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Folk History or History in Folklore – New Subsidiary Historic Discipline

Фолькло история или история в фольклоре – новая вспомогательная историческая дисциплина

Tinyakova Elena Alexandrovna

Abstract- The object of research is Russian folklore in various historic periods. The subject of research is the historic content in folklore words, phrazes, texts and Russian traditional forms of material culture. In the historic content of Russian traditional culture the author distinguishes between historic events and accompanying historic moods that may not coincide in meaning and essence. Special attention is paid to the fact how folklore narrations influenced the quality of the Russian language. The Russian folklore language is presented as «historic indicator». What is the reason for appearance of rich folklore forms and primitive, simplified in stylistic esthetics forms? The author sets the problem: how does folklore tradition, based on historic context, sort out the best examples of folklore. A comparative method of research is used: various folklore examples and forms of Russian traditional culture were compared for matching culture standards of linguistic communication: the more rough the historic process is, the lower esthetics and ethics of folklore communication is produced. The main conclusion: folklore and Russian traditional culture as a whole are very sensitive to historical time, they may be used to measure spiritual level of life and richness of the Russian language, and the folklore language, coating traditional culture, is presented then as the carrier of humanism in historic process. It is very important that the author has pointed out "the golden core" in Russian folklore that is historically universal and may be transferred to various historical periods. Folklore tradition gives firmness and integrity to historic process and leads people through historic cataclisms. The research in the article presents the new historic subsidiary discipline «folklhistory» that can add to and correct academic historic research. The research method based on Russian folklore as example may be applied to other folklore systems with the same research goals, trying to discover the depths of historic mentality.

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Аннотация- **Объектом исследования является русский фольклор в разные исторические периоды. Предмет исследования представлен историческим содержанием в фольклорных словах, фразах, предложениях, текстах и также формах русской народной материальной культуры.**

В историческом содержании русской народной традиционной культуры автор различает исторические события и сопровождавшие их исторические настроения, которые могут не совпадать по смыслу и сущности. Особое внимание обращено на повествования на фольклорном русском языке, которые ориентируют и направляют качество коммуникации на русском языке. Русский язык представляется как «исторический индикатор». В чем заключается причина появления оригинальных фольклорных фраз, приносящих богатство русскому языку, и примитивных, стилистически упрощенных? Автор ставит проблему: как фольклорная традиция, базирующаяся на историческом содержании, отсортировывает лучшие образцы фольклора. В исследовании применялся сравнительный метод: различные образцы фольклора и формы русской народной традиционной культуры накладывались на культурные стандарты лингвистической коммуникации: чем грубее было содержание исторического процесса, тем ниже были эстетические и этические стандарты коммуникации. Автор пришла к выводу в своем исследовании: фольклор и русская народная традиционная культура в целом очень чувствительны к историческому времени; они могут использоваться для оценки духовного уровня жизни и богатства русского языка, а фольклорный язык, окутывающий русскую народную традиционную культуру, представляется как носитель гуманизма исторического процесса. Важным выводом является также выделение автором «золотого ядра» русского фольклора, которое исторически универсально и может переноситься для оценки других исторических периодов вне зависимости от исторического времени. Фольклорная традиция дает единство историческому процессу и ведет народ через катаклизмы истории. Представленное исследование складывается во вспомогательную историческую дисциплину – «фольклоисторию», которая может дополнять и корректировать авторскую академическую отечественную историю. Описанный на примере русского фольклора исследовательский метод проникновения в глубь истории может применяться на материале фольклора других народов.

Ключевые слова: отечественная история, русская народная традиционная культура, фольклор, повествования, академические исследования, вспомогательные исторические дисциплины, фольклоистория, исторические события, исторические настроения, духовный уровень жизни, коммуникация, единство исторического процесса.

