

**«NEW WINE INTO OLD WINESKINS»: THE OTHER HORIZONS
OF FRONTIER STUDIES AND PERFORMATIVE TURN IN
FANTASY BETWEEN MEDIEVALISM AND TRADITIONAL
POETICS**

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The author of the article analyses the prospects for the development of frontier studies as an interdisciplinary trend in contemporary Humanities. It is assumed that there is not enough space for frontier studies in the contexts of traditional history, sociology, anthropology, ethnology and interdisciplinary approaches. The author believes that studies of really existing political, social and cultural institutions are not enough for further effective and dynamic development of frontier research. The author insists that the interdisciplinary potential of studies of multiple imagined worlds of fantasy and science fiction can provide historians with a significant corpus of texts. Further analysis of the imagined worlds actualizes their frontier character. The author believes that the studies of the imagined medievalism will assist to the development and progress of frontier studies in the contexts of analysis of social, political and economic institutions. An analysis of the imagined medievalism will bring together frontier studies with political, cultural, social and economic histories.

Keywords: frontier studies, imagined worlds, fantasy, science fiction, medievalism, mass culture

We accept as an axiom that whole worlds are
constructed in different genres of literature
Stanislaw Lem
Comparative ontology of science fiction

The formulation of the problem. Frontier studies arose in the United States historically and became an attempt of American intellectuals to actualise the frontier factor in national history. Frontier studies arose relatively late and therefore the influence of classical positivist historiography was smaller in them than in other spheres of historical science. Frontier studies developed dynamically and rapidly in the 20th century when the principles of interdisciplinary synthesis were entered the number of central and systemic in modern historiography. Frontier studies in these intellectual and cultural situations were, on the one hand, doomed

to become interdisciplinary. On the other hand, frontier studies relatively quickly understood and realised the narrowness of the analysis of frontier problems exclusively. Therefore, frontier studies mutated into a universal methodology focused on the studies of various border cultural, social, intellectual, religious and cultural dimensions of national histories in particular and world history in general. Contemporary post-post-modernist historiography, which survived several theoretical and methodological turns successfully, including social, cultural, performative and imaginative, became uncomfortably in a history that can be defined as real.

Imaginativism, inventionism and frontier studies. Imagination and invention became two influential trends in the development of Western humanities in the last quarter of the 20th century. Historians who dealt with frontier problems actively began to analyse the texts as sources of historical, cultural, national and other experiences. The development of world literature in the 20th century inspired some genres that can be defined as a frontier. Fantasy and science fiction belong to the number of these genres that occupy a frontier positions in contemporary literature and mass culture. The frontier character of them expresses in several features, including the frontier position at the junction of mythology and the traditional fairy tale, romantic literature and medieval western history, literature and cinema. Modern stereotypes of mass culture imagine fantasy as a historical and adventure novel, where heroes act in some nonexistent worlds, stylised as Western European medievalisms. The author of the article presumes that science fiction and fantasy became the frontier genres because they stimulate the imagination and invention of new worlds of frontier character. Virtually any text that belongs to these genres, offers its own unique world. These numerous worlds, never existing in reality, offer their possible historians numerous cases of existence of frontier historical, political, cultural, social, ethnographic, economic and religious situations.

Historiography. Fantastic literature, utopia and dystopia, fantasy almost from the very beginning of its history attracted the considerable attention of scholars (Lobdell, 2005; Sullivan, 2001; Wendorf, 2002; Cadden, 2014; Timmerman, 1983; Sammons, 2010; Attebery, 1980). The range of opinions, on the one hand, was very diverse and varied from the perception of these genres as parts of primitive mass literature to their imagination as elements of the serious and respected discourse (Zawalska, 2010; Kovtun, 2010; Fokin, 2010; Korol'kova, 2013). On the other hand, academic texts on science fiction and fantasy are extremely traditional and not very diverse. Researchers prefer to study the genetic links of these

genres, modern features, the main trends of the development (Käkelä, 2014; Bowman, 2014; Lehtonen, 2015; Lindgren Leavenworth, 2017).

