

Folklorism of the Contemporary Youth's Creative Work

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Abstract

Since the second half of the 20th century, there has been an increased interest in traditional forms of culture, which is probably associated with an increase in the national self-awareness of the peoples of the Russian Federation. Based on this, the authors considered the features of the use of the folklore heritage of Russian creative youth. The authors have studied the creative works of 24 young writers aged from 25 to 35. In particular, they have studied the types of folklorism in their creative works, provided the general estimate of the productivity and significance of the youth's experience of using the folkloric heritage in the modern literary process and generally in culture. The paper is defining the phenomena of the youth culture in the early decades of the 21st century (fiction, CG). The authors have made a conclusion on the diversity of the youth's creative works' connection with the folkloric samples: the construction of the social-ethnographic reality, the field of the characters' identity, a new 'cosmos', creation of the individual universes as well as the literary version of folkloric fairytale on their basis. We have also noted the tendency towards the use of the Russian folkloric characters with the purpose of giving them some universal traits of the characters of the popular computer games. The authors found that the fabulous texts are used by young authors in both the genre category and one of the ways to create on their basis new texts, various types of aesthetic experiments and games.

Keywords: Youth Culture, Folklorism, Values, Creative Guidelines, Interaction

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Introduction

The problem of the interaction between literature and folklore has been in the centre of the scientists' attention. At the same time, during a long period of time, its consideration stood within the revealing of the folkloric presence in the literary text, the revealing of the sources of the folkloric precedents, and the definition of the imaginative functions of using the folkloric tradition in the texts (Golovin, Nikolayev 2013, 17). A particular result in this regard has become a significant section of the monograph by V.I. Yeremina (2016), devoted to the folklorism in the creative works of Nikolay Gogol, the poetry of the 1880-90s, as well as the literary existence of particular folkloric formulas (Zueva, 1985).

The innovative attempts towards the solution of the problem appeared at the turn of the millennium due to the expansion of the object field of the folklore itself, the search and active acquisition of the new methods of analysis and interpretation of the folkloric texts (Orlova, 2009; Radchenko & Pisarev, 2012; Savelyeva, 2012). A great interest and multiple positive feedback of the folklorists were first provoked by the publication of the paper by V.V. Golovin and O.R. Nikolayev (2013) in the materials of the collection of writings prepared to the 3rd All-Russian Congress of Folklorists, and then also by the report read by the scientists at this Congress. In these papers, it is apparent that "folkloric and literary texts represent various types of consciousness, based on radically different aesthetic canons and function in different cultural fields" (Golovin and Nikolayev 2013). In a folkloric text, its senses are presented in a compressed form and are clear only to the carrier of the traditional consciousness. It causes the special tactics of the writer's behaviour in case he/she applies the folkloric heritage in his/her creative works, "The author must answer the question why and how he/she applies to the tradition and must communicate it to the reader" (Golovin and Nikolayev 2013, 17; Savel'eva, 2012). The scientists present an original typology of the literary texts' models connected with the

folkloric tradition. At the same time, each model considers the issues of "the author's reflection tradition, the form of explication of the folkloric-literary interaction in the text and the forecasting readers' perception" (Golovin and Nikolayev 2013).

Materials and Methods

The study is focused on the creative works of 24 authors aged from 25 to 35. They all are presented on the website created by the authors of the paper – "Youth Literature of the late 20th – early 21st Centuries" (certificate of software registration No. 2016619492, date of registration in the Software Register – 08/22/2016). Their works centre on the modern Russian reality, the recent historical past of Soviet Russia; they construct the paradigms of the future, get serious on the problems of the Russians' identity, and the search of their place in the political and cultural life of the country. One of the main issues connected with the revelling of the young writers' attitude towards the tradition is the issue of the imaginative method and the belonging to a specific direction/style wider positioned by them. In the space of the modern literature, the most diverse phenomena and directions coexist in a complicated interaction with so-called 'returned' literature as well as with the Russian emigration literature. S.I. Timina writes about it as follows, "Today inside the belly of the modern literary process such phenomena and directions have been born and galvanised as avant-garde and post-avant-garde, modernist-style and post-modernity, surrealism, impressionism, neo-sentimentalism, materialism, Socialist art, and conceptualism" (Timina, 2011: 4).

