

THE SEMANTICS OF THE FOX SPIRIT IMAGE IN THE WORKS OF PU SUNGLING

The fox spirit image is more widespread in Eastern mythology rather than in Western one. It is a common motif in the mythology of East Asian countries in general. There are a lot of fables and fairy tales about them in China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and some other countries. That's why we can say that the image of the fox spirit is considered extremely important for the whole Chinese culture.

The fox spirit image in literature is usually associated with the name of Pu Sungling. Pu Sungling is a great Chinese author of the 17th century that combined both traditions and innovations in his works. Besides, Pu Sungling was the author who revitalized the ancient literary style «the stories about non-existence» and kept a lot of forgotten folk stories alive. So, we can even say that he has saved a rich cultural heritage. However, the author had not just revitalize the genre and «copy» it but also made his own contribution.

For instance, one of the most remarkable features of the Pu Sungling's fox spirits is their representation as unusual creatures rather than as supernatural ones. Moreover, at the same time these «unusual creatures» keep all the traditional magical characteristics that are known as an essential part of foxes' nature.

Pu Sungling's art work also brightly reflects how specific the whole Chinese culture is. The most unusual for European people is the vagueness between good and evil for the borders between them are not evident at all. Such a duality is represented by showing both good and evil features of one character within the context of a single novella.

To conclude with, we can say that the fox spirit image in the Chinese literature was broadened by Pu Sungling. According to the results of our research, we can provide a classification of the fox spirits images one can find in his books. There are five types of characters in general. The first one shows the fox spirits as extremely mean chamers (that is represented in such novels as «The Devoted Ya Tou», «A Furry Fox», «A Dream of a Fox», «The Red Jasper»). The second type shows the fox spirits as vengeful for all their actions are aimed at the revenge (that is represented in a novel «Ma Zefu the Tamer»). The third type shows the fox spirits as devoted friends of mankind (that is represented in such novels as «The Fox from Weishui» and «The Invisible Fox Hu the Fourth»). The fourth type shows the fox spirits as creatures that are completely made of evil (that is represented in a novel «The Seller's Son»). And the fifth type shows fox spirits as very smart and talented liars (that is represented in such novels as «Mean Aunt Hu» and «Student Go and His Teacher»).