These trends in literature are imagined as parts of artistic creativity and literary historians often ignore social, political and cultural aspects and messages of texts which belong to these genres. Formal literary criticism cannot escape from the vicious circle of traditional themes. The traditionality of the subjects and the principles of the normativist historiography dominate in the defended dissertations about fantasy and fiction in Russian universities (Nazarova, 2015; Demina, 2015; Krinitsyna, 2011; Vinterle, 2013). Therefore, historians often ignore the problems of the imagined worlds (Dyson, 1997; Lehmann, 2017; Bowen, Nemanic, 2010; Berger, 1977; Wolf, 2014; Wolf, 2016; Slusser, 1989; Deineka, Bulygina, 2015) and invented spaces in social, political, cultural, economic and anthropological dimensions. The studies of the imagined social, political and linguistic worlds are unfortunately extremely few in Russian historiography. Russian scholars analyse fantasy in particular and science fiction in general as developed and stable genres, preferring to use different clichés. Historians of these genres perceive them as stable systems and ignore their frontier character; they do not use the potential of imaginative and inventionist historiography for studies of the imagined political, social and cultural spaces.

What is this article about? The author of the article, on the one hand, will try to analyze some typical and tribal characteristics of the science fiction and fantasy in contexts of frontier studies. On the other hand, the author presumes that the number of texts that belong to genres of the science fiction and fantasy is so significant that it provides us with opportunity to imagine special direction in frontier studies, focused on the analysis of the political, social, cultural, economic histories of never existing worlds and spaces as frontier cases of the development of historical imagination, which actualizes the main and marginal tendencies in the invention of the worlds on the frontier of reality and imagination. The author also presumes that the fantastic, utopian and anti-utopian texts that offer non-existent ideal or anti-ideal worlds also provide scholars with the significant number of sources because their further studies can form a corpus of articles and other texts focused on the analysis of different versions of the development of frontiership in culture and literature.

The imagined worlds of Medievalism: real and unreal. The relationship between imagined and real historical, religious, social, political and cultural experiences is the first problem the author plans to analyse in this article. The texts that form the discourses of fantasy,

science fiction, utopia and anti-utopia (McGarry, Ravipinto, 2016; Gee, 2016) actualise, as a rule, two forms of imagined and imagining worlds that have parallels with the historical and political processes of the real history of human civilisation. Fantasy, on the one hand, actualises the mass and primitivised notions and representations about the Western Middle Ages and local feudalisms. Modern critics and historians (Anglberger, Hieke, 2012; Hobson, 2013; Łapińska, 2013) believe that the texts of George Martin (Martin, 2011; Martin, 2011; Martin, 2011; Martin, 2011; Martin, 2012; Marques, 2016; Ramon Ruiz, 2016) became the most vivid and significant attempts to actualise the discourse of medievalism in mass literature, but this ambitious and determined attempt made visible its frontier character also. Even if his texts are not such as critics imagine them, they become sources and inspired some scholars to write and defend some interdisciplinary dissertations (Fagnastøl, 2014; Pedersen, 2017; Thorstensen, 2014; Vike, 2009; Dearman, 2016; Tegelman, 2013; Natishan, 2012).

Science fiction and utopia can actualise collective notions about the ideal desired or imperfect and unwanted future. Therefore, the analysis of numerous imagined “medieval” and “modern” worlds, states, political regimes, systems and orders can actualise the achievements of medieval studies and modern history. The number of imagined worlds that imitate and simulate the historical and social realities, the political processes and religious practices of the Middle Ages are so significant and the author presumes that it will be quite possible and logical to assume that “imagined medieval studies” or “alternative medieval studies” can become a dynamically developing field of modern interdisciplinary frontier studies because the texts in the genres of science fiction and fantasy actualise various frontier and marginal cases of imagination of medieval phenomena, feudalism and capitalist ways of social changes, modernisations and transformations. These worlds are frontier because they are real for readers and fans of the genre, who form their unique subcultures on the unstable junction and the mobile frontier between reality and imagination. These cases of imagined and invented numerous medievalisms are marginal because they, as invented constructs contain typical characteristics of various forms of feudalism that emerged, developed and died in the real history of human civilisation. Any formally feudal society, authors of fantasy novels write about, is an ideal construct because it actualises the institutions, processes and relations that developed in different parts of feudal Europe.