However, in the creative works of the youth of the early 21st century, it is exactly postmodernism that prevails. At the same time, different texts contain it with different extent of completeness: from the subsequent implementation of the main categories, carnival elements, a deliberate mix of the genre forms and the language game (Shanin, 2014) to the particular postmodernists codes (Buksha, 2014). Focusing, first of all, on the western

samples of this direction, young authors nevertheless transform them towards the russification. The experiences of A. Botev (2013), L. Yugay (2015), K. Buksha (2014) and some other authors are interesting in this regard. Curiously, none out of 24 young authors except for K. Buksha used the model of 'transmission of the folkloric texts' or their adequate interpretation, "it is so believed or told among the people" in their creative works (Golovin and Nikolayev, 2013). As the most productive model of the young authors' applies to the traditional culture, one may consider the 'translation' or creation of the literary versions of the folkloric genres' (Golovin and Nikolayev, 2013). At the same time, both amateur and professional authors are focused on fairytale (Abukayeva and Zolotova, 2013; Yefimova and Zolotova, 2016; Zolotova, 2014; Zolotova et al., 2017). Particularly, T.N. Markova justly notes as follows, "It is exactly fairytale alongside with Menippean satire that opens wide opportunities for the genre experiments and aesthetic games" (Markova, 2011: 43).

Results and Discussion

Construction of Social-Ethnographic Reality in the Works by A. Botev and L. Yugay

The model for constructing a socio-ethnographic reality and the character's identity field is quite common. (Golovin and Nikolayev, 2013). This experience of A. Botev is successful (2013). In his fiction story "The Riddle of Schroedinger's Cat" he does not hide the dependency on the experience of Samuel Beckett, Flann O'Brien and other western authors and even underlines it in every possible way. However, the scene of the story is laid in the far-flung Russian province – Karelian Pitkyaranta. In order to reproduce the way of living and the mentality of its residents, the young writer applies to the folkloric texts. So, the image of Leshy reproduced according to the rules of bailichka, appears in the text several times. Some unknown old woman describes the encounters with him and their tragic consequences, Ilya, the 'expert' of the Karelian language and folklore, Ivan, the hermit, Nina, the girlfriend of the main character, and finally

by his main antipode – the fanatic scholar Erwin Schrödinger. The demonological character, on the one hand, helps the author to create some collective portrait of the residents of this locus, and on the other – to mark Edik as an 'alien', because he is the only one who does not believe that Leshy exists (Yudaev, 2012). At the same time, the writer mystifies the reader, as the apparent traits of the lost friend Vladimir are seen by the main character in the demon's image.

On the one hand, this is a scary world. Its evening is the huge beast ("The Paintings"), the dead moon ("Goryushitsa"), the werewolves, ("The Wolves"), the huge speaking fishes ("The Bailichka"), the walking dead ("Goryushitsa", "The Longing"), Leshy ("The Leshy"), poludnitsas ("Poludnitsa") and the death itself in the presence of a bird ("The Lullabies"). On the other hand, it is naïve and attractive: with the curly sea miracle and the goggle-eyed lions with docked foretops and roses on the tails ("The Paintings"). This world of strange and wonderful monsters is domesticated and enclosed by the poetess into some canvas, framed and wrapped up by the 'carved bushes'. This world is guided by the saints, some wise women and among them is the babushka-witch with her "grow-big-and-good-and-protected-from-everything; <...> both from fears and dismays' ("Baenka"), and, finally, the narrator herself, "standing at the edge of the worlds" ("Baenka"). Apparently, due to this fact, in the world of L.Yugay the encounters with the characters hostile to humans never end with a tragedy: the werewolves are sweeping by; the mermaid fish is safely returned to the river; the walking dead have no time to do some harm to the young woman and her children; Leshy returns the cursed girl; the mother manages to whip the death away, "There is nothing to feast <for her>" ("The Lullaby"). In the universe created by L. Yugay (2015), the characters from different worlds interact. So, the celestial shepherd, the crescent "takes away <...> the cow-stars" and changes his shift, "his scarlet whip" to the terrestrial shepherd Grisha to tend real cows "Alenkas and Zorkas". The guisers receive "cushions and sweets", which they

share with the characters from the other world, "To live the coming year in good luck" ("The Guisers").

