

## FANTASTIC AS AN ELEMENT OF ROMANTICISM ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE WORK «THE ISLAND» BY J. BYRON

### ФАНТАСТИЧНЕ ЯК ЕЛЕМЕНТ РОМАНТИЗМУ НА ПРИКЛАДІ ТВОРУ «ОСТРІВ» ДЖ. БАЙРОНА

Reva I.A.,

[orcid.org/0000-0003-0753-5326](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0753-5326)

Postgraduate student at the Department of Translation Theory and Practice  
Uzhhorod National University

The research characterizes the meaning of the term «fantasy» as one of the main components hermeneutic construction literary work. The concept of «fantastic» and the main features of the fantastic, in particular fantasy and the fantastic assumption of the poetic work have analyzed. It was revealed that the fantastic is an element of artistic worldview, which is objectified in the poetic works of romanticism. Attention is paid on the principles of hermeneutic literary structure in poetic works of the late 18th – early 19th centuries. The general concept of the factors of formation artistic method has considered. From the point of view defining the main features of the artistic method, it has been proven that J. Byron is a bright representative of the era romanticism, who in his own works clearly highlighted the features and aesthetic positions of the period late 18th - early 19th centuries. As a result of the conducted research, the relationship between the fantastic and the genre of the poetic work has singled out, using an example work «The Island» by J. Byron's. In the work «The Island» by J. Byron, the fantastic has defined as a means of new logical connections, which differs from other signs of romanticism such as «comic», «language play», «wit». According to stylistic correspondences, the construction of the basis fantastic is outlined, which includes metaphors with the creation of an implicit game aspect with an open semantic game. The article substantiates the importance of understanding the concept of «author's interest» when writing a poetic work of the Romantic era. The author's interest in the work «The Island» by J. Byron acts as an aesthetic category of expression that can cause intellectual experiences of the value order perception of the author and the reader as in whole. On the examples of the work «The Island» by J. Byron were showed certain factors of building the author's interest such as: a vividly individual, strongly personal form of emotional and intellectual experience of the world, which distinguishes the author's worldview; relevance, importance of the issues with which the subject of the story in the work is connected; emotional expressiveness, accuracy and correspondence of the expressions used in the work through language content means; the integrity of the work that is mutual correspondence, the subordination of all its separate and distinct elements to the artistic and ideological goal set by the author.

**Key words:** fantasy, fantasy literature, hermeneutic structure, fantastic, artistic method, author's interest.

У дослідженні охарактеризовано зміст терміну «фантазія» як один із головних компонентів герменевтичної побудови літературного твору. Проаналізовано поняття «фантастичне» та головні риси фантастичного, зокрема фентезі, фантастичне припущення поетичного твору. Виявлено, що фантастичне є елементом художнього світосприйняття, який об'єктивується у поетичних творах романтизму. Звернено увагу на принципи герменевтичної літературної структури в поетичних творах періоду кінця XVIII – початку XIX ст. Розглянуто загальну концепцію факторів формування художнього методу. З погляду визначення основних ознак художнього методу доведено, що Дж. Байрон є яскравим представником епохи романтизму, котрий у власних творах чітко висвітлив риси, естетичні позиції періоду кінця XVIII – початку XIX ст. Унаслідок проведеного дослідження виокремлено взаємозв'язок фантастичного з жанром поетичного твору на прикладі доробку «Острів» Дж. Байрона. У творі «Острів» Дж. Байрона визначено фантастичне як засіб нових логічних зв'язків, що має різницю з іншими ознаками романтизму таким як «комічне», «мовна гра», «дотеп». За стилістичними відповідностями окреслено побудову основи фантастичного до якої входять метафори із створенням імпліцитного ігрового аспекту з відкритою смисловою грою. У статті обґрунтовано важливість розуміння поняття «авторський інтерес» при написанні поетичного твору епохи романтизму. Авторський інтерес у творі «Острів» Дж. Байрона виступає як естетична категорія вираження, що здатна викликати інтелектуальні переживання ціннісного порядку сприйняття автора та читача в цілому. На прикладах твору «Острів» Дж. Байрона показано певні чинники побудови авторського інтересу, а саме: яскраво-індивідуальна, підкреслено-особистісна форма емоційно-інтелектуального переживання світу, котре відрізняє авторське світобачення; актуальність, вагомість проблематики з якою пов'язаний предмет розповіді у творі; емоційна виразність, точність відповідність висловів, які застосовуються у творі через мовні змістові засоби; цілісність твору, тобто взаємовідповідність, підпорядкованість усіх його окремих і розрізнених елементів тій художній та ідейній меті, яку ставить перед собою автор.

