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Centre for Fantasy Literature Studies at Shevchenko Institute of Literature, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine

Summary

This article presents the principal facts concerning the evolution of the Centre for Fantasy Literature Studies at the Shevchenko Institute of Literature, NAS of Ukraine. It describes the Centre's main activities and the joint projects of CFLS and the Library of the Shevchenko Institute.

Key words: fantasy literature, studies of fantasy, CFLS.

Centre for Fantasy Literature Studies (CFLS) was founded at the Shevchenko Institute of Literature, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in June 2015. Its foundation was preceded by the monitoring of fantasy studies in Ukraine. The results of the monitoring were discussed in detail during the Days of Science in May 2015 in Kyiv and also presented in a paper on the international conference “Recepcja i tłumaczenia fantastyki literackiej” in October 2018 in Gdansk¹.

¹ The article provides the updated results of the monitoring and the current information regarding the activities and publications of the CFLS (as per 2019).

The monitoring encompassed the period from 2002 to 2015. It demonstrated the number and geography of defended theses, monographs and articles on various fantasy-related topics. It also helped to outline the dominant tendencies and problems Ukrainian researchers of fantasy literature faced in their work. The main problem appeared to be a lack of professional communication and exchange that found its expression in the insufficient familiarity with the current state of research in the field which, in turn, resulted in a lack of unified terminology.

Thus, the foundation of CFLS at the Shevchenko Institute of Literature became a logical step². Almost five years of work prove that a space for the professional communication for the academics engaged in fantasy literature studies has been successfully created. CFLS continues to work on building the academic community in the field and welcomes established scholars and postgraduates as well as teachers and students from the entire country.

The Centre's activities include research and informational projects such as academic workshops on various aspects of fantasy literature, lectures, consultations and publishing projects. The workshops take place twice a year in spring and autumn. To date nine meetings have been organized:

- October 2015 — “Terminology in Fantasy Studies”;
- April 2016 — “Intermedial Aspects of Fantasy”;
- November 2016 — “Genesis of Fantasy Literature”;
- April 2017 — “Poetry in the Context of Fantasy”;
- November 2017 — “National Versions of Fantasy Literature. Ukrainian Fantasy. Part 1”;
- April 2018 — “National Versions of Fantasy Literature. Ukrainian Fantasy. Part 2”;
- November 2018 — “National Versions of Fantasy Literature. European Scope”;
- April 2019 — “National Versions of Fantasy Literature. Slavic Scope”;
- November 2019 — “Fantasy Literature. Challenges of Ukrainian Translation. Part 1”.

The materials of these workshops are collected and published in CFLS's electronic edition available on the Shevchenko Institute's official website or on Academia.edu. Some videos of the presentations from the fifth workshop are available on the internet³. The Centre has

² CFLS webpage: <http://www.ilnan.gov.ua/index.php/en/research-centers/tsentr-z-doslidzhennia-literatury-fentezi>

³ See for example: Тетяна Рязанцева, *Світ слов'янської уяви: поезія Олекси Стефановича*: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PADfDPRK5yc>> [Accessed: 21.12.2019]

published three electronic collections dedicated to intermedial aspects of fantasy, genesis of fantasy and poetry in the context of fantasy, and the genesis and evolution of Ukrainian fantasy (Parts 1 and 2)⁴. The CFLS collections are published in Ukrainian, but summaries in English are provided for all the papers.

The above-mentioned monitoring of fantasy literature studies in Ukraine remains an open project. There are more than twenty theses on fantasy literature-related problems that were defended in major Ukrainian universities of Kyiv, Lviv, Dnipro, Cherkasy, Kharkiv, Mykolayiv, Ivano-Frankivsk etc. and more are in progress. For example, a thesis on China Mieville's prose is being completed now at Shevchenko Institute of Literature. CFLS has created a register of defended Ukrainian theses on fantasy (lit. and lang.) that is also available on the Shevchenko Institute of Literature official website⁵.

The Bibliography of Ukrainian publications on fantasy literature is an important joint project of the CFLS and Shevchenko Institute's Library. Currently there are more than 400 entries that represent various types of sources: monographs, articles, critical reviews, abstracts of theses. The bibliography is available at the Shevchenko Institute of Literature website⁶ and it is planned to make an interactive version of it. Another project in progress is the interactive map of Ukraine showing the bio-bibliographic data about Ukrainian writers of fantasy.

In 2019 the bibliography became an important instrument of CFLS's international cooperation. By sharing the bibliographic information about the Ukrainian studies of Terry Pratchett's works the Centre joined The Pratchett Project of Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland.

According to the bibliography Ukrainian scholars focus on foreign, mostly English-language, fantasy literature, choosing for analysis the texts of J. R. R. Tolkien, Ursula Le Guin, Clive S. Lewis, Susanna Clarke, Terry Pratchett, Robert Asprin, China Mieville, The Inklings and Ray Bradbury. The critical articles represent even longer list of current fantasy authors: J. K. Rowling, George Martin, Philip Pullman, et al. The researches of Ukrainian fantasy focus on

⁴ Тетяна Рязанцева, Євгенія Канчура (eds.), *Інтермедіальні виміри літератури фентезі*: <<http://www.ilnan.gov.ua/media/k2/attachments/zbirka2016.pdf>> [Accessed: 21.12.2019] ; Тетяна Рязанцева, Євгенія Канчура (eds.), *Витоки літератури фентезі. Поезія в контексті метажанру фентезі*: <<http://www.ilnan.gov.ua/media/k2/attachments/vytokyLF2.pdf>> [Accessed: 21.12.2019] ; Тетяна Рязанцева, Євгенія Канчура (eds.), *Національна своєрідність української літератури фентезі*. <<http://www.ilnan.gov.ua/media/k2/attachments/Zbirnyk19.pdf>> [Accessed: 21.12.2019].

