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IDEOLOGICAL AND ARTISTIC FEATURES OF THE CREATION OF A FEMALE IMAGE IN ANGLO-SCOTTISH BALLADS

Research article

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Abstract

The article focuses on the studying of the ideological and artistic features of the creation of a female image in Anglo-Scottish ballads. The study aims to investigate Anglo-Scottish ballads peculiarities and to analyze the female characters presented in them. The distinguishing characteristic of female characters in Scottish poetry based on gender theory, feminist and analytical research methods has been researched. The article highlights that the female character evolves along with poetry, the new worldview of the authors. In different literary time, female characters performed different functions, and the gender issue, to one degree or another, was always manifested in the works of writers; the female character always served as the embodiment of certain ideal views of the author about the world.

Keywords: ballad, character system, female character, type of male character.

ИДЕЙНО-ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ СОЗДАНИЯ ЖЕНСКОГО ОБРАЗА В АНГЛО-ШОТЛАНДСКИХ БАЛЛАДАХ

Научная статья

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена изучению идеологических и художественных особенностей создания женского образа в англо-шотландских балладах. Целью исследования является изучение признаков англо-шотландских баллад и анализ представленных в них женских персонажей. Были исследованы отличительные черты женских персонажей в шотландской поэзии, основанные на гендерной теории, феминистских и аналитических методах исследования. В статье подчеркивается, что женский персонаж вместе с поэзией формирует новое мировоззрение авторов. В разное литературное время женские персонажи выполняли разные функции, и гендерный вопрос в той или иной степени всегда проявлялся в произведениях писательниц; женский персонаж всегда служил воплощением определенных идеальных представлений автора о мире.

Ключевые слова: баллада, система персонажей, женский персонаж, тип мужского персонажа.

Introduction

The task of the research article is to maintain what characteristics of female heroes have been generalized as a result of many years of oral transmission of Anglo-Scottish ballads, which have been fixed by tradition and therefore proved to be the most significant for the national culture development in Great Britain.

We have chosen four methods of analysis:

- 1) empirical;
- 2) feminist;
- 3) case-study;
- 4) analytical research methods. Using these methods, the specificity of female images in Scottish poetry is determined.

Plenty of traditional features of composition and style are presented in Anglo-Scottish ballads that distinguish them from other poetic genres. First of all, their stylistic feature is their focus on one, often tragic, event that has a great influence on the emotional world of listeners and readers.

Main results

The term “*ballad*” originates from the Latin verb *ballare* (to dance). Therefore, the song that accompanied the dance was called *balada* in Provence, and *balata* in Italy (XIII century). Over time, the term “*ballad*” changes its meaning: in the XIV century the French *ballade* was a genre of court poetry that required sophisticated skill from the author.

In the XVII-XVIII centuries the word “*ballad*” meant any song that was sung by the people, whether it was printed or transmitted orally. Thus, ancient songs of a narrative nature that have existed for many centuries also began to be called ballads.

Literary critic M.P. Alekseev regards the English and Scottish ballad as a lyrical-epic or lyrical-dramatic story, having a strophic form, intended for singing, often accompanied by playing musical instruments [1, P. 159].

The general properties of the Anglo-Scottish ballad genre were revealed and generalized by V.M. Zhirmunsky. In ballads “they convey not discussions about events, but the events and passions themselves, in a direct, colorful and artistic form. The events reveal the individuality of the characters, primitive, unrestrained in love and hate, creatively impulsive and spontaneous” [2, P. 47].

The Scottish ballad tradition has always been a tradition of gender. These ballads depict women who are pitiful victims, heartless women, or faithful companions. The ballads depict issues of a woman's lack of control over her own destiny, and they also demonstrate by their own example how to circumvent this lack [11, P. 296-297].

From a feminist point of view, the source of inequality between male and female characters comes from the principles of the patriarchal society where these ballads originated. The term “patriarchal society” refers to a system of social structures such as religion, law, education, culture, where men dominate women. These structures influence everyday life to such an extent that male dominance and female subordination are perceived as a natural state. Women rarely questioned their position. They had so internalized the general beliefs that they did not feel the need to confront their own degradation [9, P. 560-561].