The performative turn and the rise of Medievalism. Actually, the performative turn in historiography and the triumphs of imaginalism and

inventionism that preceded it de-arraigned the historical realities that became political, social and intellectual constructs. Desacralisation of history stimulated and inspired the triumph of literature that offers multiple imagined and invented worlds and spaces with their unique social, political institutions, although their uniqueness is only a formality because all these institutions and relationships are rooted genetically in their prototypes that existed in real history. These cultural strategies predetermined the basic system characteristics and features of the invented worlds as forms of a frontier imagined spaces. The worlds invented and imagined by the authors of modern fantasy novels are frontier because they actualise the achievements and potential of several genres, including utopia and anti-utopia (Loock, 2016; Starre, 2016; Leyda, 2016), although the last one belongs to a number of politically and ideologically difficult genres and therefore it is not very popular among contemporary writers and readers who prefer to perceive texts as a product of consumerism and tend to ignore their incentives to think and criticise political and social realities.

Desacralisation of history and the collapse of the monopoly of academic historiography restored myth and the romantic areole of the Middle Ages. These transformations and changes in Humanities were impossible without performative turn (Huizinga, 1943; Law, Urry, 2004) which inspired a new interdisciplinary paradigm for the development of anthropology, archaeology, history, and cultural studies. Performative turn actualised the potential for analysis of the roles and different cultural, social, political and economic strategies of behaviour inspired by the prescribed roles. Different communities and groups in general and individuals, in particular, are able to play these roles. Awareness and understanding of the performative nature of identity led to the fact that literature and film industry became forms of performance. The texts and films including “A Song of Ice and Fire” and “Game of Thrones” became incentives for the development of new group identities that are performative in their nature and imitate the medieval feudal realities. Medievalism in this cultural and intellectual situation became one of the many cultural roles and social performance.

It was impossible to predict the historical triumph of fantasy and the rest of fantastic literature because these genres vegetated in the shadow of the giants of naturalism and realism, but fantasy was able to actualise its potencies as an attempt to escape from reality and set the mass reader and consumer free from the world of capitalism with its political and social problems. Fantasy reanimated the myth about the Middle Ages as the golden age and satisfied the readers’ demand for texts that will free them from the unpleasant capitalist and other modernities. The escapist psychology of the mass reader and iron logic of capitalist book business

stimulated the constant growth of works in the genre of fantasy in algebraic progression. Fantasy, on the one hand, has much in common with the culture of mass consumerism and social escapism in this intellectual situation because imagined worlds became more attractive to readers than ones they lived in. On the other hand, it is very important to remember that fantasy in particular and science fiction with its particular cases of utopia and anti-utopia, in general, offers some idealised and sanitised worlds because historical realities were always worse and dirtier than worlds of fantasy.

This feature actualises the transitive and frontier character of fantasy and genetically related genres, expands our collective notions about the possibilities and potentialities of frontier studies as an integral attempt to synthesise the achievements of the postmodernism with traditional normativist historiography. Pioneers and founding fathers of fantasy and creators of science fiction did not expect that by the middle of the second decade of the 21st century the number of texts of these genres would be so significant that any statistical data would lose its reasonableness and objectivity. Therefore, the invented ideal feudal worlds in texts that form the discourse of fantastic prose in all its varieties from the pure science fiction to fantasy which was able to form its orthodox canon and generate numerous marginal and frontier branches provide scholars with mutually exclusive institutions, processes and trends that are not existed in the history of Western European or Eastern feudalisms.

