an original version of a filmic metaphor. The main character, Rita by name, “*worked in a bar as a woman who is touched but isn’t loved*”. She dreams of becoming an actress like Audrey Hepburn. However, the Cinderella plot does not work for her: “*They didn’t take me. Poor speech. Trauma. It’ll never be. They said I’m a fool, I’m mocking at them. But there’s Audrey Hepburn. There is!*” (Noskova, 2015b).

One of the most ruthless Babushkin’s plots is his fairy tale “Pancakes”. The touching protagonist who “*pigeons and crows were not afraid of, and <even> children with their evil adult faces never touched*” (Noskova, 2015b) was extremely lonely. Obviously, the author agrees with the criminalist that “*the world is not decent, <if > a guy fell in love with a decomposed body*” (Noskova, 2015b). In “Tales for the Poor” Babushkin (2012), like Ganieva (2011), resorts to traditional fairy tale motifs and images. Still, they are transformed in each separate plot.

It is universally recognized that the motif of the way is compulsory for a folk fairy tale where the hero overcomes obstacles and is constantly tested while he follows his quest. In contrast, Babushkin’s characters are tested by life itself and not all of them can withstand the tension, “*It hasn’t been decided yet. So they are still standing. Still standing*” (Babushkin, 2012). However, despite the fact that Babushkin’s characters cannot cope with the test, almost all his tales have a positive ending “*... and, by the way, it’s spring, I don’t mean that it’s already warm and green, but it smells like spring*”, “*But there’s Audrey Hepburn. There is!*”; “*Peter thought: probably, his sister is waiting for him at home, probably, she will be glad, probably there will be at least one day of fun ...*” (Babushkin, 2012).

In Babushkin’s works traditional fairy tale speech markers can be found: “*Once upon a time*”, “*There were three brothers*”. There is another fact that connects Babushkin’s works with the fairy-tale tradition: his works start with a fairy-tale saying which bears a teaching thought, “*Grief to the poor, porridge without a spoon to the armless*”; “*The truth or a lie, but there is something similar to the truth*”; “*There is always a kind myopic soul that will spit and say: it’s not true, everything cannot be that bad*”; “*Somebody is lucky, somebody isn’t lucky, but somebody is neither lucky nor unlucky*”, “*Sometimes a beetle flies and a crawfish crawls*”, “*Time oppresses us, time oppresses us, oppresses us time*”; “*It’s every man for himself, only God is for himself and for that guy*”; “*An idler is not a person who sits and does nothing, but a person who has nothing to do*” (Babushkin, 2012).

However, significant differences cannot be overlooked. There are two worlds in a fairy tale: real and surreal (magical), and the hero overcomes the border-line between them. Babushkin has only one real world but it is on the brink of absurdity: “*There were no seasons in the city, only the time of the day; you could fall asleep in winter and wake up in autumn,*



*and nothing changed outside. One day Borya woke up in pain, lay a little bit, listened to the neighbor behind a thin wall who was watching the repeat of yesterday's film and crying; cautiously got up, baked a pile of pancakes, put them into the box from a table hockey and went into the forest. The woman was there, beautiful, smiling and not breathing". "I'm going to eat,- said Borya and sat down on the ground, – "You know, I can bake. I also used to dance, but now we mustn't dance. You're dead, of course, and there is a last year's leaf on your cheek, but I'll eat pancakes with you. We'll have breakfast" (Babushkin, 2012). In fairy tales the protagonist is often accompanied and helped by a magical assistant, a giver. In contrast, in Babushkin's works there are characters who are neither antagonists, nor mischief-makers; they are a kind of anti-givers (a contract killer, a drug dealer, etc.).*

## FAIRY TALE IN DMITRY AKHMETSHIN'S LITERARY WORKS

Dmitry Akhmetshin is a young writer, finalist of the Debut Prize (2013 and 2015), laureate of the "Youth Wave" and "Russian Echo" prizes. His works are also characterized by a connection between the fairy-tale and children's perception of reality, as well as the inclusion of traditional folklore elements into his plots (Akhmetshin, 2010). In a number of his works, the writer skillfully adds some fairy-tale elements to the contemporary reality which is perceived by the reader through the main character's viewpoint. The protagonists are sincere and inquisitive children.