An analysis of Anglo-Scottish ballads pointed out that in most of the works, male characters are usually named according to their professions or activities: harpers, pirates, tanners, monks, poachers, potters, etc. They appear independently in a variety of places in the ballade – at sea, on the battlefield, on a farm or in an inn. They also appear in numerous episodes, including pastoral, epic and humorous ones.

In contrast, the vast majority of female characters are found only in episodes where men are depicted. They are usually defined in relation to them – as their lovers, wives, mothers, sisters and daughters. Female characters appear mainly in love stories and family tragedies. The exception to this rule are queens and princesses who appear in adventure and knightly episodes. However, they can be seen as “royal consorts” and “king's daughters” – as heroes who are also dependent on men. In addition, there are nuns, midwives, nurses and witches. Men are also “doers” – they take action and women have to deal with the consequences.

We see a similar situation in the ballad “Lord Thomas and Fair Annet”. Beautiful Annette meets with a lord who later decides to marry a rich woman, and in the ballad the lord is not condemned for this decision. Being lower in social status, the main female character is deprived of the right to a happy marriage with her lover: “*The nut-brown bride haes gowd and gear, / Fair Annet she has gat nane; / And the little beauty Fair Annet haes / O it wull soon be gane*” [8, P. 152]. In the translated version: “*Chernavka eats on silver, / And Annette is penniless, / Moreover, over the years she will fade, / Even though she is good today!*” [3, P. 102].

Lord Thomas's wealthy fiancée is the antagonist of the ballad and, out of jealousy, deals a fatal blow to the beautiful Annette when she appears at the wedding.

Although this ballad ends tragically with the murder of Annette and the suicide of Lord Thomas, it further points to the theme of young women who have no choice but to submit to the actions of powerful men.

The ballad “The Knight and The Shepherd's Daughter” also shows a young woman struggling with male dominance. The Shepherd's Daughter is a brave heroine who insists on bringing to justice the gentleman who entered into a relationship with her against her will. She goes to the king himself and insists on marriage.

The highlight of the ballad comes in the final part, when it is revealed that she is, in fact, of noble blood. At first, the lord is frightened by the prospect of marrying the shepherd's daughter: “*Would I have drunk the fair water / When I did drink the wine, / That ever any shepherd's daughter / Should be a fair lady of mine!*” The translation goes like this: “*I would drink clean water, / But I drank wine, / And the beautiful lady should be mine / If she were the daughter of any shepherd!*”

But he is ultimately rewarded. From a commoner his wife turns into a woman of noble birth: “*But when they came unto the place / Where marriage rites were done, / She provd her selfe a duke's daughter, / And he but a squire's son.*” Translated: “*But when they came to the place / Where the marriage rites were performed, / She proved that she was the Duke's daughter, / And he was just the squire's son.*”

Despite the circumstances of their acquaintance, the young woman happily married her offender, telling him that they were a wonderful couple: “*Now you have married me, sir knight, / Your pleasures may be free; / If you make me lady of one good town, / I'll make you lord of three*” [8, P. 235]. In the translated version: “*Now, sir knight, you have married me, / I give your pleasures freedom. / If you make me mistress of one city, / I will make you master of all three.*”

This ballad shows the type of male characters who use their power to avoid responsibility. Although the path to the altar is rarely easy, women often have to use wit or beauty to get a man. But desirable men almost always command and crush with their authority.

The ballad “Andrew Lammie” tells the story of a young woman who eventually dies because she is not allowed to marry her lover, who is in a lower social position than her own.

Annie falls in love with Andrew Lammy, Lord Fivvy's trumpeter. Annie and Andrew declare their love, and Andrew leaves for Edinburgh, promising to marry Annie when he returns. The parents of the main character are categorically against such a relationship. They even beat her up to get poor Andrew to give up, but she is adamant. As a result, this leads to her death. Annie's family accuses Andrew Lammy of bewitching their daughter, but Lord Fivvie believes it was love.

