

SCTCMG 2019

International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»

TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL CULTURE IN THE LITERARY TEXT: TYPOLOGY OF FOLKLORE WORKS

Anna Oschepkova (a)*

*Corresponding author

(a) Northeastern Federal University named after M.K. Ammosov, 42, Kulakovskiy st., Yakutsk, Russia, oshchepkova.anna@mail.ru, 89241690054

Abstract

The article discusses transformations of traditional culture in literature, reveals latent and explicit folkloristic layers which manifest themselves in the fabulous structure and elements of the mythological narrative that go back to the deep mythological semantics. The article interprets the concept 'folklorism' in a written text. The studies on folklore and folk traditions involve using individual components of folklore genres (a conspiracy, an "initiating myth", a story and a great song, etc.) and folklore stylistics; studying theoretical works on the poetics of folklore; rethinking the folk tradition through "alien" texts; identifying narrative possibilities of folklore and mythological texts and creating a "folk" text in literature. Bely's folklore is polygenetic. It is a result of the typological correlation of folklore and literature. The most striking forms of transformation of folklorism are stylization and imitation of a mythological narrative which are expressed in Andrei Bely's early prose. Variations of folklorism speak for strengthening prose trends in the early twentieth century, searching for various means of rhythmization, expanding the semantic field of mythological associations, allusions, using stylization means and plot components of the myth.

© 2019 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.UK

Keywords: Folklore, myth, symbolism, fairy tale, Andrei Bely.



1. Introduction

In the context of contemporary cultural globalism, there is an increasing interest in the specifics of interaction with “alien traditions”. Cultural texts are considered as an interaction space with an “alien word”. Researchers identify literary genetics of authors, determine their orientation to a certain poetic tradition. Oral tradition in a literary text is a relevant issue. The synchronic approach is characterized by a special literary folklorism with its focus on the tradition of folklorism rather than on folklore; another type of relationship between a literary text and a folklore text is possible. It is determined by the text itself, language (“memory of the genre”, “memory of the language”, “archetype”). In Russian literature of the early twentieth century, infernality and integrity of poetic vision were lost, while the trend to strengthen the creative beginning appeared. The search for prose is directed to the form of the work, the speech level and a genre model that goes back to the folk tradition.

2. Problem Statement

Bely’s (1990) early work are closely associated with mythology. These works have never been studied. Fundamental intersections of two types of creativity (literary and theoretical) have been beyond research. They are crucial to understand transformations of folklore works by Bely (2000). The most representative material for solving these problems is his early works of 1905-1909. Learning the aesthetic experience and poetics of the folklore tradition was one of the most important ways for Andrei Bely as a theorist of symbolism and a writer. The peculiar result of this process was the myth-folk theory. The symbolist search caused the evolution from myth to folklore. The article specifies his idea of folklore. A distinctive feature of symbolist texts is mythopoetism and folklorism (Mints, 2004). The problem of folklorism in the poetics of symbolism is related to the theoretical and folkloristic works by Andrei Bely.

In the works by Andrei Bely, there are variations of parafolkliness of the text, plot construction, whose stylistic features are already a literary phenomenon. These texts indicate typological convergences and divergences of the two types of texts (folklore and literary) and peculiar borderness of the symbolist narrative of the early twentieth century with its attention to the language, the stylistic playout of the genre-stylistic layers of folklore, starting with “speech genres” (Bakhtin, 1979), speech elements of sayings, proverbs and ending with formula expressions (Sapir, 2002). Traditions of folklore narration influenced the prose of the early twentieth century. The study on traditions of the myth-folk narration in these works will allow for analysis of specifics of their “parafolklore nature”. The story “The Bush” by Bely (1990) was published in “Golden Fleece” (1906, No. 7-9). At the end of the story, there was an indication of the date of writing: Dedovo, May 29, 1906. The “bush” is a result of author’s appeal to the folk tradition. Bely (1990) indicates the presence of such stylistic elements of folk origin as an “image of fairy tales”, an “epic tune”.

Foreign researchers emphasize an internal genetic connection with the Blok theme in its autobiographical context and the story of “Silver Dove” (Carlson, 1983; Alexandrov, 1985; Barrat, 1980). Moreover, the researcher emphasizes the dynamics in the evolution of the mythological folk complex which is reflected in the movement from “The Bush” to the collection of poems “Ashes” and “Silver Dove”, (Toporov, 1999).

Folklore stylization finds expression at the stylistic level of the text (inversions, repetitions, gradation, detailed comparisons, metaphors, epithets and metonymy). However, the greatest degree of concentration of the professional folklore description is expressed in the narrative structure of the story. Repetitions, comparisons, metaphors and other stylistic figures are located in a limited space: in the complex, ambiguous, dual structure of the text and in the plot structure of the story. The storyline is typologically related to the plot sequence.