The tale "Nightlights" portrays a little hero's attempts to rescue his parents whose eyes were stolen by a witch. The author describes the boy's night trip using some elements of the fairy tale plot scheme (fairy types 313H \*, 327B, 327C, F CIOP, etc.). The author also interprets creatively a fairy tale motif that is traditionally realized in episodes of the protagonist's escape from a hostile alien creature (313H \*, 551 CIOP, etc.): escaping from the chase, the hero uses magic objects which create impassable obstructions on the way of the pursuer: a forest, a river and others.

A street lamp, which, according to the boy, lives its own life at night, helps Kirill avoid the pursuit. This unexpected savior can be considered a natural element of the surrounding "landscape", such as a traditional forest, a river or mountain stopping monsters that chase the heroes of folk tales.

The young writer often refers to the traditions of fairy tales about animals of both Russian and other peoples (Japanese). The cycle "Short tales" includes such fairy tales as "About a wolf who made friends with a boy", "About a raccoon and swamp cranberries", "Once upon a time there lived a weasel and she had a friend", "About a boulder looking like a baby's head", "About a fox and an abandoned little fox", "About a crane and rotten fruit", and a saying "About a weasel and her friend" which is prefaced in the tale "Once upon a time, there lived a Weasel and she had a Friend". However, creating his own literary versions of fairy tales about animals, he widely uses fairy-tale traditions.

Overall, the orientation on a "fairy-tale" (Akhmetshin's definition) is realized in his texts as a synthesis of the artistic features of different types of folk art, fairy tales and tales about animals, tales and parables, which, in our opinion, determine the specificity of Akhmetshin's fairy-tale creativity and his creative search in the genre of a literary fairy tale (the emphasis on the mystical side of a fairy tale narrative, the use of the fairy-tale motifs of different peoples, genre synthesis).

## CONCLUSION

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Russian culture tends to actively use and interpret all kinds of mythological heritage. This tendency is revealed both in young professionals' literary

works that have already been awarded prestigious prizes and in amateur writers' works posted within a narrow fans' community. The former aim to create genre nominations and to resort to the previous generation's experience in the field of using fairy tale elements in a modern narrative, specifically, to Lyudmila Petrushevskaya's idea of introducing the fairy tale component into the modern reality. Many young writers consider such a technique to be the most efficient for making a powerful and impressive story. It is the very level where peculiar interactions between pop culture, literature and folklore are born. Under these circumstances mass culture can be regarded "a contemporary emulation of folklore, urban epos and myth". Simultaneously, in the works by the Debut prizewinners (Alice Ganieva, Eugene Babushkin and Dmitry Akhmetshin) one can find both traditional elements (plots and motifs of folk fairy tales, separate structural models and constituents of images and characters, magical objects, etc.) and innovative elements (title – subtitle interaction, perception of two worlds as a characteristics inherent to a child's mind, resorting to estrangement, etc.).

Turning to amateur writers' literary output, fairy tale elements are used as a matrix which is able to give birth to new narrative structures or as an independent genre. Moreover, there is a slight difference concerning the fairy-tale as an independent genre between fandoms. The Harry Potter fandom never claimed to write fairy tales or mark similar works in such a way until J.K. Rowling released a sequel of fairy tales herself. However, Tolkien's fandom treats the fairy tale differently and does not hesitate to offer fairy tales to readers. Professional authors and amateur writers find it equally efficient to use the so-called conversion (fairy tales by Tolkien's fans and Eugene Babushkin's tales). Overall, the fairy tale in Russian professional and amateur writing is used both as a genre nomination and as a means to form genres and new narrative models.

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