

<https://doi.org/10.22455/CM.2949-0510-2024-4-270-281>

<https://elibrary.ru/QKYBSG>

УДК 821.111.0



Научная статья / Research Article

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THE PEDAGOGIC OF THE FAIRY TALE: HISTORY AND LEGEND IN R. KIPLING'S "PUCK OF POOK'S HILL" AND "REWARDS AND FAIRIES"

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Abstract: R. Kipling's books of stories "Puck of Pook's Hill" and "Rewards and Fairies" are sometimes called "historical fantasy"; it is the series of short stories that are set in various periods of the English history. The magic creature — Puck, the inhabitant of the Hills — introduces two children, Dan and Una, who spend summer in Sussex, to the history of their "small motherland", and besides, to a handful of important historical personages and events that became crucial for the shaping of the nation in general, such as Christianization of Britain, Norman conquer, Magna Charta, geographical discoveries, etc. Magic elements are included into the stories of the real past; magic places and magic creatures existing in England are almost doubtless, because we can see magic as something really and effectively acting even in the beginning of the 20th century. Otherwise speaking, it is necessary to know and to accept both the real, factual English history and the mythological one to really learn the past and the present of the country — literally, to be an Englishman. Everything that surrounds children takes part in the narrative and has a deep personal meaning to the characters. Dan and Una symbolically "seize" the land, and forever on their actual heritage is the historical and cultural one.

Keywords: children's literature, history, fantasy, myth, narrative, genius loci.

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For citation: Sergeeva, V.S. “The Pedagogic of the Fairy Tale: History and Legend in R. Kipling’s ‘Puck of Pook’s Hill’ and ‘Rewards and Fairies’.” *Codex manuscriptus*, issue 4. Moscow, IWL RAS Publ., 2024, pp. 270–281. (In English) <https://doi.org/10.22455/CM.2949-0510-2024-4-270-281>

ПЕДАГОГИКА ВОЛШЕБНОЙ СКАЗКИ: ИСТОРИЯ И ЛЕГЕНДА В СБОРНИКАХ Р. КИПЛИНГА «ПАК С ХОЛМА ПУКА» И «НАГРАДЫ И ФЕЙ»

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Аннотация: Сборники рассказов Р. Киплинга «Пак с холма Пука» и «Награды и феи» иногда называют «историческим фэнтези»; это серия коротких повествований, действие которых происходит в разные периоды английской истории. Волшебное существо — Пак, обитатель Холмов — знакомит двух детей, Дана и Юну, которые проводят лето в Сассексе, с историей их «малой родины», а также с некоторыми важными историческими личностями и событиями, которые сыграли ключевую роль в формировании английской нации как таковой (христианизация Британии, нормандское завоевание, Великая хартия Вольностей, географические открытия и т.д.). Элементы волшебного включены в рассказы о реальном прошлом; существование в Англии волшебных мест и магических существ кажется почти несомненным, поскольку магия предстает перед нами как нечто реально и активно действующее даже в начале XX в. Иными словами, чтобы в самом деле постичь прошлое и настоящее страны — буквально, чтобы быть англичанином — необходимо знать и принимать как реальную, фактическую историю Англии, так и мифологическую. Все, что окружает детей, принимает участие в повествовании и имеет для героев глубокое личное значение. Дан и Юна символически вступают во владение землей, и отныне их подлинным наследием становится наследие историческое и культурное.

Ключевые слова: детская литература, история, фэнтези, миф, повествование, *genius loci*.

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Для цитирования: Сергеева В.С. Педагогика волшебной сказки: история и легенда в сборниках Р. Киплинга «Пак с холма Пука» и «Награды и феи» // Codex manuscriptus. М.: ИМЛИ РАН, 2024. Вып. 4. С. 270–281. <https://doi.org/10.22455/CM.2949-0510-2024-4-270-281>

When speaking of children's literature, we should always consider the author's intention, especially when "the books for the little ones" were almost inseparable from didacticism of sort, when the balance between instructiveness and thrill was just being defined. In this context, it seems interesting to analyze two books of Rudyard Kipling, namely "Puck of Pook's Hill" and "Rewards and Fairies" (the first one was written in 1906, the second one — in 1910, but just a year passed inside the books).