Frontier studies of heterogeneous medievalisms. The differences between the real medieval studies of multiple histories as histories of the political, social and economic experiences of the West and the fictional attempts to imagine and invent the histories of the non-existent feudal “cozy worlds of conservative escapism” (Panfilov, 2014) can be formal and nominal because the medieval worlds invented in fantasy began to create their own historiographic traditions that simulate and imitate styles and large narratives of academic historiography successfully. The market triumph of fantasy and its successful film expansion (Kovaliov, 2014; Panfilov, 2014; Arnautova, 2016), despite the frontier cultural nature of the genre, actualised the universality of medievalism. Evgenii Savitskii, the Russian historian, defines medievalism in the following way:

images of the Middle Ages, scientific and popular, existing in the modern times, as well as institutions engaged in their production or using them, including literature, cinema, and computer games” (Savitskii, 2015)

Russian historian Dmitrii Haritonovich stresses that the phenomenon of medievalism became universal for modern cultures and “the Middle Ages are in us” (Haritonovich, 2000).

The first “professional” historians and medievalists of the imagined medievalisms can be the authors of fantasy novels that stimulate the historical imagination, but the social and cultural demands of consumer society stimulate the emergence of the specialised pseudo-academic communities that develop alternative historiographic discourses. The market, demand and interest became three factors that ensured this sort of literature with success and significant sales. On the one hand, these texts can stimulate, interest in the imagined worlds and inspire historians to criticise and analyse alternative historical narratives simultaneously, despite the fact that these histories are nothing more than a literary fiction, but these fantasies have much in common with the real history of medieval England.

Commenting on the historical parallels between the formally fantasy plot of the George Martin saga and the history of the War of Roses, American historian Brian A. Pavlac believes:

The doomed Richard of York influences the character of Eddard Stark. Robert Baratheon resembles Edward IV both in his warrior prowess and in his neglect for the rule. Robb Stark, also like a valiant Edward IV, makes a politically foolish marriage. Among the Lannisters, Tywin is a bold and sharp ruler, just like Edward I, “the Hammer of the Scots”. Richard III’s wit, insight, and alleged hunchback are exaggerated in the character of the dwarf Tyrion. His sister Cersei receives the same kind of abuse hurled at Margaret of Anjou (1430 – 1480), the wife of Henry VI. And young Danaerys combines the attributes of an inspirational Joan of Arc with those of the claimant to the throne, Henry Tudor” (Pavlac, 2017).

On the other hand, these fictitious historiographies (Martin, García, Antonsson, 2014; Martin, 2012; Martin, 2015; Martin, Pearlman, 2015) are extremely interesting in the contexts of genesis and the transformation of historiographical narratives: despite the fact that such texts focus on histories as fruits of imagination and mind games, they actualise the objective processes of genesis and further transformations of collective strategies of public use of history including its invention and manipulations with memory of communities, despite the fact that they emerged as the results of fans’ activities. These histories (Reinhart, 2014; Lowder, 2012; Langley, 2016) that imitate and simulate academic historiography, on the one hand, actualise the methodological crisis of medieval studies, blurring the boundaries of history as a form of knowledge with non-academic

strategies for the production of meanings. These authorised and amateur histories inspire a regress of historiography that actualises its genetic relationships with medieval chronicles and annals.

Authors of modern texts in the fantasy genre who simultaneously became authors of novels and authors of pseudo-academic descriptions of events, they invented in their texts, mutated into modern chroniclers and annalists of the non-existent worlds. Modern writers as convinced and hardened postmodernists became both authors of texts and researchers of the worlds, they imagined and invented. All these writings form “beyond” (Ryzhkovskii, 2009) of modern fantasy and legitimise the invented and imagined worlds post factum. On the other hand, they stimulated the response of the academic community, but professional historians reacted too late when the market was occupied by other texts written by the authors of the original fantasy novels or fans of the genre. Professional historians were forced to state the invasion of games in the Middle Ages in particular or quasi-medievalism in modern realities in general. Critics could only admit that mass literature and the film industry responded and reacted promptly to social and cultural demands, but the triumph of the new and simplifies medievalism actualised the frontier character of the modern intellectual situation.