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I. Introduction

Russian traditional culture and folklore as its narrative mode, present great interest for research of common people's participation in history. From historical viewpoint the content in material and word forms of Russian traditional culture give two kinds of historical knowledge and research: everyday history that served as background for historical process and cardinal historic events that build the main steps in history. Tradition in folklore narration calls to objectivity, because the meanings that make up traditional culture, are checked through mass consciousness. No subjectivity, no censorship are afforded in texts of traditional culture. Absence of subjectivity is realized through authorlessness and transferrence by oral tradition. Oral tradition gives a good way of sorting out the most prominent, it doesn't need an authority to install the privilege of narration, and the content in oral tradition removes subjectivity not only in creation, but in acceptance and approvement by many people—stupid and contradictory to life process meanings can't stick in. Instead of censorship Russian folklore uses metaphoric phrazes that conceal the meaning on the surface, mythologization, "other way narration". Thanks to these methods Russian folklore has kept the memory of people's heroes, leaders of suppressed mass revolts—Stepan Rasin, Emeljan Pugachev etc. One must know the peculiarities of folklore language to guess the hidden historic meaning. One more advantage – folklore doesn't need publishing base. In Russia the period of collecting folklore began approximately since the XVII-th century. The first items to be collected were fairy tales and songs as seeming distant from politics and power (on the surface). History is spread throughout space of traditional culture. A historian must be very keen to dig it out and discern. Historical method of Russian traditional culture has one method of writing history that academic historic writing lacks—it is narrating historic moods, most vividly presented in songs. Folklore, born and built in people's mind, moves history, and how it does it– further considerations show.

Specific approach to the historic interpretation in Russian traditional culture: Language in folkore texts of historic thematics is brief and symbolic, aimed at guessing and catching something cardinal and important, without subjective turns in considerations. In this way historic content of folklore carries historical justice. In Russian traditional culture the primary position is occupied with the events that are good for people. At the core of folklore there stands a hero – either a prominent leader, whose deeds bring the good for people as Generallelissimus A.V.Suvorov for example, or a common person, sometimes even nameless, that displayed super human qualities in struggling for the good. The core wisdom is contained in proverbs and sayings, they present national historic mentality[2].

The source of Russian folklore: The history of Russian folklore goes back to Kiev Rus' and is connected with introduction of Christianity in Rus' by Knight Vladimir. That is why the folklore of ancient Rus' is saturated with Christian meanings. In Russia history writing began in monastries by monks somewhere in the IX-X-th centuries because literacy among people in broad space was at a very low level. The very narration of Russian history was coated by religious meanings. By and by with events, crowding history, the historic texts began developping loose connection with religious interpretation of history which still firmly held Biblical canons, and there appreaded secular history in Russian researches approximately by the XVII-th century. The period from the Christening of Russia in 988 till the end of XV-the century was the period when christian meaning predominated above folklore [8]. Russia is called "the country of icons" by religious researchers of history [3] (mostly up to the XVII-th century). Every knight tried to build churches and temples on his territory and the icon was the first item for them. In knights' conflicts and tragic struggle against mongolo-tatar yoke there appeared saint victims – Alexandr Nevskii, Boris and Gleb, Sergei Radonezhskii, etc. Religious personages were taken from biblical narrations, such as Mikchail Archangel with his Saint Army[8]. These are true historic texts, they are rich with historic events, the more so as they may guide historic interest in secular historic texts[2]. So icons of ancient Russia are true historic texts. The secular period of Russian folklore in ancient Rus' is called as "Bylinnaya Rus'"[6]. These images of Ancient Rus' folklore summerized the best traits of human character. Such folk heroes included traits of real persons and their life details, but the names were symbolic, they guided people by their moral code to be brave, courageous, strong, and on the other hand, chronical historic events were focused in them, so they helped to collect historic data and information[4]. In traditional culture of ancient Rus' there was the base of heroism.

The "golden core" of Russian folklore– from the end of XVI-th century up till the first half of the XIX-th century: This period went against the background of serfdom, it is polar in its meanings: tradegy and joy/ happiness. The main traits that coat historical narrations in folklore of the period of serfdom: optimism– the good combats the evil; the meaning of unity, collectivism; individual creativity and invention; tragic sufferings; heroism; humiliation and suffering under serfdom; glorifying of labor; beauty of nature; love for life [7]; critical mindset; humor in the form of playing; irony as critisizing life drawbacks; creativity and initiative; echoes of christian moral meanings[9]. For Russian folklore objective meaning is associated with feeling of nature[1;6], that is why folklore mentality is deeply ecological. Why ecological? Because the most part of common people