Could we call them fairy stories? In Russia Kipling's tales were selectively published in collections called "The Fairy Tales of Old England" and "The Tales of English Writers". English-speaking researchers often call Kipling's books "fantasy" (sometimes "contemporary fantasy") or "historical fantasy". Two children, Dan and Una, while spending summer in Sussex, met a magical creature whose name is Puck. After this introduction we have a series of short stories set in various periods of English history; Puck told these stories himself or via magically conjures various characters from the past. Magic elements are included in the tales about the past of England, and at the same time, thanks to the fairy narrator, we can see magic as something really existing and still active in the beginning of the 20th century, when the books were written, even though "the Hills are empty now, and all the People of the Hills are gone" [6]. We could say that Kipling describes (as C.S. Lewis will do later, in "That Hideous Strength") not only "historical", or documentary, but also magical / mythological history of England, where the real and the magical are fused together. Partly the books' structure is set inside the plot: we learn from the first book that Dan and Una's "father had made them a small play out of the big Shakespeare one" [6] (it is "Midsummer Night's Dream") having chosen some scenes; in a way, Kipling himself presents us the "big" history of Britain in a "smaller" format, by means of short tales, leaping back and forth, from the remote past to the nearer one and

then back again. At the centre of the book the poem “Runes on Weland’s Sword” clashes with “Cities and Thrones and Powers”. The Roman stories of imperial ups and downs are followed by the lighthearted “Hal o’ the Draft” with its lesson against pride. “Dymchurch Flit” is linked with “The Treasure and the Law” where the signing of Magna Charta is told by Kadmil the Jewish moneylender. Puck comes into Dan and Una’s world (that is the author’s and the reader’s world, too) and leads them into the magic world of the past by telling stories. In Edwardian children’s literature we repeatedly find the image of a “fairy guide” (Kenneth Graham, James Barry, Thomas Hardy, etc.); in a way Puck was preceded by E. Nesbith’s characters, Phoenix and Psammead, immortal fairy creatures who entered the usual life of contemporary children. Kipling may have been more convincing mostly because his readers, having read Shakespeare, were already familiar with Puck and recognized him at once. It is not the matter of historical authenticity; literature authenticity is enough.

Historical and legendary (mythological, archaic) past is unfolding in front of us; there are fairies, elves and other “People of the Hills”, but we do not see King Arthur. Historical figures are not always famous — and not always strictly “historical”; we find there both historical novellas (such are the stories of a Roman centurion that we cannot call absolutely historically true, but at least they are convincingly reconstructed by Kipling) and fairy tales / fantasy (see, for example, “Cold Iron” — the story of a boy raised up by fairies — or “Dymchurch Flit”). Historical memory is especially important in Kipling’s children books — not just a memory, but a genius loci: the action takes place in Sussex, among the famous chalk cliffs; Pevensey Levels, South Downs, the Isle of Wight are totally real, Kipling himself lived there, and it is crucial: hills, dales and all the other things surrounding children take part in the story and have the deep personal meaning for them. Children symbolically “took seisin” of the land — now it really belonged to them:

“One of my little magics,” he answered, and cut another. “You see, I can’t let you into the Hills because the People of the Hills have gone; but if you care to take seisin from me, I may be able to show you something out of the common here on Human Earth. You certainly deserve it.”

“What’s taking seisin?” said Dan, cautiously.

“It’s an old custom the people had when they bought and sold land. They used to cut out a clod and hand it over to the buyer, and you weren’t lawfully seised of your land — it didn’t really belong to you — till the other fellow had actually given you a piece of it — like this.” He held out the turves.

“But it’s our own meadow,” said Dan, drawing back. “Are you going to magic it away?”

Puck laughed. “I know it’s your meadow, but there’s a great deal more in it than you or your father ever guessed. Try!”

He turned his eyes on Una.

“I’ll do it,” she said. Dan followed her example at once.

“Now are you two lawfully seised and possessed of all Old England,” began Puck, in a sing-song voice. “By right of Oak, Ash, and Thorn are you free to come and go and look and know where I shall show or best you please. You shall see What you shall see and you shall hear What you shall hear, though It shall have happened three thousand year; and you shall know neither Doubt nor Fear. Fast! Hold fast all I give you” [6].