Therefore, the voice of few representatives of the academic community (Larrington, 2016; Pavlac, 2017; Johnston, Batts, 2015; Attewell, 2014; Mondschein, 2017; Perpinya, 2016; Young, 2015; Carroll, 2017) who tried to analyse texts of the fantasy genre in contexts of their real historical genealogies and intellectual archaeologies turned out to be muffled by a harmonious chorus of fanatical writings and texts. The fantasy as a genre is extremely heterogeneous and therefore the author presumes that it would be logical to assume that imagined medieval studies of ideal feudal worlds, on the one hand, can provide frontier studies with several interdisciplinary and promising sub-disciplines, including sociology, historical anthropology, cultural anthropology, and microhistory of the imagined feudalisms. On the other hand, if we take into account that the corpus of texts is too significant and contemporary writers have no intention of stopping writing texts in the fantasy genre clearly, alternative medieval studies of imagined feudal worlds can mutate into the analysis of particular cases.

From frontier studies to... frontier studies, or a new agenda. This scenario of the evolution of alternative medieval studies as a part of frontier studies can provide the academic community with postmodernist and constructivist texts that can have much in common with Western medieval studies of the “Annals” or methodologically and theoretically

related approaches. “Institutional instability of the late Middle Ages: the case of Arkanar”, “Secular and religious elites of Arkanar and Vallek: comparative analysis”, “Principles of inner suzerainty and sources of feudal fragmentation: numerous cases of Winterfell”, “Political anthropology of power: Hand of the King (sacred and secular aspects)”, “Cities as the ancestral homes of social transformations: Braavos and Pentos between early capitalism and relapses of re-feudalisation” are just a few examples of possible names of plausible articles that have chances to form the interdisciplinary trend in frontier studies.

The author understands that these titles of possible articles have nothing in common with the Russian academic tradition and can annoy by their “deliberate anachronism”. Evgenii Savitskii, Russian historian, commenting on the situation states that

American professional historians, philologists, and art historians publish dozens of books that would anger the researcher who was brought up respecting the principle of historicism. These texts are little known in Russia because they look strange, do not correspond to academic criteria, which are still reproduced in Russian universities. The inadequate reception of this kind of research literature is evident evidence of a continuing gap in the theoretical horizons, a lack of understanding of some basic premises that have significantly influenced the production of historical knowledge in the US and to some extent in Western Europe since the 1970s and 1980” (Savitskii, 2016).

Analysing the cultural contribution of modern fantasy, including the texts of George Martin, it is extremely important to remember that this literature was able to become a stimulus for academic imagination and the synthesis of medievalism with studies of popular culture and collective perceptions of the past.

These new studies focused on the imagined feudalism of “Games of Thrones” look quite respectable and their authors imitate and simulate academic approaches actively and successfully, but this imitation has only a formal character because the actual studies of feudal relations and Westeros institutions imitate university discourse so deeply that it became part of semi-academic historiography. Westeros medievalism can inspire the analysis of problems, which academically recognized and respected medieval studies explore. The author presumes that the Western medievalists reached a compromise in the studies of the imagined and heterogeneous feudalisms and proposed an agenda that includes the studies of political and religious institutions (Riggs, 2017; Attali, 2017; Clasby, 2017; Swank, 2017; Giudici, 2017; Uckelman, 2017; Polack, 2017),

chivalry and the phenomenon of royalty (Finn, 2017; Quercia, 2017; Muhlberger, 2017; Pavlac, 2017), heterogeneous social spaces and situations of existence of multiple dependent groups of the population (Carroll, 2017; Ruiters, 2017). Modern historians of Westeros believe that gender and children's history of feudalism (Liedl, 2017; Strandgaard 2017; Mares, 2017; Alesi, 2017) are extremely promising also. Actually, contemporary interdisciplinary studies of plural and heterogeneous feudal and medieval worlds of Westeros (Peterson, 2015; Napolitano, 2015; Cowlshaw, 2015; Walker, 2015; Zontos, 2015; Hackney, 2015; Wittingslow, 2015; Nel, 2015; DeCoste, 2015; Gresham, 2015; Kozinsky, 2015; Leederman, 2015) actualise the experience of traditional positivist historiography and synthesise it with interdisciplinary postmodernist attempts to invent history.

