

# A promising form of cultural transfer of the heroic epic of the Sakha people to the youth environment

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**Abstract**—The article considers the cultural transfer as an effective mechanism of popularization of the heroic Yakut epic *Olonkho* in the foreign cultural readership. The heroes of the traditional Yakut *Olonkho*, received as a series of novels by R.OLDI, a chance to become characters of the genre of ethno-cultural fantasy popular among the youth audience, gain access to the world mass reader, popularity in a foreign cultural environment, a fairly complete adaptation of ethno-cultural values by the perceiving culture and the entry of this culture into the culture of the giver.

**Keywords**—*ethnic fantasy, Olonkho heroes, cultural transfer, intercultural dialogue, cultural contact, cultural clash, mentality, spiritual values, heroes of the Middle world, magic*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Yakut heroic epos *olonkho*, recognized by UNESCO in 2005 as an intangible masterpiece of humanity, represents a unique contribution of the northern people to the world cultural heritage. *Olonkho* installs mythology and religion, matrices of philosophy, ethics and aesthetics, the foundations of culture, from which the types of folk and professional art subsequently developed: music, singing, poetry, theater, choreography, and fine art. The vivid and large-scale artistic images, rapid transitions of the plot, the magnificent language of poetic texts concentrate the ideals of a worthy life that should be lived that way - protecting the heritage of ancestors, developing craftsmanship, raising worthy children, passing on spiritual and moral values and principles, historical experience and social memory.

For the first time, the heroic legends of the Yakuts became objects of scientific research in the works of O.N. Betlinka, N.A. Vitashevsky, R.K. Maak, A.F. Middendorff, E.K. Pekarsky, V.L. Seroshevsky, I. A. Khudyakova, et al. Since the beginning of the XX century, thanks to educated representatives of the Yakut people (N.S. Gorokhov, M.N. Androsova-Ionova, R.K. Bolshakov, I.N. and K.G. Orosiny, A.Ya. Uvarovsky) the creation of a database of *olonkho* texts was underway, which continues to be replenished thanks to field research by modern Yakut philologists and epicologists.

Significant stages in the professional study of *olonkho* are:

- P.A. Oyunsky, who created the large-scale *olonkho* «Nyurgun Bootur the Swift» thanks to an extraordinary storytelling gift;
- creation by the folklorist G.U. Ergis of a full-fledged conceptual apparatus for published texts;
- systematization of *olonkho* stories by the specialist of epic poetry N. V. Emelyanov;
- a phenomenological approach to the study of *olonkho*, at the source of which I.V. Pukhov stood.

It is with the monograph of the last author that the stage of modern scientific research of the *olonkhologists* of the republic begins to study the connections of the heroic epic of the Yakuts with the epics of the Turkic-Mongolian peoples (V.V. Illarionov, K.D. Utkin, T.V. Illarionova, L.S. Efimova, A. N. Danilova, A.A. Kuzmina, N.A. Orosina, et al.).

In modern scientific, political and pedagogical circles of Yakutia, academic circles of the Turkic-speaking regions of Siberia, the perception of the Yakut heroic epic *olonkho* as a hypertext of ethnic culture is being fixed, since over the past 10-15 years, the interpretation of *olonkho* exclusively as a genre of oral folk poetry has become too limited.

Separate values and principles of *olonkho* politics and RS social scientists suggest laying the foundation of national ideology, starting with the traditional mythologization of power [1]. Both regional and federal political circles are close to the ideal of centralized power, within which the victorious hero alone rules - as the only force capable of restoring the former order and fighting chaos for a peaceful future. If you interpret *olonkho* after A.A. Burtsev and L.N.Semenova as a concentrated embodiment of spiritual culture and spiritual values that permeate the spiritual, practical and spiritual-theoretical spheres of human life, the *olonkho* becomes an object of creative comprehension in art, an object of research in science, the content of educational activity, etc. [2].

The selfless work of several generations of Yakut folklorists, philologists and culturologists provided a large-scale information base for epicological studies and allowed the implementation of numerous targeted programs for the preservation and study of *olonkho* [3]. But in addition to the traditional academic ways of assimilation (monographs, reports, conferences, academic publications), for a worthy response to the challenges of globalization, the original epic heritage of the Sakha people needs new forms of incarnations, creative finds for a full-fledged intercultural dialogue to ensure the active penetration of *olonkho* elements and images in modern, global, youth culture and expand its relevance.

## II. THE PURPOSE OF THE SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE

The aim of the article is to study the potential of transnational cultural transfer as an effective mechanism for the active introduction of *olonkho* images and plots into the cultural spaces of other peoples (using the cycle of novels «Strong» by G.L. Oldi).