On the one hand, it is a specific place, on the other, it is the whole Old England. In a finishing poem of the first book, “The Children’s Song”, there are no specific realiae — it is just “Land of our Birth”, “Motherland”. These are spiritual regional studies of sorts: the reader moves from a small spot on the map, namely, that very spot where Dan and Una are sitting while listening to Puck to the general idea of people, nation, national identity, nationwide values. “The Children’s Song” contains the idea of “Englishness” and the traditional English values as we can find them, for example, in the school novels of that age (loyalty, justice, modesty, diligence, truthfulness, bravery, ability to be content with little, cheerfulness, etc.). From Motherland and Land of our Birth the focus shifts to humankind, “Nations” united by the divine truth (“Thy Grace may give // The Truth whereby the Nations live”) [6].

The real inheritance of Dan and Una is a cultural and historical one that cannot be discussed without fairy tales and legends; they have the same right for a place in people’s memory as in the historical data. The question raised by Kipling is whether the legend historicized or the history legendarized. On the one side, the world has been changing by abandoning the archaic with its cruelty and human sacrifices; on the other side, it never ceases to be magic if certain conditions are met — even if the gods left. England itself remains the same entry point, the portal to the world of legend, as two thousand years ago, and this feeling is important in order to be an Englishman. The continuity is proved in the stories: in “Dymchurch Flit” Tom Shoemsmith (aka Puck) says: “Some of us can’t abide Horseshoes, or Church Bells, or Running Water” [6]. Hobden’s wife was a woman with extraordinary abilities:

“Ah! I’ve heard say the Whitgifts could see further through a millstone than most,” said Shoesmith. “Did she, now?”

“She was honest — innocent of any nigromancin’,” said Hobden. “Only she’d read signs and sinnifications out o’ birds flyin’, stars fallin’, bees hivin’, and such. An, she’d lie awake — listenin’ for calls, she said.”

“That don’t prove naught,” said Tom. “All Marsh folk has been smugglers since time everlastin’. ’Twould be in her blood to listen out o’ nights.”

“Nature-ally,” old Hobden replied, smiling. “I mind when there was smugglin’ a sight nearer us than what the Marsh be. But that wasn’t my woman’s trouble. ’Twas a passel o’ no-sense talk” — he dropped his voice — “about Pharisees.”

“Yes. I’ve heard Marsh men belieft in ’em.” Tom looked straight at the wide-eyed children beside Bess.

“Pharisees,” cried Una. “Fairies? Oh, I see!” [6].

— and she passed her “out-gate sense” to her son who is thought to be “not quite right in his head”. “Do ye believe or — do ye?”, asked Shoesmith insistently, and the children are left under the strong impression that there will always be people in Whitgift’s family who are safe from any evil and who can see things the others cannot.

The structure of the books may seem chaotic: it is clearly nonlinear.

<i>Puck of Pook’s Hill</i>	<i>Rewards and Fairies</i>
“Weland’s Sword” (the beginning of a Norman storyline)	“Cold Iron” (indefinite epoque, the main character is a child raised by fairies)
“Young Men at the Manor” (Norman storyline continues)	“Gloriana” (during the reign of Queen Elizabeth)
“The Knights of the Joyous Venture” (Norman storyline continues)	“The Wrong Thing” (the story of Hal from the previous book)
“Old Men at Pevensey” (Norman storyline, final 1)	“Marklake Witches” (early 19 th century, the story of Doctor Laënnec)
“A Centurion of the Thirtieth” (Roman storyline, that chronologically precedes the Norman one)	“The Knife and the Naked Chalk” (the Neolithic era)
“On the Great Wall” (Roman storyline continues)	“Brother Square-Toes” (American War of Independence)
“The Winged Hats” (Roman storyline, final)	“A Priest in Spite of Himself” (American War of Independence)