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was made up with peasants. Then… If there was no justice in real life, where could a common person search for justice—only in nature. The "golden core" of Russian folklore and traditional culture in general is historically universal and may be successfully used in various historic periods[5]. By the middle of the XIX-th century the "golden core" of Russian traditional culture got confirmation forever. The first prominent and big collection of folklore was made by Kirsha Danilov in the XVIII-th century. Since the XIX-th century this collection began to be reprinted: 1804, the 1818-th expanded edition, 1901 saw the edition under the supervision of Tzar's Public Library and then the book was edited many times in Soviet period. These editions contained the "golden core" with esthetic perfection of the Russian language in it, it is true to history and socially universal for various historic periods[10].

Historical functions of folkhistory:

1. Narrative function, documentary, collecting events into a chain of historic narration; at the basis of this function there lies the folk desire to keep and monitor the going of history; but the choice of events corresponded to mass historic logic that took into consideration the significance of events, dimension of embracing people in participation, action space and consequences.
2. Mythologisizing function (it was historical style that tried to rise to objectivity); in a certain extent this function performed compensating role.
3. Tragic function, it supported in grief.
4. Political function appreared later, on the revolutionary path of history.
5. In a certain extent satiric function predicted the political one, but it carried more satire on human moral, but not realization of power.
6. Humor, that is why it was realizied in folklore playing customes and traditions.
7. Fairy function reflected desires of common people.

Is there folklore in Russian mass texts of revolutionary content? The cancelling of serfdom in 1861 disturbed traditional culture. A chain of free peasants' revolts passed through Russia. This breaking down of serfdom lasted for about 30 years. The author determines it as «Russian civil war». Traditional culture couldn't be stable in its narrative function. Distroyed peasants' traditional culture gave birth to town and city culture—the working class of industrial workers began to get shaping. Displeasure in life conditions began to turn to revolutionary ideas. Revolutionary songs functioned as folk ones. But there was a "true bridge" between the folk songs and newly appearing revolutionary ones - "trudovije pripevki" (short phrases, sung, to accompany hard work). Especially one of such labor songs took the leadership—"Dubinushka" (Russian people worshiped the oak—"dub" in Russian—among other trees; it symbolized human strength), by 1917 it was very popular among revolutionary in spirit people and sung by the famous Russian opera singer F. Shalyapin. On the border of the XX-th century the firm vectors of Russian traditional culture were not broken what so ever. But since the beginning of the XX-th century traditional culture stopped to support the life of common people, and the new working class with new culture standards of life was taking historical leadership. Ethnography as a science was excluded from soviet mentality—it contradicted the slogan by Marx and Engels "Proletariat of all countries, Unite!"

How did Russian traditional culture write history in Soviet times and did it exist all together? Many new meanings came to proverbs and sayings: political, new forms of labor organization, negative traits of labor, sharp critisizing. The Russian language itself became rougher and low esthetically in new forms of traditional culture against the historical background, too politilized and subordinated to the Party of Bolsheviks, then CPSU. Political leaders tried to use new folklore for agitation, propaganda, influence on mass consiousness. There appeared slogans after the types of folklore phrazes. The atheistic key was made very prominent (and it contradicted to the origin of Russian folklore as stated above). The Russian language began to lose its ethnic content because it covered more than 100 peoples in the Soviet Union, and folklore ensembles tried to demonstrate those national Russian features that could be applicable for other peoples in the USSR.

II. Conclusion

The author came to the conclusion in the research that wordy forms of Russian folklore are very sensitive to historical process: the more favorable the process, the richer the language. So the stylistic, lexical, grammatical (literacy) quality of language - folklore as its most conservative layer, Russian in this research, may be used to measure the humanism of historical process. Of course, folklore language does not cover the whole space of communication in the Russian language, it is somehow as the "spiritual juice" of the national language. The meanings of the folklore language are more volumous, partly symbolic, in many ways it keeps popular wisdom. But the author of the article researched the historical context of Russian traditional culture as a whole; language forms of traditional culture are main carriers of historical meanings and material forms give support. There appears a new sunsidiary historic discipline –folk history.

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