⁵ Тетяна Рязанцева (ed.), *Дисертації з проблем літератури фентезі: 2002-2018* : <<http://www.ilnan.gov.ua/index.php/uk/naukovo-doslidni-tsentry-pry-instituty/tsentr-z-doslidzhennia-literatury-fentezi>> [Accessed: 21.12.2019].

⁶ Марина Штолько, *Бібліографія українських студій з проблем фентезі*: <http://www.ilnan.gov.ua/index.php/uk/naukovo-doslidni-tsentry-pry-instituty/tsentr-z-doslidzhennia-literatury-fentezi> [Accessed: 21.12.2019]

the texts of current Ukrainian writers such as Halyna Pahutyak, Maryna and Serhiy Dyachenko, Volodymyr Arenev et al⁷. The fantasy literature of Eastern and Southern Europe is gradually gaining attention of Ukrainian scholars as well. Several articles that analyse the works of major Polish author of fantasy Andrzej Sapkowski appeared recently⁸ and a thesis dedicated to Bulgarian SF and fantasy was defended in 2015⁹.

Currently there are only two monographs on fantasy in Ukraine: Mykhaylo Nazarenko's "Reality of Miracle" (2005) dealing with the works of Ukrainian Russian language fantasy writers Maryna and Serhiy Dyachenko¹⁰, and Larysa Boytsun's "The Ancient Heritage in Fantasy" (2009)¹¹. Genre traits of fantasy are briefly outlined in a special paragraph of Tetiana Bovsunivska's study "The Theory of Literary Genres" (2009)¹² and Olena Tykhomyrova in 2011 published a textbook for students "Home Reading. Realms of Fantasy: A Reader's Guide to Terry Pratchett Novels"¹³.

Fantasy literature gradually finds its way into university syllabuses. In 2018 Dr. Yulia Vyshnitska from Borys Grinchenko University in Kyiv introduced a course "The Game of Thrones of George Martin: Myths and Rituals" that embraces the analysis of the main mythologems, the peculiarities of the invented cults etc. O. Tykhomyrova from Kyiv National Linguistic University uses T. Pratchett's texts in her course of theory and practice of translation.

CFLS also supports Ukrainian translations of fantasy providing consultations and assistance. Centre's Deputy Director Yevheniia Kantchura consulted and promoted the first Ukrainian translations of T. Pratchett's novels published by Vydavnytstvo Staroho Leva in 2017.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸Е.g.: Святослав Півень, *Жанрові межі фентезі : (на матеріалі «Саги про Відьмака» Анджея Сапковського)* [in:] *Компаративні дослідження слов'янських мов і літератур : зб. наук. пр. / Київ. нац. ун-т ім. Т. Шевченка*, Вип. 21 : Пам'яті академіка Леоніда Булаховського, (Київ, 2013), 302–310 ; Марта Демчик, *Своєрідність жанру фентезі у романах Марини та Сергія Дяченків «Ритуал» і Анджея Сапковського «Відьмак»* [in:] *Науковий вісник Ужгородського університету. Серія Філологія*, Вип. 2 (36), 2016, 102–106.

⁹ Олена Сайковська, *Сучасна болгарська фантастика: генеза, жанрові модифікації та поетика: автореф. дис... канд. філол. наук*, (Київ, 2015).

¹⁰ Михайл Назаренко: *Реальність чуда. О книгах Марини и Сергея Дяченко*, (Київ, Издательский дом «Мой компьютер», Винница, Тезис, 2005).

¹¹ Лариса Бойцун: *Антична спадщина у фентезі*, (Київ; Умань, СПД Жовтий, 2009).

¹² Тетяна Бовсунівська, *Теорія літературних жанрів*, (Київ, ВПЦ «Київський університет», 2009), 442-455.

¹³ Olena Tykhomyrova, *Home Reading. Realms of Fantasy: A Reader's Guide to Terry Pratchett Novels*, (Київ, Видавничий центр КНЛУ, 2011).

CFLS's members participate in various international conferences on the problems of SF and fantasy, e.g. those organized by Polish universities and research centres ("Slavic Worlds of Imagination", organised by the Children's and Youth Literature Research Centre of the Faculty of Polish Studies and the Institute of Slavonic Philology, Jagiellonian University; "Reception and Translation of Literary Fantastics" organized by the University of Gdansk; Medieval Fantasy Symposium organized by Koszalin University of Technology).

Open lectures on various aspects of fantasy literature form another important direction of Centre's activities. As a part of the Institute of Literature's team CFLS participates in Days of Science and Scientific Picnics, STEM Festival and other popular science events in Kyiv. CFLS-related scholars from the universities of Lviv, Mykolaiv, Zaporizhia and Zhytomyr give open lectures and master-classes on reading and teaching fantasy. The Centre receives good coverage from Ukrainian media, including regular interviews with senior representatives on national and local radio.

Conclusion:

This brief review demonstrates that the interest of Ukrainian scholars in fantasy literature and their need in professional communication and exchange resulted in the foundation of the CFLS. The Centre's workshops, its publishing and bibliographic projects successfully promote the fantasy literature studies in Ukrainian academic circles. We hope for an academic journal and a specialised conference, but now they remain a distant perspective.