

PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMBOLISM IN ILLUSTRATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY FAIRY TALES AND DARK FANTASY WORKS

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Abstract: The article studies the psychological symbolism in illustrations for modern fairy tales and dark fantasy works. It analyses how artists use metaphorical images, such as doors, shadows, mirrors, and distorted spaces, to create emotional tension. The work also points to visual strategies that build an atmosphere of worry and uncertainty through the use of form and composition.

Keywords: Symbolism, book illustration, dark fantasy, visual images, psychological motive.

1. Introduction

Modern researchers of visual culture say that illustration can form the emotional feeling of the text and can play the role of an independent artistic interpretation. Perry Nodelman, in his study of narrative art, notes that images often give information that words keep silent about, and they create an emotional meaning that is not possible to describe with words [1, p. 21]. In the dark fantasy genre, visual symbols become the main tool for bringing the reader into the atmosphere.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

John Berger says that the process of seeing comes before words, and the perception of visual images affects our emotions even before we understand the story [2, p. 7]. That is why symbols, for example doors or dark corners, work on the level of the subconscious. Gaston Bachelard, in his philosophical work about the poetics of space, explains that the door is a symbol of transition and doubt, because on the threshold the desires and fears of a person gather [3, p. 222].

3. Visual strategies of modern illustrators

Illustrators use proven composition methods to create tension. Molly Bang, in her guide on building images, shows how sharp angles and diagonal shapes cause a subconscious feeling of danger, while soft curves are connected with safety [4, p. 42]. The deformation of objects also plays an important role. Noël Carroll, in his philosophical analysis of the horror genre, says that the effect of “art-horror” appears when normal categories are broken, when objects or creatures look unnatural or unfinished [5, p. 32].

4. Conclusions

Psychological symbolism in modern illustrations for fairy tales and dark fantasy works plays an important role because it forms the narrative and creates the atmosphere. The analysis shows that illustration is an independent art form that needs from the artist a deep understanding of the psychology of perceiving forms, space, and symbols of transition.

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