Formalists' Approach to "Plot" and "Fabula"

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Annotation: Work on the plot and fabula, as a rule, begins with a theme, to a certain extent predetermined by the idea of the work. Each writer has his own thematic preferences due to the circumstances of his private and creative life. With the theme comes the fabula or, most often, its main points (plot scheme), the backbone, which gradually acquires the "meat" of the plot material. The fabula schemes, outlines of future full-blooded plots are often prepared by writers for future use, calling ahead of time plots. Sources for acquiring plot material are as diverse as life itself. This may be, first of all, the personal experience of the writer, who not only sits at his desk, but also lives in the colorful world around him.

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Introduction

In the literature, there are several approaches to the definition and correlation of such concepts (terms) as "plot" and "fabula". The distinction between the two is defined very differently, but for many critics "plot" is the sequence of events as they happen, and "fabula" is the sequence in which the author arranges them (in which he narrates them or portrays them dramatically).

The purpose of this article is to consider the terminological issue of plot and fabula based on the method of functional analysis of literature. The plot is often confused with the plot. The concept of plot, as is known, was first encountered already in Aristotle, however, today it does not have the necessary terminological certainty. In modern literary criticism, this term is used mainly in two meanings.

In one sense, the plot is the main events of the work, in contrast to the fabula, which covers the details of the action.

Literature review

The classical theory of the plot, in general terms, formed back in ancient Greece, proceeds from the fact that the main components of plot construction are events and actions. Events woven into actions, as Aristotle believed, constitute the fabula - the basis of any epic and dramatic work. We note right away that the term fabula is not found in Aristotle, this is the result of a Latin translation. Aristotle's original myth. This nuance then played a cruel joke on literary terminology, since the differently translated "myth" has led to terminological confusion in modern times. Below we will dwell in more detail on the modern meanings of the terms plot and fabula.

Aristotle associated the unity of the plot with the unity and completeness of the action, and not the hero, in other words, the integrity of the plot is ensured not by the fact that we meet one character everywhere (if we talk about Russian literature, then, for example, Chichikov),but by the fact that all the characters are involved into a single action. Insisting on the unity of action, Aristotle singled out the plot and denouement as necessary elements of the plot. The tension of the action, in his opinion, is supported by several special techniques: ups and downs (a sharp turn from bad to good and vice versa), recognition (in the broadest sense of the word) and the errors of misrecognition

associated with it,which Aristotle considered an integral part of the tragedy. For example, in Sophocles' tragedy "Oedipus Rex", the intrigue of the plot is maintained by Oedipus not recognizing his father and mother.

In addition, ancient literature often used metamorphoses (transformations) as the most important technique for constructing a plot. Plots of Greek myths are filled with metamorphoses, and one of the most significant works of ancient culture has such a name - a cycle of poems by the famous Roman poet Ovid, which is a poetic retelling of many plots of Greek mythology. Metamorphoses retain their significance in the plots of the latest literature. Suffice it to recall the stories of N. V. Gogol "The Overcoat" and "The Nose", the novel by M. A. Bulgakov "The Master and Margarita", etc. Lovers of modern literature can recall the novel by V. Pelevin "The Life of Insects". In all these works, the moment of transformation plays a fundamental role.

The classical theory of the plot, developed and refined by the aesthetics of modern times, remains relevant today. Another thing is that time, of course, made its own adjustments to it. In particular, the term collision, introduced in the 19th century by G. Hegel, was widely used. A collision is not just an event; it is an event that breaks some routine. "At the basis of the collision," writes Hegel, "is a violation that cannot be preserved as a violation, but must be eliminated". Hegel astutely noted that for the formation of the plot and the development of plot dynamics, a violation is necessary. This thesis, as we shall see, plays an important role in the latest plot theories.

The Aristotelian scheme "outset - denouement" was further developed in German literary criticism of the 19th century (first of all, this is due to the name of the writer and playwright Gustav Freitag) and, having undergone a series of clarifications and terminological treatments, received the classical plot structure scheme known to many from school: exposition (background for the beginning of the action) - the plot (the beginning of the main action) - the development of the action - the climax (high voltage) - the denouement.

Today, any teacher uses these terms, called plot elements. The name is not very successful, because with other approaches, completely different concepts act as elements of the plot. However, this is generally accepted in the Russian tradition, so it hardly makes sense to dramatize the situation. We just need to remember that when we say plot elements, depending on the general concept of the plot, we mean different things. This thesis will become clearer as we become familiar with alternative plot theories.

Analysis

The novel "Eugene Onegin" is "free" from the rules by which works of art were created in the time of Pushkin, it "contradicts" them. The plot of the novel includes two fabula lines: the history of the relationship between Onegin and Tatyana, Lensky and Olga. In terms of composition, they can be considered as two parallel event lines: the novels of the heroes of both lines did not take place.

From the point of view of the development of the main conflict on which the plot of the novel rests, the Lensky-Olga plot line does not form its own fabula line, even if it is a secondary one, since their relationship does not develop (where there is no development, movement, there is no plot).

The second compositional feature of the novel is that the main character in it is the Narrator. He is given, firstly, as Onegin's satellite, now approaching him, now diverging; secondly, as the antipode of Lensky - the poet, that is, as the poet Pushkin himself, with his views on Russian literature, on his own poetic work.

Discussion

At the same time, despite a solid history and authoritative sources, such an understanding of the term in both Russian and Western European literary criticism is not decisive. The opposite point of view is more popular.

The fabula is the main event series of the work in its conditionally life-like sequence (that is, the hero is first born, then something happens to him, finally, the hero dies). The plot is the entire sequence of events in the sequence as it is presented in the work. After all, the author (especially after the 18th century) may well begin the work, for example, with the death of the hero, and then tell about his birth. Fans of English literature may recall the well-known novel by R. Aldington "Death of a Hero", which is built in exactly this way.

Conclusion

All this makes the plot analysis interesting and adequate. These are, in general terms, the contours of the classical theory of the plot, which has its origins in ancient aesthetics. What this has in common is that the conversation about the plot (or about the plot and fabula) is always conducted in relation to a specific work, that is, each work is unique from the point of view of the plot. After all, each work has its own events, its own characters, its own system of gestures.

This allows for a rather subtle analysis of a particular work, but deprives the philologist of the possibility of maneuver, since the mechanism for analyzing the same type of plots in different literary works has not been developed. At the same time, even elementary reading experience will tell us that many plots, for example, detective stories or action movies, are strangely similar, although everything external (names, scenes, gestures, etc.) will be different.

How can this similarity be explained? What analysis tool can help us?

The classical theory does not have such a tool, so modern science, without abandoning the achievements of this approach, often uses a different logic of plot analysis. In its most general form, this technique can be called a structural approach to the plot, and motive becomes one of the basic terms of analysis.

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