3. Research Questions

The study on the works written by Andrei Bely in 1905-1909 will highlight basic structure-forming principles of the experimental prose and identify features of the transformation of symbolist poetics. In his early prose, traditions of folklore narration had a certain effect (Lavrov, 2007). It should be emphasized that this is not about the genetic connection of his works with a certain fairy-tale or epic plot, with individual folklore images and motifs. It speaks for their deep correlation with the folklore tradition in the very type of literary narration, since the works by A. Bely belong to their literary era. Analysis of the mechanisms of application of myth-folk narration traditions will allow for a more detailed presentation of the specifics of their experimental nature. The study of literary "texts-myths" suggests that the poetics of these texts: 1) is consistent with the logic of plot development, both in folklore and in myth; 2) represents the result of synthesis of fairy-tale and mythological structures whose archetypal basis is manifested in the plot and spatial organization, deep semantics of the narration; 3) is determined by the principle of stylization of the entire text in a fantastic manner, rising from the folk tradition; 4) includes elements of ritual-conspiracy tradition, refracted in the style of the text. Thus, the narrative structure of the literary "text-myth" is distinguished by its polygenetic character which recreates poetics of the folklore tradition.

4. Purpose of the Study

In this regard, it is interesting to consider how folklorism is created in the symbolist text of the beginning of the twentieth century. The research material is the small prose by Andrei Bely containing folklore motifs. Nevertheless, the decisive role of the main plot core remains behind the traditional fairy-tale composition. The evolution of the "parafolklore text" by Andrei Bely understood as a text recreating author's perception of the folklore tradition is analyzed. This text is an organic part of traditional culture. At the same time, there can be different degrees of correlation of literary works with the folk tradition. The studies of the "parafolklore text" by Belyi (1990, 2000) deal with narrative organization of literary works and interpretation of Bely's theoretical views on folklorism. It was formed as a result of generalization of text studies whose evolution can be described as a movement from Gogol's poetics to his own texts. The stories "The Bush" (1906) and "The Silver Dove" (1909) symbolize two stages of the author's appeal to the folk tradition. They are "parafolklore" texts (Meletinsky, Novik, Segal, & Neklyudov, 2001). The article reveals peculiarities of folk stylization as a means of recreating "parafolklore" texts, determines narrative techniques for creating a literary text that are related to the poetics of narrative genres of folklore, discusses synthesizing capabilities of a literary text.

5. Research Methods

The starting point is the idea of the typological autonomy of folklore and literature, going back to their fundamental differences as independent systems established by Bogatyrev (1971), Meletinsky and Neklyudov (Meletinsky, 2001; Meletinsky et al., 2001). The methodological basis is individual provisions of the works by Propp (2000). Analysis of the artistic structure and motifs of the story "The Bush" reveals a special stylistic and plot organization focused on folklore poetics. Bely recreates poetics stylistically close to folklore. This story is his first folklore poetic text. Folklore stylization finds expression at the stylistic level of the text and in the narrative structure of the story. Repetitions, comparisons, metaphors and other stylistic figures are part of the complex, ambiguous, dual structure of the text. Analysis of the narrative structure shows that in the "Bush", the plot scheme corresponds to a fabulous composition. The story begins with the motive of transformation: Ivan Ivanovich undergoes a certain transformation, becoming a burdock, and then Ivanushka the Fool. This interchangeability motivates anthropomorphism of an inanimate being and reverse metamorphosis of a person into a biomorphic state. The main character, Ivan Ivanovich, is transformed into Ivanushka the Fool, who lives under the bush ("initial situation") (Propp, 2000). Comparison of the plot of "Silver Dove" with a model of a fairy tale showed that in the narrative structure of the story, the plot movement is a system of the simplest components of the fairy plot – functions discovered by Propp (2000). Peter Daryalsky is lonely and rootless. His "homeland", "home" are described in the languor of the character. Its appearance also corresponds to the canons of folk aesthetics: "ashy curls", "scarlet lips"; "My fellow". The story, like a fairy tale, falls into three blocks based on the tests: winning the favor of Matryona, serving at the carpenter, joining the pigeon sect ("preliminary test"); confrontation with Kudeyarov, disenchantment from his diabolical influence ("main test"); leaving the carpenter's house, accepting death from the "pigeon" brothers and returning "home" ("additional test").