**Ключові слова:** фантазія, фентезі література, герменевтична структура, фантастичне, художній метод, авторський інтерес.

**Problem statement.** There are many scientists interest why do people read fiction. Out of interest is one obvious answer. As Henry James put it: «The only obligation to which in advance we may hold a

novel...is that it be interesting» [3, p. 56]. But interest is a complex word, its first sense, from the sixteenth century has to do with relations to property: to have an interest in something is to have a claim

to or share in it. The relation generates an attitude: to have a claim to something gives one a concern in or about it. This sense was developed further during the late eighteenth century: to be interested meant to concern for or curiosity about a person or thing. Almost immediately, the attitude was transferred to the object of the attitude, in a third sense: to interest is to arouse curiosity or attention, to matter or make a difference. People read fiction or anything, including this book because what they read is matter of interest, in all these senses. They read fiction because it is about the kinds of things, persons, or attitudes in which they have, in real life, an interest. Of course, not all groups in society have the same interests, and so the themes and the forms of fiction in Britain during the Romantic period were determined in large part by the interests, real or imagined, of its readers, writers, are publishers.

Fantasy is the faculty by which simulacra of sensible objects can be produced in the mind: the process of imagination. The difference between mental images of objects and the objects themselves is dramatically emphasized by the fact that mental images can be formulated for which no actual equivalents exists; it is these images that first spring to mind in association with the idea of fantasy, because they represent fantasy at its purest. For this reason, Geoffrey Chaucer, the first writer known to us who worked in a language recognizably akin to modern English, uses the word *fantasye* to refer to strange and bizzare notions that have no basis in everyday experience, and this is the sense in which it is usually used today when one speaks of «fantasy literature».

#### **Analysis of recent research and publications.**

The question of the fantastic in the works of romantics was considered foreign literary critics: H. Beers, C. Kelly, B. Stableford, D. Sandner, N. Orrin, C. Wang etc. In our opinion, it is worth considering the element of the fantastic in the period of romanticism, as this is a significant question for research, because the fantastic is preferred only in the modern world.

**The aim of the article.** To determine the element of the fantastic in the work «The Island» by J. Byron.

**Presentation of the main material.** The romantic tendencies are based on the principles of hermeneutic literary structure when new horizons of knowledge of the world open up against the tyranny of «hard sense» armed for romantics. In this case the concepts of «grotesque», «irony», «language play», «witty», «comic» are close not only to the paradoxical, but also to the fantastic. The value of the author's inner world, the power of the subject acquire a full-scale economic self-consciousness. The fantastic for romantics is