## III. METHODS

The main used methods are theoretical and comparative ones, methods of comparative analysis and cultural transfer. The selected aspect of the study also involves an appeal to the hermeneutical method of interpreting the sources of fantasy and ancient mythology, the method of mythopoetic analysis that analyzes a literary work in a cultural, mythological and literary context.

## IV. RESULTS

Ethnic cultural fantasy (folk fantasy) can become a promising cultural mediator, providing a semantic transfer of *olonkho* ideas images to other contexts of perception, cultural spaces of other peoples.

Fantasy is a young literary genre characterized by a large valency (the ability to attach other texts of mass culture to itself. As a working term for this article, the authors use the corrected interpretation of I. Venterle: «fantasy is the direction of modern culture, the essential features of which are: magic, as a full-fledged component of the world created by the author, a convincing social and natural environment, subjects, images of heroes, events built on the basis of ethnic myths, pre Denmark and the realities of everyday life of a particular people, a pronounced multimedia character» [4].

As an example, it is enough to cite «The Lord of the Rings» by JRR Tolkien, who occupies the first line in the list of «200 best books but the Air Force version». Created on the basis of Celtic and Old Germanic legends, the epic is translated into 30 languages of the world - from Japanese to Swahili; in terms of sales popularity in Argentina and Portugal it ranks first, in Germany - sixth. For two decades now, young readers of English-speaking countries in mass polls have called the trilogy «the greatest book of the 20th century». R.I. Maklakov points out in his thesis that «in England Tolkien's books are taken in libraries more than 200,000 times a year, which exceeds the popularity of such «classical» authors as W. Shakespeare, C. Dickens and J. Austin, and the word «hobbit» was included in the Oxford English Dictionary» [5].

In the Western European cultural tradition, fantasy is closely connected with the epic and German-Scandinavian mythology. J.R.R. Tolkien, one of the first fantasy authors, was also the first theoretician of this genre. He formulated his concept of fantasy tradition in the essay «On Fairy Tales», including such essential signs of the genre as the absence of an age limit for the perceiving side, the construction of a reliable Secondary World, and the indispensable presence in quest magic stories - the hero's journey as a path of spiritual development and achievement with the fight against evil, Flight and Consolation [5].

Ethnic fantasy, created in the Russian Federation since the 90s of the 20th century, uses the plots and images of Slavic mythology, folklore and the early Slavic history of the pre-state and early state period (6-11 centuries). It was the novel by M. V. Semenova «Wolfhound» (1995) that laid the foundation for the so-called Slavic or ethno-cultural fantasy. Drawings testify to the popularity of the writer's books: *Wolfhound* was released in 2006 with a circulation of more than 200 thousand copies; moreover, it was the 12th year of publication. The author herself claims that her appeal to the genre of Slavic fantasy is caused by the desire to interest the reader in the history of her people and the desire to resist the dominance of Western European fantasy in the domestic book market.

Analyzing the series of M. Semenova about *Volkodav*, experts came to the conclusion that not only specifically ethnic (Slavic), but universal cultural models based on the structure of the heroic myth are

embodied in the novels that make it up; this allows us to clarify their nature, defining it as «heroic» fantasy [6].

Ethnocultural fantasy is created in two main ways:

1. Cultural syncretism (contamination) when there is a mixture of archaic components of the original culture with more modern installations of the same culture;

2. Cultural transfer, when specially or arbitrarily selected cultural components of the original culture are embedded in the new cultural system, being transformed in the process of plot development [7].

Due to the peculiarities of the historical development of a country, the uniqueness of its linguistic and cultural traditions, intercultural dialogue can be implemented in two directions:

- adaptation of cultural values by a perceiving culture;
- the entry of elements of this culture into the giving one.

Literary comparative research as a science that studies the characteristics of the interchange of spiritual values, in order to achieve a full-fledged intercultural exchange, focuses on the use of cultural transfer. This culturological approach in Russia received the status of a research area at the beginning of the 21st century thanks to joint Russian-French large-scale projects. Cultural transfer processes take place between national cultures and between other cultural spaces.

Experts consider cultural transfer as a dynamic process linking three components:

TABLE I. COMPONENTS OF CULTURAL TRANSFER

1. Source culture	2. Intermediary instance	3. Target culture
Objects, cultural texts and practices borrowed from the original culture	Explores the roles and functions of authorities = intermediaries (scientists, translators, research institutes, universities, the media, publishers, etc.)	Selection, forms of assimilation in a perceiving culture (translation, forms of creative adaptation, imitation).