This intellectual situation, on the one hand, confirms that modern medievalism as a postmodern construct and invented academic tradition is ready to analyse any sources that do not fix the real historical experiences of feudalisms and medievalisms, but actually imagines and invents them here and now for mass consumerism. American historians imagine the source as a universal absolute and they are ready to localise the texts in the genre of fantasy among other sources:

for historians, the first step in answering any problem is to find the sources. Any record of past human activity is a source, but most useful for historians are written records: letters, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, writs, laws, accounts, speeches, and literature. Without sources, we know nothing of what happened in the past. And, even with sources, our knowledge is incomplete, tentative, and uncertain. The word “versus” [...] underscores the tension of understanding facts and reality, whether in fiction or in history. The narrators in Game of Thrones are sources, and, like all people, they offer individual perspectives that contradict and confuse one another” (Pavlac, 2017).

The frontier and fictitious character of the fantasy texts does not confuse their researchers that their conclusions will be the result of postmodern birth traumas because they will be temporary, situational, constructed, imagined and invented. This approach once again confirms the universality of presentism in American historiography that allows a historian to imagine and invent events and social historical realities. On the other hand, fantasy became an incentive that allows modern historians to experiment and not lose the skills of critical thinking because the analysis of non-existent worlds with their multiple feudalisms and the Middle Ages became an effective charging for the mind that turned the Middle Ages in

the more attractive object of analysis than international terrorism. The historical and political experiences of the West inspired the great capitalist mutation and transformation. The heterogeneous medievalisms and feudalisms with their numerous local versions were not able to withstand competition with the iron step of capitalism that destroyed the archaic dynastic states and replaced them with a nation or nationalising ones. Writers are cramped and sometimes uncomfortable in the discourse of pure and orthodox fantasy.

Therefore, the history of Soviet, Russian and Western science fiction provides its historians with numerous texts, where imagined societies passed feudalism and used different models of political, social, economic and cultural transformations and transitions into formal capitalism. The Analysis of the imagined capitalist, authoritarian and other constructed worlds of science fiction, utopias and anti-utopias can essentially supplement the list of hypothetical titles of academic articles of a new dynamically developing discourse of studies of the invented worlds. “Numerous non-classical fascisms: problems of the typology of political regimes in Saraksh”, “Tormance as Asia: the problems of political authoritarianism”, “Military elites as a political factor in Alai Duchy and the Empire” are only few names of plausible articles that can belong to the methodological canon of frontier studies or be the part of other dynamically changing interdisciplinary approaches simultaneously. Further analysis of imagined worlds in their political, social, economic, cultural, religious diversities can stimulate interdisciplinary synthesis.

The studies of the imagined worlds actualise and reveal the potential of inventionism and imaginalism because they will confirm the universality of these post-modernist approaches that are equally effective for analyzing real historical and political processes and imagining forms of economic and social transformations of non-existent societies. The research activities of historians who will explore non-existent worlds will have a lot in common with studies of real historical sources. They can achieve the same conclusions because the objects and subjects of their studies are equally inaccessible to them: a historian who analyzes the sources of the era of the War of Roses and his colleague who studies similar processes in various non-academic artistic texts of the fantasy genre are equally weak in verifying their conclusions because the Wars of Roses ended a few centuries ago in particular, and the fantasy worlds never existed in general. Real historical sources about the War of roses and texts about the struggle of the kingdoms that belong to the fantasy discourse have a lot in common because they are only constructed with different reputations.