“Hal o’ the Draft” (16th century, the Age of Discovery) “Dymchurch Flit” (16th century, fairies leave England) “The Treasure and the Law” (Norman storyline, final 2, Magna Charta Libertatum is signed — should we call it a convergence of the Norman and Roman storylines?)	“The Conversion of St. Wilfrid” (7th century) “A Doctor of Medicine” (17th century, the English Revolution) “Simple Simon” (16th century, the story of Francis Drake) “The Tree of Justice” (Norman storyline, final 3)
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Kipling chooses various spots in history starting from the Neolithic era; we can see the Roman Britain, the Vikings, the Christianization of England (the story of the Bishop Wilfrid), the Anglo-Saxon and the Norman invasion, the Tudors, the Invincible Armada, the plague (the story of the physician Nicholas Culpeper), the border of the 18th–19th centuries (speaking of Laennec who invented the stethoscope, Kipling has to “transfer” him into Sussex where he never lived), the Revolutionary War in America, Napoleonic wars. What does this fragmentary nature of the story mean? The memory awoken by something real (be it a talk about picking hops, or about sheep, or iron) snatches from the past some scraps of legends and stories; sometimes specific objects connecting the present and the past turn out to be a trigger (for example, an old trough mentioned in the story about the plague doctor or a prehistoric arrow head), or even a place itself does the work (an old house, a hollow, a tree and so on). The link is Puck, who is, on the one hand, a mythological creature, “the oldest Old Thing in England” [6] (Parnesius calls him the Faun), and, on the other hand, a literary character, widely-known because of a Shakespeare’s play. Daytime — the time of labor and order — merges into the unconceivable and chaotic nighttime where the myth, dream and fantasy rule; moving between these two worlds, we are not able to say which world is, so to speak, a basic one.

Donald Mackenzie, who wrote an introduction for the Oxford World’s Classics edition of “Puck of Pook’s Hill” and “Rewards and Fairies” in 1987, called Pook’s Hill a sample of “the archaeological imagination” that leads to the crucial episode in the story of English liberty:

In *Puck of Pook’s Hill* Kipling opens up this sense of gaps and discontinuity by the movements backwards and forwards through history that are crucial to

our reading of it. The sequence from “Weland’s Sword” through the Norman stories to “The Treasure and the Law” can be taken as a spinal column for the book. It celebrates English history as a story of growth and coming together that climaxes in the signing of Magna Charta. Puck sums up its continuity in terms half-magical, half-organic:

“Weland gave the Sword, The Sword gave the Treasure, and the Treasure gave the Law. It’s as natural as an oak growing.”

But cutting into and countering this sequence are the Roman stories — a triptych of imperial decay to set against the buoyancy of settlement, adventure, and organic growth in the Norman triptych. That buoyancy, in turn, is chequered by the sense of ageing and loss signalled in their titles as we move from “Young Men at the Manor” to “Old Men at Pevensy” and recurrently pointed up in the latter. “And what did you do afterwards?” Una asks at the end of its tale of manoeuvre and intrigue. To which Sir Richard replies: “We talked together of times past. That is all men can do when they grow old, little maid” [2].

The past: fractured, silent, taunting is with its mysteriousness, can spark imagination as it happened with the Romantics. And the last poem from Kipling’s book “Rewards and Fairies”, “A Carol” (thus being the last word of the cycle), emanates a deep sense of continuity which people should accept with modesty and gratitude, for it was meant to be so. People have been always trying to dig the past up, to reconstruct it, even to embody by various narrative tools, from a joke to a historical novel. Kipling, by means of artifacts and often by the feeling of the soil itself (his characters regularly touch it, knead it, smell it), presents the past that is not only read or spoken about, but seen (while a person holding the book in their hands sees it by *reading* first); the past that is open to questioning and interaction:

<...> the past as buried, to be reached by digging; the past as at once remote, indeed alien, and immediate (the “deepest mud yielded us a perfectly polished Neolithic axe-head with but one chip on its still venomous edge”).

<...> At its most intense the archaeological imagination can fuse, as no written or oral history does, a sense of the past as unbridgeably other with a sense of the past, in its silent immediacy, challenging or teasing us into the re-creating response that is, in a complex of senses, reading [2]¹.

¹ The reference to *Something of Myself*, Kipling’s Autobiography.