Almost in each verse ('the poetic interview'), the poetess goes from the precise reproduction of a folkloric fact, realia, and action to their transformation and some conversion. A special attention here should be paid to the following works – verses "The Leshy" and "Zaklichka". So, Leshy has a traditional appearance, "he is higher than the trees, like a black mountain", also performs the traditional functions – takes the cursed girl away to the forest ("Her mother told in a fit of anger: Leshy, take her away!"). However, L. Yugay (2015) shifts the habitual ideas of the character's way of actions, and introduces into the narration a legend about the origin of Leshy and other demons, "He was an angel and then a fallen star". The main verse of the collection "Zaklichka" has a powerful constructive potential (Yugay 2015).

Every day and Social-Political Myth-Making in the Stories by D. Zarubina and K. Buksha

In the context of myth-making, one may also consider the story by D. Zarubina (2015) "The Silence beneath the Floorboards". Its contents show the interest of the young woman writer to the moral problems and at the same time to the mystical side of life. The reader may observe a kind of attempt to understand and reproduce the emotional world of a little human. For this purpose, D. Zarubina uses the technique of defamiliarisation: the one may see a tragicomic story of a family (divorce settlement) through the eyes of a child. Here the traditions of realist fiction and folkloric bylichkas are connected. On the one hand, the story tells a routine family conflict, while on the other – the resolution of the conflict appears to be possible only when a mythological figure of Domovoy (the Household Lord) appears. Zarubina also shifts the timely and spatial boundaries: she sends the child to the other world, invisible for the adults; at the same time, it (the world) is not described by the author, but it can be perceived.

The social-political myths of the 20th century are dealt with already by K. Buksha (2015). In

her novel "The 'Freedom' Factory", the writer successfully uses the west-European verbatim technique. The novel is based on the real interviews of a defence enterprise's workers. The young woman writer in this case applies to the model of 'large family' (Father – Joseph Stalin; Mother – the Motherland; Sons and Daughters – the Soviet people; Enemies – their various guises), which is groundbreaking for the Soviet society of the 30s-50s, as well as for its culture and literature. The traditional triad as applied to the West looks as follows: Father/Another Director, Motherland – Mother/A Symbolic Image of a Girl-Woman, Sons and Daughters/Factory Workers. At the same time, from the series of Directors of this model only N fully corresponds to it; the image of the Girl-Woman is quite a vogue; moreover – the female factory workers of the novel acquire the pure femininity.

We see as the denoted in the text by K. Buksha (2015) becomes the denoting, a form and in some cases even a technique. However, one cannot deny that the components of the Soviet discourse peculiar to a person's character are presented in the novel vividly and convincingly. The writer's attitude towards the 'Soviet past' is ambiguous: she finds the possibilities to delight in the massive success, to underline, despite the stereotypes, the genius and ambivalence of her characters, to show various types of women and their charm. At the same time, her abhorrence is provoked by the general atmosphere of despondency and even the poverty of life, lie and hypocrisy of the official slogans, the fear of repressions incorporated into the consciousness, rush jobs and unsalaried overtime on the factory etc., which she denotes with one word – 'obsession' (Buksha, 2015).

Creation of the Literary Versions of the Folkloric Fairytales in the Creative Works of the Young Russian Writers

The genre of the literary fairytale is currently popular among a rather large group of talented youth. At the same time, some ideal for them the creative works of Lyudmila Petrushevskaya may be called (Plotnikova and Zolotova, 2012).

The woman writer that became famous in many genres, at the end of the 20th century issues her collection "The Real Fairytales" (1997). It, on the one hand, contains a prominent apply to the folk's tradition, on the other – Lyudmila Petrushevskaya, having based on the folkloric traditions, uses them in a new quality and pursuing the other goals, compared with the traditional mindsets.

In this case, it is important to pay attention to another issue of the 'talking knots' concept by V.V. Golovin and O.P. Nikolayev (2013). According to the researchers as part of the 'competition model', "the author starts imposing her version of translation as the one belonging to the original tradition", which is, in case with the collection by Petrushevskaya, boldly underlined in the title – it is exactly her fairytales that must be considered as 'real'.

The folkloric context of "The Real Fairytales" by Lyudmila Petrushevskaya is complicated and diverse both in its contents and in their functions. Alongside with the functions, in the fairytales of the writer one may highlight the idea of the motive, the phenomenon of the traditional characters, as well as imaginative techniques from the general folkloric corpus. Simultaneously the writer expands the 'field' of the tradition by using the genres close to the fairytale, such as fantasy, peasant, and urban legend, as well as the elements of myths and rituals and thus paradoxically, 'engrains' them in reality (Plotnikova and Zolotova, 2012).