The use of cultural transfer in our case is not aimed at assimilating the cultural elements of the original culture in the target culture, but at «embedding» them into a new cultural system, which can be modified during the implementation of the transfer. The penetration mechanism of one culture into another is complicated by the participation of cultural «intermediaries», whose efforts are aimed at reducing the cultural distance in the sense of culturally transferring ideas into the context of perception of the bearer of another culture in order to ensure the optimal result of assimilation of borrowed elements.

In the perceiving culture, the acquired forms differ from the original version (the exact transfer of the original is possible only in the simplest cases), either a deviation from the original or a creative change in the

source material occurs. Placing an alien cultural element in a different cultural context may be accompanied by a rejection, cultural resistance, or conflict of borrowed new content with existing patterns.

Although the processes of developing and introducing cultures into a foreign cultural space are complex and not always predictable, D. V Lobacheva advocates the use of the cultural transfer method to ensure the objectivity and accuracy of research in a comprehensive analysis of a literary text [8].

Domestic and foreign scholars note the richness of artistic images, plot moves, the perfection and poetry of the Olonkho language, which incorporates «in compressed, encoded form many elements of the spiritual heritage of ancient cultures of Eurasia, from the Neolithic to the late Middle Ages». The inaccessibility of olonkho texts to a global audience due to linguistic and cultural barriers, low throughput of traditional scientific ways of assimilation (translations, conferences, monographs) of the cultural heritage of the Sakha people - in the era of globalization, requires new techniques and new cultural intermediaries for the active development of olonkho by modern world culture.

Ethnocultural fantasy, a modern direction of literature and culture with a pronounced multimedia character, is such a promising cultural mediator that provides the semantic transfer of images and plots of olonkho, as was done with Kel's and Slavic epics, into the cultural spaces of other nations. At the present stage, it is fantasy literature continues to be the most sought after by a wide readership, and the works of individual authors have become iconic («The Lord of the Rings» by J.R. Tolkin - in the middle of the XX century, «Harry GGotter» J.K Rowling - at the turn of the century, «A Song of Ice and Fire» by J. Martin - in the new century).

When using the cultural transfer mechanism, the cultural elements of olonkho (heroes, plots, picture of the world, blessings-algys), perceived individually or collectively, can be effectively introduced into the field of a new culture, having lost its «alienness» and creatively transformed. Such a way of incorporating an archaic heroic epos with the help of the latest technical achievements into a new cultural environment and new existence is extremely promising for the youth culture of the era of information civilization.

With the help of a cultural transfer, the plot of the classic quest «Strong» of Kharkov science fiction writers Dmitry Gromov and Oleg Ladyzhensky, written under the pseudonym Henry Lyon Oldie, is realized. Two novels from the unfinished series contain a description of the trials, exploits, disappointments and discoveries of the romantic teenager from Heavenly Village Yurun Wallan.

The main genre-forming component of the series is the Yakut heroic epic olonkho. The authors not only build a modern work according to the laws of this ancient genre, but lay the basic motives of the next

literary genre, the medieval knightly novel, in the outline of the narrative.

The writers thoroughly worked out mythological themes, plots, symbols and images, details of everyday life, in order to recreate their own Three Worlds. In the Upper World, Yuryun Wallan lives in a Heavenly Village, and there among the gods and their companions rural customs prevail. It is normal for Yuryun that his father can dictate the will of the Law to people in the Middle World, that he himself is the future bootur, that his older brother Müldün is already a mighty bootur, and his sister is a shaman. And even suspiciously like a crock-pot, a kamelka (hearth) in the kitchen, which itself prepares food, blinking lights, is also in the order of things for Yuryun.

An enthusiastic reader who does not immediately begin to suspect that the world (more precisely, the three worlds - the Upper, Lower and Middle ones, connected by the earth's axis) is not at all arranged «as usual» as it seems to trusting Yuryun. By tradition, every future boat tour goes to the Forge of Growth to receive armor and wonderful weapons. So Yuryun Wallan rushed for heroic attributes, not suspecting until the last second that he would be shackled into this armor right on the anvil, cladding his body in an iron protective shell.

Meeting the spirit of Fire became Yuryun a brutal test of pain and flame. The «exam» involves two grades. Or the red-hot flame will burn out in a body and soul of the future hero all fears and doubts - or the candidate will die. Light and darkness, good and evil, truth and silence mingled in the new reality... Aan of Ughan - the epithet of the spirit of Fire (spirit name is a mystery) - has two options of interpretation. The first – «Svetliy» (disperses the darkness in the world and in the human soul) and the second – «sacred Knowledge» (carries the light of knowledge in the world) [9].

