



The Folklore Image of Baba-Yaga and the Mythological Image of a Witch in the Works of Oral Folk Art

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Received 18th Feb 2022, Accepted 16th Mar 2022, Online 15th Apr 2022

Abstract:

The article deals with the folklore image of Baba-Yaga, referring to the image of the lower mythology. Russian folk tales from the collection of the compiler A.N. Afanasyev are analyzed, where it was revealed that Baba-Yaga is a multifaceted image.

Keywords: Baba-Yaga, myth, folk art, fairy tale, character, witchcraft, image, evil.

Introduction

The tales of Baba Yaga and myths about the witch are wonderful examples of Russian folklore and literature. Many poets and writers have turned to these images of lower mythology. The images of Baba Yaga and the witch have forever entered the treasury of oral folk art. Scientists have repeatedly tried to understand these images. They have received many interpretations.

Who is Baba Yaga? Why is this character so beloved by the people? After all, Baba Yaga is a bright representative of the dark forces. Obviously, this image originated in the era of matriarchy, when people worshipped a female cult. Hence, the first half of the character's name – Baba, which means woman. She acts as a giver, adviser and is perceived as a benevolent being.

But when matriarchy was replaced by patriarchy, the image of Baba Yaga underwent changes. There were a lot of masculine traits in him, and negative qualities in the character began to develop: she became an ogre, a kidnapper of children, a villain. Thus, initially Baba Yaga was a kind old lady, and then she had a double: the evil image of Baba Yaga. Hence, probably, the second half of the name – Yaga. Translated from the Old Russian language, "ягать" means "scold". Hence, Baba Yaga - this is an evil woman who constantly scolds.

Materials and Methods

Analyzing Russian folk tales from the collection of the compiler A.N. Afanasyev, it was revealed that Baba Yaga is a multifaceted image. Traditionally, she is regarded as a warrior, and sometimes acts as a giver, benefactor, helper of the hero.[1, 133] The evil Baba Yaga scares children (promises to cook and eat), punishes (makes them do hard work), kidnaps children from the family (with the help of animals) and so on. A person who gets to Baba Yaga is always in danger of death, but ingenuity and resourcefulness save him. In fairy tales, Yaga is at enmity with people – people are looking for salvation from her.

Kind Baba Yaga helps people (gives advice, shows the way), protects (gives magical things that protect people), contributes to the triumph of good (rewards good people and punishes evil ones). Baba Yaga is the mistress of animals and various forest creatures. The very dwelling of Yaga is surrounded in fairy tales by mystery. She lives in a remote forest in a hut on chicken legs, so far from all living things, where even crows do not bring bones. The hut is surrounded by a fence of human bones with skulls on poles. On the gate instead of constipation - hands. Instead of a lock, a mouth with sharp teeth. The hut of Baba Yaga can turn around its axis, but basically it is turned to the forest in front, to "this world" with its back. To get into the hut, the hero needs to cast a spell: "Stand up the old way, as your mother set! Back to the forest, front to me."

Baba Yaga greets those entering his strange dwelling with a snort: "Fu-fu fu! Before the Russian spirit has never been heard of, the view has not been seen..." So she meets unexpected guests for the reason that she herself belongs to another world hostile to people. Yaga cannot stand the smell of a living person, it's disgusting and scary to her.

Baba Yaga is a dead man. She lies in her cramped hut as if in a coffin. The fact that Yaga is a dead man, says her bone leg. Baba Yaga is blind: she doesn't see the hero, but she can smell him. In particular, the following description is common: Baba Yaga, a bone leg, sits "on the stove, on the ninth brick," and she has "teeth on the shelf, and her nose has grown into the ceiling." To people of a distant time, the afterlife of their deceased ancestors in the female line seemed exactly like this. Thus, Baba Yaga was considered a calm ancestor. It was believed that, having passed away, she patronized her kind-tribe. Her memory was honored and thus they thought that they were enlisting her support. That's why Baba Yaga gives people good advice instead of just reverence. For this she repays with kindness.[2, 97]

Baba Yaga can act both as a pest (then she tries to destroy the hero or heroine who came to her for one reason or another), and as a donor (then she, after questioning the hero, steaming him in the bath and feeding him, gives the necessary thing or gives the necessary information). Often the hero gets to three sisters in turn and receives the necessary help only from the last Baba Yaga.