These innovations of Lyudmila Petrushevskaya are also readily used by the representatives of the national youth fiction of the 21st century. So, the winner of a series of the modern literary prizes ('Triumph' etc.), A. Ganieva, in 2011 created her collection "The Strange Fairytales" (Ganieva, 2011), the finalist of the youth playwriting competition 'Lyubimovka', winner of 'Debut' in the category 'Flash Fiction' (2012) E. Babushkin – 'Fairytales for the Poor' (Babushkin, 2012), called by the critics 'The Winter Fairytales' (by the first of them) (Noskova, 2015); winner of the awards by the 'Molodezhnaya volna (Youth Wave)' and "The Night Lights" (Akhmetshin, 2012).

The motive of journey, during which the main character overcomes obstacles or challenges also presents in the fairytales by E. Babushkin (2012), although unlike the folk tale, the characters are tested by the life itself, and far from all of them endure the strain ("They are still puzzled. So, they just stand like that even now. Just stand like that") However, despite the characters of E. Babushkin (2012) fail to cope with the ordeal, almost all his fairytales have happy ends ("...and, by the way, it is already spring, it's not like already warm and green, but smells like spring"; "Pyotr thought: this was that probably his sister was waiting for him at home, maybe she would be happy, and there might be at least one day of fest... etc.")

In the story by D. Akhmetshin (2012) "The Night Lights", one of the main characters becomes the image of 'a fairy witch who stole the eyes of the boy's parents and remained just empty shells instead of them". The little character headed to her in order to rescue his parents. The night journey of the boy is described by the author using the elements of the plot scheme of a fairytale (fairytale types 313H*, 327B, 327C, F CYC etc.).

In the works by the above-listed authors, particularly by E. Babushkin (2012), there are formulas close to the fairytale ones ("Once upon a time"; "There were three brothers. Studied together and quitted the study together"). The fact may also be correlated with the fairytale tradition, according to which the works by the young author start from a special introduction bearing a specific moral idea ("Grief to the poor, porridge without a spoon to the handless, and one and a half nest doll to the lonely"; "Whether it is truth or lie, but there is something true in it" etc.)

This peculiarity of a child's consciousness is also found in the fairytales by A. Ganieva (2011). For example, in "Vasya, Gera and a Golden Lady" the encounter of the 'ordinary' boy Vasya with a fairy 'kind lady <...> in a golden dress' takes place in a grocery and is perceived by the both as something usual. In the fairytale "Akuchi-Makuchi", the main character boy Misha not only visited a fairyland but also learned its

language. Thus, the magic in her fairytales has child reasoning, and it is like originally peculiar to a child, an integral part of their existence and consciousness, breaks through the language, which is suddenly spoken by the child and not understood by the adults.

In the fairytales by D. Akhmetshin (2012), the worldview of the little boy contains the elements of not 'invented', but the most 'real', 'spiritual' other world, which helps to understand that the children really perceive the reality more fully and multi-layered than the adults. Due to this note, the issue of where this reality ends and where the game of the child's imagination begins becomes especially intriguing.

The modern reality is also reflected in the world of fairytales of the young authors differently. In the fairytales by A. Ganieva (2011), "the characters act in familiar social situations and typical circumstances, facing the problems close to the mass reader" (Chernyak, 2009: 286). The key issues of the development of the action, important from the perspective of the characters' characteristic, take place in the modern institutions: hospitals ("Akuchi-Makuchi"; "The Wet Feet"), grocery stores ("The Round-the-World Journey"), schools ("Marusya the Beauty"), etc.

E. Babushkin also immerses his characters into the modern reality (2012). However, this reality is extremely gloomy and even scary. The researchers believe, and one cannot disagree with it, the fairytales by Babushkin "precisely recapture the atmosphere of hopeless suburbs and eternal outskirts" (Yudayev, 2012). E. Babushkin himself believes he works in the direction of the 'new proletarian fiction'. His characters whether they are employed or not, are usually poor people and as if they even have no inner world. The author is convinced that nobody of them is guilty that their life is so materialistic and joyless. Moreover, they do not even have a clue about the hell they live in.

