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Tzvetan Todorov's Theory of the Fantastic in Nikolai Gogol's Three Short Stories Shiva Masoudi ¹ 0009-0007-1567-2642 Nafiseh Saadat ² 0009-0004-3010-2010

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ABSTRACT

Retrieving fantasy as a keyword for recognizing and classifying a type of literature does not have a long history. Despite its relative recency, however, it attracted the attention of scholars and encouraged further research. Nonetheless, it was Tzvetan Todorov who presented a comprehensive theory of the fantastic and expanded its semantic range on two fronts by including the uncanny and the marvelous. Nowadays, little research can be carried out about fantasy without reference to this theory. The importance of the fantastic realm is that due to its semantic nature, it includes a wide range of styles, genres and literary tendencies. A great number of modern and postmodern literary trends have a touch of fantasy to them. Along with more contemporary types such as magical realism, police mystery, and science fiction, which are clearly placed in the domain of fantasy, more advanced works of Gothic, grotesque and romanticism can also be included under this category. Gogol's stories are no exception. Russian literature has always had an impact on world literature due to the great works of writers and poets of the 19th and 20th centuries. Gogol was a great writer in this era, and from the point of view of Todorov, many of his writings can be classified in the realm of fantasy. Although Gogol started to write in the footsteps of the romantics, he directed Russian literature towards realism by introducing ordinary people and their daily lives, which sometimes took a humorous tone. Due to his new writing style and his popular approach, he inspired many writers after him in Russia and even the world. His works may not be a large collection, but in terms of structural and semantic features, many believe that he brought about a revolution in Russian literature. The search for the fantastic realm in Gogol's "Nevsky Prospekt" (1835), "The Nose" (1836), and "The Overcoat" (1842) is the subject of this paper. Attention to the concept of fantasy and Gogol's works in the previous studies on the topic written in the Persian language has been inadequate. This study provides a number of criteria for measuring or creating the fantastic realm in literature. The previous criterion taken from Todorov's typology is less useful in recognizing the fantastic realm in literary works. Often, the criterion of fantasy is evaluated as being somewhere between fantasy and reality on a spectrum of doubt, but how it is formed in three syntactic/verbal, semantic, and pragmatic levels is a gap that this research article aims to narrow. Therefore, three levels of fantasy will be examined in "Nevsky Prospekt," "The Nose," and "The Overcoat." At the syntactic and the semantic levels, they create lifelike descriptions, descriptions of parts of the whole, and imaginary creatures, and at the pragmatic level, they create the combination of dreams and reality and the narrator's interventions in the fantastic realm.

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