a means of new logical connections which are not inherent in the art of classicism. The fantastic is possible only in the realm of the aesthetic. The aesthetics of the fantastic in the work reflects the author's artistic creativity which is inextricably linked with the reality of life, reveals the essence of the era, demonstrates the ideological-political, literary-aesthetic trends of the time, flows into literary currents and directions. The aesthetics of the fantastic strengthens, expressively expresses the logic of events and characters in the works. Acts in conjunction with logic and implicitly represents logic where it is incomplete but had been felt. In this sense, the fantastic is compared with the mythical which is also a type of logic beyond concepts (common sense). The fantastic acts as a game. It relies on familiar concepts, the effect of which renewal is expressed through an instant reaction, bypassing reflection and logical thinking. The fantastic, as well as the purely comic, does not put up with excessive detailing, with the realm of «common sense». On the contrary, such literalization, which destroys aesthetic conventions, acts as an object of the comic and causes an instant reaction in the form of laughter. In such a plane, the fantastic borders on irony. Metaphor has some points of contact with the fantastic. Based on the convergence of the realities that belong to different logical planes, a metaphor does not require unconditional belief in what it claims. The fantastic basis of the metaphor causes desire that romantic writers want to literalize, thereby turning the implicit game aspect into an open meaning game. The boundaries of the fantastic in art are very wide, from the naturalistic implausible and supernatural to the empirical improbable. It all depends on cause and effect relationships. The more natural the relationship, the more fantastically close to the related concepts of incredible, unlikely, strange, rare, common sense is the evaluation criterion. Since the fantastic offers a combination of real elements in an unexpected order, it is impossible to do without empirical material at all, since it relies on the empirical experience of the normal (normative) idea of deviation from it, in other words, on the aesthetics of recognition. In terms of poetics, fantastic creatures, their actions, circumstances, events, and their combination are distinguished. The reader sees a combination of familiar, easily recognizable empirical elements according to the principle of the grotesque, as understood by the romantics, usually such characters have bodily plasticity or other signs of corporeal existence (voice, spirits, ghosts). In English romanticism, the fantastic was considered a historical concept. It meant a combination of fantastic and fabulous. Romantics in England brought the signs of the fantastic closer to

substantiality, semantic indisputability, most often to folklore. Fantastic circumstances, events (chronotope) often contain the mysterious, the miraculous, the supernatural which oppose logic, because they are based on the aesthetics of time-space infinity. One of the elements fantastic is the flexibility of the author. For romantics, the idea of plastic infinity embodies nature, which becomes their favorite place of fantastic events, an inexhaustible source of characters. In the works of romantic artists, images of dreams also occupy a place. The authors of romanticism started the idea of dream images from Shakespeare's poem «A Midsummer Night's Dream» [2, p. 32].

The fantastic activates imagination in romantics which has its own realm in consciousness, relies on innate sense and does not allow the translation of the internal states of images into the language of expressive plasticity and clear concepts. The task of the author to express the fantastic is to gain the reader's trust. The mechanism of gaining trust is based on the system of dominance meanings. The reader must be convinced of the seriousness content. Mythological and fantastic cannot be equated. If the comic in the Romantics expressed a deviation from a stable semantic center sanctioned by empirical common sense, then irony is also a way to destroy the centrality of thought and concepts in a new object. Fantastic works differ from realistic works primarily by the presence of a fantastic assumption. Any fantastic assumption must fulfill a certain, clear task for the author himself to help reveal the characters of the actors, the development of the conflict. In addition, a fantastic assumption can serve as a means by which the author conveys a certain idea to the readers [5, p. 18].

Romantic poetry designates not a form of literature or criticism but the romantics' general aesthetical ideal. This ideal was truly revolutionary. It demanded transform not only literature and criticism but all the arts and sciences and it insisted that we break down the barriers between art and life so that the world itself becomes «romanticized». In romanticism poetry found a new freedom at the novel emerged as a dominant form. Overall, writing became more personal and achieve a new sense of humanity and that's perhaps the most modern characteristic to emerge from this period.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was a conflict between the literary tradition of romance and that of novel means, the conflict between the fantastic element and the realistic element, which is the conflict between Romantic flight and actual fact, idealism and realism, dream and reality and finally, the conflict between the person having noble aspirations and the reality that