Nothing foreshadowed interest in texts about the struggle of the English aristocracy for the king’s throne because their anonymous writers,

representatives of the silent medieval majority, on the one hand, could not assume that their manuscripts would be almost the only source for modern historians. On the other hand, no one can guarantee that a few centuries later accidentally escaped and fragmented texts about the war of kingdoms and thrones will not be imagined as real historical sources because hypothetical historians of the future will work with texts, as modern historians do, and write history as an attempt to deconstruct the source and construct our collective ideas about it. The author presumes that it is possible to offer an agenda for further studies of the non-existent worlds in the contexts of frontier studies, intellectual, cultural and social histories, but the most of the texts will focus on alternative medievalisms or various experiences of political, economic and social developments in formally capitalist or leftist ideological dominants.

Preliminary conclusions. The author presumes that further studies of fantasy, science fiction, utopias and anti-utopias as special cases of the cultural frontiers can become very promising in the contexts of frontier studies, the history of literature, cultural, social and intellectual histories simultaneously. The analysis of fantasy allows us to trace the trajectories and ways how the mass consciousness and the culture of mass consumerism perceive academic discourse and discourse of high culture. The rapid progress and the triumph of fantasy became distorted and refracted reflections of the successes and achievements of Western medieval studies in general and of “Annales school” in particular. The successes of the fantasy and its expansion, on the one hand, were impossible without the works of French and Italian medievalists who discovered and actualised human, anthropological and microhistorical forms and dimensions of heterogeneous worlds and medieval landscapes.

On the other hand, the triumph of the consumerism that tends to consume almost everything, including primitivised and simplified historical facts, re-imagined and re-invented history as a story for entertainment, fun and pseudo-intellectual pleasures. The huge literature of fantasy responded to these social inquiries with numerous texts stylised as a chivalric novel. Fantasy became a frontier cultural phenomenon when it ceased to be the property of English and American literature only because foreign authors who began to master and even occupy and colonise this genre actively preferred to create template texts where social and cultural spaces, political and historical contexts grew out of Western European feudalism. It is extremely difficult to distinguish the texts of the American or English authors from the ones of their Russian colleagues because they prefer to use a limited set of storylines, including chivalry, magic, feudal

wars etc. The fantasy in this cultural situation mutated into the great cultural frontier with blurred borders between national literatures.

The frontier character of the fantasy actualises the marginality of this genre, but the marginality of the fantasy has no negative connotations. Fantasy is marginal because it is a frontier in the contexts of simultaneous exclusive non-belongingness of one cultural tradition only. The analysis of the texts that form the fantasy discourse is extremely promising in the contexts of interdisciplinary synthesis because it provides the historian with the opportunities to use the methods of historical, social, economic sciences to analyse non-existent worlds as frontier spaces between real historical facts, processes and institutions and fictional trajectories of social, political and economic developments of imagined multiple worlds.

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**«НОВОЕ ВИНО В СТАРЫХ МЕХАХ»: ДРУГИЕ ГОРИЗОНТЫ
ФРОНТИРНЫХ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ И ПЕРФОРМАТИВНЫЙ
ПОВОРОТ В ФЭНТЕЗИ МЕЖДУ МЕДИЕВАЛИЗМОМ И
ТРАДИЦИОННОЙ ПОЭТИКОЙ**

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Автор статьи анализирует перспективы развития фронтальных исследований как междисциплинарного тренда современных гуманитарных наук. Предполагается, что фронтальным исследованиям тесно в контексте как традиционных истории, социологии, антропологии, этнологии и междисциплинарных подходов. Автор полагает, что реально существовавших политических, социальных и культурных институтов недостаточно для дальнейшего эффективного и динамичного развития фронтальных исследований. Автор настаивает, что междисциплинарный потенциал изучения множественных воображаемых миров фэнтези и твердой научной фантастики может обеспечить историков значительным корпусом текстов. Дальнейший анализ воображаемых миров актуализирует их фронтальный характер. Автор полагает, что изучение воображаемых средневековий будет содействовать развитию и прогрессу фронтальных исследований в контекстах анализа социальных, политических и экономических институтов. Анализ воображаемых средневековий сблизит фронтальные исследования с политической, культурной, социальной и экономической историями.

Ключевые слова: фронтальные исследования, воображаемые миры, фэнтези, научная фантастика, средневековий, массовая культура

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