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INTERTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF FOLKLORIC MOTIFS IN THE POETIC WORLD OF SERGEI YESENIN

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Abstract

The article presents an intertextual analysis of folkloric motifs in the poetry of S.A. Yesenin. It examines both explicit and latent forms of folklorism manifested through allusions, reminiscences, stylization, and symbolism. Special attention is given to the interaction between the folk and authorial poetic systems, as well as to the function of folkloric elements in the creation of artistic imagery and the representation of a cosmogonic concept. It is emphasized that S.A. Yesenin's appeal to folklore is creative in nature, forming a dialogue between tradition and the author's vision rather than a simple borrowing.

Keywords: S.A. Yesenin, folklorism, intertextuality, allusion, reminiscence, stylization, symbol, poetics, ritual poetry, literary analysis.

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Introduction

Аннотация

В статье проводится интертекстуальный анализ фольклорных мотивов в поэзии С.А. Есенина. Рассматриваются явные и латентные формы фольклоризма, проявляющиеся через аллюзии, реминисценции, стилизацию и символику. Особое внимание уделяется взаимодействию народной и авторской поэтической системы, а также функции фольклорных элементов в создании художественного образа и отражении космогонической концепции. Подчеркивается, что обращение к фольклору у С.А. Есенина носит творческий характер, формируя диалог между традицией и авторским видением, а не простое заимствование.

Annotatsiya

Maqolada S.A. Yesenin she'riyatidagi folklor motivlarining intertekstual tahlili amalga oshiriladi. Unda alluziya, reministsensiya, stilizatsiya va ramziylik orqali namoyon bo'ladigan folklorizmning ochiq va yashirin shakllari ko'rib chiqiladi. Xalqona va mualliflik poetik tizimlarining o'zaro munosabati, shuningdek, folklor unsurlarining badiiy obraz yaratish va kosmogonik konsepsiyani ifodalashdagi funksiyasiga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. S.A. Yeseninining folklorga murojaati oddiy o'zlashtirish emas, balki an'ana va muallif qarashi o'rtasidagi ijodiy muloqotni shakllantiruvchi hodisa ekanligi ta'kidlanadi.

Ключевые слова: С.А. Есенин, фольклоризм, интертекстуальность, аллюзия, реминисценция, стилизация, символ, поэтика, обрядовая поэзия, литературный анализ.

Kalit so'zlar: S.A. Yesenin, folklorizm, intertekstuallik, alluziya, reministsensiya, stilizatsiya, ramz, poetika, marosim she'riyati, adabiy tahlil.

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Early works of S.A. Yesenin were often perceived as imitative: some critics and literary scholars saw in them an imitation of N. Klyuev, V. Mayakovsky (particularly in relation to short poems), futurism, and folkloric stylization. The issue of S.A. Yesenin's folklorism was especially acute, since from the outset the poet was labeled a "son of the soil," a singer of the "peasant cosmos," and so forth. At the same time, researchers identifying forms of folklorism relied mainly on bookish sources: materials for comparative analysis were drawn from theoretical works by F.I. Buslaev, V. V. Stasov, and other scholars, as well as from folklore collections, for example those of A.N. Afanasyev. In the 1930s, the first article devoted to Yesenin's folkloric eidology appeared. In his discussion of folkloric elements in Yesenin's poetics, B. Neiman focused primarily on book sources with which the poet was familiar (D. N. Sadovnikov's collection of riddles and A. N. Afanasyev's fairy tales). The scholar discerned in the poet's early works forms of stylization, deliberate orientation toward, and imitation of folkloric formulas, paying particular attention to their connection with the Russian riddle tradition. Thus, behind the images of the moon, stars, birds, and fish, Neiman saw a calquing –sometimes skillful and complex – of the metaphorical structure of the Russian riddle.

However, is it really that simple, and should the poet be bound by an oath of allegiance to folklore? Forty years later, V.I. Kharchevnikov published an article on the folklorism of early S.A. Yesenin. The author approached the essence of the problem more cautiously, noting the full complexity of the interaction between the folkloric and poetic system. Yet V.I. Kharchevnikov's article did not produce anything substantially new in the understanding of early Yesenin's folklorism, since the researcher ultimately proposed stopping at the thesis of the folkloric irresolvability of some of the poet's metaphors [3, p. 16].