Annie has a premonition of her death, and realizes that its cause is her inconsolable love for a poor trumpeter: “*O gin that flower war in my breast, / It grows baith braid and bonny; / There's a daisie in the midst o it, / And it's ca'd by Andrew Lammie*” [8, P. 531]. Translation: “*This flower would be on my chest / With all its petals: / I would caress him, kiss him, / Like the glorious Andrew Lammy.*” The image of Annie is a typical image of a faithful woman.

There are many medieval Anglo-Scottish ballads that focus on the relationship between a man and a woman. However, ballads such as “Edward,” “Bonny Barbara Allan,” and “Matty Groves” stand out because they depict typical relationships between a man and a woman. In the three ballads presented, you can find the following similar features:

1. There is always a conflict between a man and a woman.
2. None of these ballads represent an ideal relationship between a man and a woman.

Although the relationship between a man and a woman in the ballad “Edward” revolves around a mother and son, their relationship is just as confusing as that found in other ballads. Edward and his mother have a tense and tumultuous relationship, which is highlighted in their conversations and interactions with each other. Edward's tension towards his mother is shown in the answers to his mothers' questions: “Why does your sword so drip with blood, / Edward, Edward.” / Edward, Edward?”

Instead of answering truthfully, Edward lies to his mother, saying that he has hawk's blood on his sword: “Oh, I have killed my hawk so good, / Mother, mother.”

In the end, Edward suffers from guilt and confesses to his mother that he really killed his father. Expecting to find at least some sympathy with his mother, since it was his mother who gave Edward the idea to kill his father, Edward was instead subjected to a series of questions from his mother. These questions make Edward angry, especially since one of them is how he is going to be punished for his actions: “And what penance will ye suffer for that? / My dear son, now tell me.” Translation: “And with a grievous sin thou shalt atone for thyself, / My dear son, tell me.” After interrogating Edward after the murder, it is clear that the mother is clearly responsible for her relationship, as she skillfully manipulates Edward.

The relationship between Edward and his mother cannot be considered as perfect one between a man and a woman, or a relationship between a mother and her son, as neither party demonstrates any respect to each other. This becomes particularly evident when Edward's mother inquires about what he intends to leave behind for her, given that he is about to flee his homeland.

She asks the question: “And what will you leave for your mother, / Edward, Edward?” To which Edward responds: “You shall bear the curse of Hell from me, mother. You shall bear the burden of Hell's wrath for the counsel you have offered me. May you be damned until the end of your days for whispering sin into my ear!”

Moreover, owing to his strained relationship with his mother, Edward shows some kind of distrust towards other women in his life, he seems mistrustful even of his mother. When his mother inquires about his intentions regarding his children and wife, Edward responds with a terse remark: “The world is vast, let them beg for their livelihood, Mother, Mother“. “What will happen to your children and your wife, / Edward, Edward? / Let them travel all over the world for bread and a bag, / My mom, mom!” [8, P. 31].

The poem “Beautiful Barbara Allan” portrays a relationship between a man and a woman that fails due to the stubbornness and unyielding nature of both parties involved. The bond between Sir John Graham and Barbara Allan is characterized by their tenacity, as both of them are emphatic. Barbara Allan's relentlessness is evident in her refusal to accept the truth that Sir Graham's love for her seems to be fading.

Despite the fact that Barbara Allen and Sir Graham hold by different points of view, their relationship — which is characterized by the three ballads — bears a striking resemblance to an ordinary relationship between a man and a woman.

Barbara Allan requests her mother to prepare a coffin for her, as her love has passed away today, and she will die for him tomorrow: “Since my love has died for me today, / I shall die for him tomorrow”).” These actions indicate that they held mutual respect and perhaps affection for one another, albeit both, particularly Barbara Allan, may have hesitated to express their true emotions [8, P. 220].

The relationship between Lord Arlen and his wife from the ballad “Mattie Groves” is far from ideal due to deception and patriarchy. Lord Arlen's wife cheats on her husband with Matty Groves: “Come home with me, Little Matty Groves, and sleep with me tonight.” “Come back with me, Little Mattie Groves, and sleep with me tonight.” The relationship between Lord Arlen and his wife can be described as patriarchal: Lord Arlen treats his wife as property, not as a human being: “And then Lord Arlen he took his wife, / He sat her on his knee / Saying who do you like the best of us, / Mattie Groves or me” [8, P. 216]. In the translated version: “And then Lord Arlen took his wife, / And sat her on his knee / Giving her a choice – who is better among us, / Matty Groves or me.”