Baba Yaga has a special power given by nature. She can turn into a goat, a bear, a magpie and other different animals and birds. There are a lot of animal traits in it. A hut - and that one on chicken legs. It can be noted that the main activity of Baba Yaga is due to her close relationship with wild animals and the forest. She lives in a deaf thicket, animals and birds obey her. Therefore, we can connect the origin of Baba Yaga with the image of the mistress of animals and the world of the dead, common in fairy tales and myths of many peoples. So, it is easy to notice that in the image of Baba Yaga, the features of many ancient characters are combined. Therefore, the functions that Baba Yaga performs in different plots are so different.

The cult of the female ancestor gave way to the cult of the male ancestor. And once a respected being, Baba Yaga turned into a witch. It inspires horror and disgust, acts against people. Yaga was endowed with the features of a cannibal, an evil warrior, a kidnapper of children.

There are a lot of ditties about Baba Yaga, where her image and appearance are described:

Баба-Яга – костяная нога.

С печки упала – ногу сломала.

Пошла в огород – испугала народ.

Побежала в баньку – испугала зайку [3,176]

It was noticed that images similar to Baba Yaga exist in the folklore of other peoples: Poles, Czechs, Slovaks and other Slavs, as well as Finns. They even have similar names: Edza-Baba, Jerzy-Baba, Ezinka, Yazia, Baba-Yatia. But still there is no complete coincidence: in the fairy tales of another people, the image received its own special development, each has its own special story. According to Russian belief, Baba Yaga is compared to a sorceress. In ancient Russia, those people who were engaged in witchcraft were afraid. The image of Baba Yaga is interpreted as the image of an old witch or witch in Russian fairy tales.[4, 56]

Witch - a woman endowed with witchcraft abilities by nature or who has learned to conjure. In essence, the very name "witch" characterizes her as "a person who knows, possesses special knowledge" (to witch means to conjure, to tell fortunes). Witches are different ... Witch, sorceress, fortune teller. "Well, go to Bald Mountain, to the witches!"; "A learned witch is worse than a born one"; "Skillfully and beat the witch"; "Witches stole the month." According to beliefs, witches are "born" kinder than "scientists" and can even help people by correcting the harm caused by "scientists" witches.

It is believed that the "born" witch is born the thirteenth girl from twelve consecutive girls of the same generation. Such a witch has a small tail.

So who is a witch? This was the name of a woman supposedly endowed with magical power. She wears black clothes, flies on a broom or in a mortar, cooks a magic potion in a cauldron. She has an assistant spirit, most often in the guise of a black cat or a raven. Witches and sorcerers were suspected of serving the devil, who received their immortal souls in exchange for magical power. Witches were credited with the ability to influence nature, turn into animals, fly, and come into contact with evil spirits. A witch is a woman who has decided to sell her soul to the devil. It differs from Baba Yaga in that it has a small tail.

Russian witches, like Baba Yaga, rush through the air in an iron mortar, chasing with a pestle or a stick, and sweeping the trail with a broom, and the earth groans, the winds whistle, and unclean spirits utter wild cries. They have much in common with sorcerers: in the same way they die hard, suffering from terrible convulsions, sticking their tongue out of their mouths, unusually long and horse-like. But the similarity does not stop there, because then restless walking from fresh graves begins; they calm down aspen stake driven into the grave.

Therefore, people endowed with witchcraft abilities, dying, could endow them with unsuspecting relatives, acquaintances - through a cup, a broom, other objects that are at hand.

There are narratives in which the mother-in-law tries to teach her son-in-law to do magic, as the old sorcerer offered to "write off his witchcraft" as a sign of his favor, etc. The peasants believed that the local witches get their knowledge from the Kiev witches, "what is on Bald Mountain", and then "pass it on to each other".[5, 248]

Conclusion

Examining the epics and oral folk art, one can come to the conclusion that Baba-Yaga and the witch, in the village of the XIX-XX centuries as if they personified the troubles, dangers and accidents that lie in wait and persecute the peasants. These images are a universal explanation of misfortunes and in this capacity they are even necessary for the life of the peasant community.

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