is alien and hostile to these aspirations that is to say, that type of conflict which will be typical to the later social novel and the realistic literature on the whole. For a long period of time, until the late eighteenth century, the terms «romance» and «roman» a matter of confusion. Similar to the word romance, the term roman («novel» in English) «appeared in the Middle Ages to name a story, at first in verse (like Tristan et Iseut) and later in prose (Le Roman de Renart), and which was written in vernacular, Romance language different from Latin the language reserved for scientific and religious texts». Beginning in the eighteenth century and especially with the rise of romanticism, there were more conclusive efforts to distinguish between the romance and the novel, emphasizing the importance of one form of writing over the other alternatively, but the genres also proved to be less conflicting than complementing each other. Thus, «the revival of traditional romance from the late eighteenth century onwards had a huge impact on the novel, spawning subgenres explicitly mixing the characteristics of novel and romance such as the gothic, the sensation novel, the thriller, the crime novel, science fiction, children's fiction, and modern fantasy». Also, our contemporaries use the word «romance» to name novels of love, sensation and sentimentalism, often censored as being just popular and of low aesthetic quality. But in literary history, most important is that romances are directly connected to the rise of the novel, to which they offer – excluding the fantastic, the improbable, and the extravagant – elements of a narrative of love, adventure, the marvellous and the mythic, the travel and the quest, the test of life and initiation, and, to a lesser extent, aspects of the daily, domestic and social life. In the eighteenth century, the English novel was separated from the epic and the romance in the framework of «a temporal and spatial shift from distance and heroic scale to the here and now of bourgeois immediacy».

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was born connection with new philosophical realism. The method of eighteenth-century realism in the novel was the study of the specifics of experience by an individual researcher. The novelist of the eighteenth century just like author of the nineteenth century novel was interested in individual life, as he was concerned with different aspects of social existence in general. The interested look the novelist cast upon the aspects of everyday life was both realist and critical, and linked to a kind of universal criticism exercised in different fields (literature, ethics, politics, philosophy). This is a common aspect of the eighteenth-century English novel, as general, along with the continuation of the picaresque form, which gave at that time the thematic

and narrative perspectives most congenial to the fictional expression of the concern with the personal and the social. The picaresque novel represents a dynamic narrative movement which goes over different social settings, which characters whose main features are clearly and definitely rendered, even if the author fails over psychological aspects. The protagonist of the picaresque novel is usually an autodiegetic narrator recounting his own life and colouring it with the presentation of the other character's lives, as well as with many personal reflections and points of view on events, people and things he meets in his both physical and spiritual pilgrimage. The experience of life of the picaresque hero is important so far as it changes the inner existence of the protagonist, together with his condition, destiny and social position. The changes in his inner life, that is, of his personality, are based on his understanding of moral values, on acquiring of the sense of right are wrong, and ability to reconcile the outward and the inward, revealing how a high social position and money can also contribute to the character's true enrichment of spirit. As a continuation of seventeenth-century fiction, the eighteenth century also saw an increase in autobiographical writing, which may be related to the rise of the interest in self-analysis and individual experience. It was a form of self-expression open to both men and women later leading on to experiments with fictional first-person narratives.

It's tempting to write that «The Island» is something of a «Cinderella» poem in Byron's oeuvre, but if such a claim is advanced it is only fair to observe that the past few decades have seen some important individual studies of particular aspects of the poem, variously privileging its social, cultural, historical and political aspects, in main springing from literary theory and informed by epistemological perspectives. This book engages with them where relevant but this is not its primary function.

As a first step to understanding what Byron did in «The Island», it will be helpful to look in some detail at the painful year that preceded its composition, a year which also saw the writing of *The Age Bronze* and Cantos VI–XII of *Don Juan*. Buffeted by contrary fortune during this month, the states of mind revealed in both Byron's letters and through his actions provide useful indicators. The intention here is not to mine every nook and cranny for a full biographical and psychological contextualization – an understanding that would require a depth and length unbalancing to the whole – but only to present a background context for the waiting of the poem and bring events into view from Byron's perspective. The concern then is not sort every bit