Thus, he tries to make all the decisions for her, which are not always appreciated by his wife. My wife, feeling deprived, decides to cheat. From her point of view, this is revenge for all the attempts made by Lord Arlen to humiliate and insult her.

Although none of the above ballads show a relationship that represents an idyll between a man and a woman, each of these ballads is effective in portraying the arguments of both sides.

Many ballads note that the female main characters are very beautiful. “Fair” or “Bonny” are used as regular epithets with words such as “Maid”, “Lassie” or “Lady” or with character names such as “Bonny Annie”, “Fair Janet” or “Fair Annie”. Physical beauty is most often associated with good mental qualities. For example, “Beautiful Annie” is reserved and loyal; “Pretty Annie” sacrifices her life to save her lover. In contrast, negative characters are usually portrayed as ugly. For example, “Alison Gross” is described as “the ugliest witch in the Nordic country.”

However, in the ballad “Mary Hamilton”, beauty becomes the cause of crime. The protagonist, in all likelihood, was a historical figure. Mary was a lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Scots. She had an affair with the king and became pregnant. She kept it a secret and killed her baby after giving birth. Her crime was discovered, Mary was sentenced to death and hanged in Edinburgh. She mourns her beauty before her execution, saying: “O happy, happy is the maid, / That's born of beauty free! / It was my dimpling rosy cheeks / That's been the dule o me” [8, P. 421]. Translation: “Oh, happy, happy maidservant, / Born with beauty. / It was my pink cheeks / It was my promise”.

Mary sees her beauty as the cause of her suffering – if she were not so beautiful, she would not have become the king's mistress.

The ballad serves as a critique of a society where women have become victims of their appearance. In ballads, which are often passed down through oral storytelling, we can see a picture of women through the eyes of men. One particularly striking example is the ballad called «The Whummil Bore», which is translated as «drilled hole» in Scottish slang. This refers to a hole in a wall through which a male narrator spies on a beautiful young lady in her room.

The story tells about the king's daughter and a servant who, after serving at court for seven years, one day spies on the princess. The text uses exaggerated language to describe the princess's posh clothes: «She wore two dresses and had ten pins

stuck in them». Nevertheless, it is her body that captures the protagonist's attention, evoking admiration: "Her neck and chest were like snow." However, his covert gaze does not linger for long, and he is forced to walk away from the hole in the wall.

The story of the ballad ends without any dramatic events, making it resemble a humorous tale of a snooping Tom.

A significant element of the ballad is the male character's gaze upon a woman. This glance has a captivating effect on the protagonist, momentarily placing the female figure in his power, albeit unknowingly. In this ballad, it is clear that the female protagonist holds a superior position over the male one [8, P. 46].

Conclusion

The Anglo-Scottish ballad tradition presents a diverse array of female figures, ranging from those who are rendered helpless in the face of male domination to those who exhibit viciousness, vindictiveness, or devotion, love, and care. Some ballads describe narratives, imbuing these female characters with negative traits such as passivity, irrationality, depravity, perversion, and inconsistency.

Let us summarize the results of theoretical side of this issue and the prospects for future research.

However, the majority of women are characterized in a positive way. There are numerous instances of proactive and fearless heroines. The feminine body is frequently perceived as a source of allure and strength, rather than an object of shame. Pregnant women and mothers are depicted as powerful heroines who govern life and death, marginalizing men from their domain. They cast spells and imprecations, and some feminine characters possess sufficient strength to become oppressive and menacing towards men — they are typically portrayed as supernatural beings, such as witches or fairies, blending Christian and superstitious beliefs with fantastic elements and artistic images.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Рецензия

Все статьи проходят рецензирование. Но рецензент или автор статьи предпочли не публиковать рецензию к этой статье в открытом доступе. Рецензия может быть предоставлена компетентным органам по запросу.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Review

All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.

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