The Use of the Slavic Mythology in the CG Development (using the example of R.V. Papsuev)

We want to pay special attention to the creative works by R.V. Papsuev (2017). The professional writer and artist of the CG industry, he noticed that when creating computer role-playing games (RPG), the developers prefer the characters of the western fantasy. To their mind, it is caused by the fact that the characters of the Slavic mythology and Russian folklore, not recognisable enough by the western world, decrease the number of users. As part of the project for his friends, the artist has decided to combine the Russian fairytales with the standard CG fantasy-clichés.

Interestingly, the project 'for friends' has grown into a unique phenomenon without any advertisement, extremely popular among social media users. The artist has set the task to choose from the texts of the Russian fairytales, folk stories, lexical entries of the Slavic mythology the characters, who due to their canonic characteristics are capable of taking the functions of the traditional characters of the CG reality, as well as to create for them a legend, ensuring the reasonability of the perceived clichés of the traditional fantasy and computer game (Papsuev 2017).

The graphics bases of the project have been currently published in the author's art-book "The Fairytales of Old Rus'. Inception". In a social media community with the same name (Papsuev 2017), R. Papsuev provides detailed comments on the created images, speaks about the sources, while in the art-book he reproduces the sequence of the work on each character, using the rules for creation of the CG concept-art (Abukaeva and Zolotova, 2013).

P. Papsuev (2017) also uses the other methods to reveal the 'avant-text' of the traditional fairytale-mythological and bylina plots. So, the artist offers to use the world of Old Rus' and its characters in the table card RPGs in the form of manga (Japanese comics), traditional European comics, animated cartoons (anime), and at the same time he uses particular images of such

products (the comics' covers, a sample from the comics, a picture of the character styled as manga and anime). The artist pays special attention to the details. On the one hand, the character is modernised: he or she gets a weapon in store, the appearance is actualised – tattoos, tight leather clothes etc. On the other hand, the traditional characteristics are maintained and even emphasised: the table card with the picture of Ilya of Murom contains the list of such skills of the character as, e.g. 'horseback riding', 'intimidation', 'art of survival', 'domestication', and 'listening'. At the same time, the artist notes that "the fairytales of Old Rus' have become a part of our reality", mind the activities of the project fans, taking part in the cosplay.

It is thought that the project by R. Papsuev is a variant of the folklorism, implying some return from the replication to the roots. A traditional western fantasy already presents a particular type of folklorism, having become the bases for a computer game, it additionally absorbs the genre peculiarities. Folklorism of Papsuev is the principal folklorism, which means its purpose is to make the tradition modern; on the one hand, to popularise it among the foreign audience, on the other – to make it more appealing for the Russians, which is the most important. At the same time, it seems like this variant of work with the folkloric heritage is also tested in the other genres of the mass art, particularly in the big cinema (Yefimova and Zolotova, 2016).

Conclusion

In the youth culture at the turn of the millennium, one may observe the tendency towards a rather active use and interpretation of the folkloric heritage. So, the young poets and writers readily use the folkloric images to reproduce the social-ethnographic reality and the identity field of a character, including the folklore in the myth-making process and in the process of creation of the personal universes. While in general, the fans, when applying to the folkloric heritage, prefer the mythological eclectic, easily reproducing in the same story 'folkloric' and 'fairytales-mythological'

characters with the traits of appearance/character borrowed from various cultures. The CG developers are not only not confused, but also to some extent even inspired by the fact that the fairytale and mythological realia they use belong to different epochs and cultures and are created both by a collective of people and by a separate person.

The most efficient model for the youth has become the 'translation' or the creation of a literary version of the folkloric genres, most of the fairytale genre. The fairy texts are used by young authors both as a genre category and as one of the ways to create new texts based on them, various kinds of aesthetic experiments and games. At the same time, young professionals are to a greater extent focused on the creation of the genre categories and applied to the imaginative discoveries of the older generation representatives, particularly of Lyudmila Petrushevskaya. So, one of the brightest methods for creation of the youth literary fairytale is the immersion of its characters into the contemporary reality. Simultaneously it contributes both to the discovery of the traditional and the innovative elements.

As for the correlation of the signs from different types of culture, including folklore in the creative works of young authors, then it seems impossible to reveal some regularity in their use at this stage. The focus on some or other tradition/text is primarily defined by the imaginative tasks, set by the young writer, and it is often experimental: a kind of 'competition' with the popularly accepted, including the folkloric image, the attempt to check the perspective/effectiveness of the technique popular in the western literature on the Russian material, as well as the aspiration to the enrichment of the narrative technique of the modern national literature.

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