of wheat from the chaff and be overly prescriptive about what did or did not serve as a possible well spring for the poem, but rather to lay out such events in broad brushstrokes and suggest possibilities and connections which might form a useful backdrop. In any such understanding we are helped immeasurably by having access to the rich mine of Byron's letters and journal's, enabling us to look up what his preoccupations were on any one particular day – an access easily taken for granted. A moment's reflection however, imagining that could we read Shakespeare's letters to his friends while writing *The Tempest*, or look into Dante's private journal as he finishes *The Inferno* reminds us of our privileged perspective in Byron's case. The insights that we glean from the poet's expressed attitudes, states of mind and record of quotidian events is not unique, but it precious, because judiciously approached, it has the capacity to illumine multimple aspects of his creative expression and thought and not just in his prose writings. It is obvious, for instance, that Byron uses a range of dramatic voices in *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*, but we are inclined to accept that when he writes, «And if my voice break forth», it is indeed, in some real sense, «his» voice that we hear. The year that led up to Byron's picking up his pen on 11 January 1823 – in the small hours, one ussumes – and inscribing the double title «*The Island. Or Christian and his comrades*» produced an array of emotional shocks and wounds to Byron's psyche quite unlike any other in his life.

In 1816 may have seen his catastrophic fall from grace, but this was single volcanic event evolving out of a distressed marriage and visited upon a still relatively young and healthy man, stimulating him to one of the greatest creative periods of his life.

In 1822, by contrast, was a year of attrition, producing month by month a wearying series of seismic shocks that took their toll in poor health, bouts of melancholy and a sense of frustration with life which only a continuous restless creativity could alleviate. Indeed, as the miseries of this *annus horribilis* piled Pelion upon Ossa, Byron's productivity turned like a weathercock: from January 1822 to February 1823 (when he finished «*The Island*»), he also completed *Werner*, wrote «*The Deformed Transformed*», a full seven cantos of *Don Juan* and «*The Age Bronze*» as well as «*The Island*», starting canto XIII of *Don Juan* two days after finishing it, yielding an approximate overall total for a period of 5, 673 lines.

If the reader does not find in the work questions and problems capable of affecting him «for life», evoking certain, even if distant, analogies with his own life or the life of his immediate environment,

which would resemble his own life experience, but at the same time would surpass it, would expand his horizons, – no valuable experiences will appear in the mind of the reader. Therefore, work «The Island» by J. Byron is interesting for the reader because J. Byron fulfills the reader's wishes, so to speak, through his author's interest. Byron's authorial interest is revealed in the accumulation of metaphorical expressions in the work. Thus, through metaphorical expressions, the author can indicate real things and events in the form of a fantastic element. For example, let's take the lines from the work «The Island» by J. Byron:

«Sneered at the prospect of his pigmy sail. And the slight bark so laden and so frail. The tender nautilus, who steers his prow. The sea-born sailor of his shell canoe» [1, p. 14]. «Watched his late Chieftain with exploring eye. And told, in signs, repentant sympathy; Held the moist shaddock to is parched mouth. Which felt Exhaustion's deep and bitter drouth. But soon observed, this guardian was withdrawn. Nor further Mercy clouds Rebellion's dawn» [1, p. 15]. «With slow, despairing oar, the abandoned skiff. Ploughs its

drear progress to the scarce seen cliff. Which lifts its peak a cloud above the main: That boat and ship shall never meet again!» [1, p. 16].

In the above lines, J. Byron describes the ship metaphorically. Metaphorical expressions such as «pigmy sail», «slight bark so laden and so frail», «tender nautilus, who steers his prow» create an incredible element of the fantastic about which the reader needs to count on his inner worldview when he is reading.

**Conclusions.** The fantastic is one of the important elements in the works of romanticism. The sign of the fantastic is created with the help of the author's interest, which forms a fantasy representation of the world as a whole. The examples of the work «The Island» by J. Byron has showed an element of the fantastic no generally accepted norms in the field of fiction, but through the successful use of stylistic devices that are formed a fantastic assumption.

The study of the work «The Island» had been proved that J. Byron is a really bright representative of his era, because in his works the artist tried to adhere the literary signs of romanticism.

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