The quest will turn a naive boastful boy into a brave and decisive young man, whom no shocking information about the structure of the universe and about the origin of the bright gods aiyy themselves can move from their chosen path. For him, «a common thing» will be the way to the ends of the world to help out a brother whom he has never seen, and then accept him as he is (and in Nyurgun there are so few human remains after captivity) [10]. And the fate of the two heroes binds with the iron knot, and the younger brother takes responsibility for the elder, as the heroes need to help each other. Otherwise, they will burn, lose themselves. So Yuryun Wallan will make his choice when he rushes into the mechanism of Time, on his sharp edges to save his brother, and the whole family then rushes to save him, rebelling against the passionless Law.

The authors did not stint on the milestones of the hero's biography - first love, first trouble, first loss: here, and the already mentioned growing up on a red-hot anvil, and a family that loves and lies because of love, strength is its essence and the price that must be paid for her gain. Oldie has the very concept of superstrong creatures that can do anything, and nothing

happens to them for that, causes legitimate doubts. Booturs in their combat form (it is called «expansion») turn into infants with a set of primitive feelings and reactions, they can only beat and destroy, and the world for them is divided into «bad» and «good». Only iron willpower can deter them from becoming dangerous monsters with every outbreak of anger. Preserving humanity in oneself is the main victory of a rational man over the wild power of bootur.

And this is just one example, and how many other types of power are still present: pride, authority, wealth ... Not to succumb to madness, hatred, pride, decide and act according to the laws of goodness and nobility - this is the true strength of a man. And that's right, because no matter what Oldie writes about - ancient Greece, the labyrinth of the monastery in Shaolin, medieval Japan - they primarily write about people. And their series «Strengths», which has begun, is no exception.

## V. DISCUSSIONS

The phenomenon of fantasy has not been an object of scientific interest for a long time because of the perception of fantasy versions of fairy tales or teenage literature. But over the past 20 years, fantasy has become the study object not only by literary critics, but also by representatives of other sections of social and humanitarian knowledge, who have applied the approaches and methods of their sciences to works: [11]:

1. The author-critical approach - early research was critical and written by science fiction writers themselves - foreign (W. L. Guin, M. Murcock, A. Clark, R. Heinlein, R. Jordan) and domestic (S. Loginov, A Sapkovsky, N. Perumov, S. Lukyanenko).

2. The philological approach. The founder was K.N. Manlaw, who analyzed the works of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, J. MacDonald. Further, the philological nature of the research was continued by S. A. Luzina, N. G. Medvedeva, S. B. Likhacheva, and R. I. Kabakov.

3. According to proponents of the archetypal approach (K. Kilby, X. Carpenter, R. Helms, M. White, S. L. Koshelev, M. A. Shteyman, E. N. Kovtun), the main characteristic of the fantasy world is the presence of a supernatural component in a fantasy reality that allows fantasy to refer to the original archetypes of the archaic past of mankind.

4. The philosophical approach. J.R. R. Tolkien first theoretically analyzed the philosophical and mythological foundations of fantasy.

A new view of fantasy as a virtual neomythological phenomenon (D.A. Baturin), based on a new axiology, philosophy and ideology, and entailing serious changes in fundamental views on the essence of reality, is gaining strength [12]. The interpretation of fantasy as a new kind of artistic virtual reality with a multimedia character explains its ability to expand the olonkho audience by transferring its plots and images to films, computer games, music, sites, comics, video gusters,

fan fiction IT industry, role-playing games with heroes and on the classic plots of olonkho or from other objects of culture of the information age.

It seems promising to explore the specifics of «fantasy» as a special virtual reality that forms a new cultural space.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Ethnocultural fantasy acts as an effective mechanism for cultural transfer, includes the cultural elements of the Yakut heroic epos olonkho (heroes, plots, world order, life scenarios, poetry-algys) in the cultural space of other nations, primarily the youth audience.

Fantasy series G.L. Oldie «Strong» takes place in the Yakut Trekhmyr, where heroes-booturs fight monsters and strangers, conjure beautiful shaman-udaganki, and the evil inhabitants of the Lower World-Abasa raid. Young Bootur goes on a quest to save his brother. At the end of his wanderings in the Lower and Middle Worlds, having worthily overcome the trials that fell to his lot, while remaining faithful to the eternal values of the family, love, honor and fighting brotherhood. Yuryun Wallan will become a valiant companion of Nyrguun Bootur - the great defender of the Middle World.

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