Recent monographs devoted to this issue also provide an overview of the "registering" forms of folklorism, although researchers themselves often point to such a methodological orientation: "Documentalism begins with a proto-

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foundation in the form of the author's intention, the writer's search for and selection of appropriate factual material, the inclusion of necessary components into the artistic fabric of the work, and the elimination of superfluous initial elements" [3, p. 17]. Nevertheless, in the works of E.A. Samodelova one can still observe a dialectical attitude toward S.A. Yesenin's folklorism. The researcher notes that "at times he removed what was too transparent, too obviously referring to a folkloric or ethnographic source, even though it had already appeared in the first publication" [3, p. 8]. However, E.A. Samodelova has her own view of the problem, connected with the identification of "ethnographic constants"; for this reason, in her works of 2012 the analysis of the text is accompanied more by ethnographic commentary than by folkloristic interpretation.

Certainly, scholars are partly right in claiming that the early period of S.A. Yesenin's work is characterized by certain stylizations and direct orientations toward the folkloric system of metaphor [1, p. 109], yet this raises the legitimate question of the functions of these metaphors in S.A. Yesenin's poetics.

Folklorism in the poetry of S.A. Yesenin does not always manifest itself openly; scholars distinguish between forms of "registering" folklorism and its latent manifestations. For example, in the 1918 poem "Birch" («Берёза») the author uses folk motifs of nature and calendar rituals (*in Russian language*):

Белая берёза под моим окном

Принакрылась снегом, точно серебром;

И стоит она в сонном волшебстве,

Как сказочная героиня в лесной глуши [4, p. 88].

As G.I. Maltsev observes, the image of the birch resonates with the traditional symbolism of the "tree of life" and with calendar festivities related to the winter cycle and the preparation for spring [2, p. 80]. Through the contemplation of nature, the lyrical hero experiences a sense of participation in cosmic forces and ritual poetry.

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In the 1919 poem “*Dreams*” («СНЫ») Yesenin employs the motif of the meeting of two dawns (*in Russian language*):

*В снах я видел поле белое,
Где конь скачет, рвет просторы,
И две зори встретились в дали,
Ведя свои золотые колесницы* [4, p. 134].

This image echoes folk calendar rituals in which the meeting of two dawns symbolizes the alternation of day and night. Chariots harnessed with horses resemble folk ornaments on peasant sledges of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, where such images were used to signify cosmic order and the natural cycle [5, p. 72].

Another example is the 1920 poem “*Song of the Dog*” («Песня о собаке») in which Yesenin turns to the folkloric symbolism of animals, weaving it into a ritual and cosmogonic context (*in Russian language*):

*В поле бежит собака смелая,
Лунный свет играет на ее шерсти,
И ветер шепчет древние сказки,
Как предки наши шли в поле на заре* [4, p. 202].

Here folklore appears as a hidden structure shaping the images and giving the text a ritual and sacred dimension. The lyrical hero senses a connection with archaic reality, while poetry functions as a means of dialogue with folk tradition rather than mere borrowing.

An analysis of S.A. Yesenin’s poetry shows that folkloric motifs in his work are not limited to direct borrowings from folk songs, fairy tales, or calendar rituals. S.A. Yesenin skillfully employs both explicit forms of folklorism – allusions, reminiscences, stylizations, and symbols – and latent, hidden elements organically integrated into his authorial poetics. This allows him to create artistic images that simultaneously correlate with archaic cultural tradition and with the poet’s individual vision.

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S.A. Yesenin's lyrical heroes are often represented as participants in cosmic and natural forces, which reflects a profound connection between the human being and ritual-sacred reality. Folkloric elements perform not merely a decorative function but also serve as means of expressing fate, the inner world of the hero, and the poet's philosophical reflections on life, time, and humanity's place in nature. Thus, folk tradition becomes a means of comprehending and artistically reinterpreting reality rather than a simple source of narrative or figurative borrowing.

An important aspect is that S.A. Yesenin creates a dialogue between past and present, between the folkloric system and his own poetic imagination. He demonstrates the ability to integrate archaic motifs into a modern artistic context, forming a unique synthesis of national tradition and personal authorial style. This explains S.A. Yesenin's innovativeness as a poet and his ability to perceive the "great epic of the universe" through the prism of folkloric and ritual symbolism. Overall, the study confirms that S.A. Yesenin's appeal to folklore is creative and immanent in character. It forms the foundation of his poetic system, making it possible to create texts in which literature, folk art, and philosophical thought interact. The results of the analysis may be used for further studies of Russian Silver Age poetry, the investigation of intertextual connections and the ways folkloric motifs are incorporated into literary texts, as well as for comparison with the poetry of other authors of the same period.

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