The feeling of continuity and incessancy does not break because of Kipling's trips back and forth, to the events that are necessary for our understanding of the history. The storyline beginning in "Weland's Sword" and going through the tales of the Norman Conquest to "The Treasure and the Law" may be perceived as the main idea of the first book: it presents the story of England as the process of permanent growth and development of personal rights. The second book is the story of discoveries and inventions (two tales of doctors, two or even three tales about seafarers, a few stories about the rulers, such as Queen Elisabeth, Washington and Napoleon). But both books begin and end in the same way: a mythological story ("Weland's Sword", "Cold Iron") — a "Norman" story ("The Treasure and the Law", "The Tree of Justice").

The influence of Edward Freeman's famous book "The History of the Norman Conquest of England" (1867–1879) is evident here: Freeman believed in the fundamental succession of the English history and thought the Norman Conquest to be beneficial:

The fiery trial which England went through was a fire which did not destroy, but only purified. England came forth once more the England of old. She came forth with her ancient laws formed into shapes better suited to changed times, and with a new body of fellow-workers in those long-estranged kinsmen whom birth on her soil had changed into kinsmen once again [1, p. 395].

It is exactly what Kipling is pointing at his "Norman" tales. The story of money and intrigues told by the Jew moneylender called Kadmiel ends with the signing of Magna Charta ("the Law that was signed at Runnymede" [6]), and it is the symbolical contingency of "their own" and "others". But the Roman theme — three stories about the decline of the Empire — wedges into this continuity, into the tale of the establishment and natural growth of the Anglo-Norman State. Another "organic" motif sounds there — the unstoppable tide of history, the change of epochs and formations, the motif of growing up, ageing, and loss. Maturity and its price is another major theme of the stories; it is closely linked with such things as duty and responsibility (as we can see in the tales of the Roman centurion), and these values are fundamental, among other desirable features, for the shaping of "Englishness". Hopeless last stands and the youths becoming "old and grey-haired" too soon were the stable components of the patriotic literature written for children, especially for boys, and Kipling himself did his character in his much-debated "Stalky and Co" (1899) a war hero at last. The future service to the state, inside or outside its borders, is a pedagogical concept, and a heroic legend, with parallels between the

British and the Roman empires, is a perfect tool for honing of patriotic virtues, even if Parnesius and Pertinax's story is almost pure fiction, historically speaking, something similar to "The Three Musketeers"².

The same is true for the first story told by Puck, "Weland's Swords". From a historian's perspective, it is nothing but fiction, so we may suspect that Puck made everything up. The reader, all in all, is supposed to believe that the Anglo-Saxon having invaded Britain (constantly called "Old England") brought a god named Weland, "and he was a smith to some Gods" [6]. Kipling derives the modern name "Willingford" from "Weland's Ford"; the awe-inspiring Northern god becomes a small fairy in England and works in a smithy by the road shoeing horses. But this mythological element is necessary to launch the whole story with its symbolism: the magic sword will be made and given to a Saxon boy called Hugh thus laying the foundation for one the main *historic* storylines of the book. This is also true for the second book, as Dixon Scott in 1912 noted:

<...> if the reader will turn back to these wise fairy-tales he will see that each is really four-fold: a composite tissue made up of a layer of sunlit story (Dan's and Una's plane), on a layer of moonlit magic (plane of Puck), on a layer of history-stuff (René's plane and Gloriana's), on a last foundation of delicately bedimmed but never doubtful allegory [5, p. 316].

Deeply allegorical is "The Knife and the Naked Chalk", the story of a Neolithic shepherd. "And yet what else could I have done?" he said. "The sheep are the people" [7]³. A simple shepherd giving his right eye to be put out in order to obtain a knife and save his people is thought by his fellows to be "a God, like the God Tyr, who gave his right hand to conquer a Great Beast" [3]; and there is only one step to Christ's sacrifice (see, for example, a parable of a good shepherd, John 10: 1–18).

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

² About historical inaccuracy of the "Wall" and bucolic Sussex landscape accurately reflecting the reality see: [3]; about Kipling and "archeological nationalism" see: [4].

³ The meaning of the phrase was partly lost in the Russian translation ("Our life is in our sheep").

14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

“A Carol”, a traditional song on the theme of Christmas, concluding the book, is highly logical in this sense. Past hidden in the present, and the “old” (archaic) meet with the modern thus healing the rupture. The life goes on, and “who shall judge the Lord” [7].

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