Analysis of the spatial structure of "Silver Dove" shows that the main spatial elements of Daryalsky's movement correspond to the spatial structure of the tale. The spatial structure of "Silver Dove" is subject to the logic of the narrative myth associated with the initiation ceremony: home - path - crossing the border – alien home – returning home. In archaic systems, initiation is associated with concepts of death and birth: death is used in its metaphorical meaning - the death of a former person and the birth of a new one (Smirnov, 2000). In "Silver Dove", the semantic content of motivation of initiation can be represented as follows: 1) crossing the border in order to obtain initiating information; 2) a cyclic path - back and forth; 3) transition involves overcoming the barrier; 4) the meaning is metaphorical death and birth. The old body must become "empty" to be filled with a new meaning. Similarity of mythological narrative and fairy-tale narratives indicates the presence of a prototypical basis expressed in the spatial organization of the text.

6. Findings

The most important feature of the small prose of the early twentieth century is complex polygenetic and heterogeneous images and plots. In "The Bush", the storyline corresponds to the narrative structure of the tale. The story contains functions that form a composition of a "one-way" fairy tale, where the move is carried out through "fight-victory" (in "The Bush", through "defeat"). At the same time, in "The Bush" the plot scheme is permeated with elements of the heroic epic (epic): description of the battle, epic

characterization of the hero, a snake-like look of the Bush. The story is a contamination of elements of two folklore genres - fairy tales and epics. The writer builds a special style model of "Silver Dove", synthesizing folklore genres at individual levels of narration and at the level of the text. However, only stylistic components of these genres are combined. Elements of conspiracy, ritual and song poetry are involved in the general structure of folklore stylization. Stylization of folk genres is focused on creation of mythological overtones. Bely (1990) followed the idea of ritual and magical interpretation of the word in the folk tradition. The poet appealed to folk traditions, Russian sectarianism; he used fantastic elements in speeches of his characters, developed structural-semantic components of the folklore genre. For Bely, it was important to create a text in which the myth performs a code function specifying secret meanings. Elements of the conspiratorial ritual song tradition perform the role of "cipher language". Artistic description of the characters of "Silver Dove" is based on genre traditions of ritual songs. The use of narrators' masks are stylization elements. For Bely (1990), stylization was used to create a "folk" work.

7. Conclusion

The emergence of the folk tradition in Russian prose of the early twentieth century is due to the evolution of writers themselves. The story is the first work in the number of "parafolklore" texts of writers which determined the nature of folklore narration principles influenced genre originality of the Russian prose of the early twentieth century. For the early works by Bely (2000), the story "The Bush" is his first folklore poetic text. Folklorism of Bely's (2000) works is polygenetic. It is result of correlation of literature and folklore texts. It has a typological character which finds expression in equal interaction of artistic and theoretical texts. Folklorism becomes one of the most important stages of his individual evolution. Bely experiments with an "alien" text, creating unique narrative poetics of the Russian story of the early twentieth century. The results of the study showed that the problem of literary understanding of folklore tradition has great prospects in terms of addressing the problem of relation between imitation of folklore poetics and folklore stylization and the problem of a deeper - mythological - understanding of folklore and folk traditions.

References

- Alexandrov, V. (1985). *Andrei Bely: The major symbolist fiction*. London.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1979). *Problems of poetics of Dostoevsky*. Moscow: Owls.
- Barrat, A. (1980). *Mystification and initiation in "Серебряный голубь": Belyj, the reader, and the symbolist novel*. Amsterdam.
- Bely, A. (1990). *The beginning of the century: in 3 volumes*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura.
- Bely, A. (2000). *Prose of the poet*. Moscow: Wagrius.
- Bogatyrev, P. G. (1971). *Issues of the theory of folk art*. Moscow: Art.
- Carlson, M. (1983). *The conquest of chaos: Esoteric philosophy and the development of A. Bely's theory of Symbolism as a world view*. Michigan.
- Lavrov, A. V. (2007). *Andrew Belyi: surveys and studies*. Moscow: New Literary Review.
- Meletinsky, E. M. (2001). *From myth to literature*. Moscow: Publishing Center RRGU.
- Meletinsky, E. M., Novik, E. S., Segal, D. M., & Neklyudov, S. Yu. (2001). *The structure of a fairy tale*. Moscow: Publishing Center RRGU.
- Mints, Z. G. (2004). *Poetics of Russian Symbolism*. St. Petersburg: Art.
- Propp, V. Ya. (2000). *Russian stories*. Moscow: Labirint.

Sapir, E. (2002). *The Psychology of Culture*. Berlin; New York.

Smirnov, I. P. (2000). *Zur altrussischen Kultur, ihrer nationalen Spezifik und der Geschichtslogik*. Wien.

Toporov, V. N. (1999). *On the block layer in the novel by Andrei Bely "Silver dove"*. Moscow: Russian State Humanitarian University.