

Mental Representations of Lyrical Prose¹

*Elena G. Ozerova², Nikolay F. Alefirenko³, Svetlana A. Kosharnaya⁴,
Larisa I. Plotnikova⁴, Irina I. Chumak-Zhun⁴, Elena V. Pupynina⁵, & Olga V.
Dekhnich⁵*

Abstract

The article analyzes mental representations of Russian lyrical prose texts. The texts demonstrate collective memory engrams that are defined by cultural and historical legacy of the nation and authors' creative world perception. In architectonics of a lyrical prose text, sense perception reveals itself in accumulated underlying meanings and wisdom conveyed by expressive means. The author's intention shows through lyrical dispersion understood here as a synthesis of variation in nomination and expressive resources of the language. Mental representations of the Russian lyrical prose texts emerge out of authentic Russian culture. Linguistic means through which they are revealed demonstrate subjective codes of the author's mind that are deciphered by readers of lyrical prose.

Keywords: Text of Lyrical Prose; Mental Representations; Cultural Memory; Author's Perception.

1. Introduction

As a new approach to analyzing literary text cognitive poetics covers broader research area than before. However, texts of lyrical prose still remain almost unstudied field of literary culture. Uniqueness of the text of lyrical prose is in its ability to convey spiritual and sensual thinking on the verge of poetic narrative and creative philosophizing about the sense and value of life, to represent panoramic view of reality through its individual interpretation and interpretation in culture and

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² Department of Russian Language and Russian Literature, Belgorod State National Research University, Russia; *Info@ores.su*.

³ Department of Russian Language and Russian Literature, Belgorod State National Research University, Higher School of the Russian Federation, Russia.

⁴ Department of Russian Language and Russian Literature, Belgorod State National Research University, Russia.

⁵ Department of English Philology and Intercultural Communication, Belgorod State National Research University, Russia.

history. In the text of lyrical prose, these categories are implicit; they are hidden in labyrinths of figurative language. To explicate them there is a need to develop methodological approach and research instruments that could facilitate ethnolinguoculturological modeling of discursive space of the Russian lyrical prose.

Cognitive and pragmatic interpretation of the text of lyrical prose from genre perspective is based on understanding lyrical prose as a short prosaic text where the author's sensual self prevails and highly emotional (poetic) style of verbal thinking is adopted. According to Potebnya (1976), poetry may be found in any literary work, "where distinctness of the image creates fuzziness of the meaning, i. e., behind the features of the image and with their help mind sees much of what is not given in them, where even without the author's intention or contrary to it indirectness appears." (p. 373).

2. Terminology

Interaction between genre and culture is based on their dialogical nature and style marking. Therefore, genre attributable to the text of lyrical prose is of binary nature. Firstly, it is a product of discourse. Secondly, it is a product of historical and cultural setting for discourse. In general, lyrical prose (as a phenomenon of genre and written word) should be considered a fictional and stylistic type of literary arts combining features of prose and poetry. It is rather precisely defined by adjectives used by researchers. For instance, Zhirmunsky called it "poetic" or "purely aesthetic", Tynyanov used "poeticized" for it, Kozhevnikov characterized it as "nonclassical", "lyrical", "rhythmic", etc.

3. Materials and Methods

In our opinion, the text of lyrical prose is a prose work that, though not written in verse, has unique lyrical architectonics. It is no wonder that the genre of such texts is defined as lyrical prose. Reality is presented in it through verbalized subjective connotation acquired from emotional experience of life. At the same time lyrical prose is a type of prose. It refers to work of any prosaic genre that is charged with emotions, permeated with the author's feeling.

The genre of lyrical prose accumulates values and cultural layers of national legacy combined with the author's sensory experience. It is in the text of lyrical prose that the author's mental perception of reality and individual creative power are revealed. Subjective individual perception of reality, correlation between the object of creative writing and the self, birth of ego-meanings, ego-reminiscences and ego-attitude create ego-space of lyrical prose. It interacts with roots of worldview and provides value-, culture- and cognition-based subjective comprehension of the text of the Russian lyrical prose (Jabbari et al., 2019; Nakhaee & Nasrabadi, 2019).

We apply the method of cognitive hermeneutic analysis to texts of lyrical prose. It comprises historical and cultural analysis as well as contextual analysis. The componential analysis is used to identify a range of variation on semantic level (Kodekova et al., 2018; Mohd Beta & Ali, 2017).

4. Results and Discussion

Unique features in texts of lyrical prose include spiritual, sensory, national and cultural images in the architectonics of the author-creator's self. The latter is represented in the text through mental units such as the concepts of "Belief", "Holy Russia", "Love", "Mother of God", "Feast", "Easter", "Christmas", "Trinity", "Birch", "Transfiguration", "Savior of the Apple Feast Day", "Prayer", "Living water", "Clean Monday", "Last Judgment", etc.

Concepts in the text of lyrical prose tend to interpret cognitive phenomena in Orthodox Tradition through the lens of the author's continuum. As texts of lyrical prose actualize genetic memory and cultural reality, they combine characteristic mental and linguistic properties of architectonics to influence the reader. For instance, biblical expressions in the text of lyrical prose create spiritual wisdom in perception and demonstrate nation's memory traces through cultural attitudes and value system of the author. The only biblical expressions given by Jesus himself are The Lord's Prayer (Our Father) and the phrase "хлеб насущный" (daily bread). This biblical phrase is most frequent in texts written by Shmelyov. The author describes the time of home canning vegetables for winter use sensually and perceptually («пахнет зеленой свежестью», «запах... хрена и укропа, огуречной, томящей свежести... – слышу и вижу быль, такую покойную, родную, омоленную душой русской, хранимую святым Покровом»). I. S. Shmelyov draws the reader's attention to the fact that the vegetables have been grown and canned with prayer by coining the word омоленный: омоленную душой русской. The story about household activities (canning cucumbers) has lyrical architectonics. With the help of personification cucumbers (огурцы) acquire human attributes: "Молившую над огурцами. Теперь я знаю душу молитвы этой: это же – «хлеб насущный»: «Благослови их, Господи, лютую зиму перебыть..." (И.С. Шмельёв "Лето Господне").

Religious architectonics of spiritual interpretation of reality is also found in Lazhechnikov's "Basurman": *"Под вязом поставлен стол: скоро готова вечерняя трапеза. Но прежде, нежели садиться за нее, все семейство благоговейно творит молитву... "хлеб насущный"*.

It is worth noticing that in this context, the author uses the phrase "творить молитву" (lit. create prayer) that means "to say the Jesus prayer". Characteristic aspects of biblical phrases mental representations in the Russian literary texts "are

determined by specific folk philosophy of meaning in life. This philosophy is a particular standard for Orthodox worldview that produces a unique style of literary thinking” (Ozerova, 2014, p. 28; Bahremand, 2015). Accordingly, cognitive and cultural information that is conveyed by biblical phrases is in the system of values that is motivated by historical factors and that builds important conceptual frame for interpreting literary text (Langacker, 1999, p. 14).

The Dictionary of Biblical Phrases and Words offers the following definitions:

“Daily bread (хлеб насущный). 1. *Formal*. Everyday essential food; livelihood.” (Mokienko et al., 2010, p. 492)

“2. *Figurative*. About something most essential, important for somebody or something” (Mokienko et al., 2010, p. 493).

In literary texts, the biblical phrase “хлеб насущный” (daily bread) is more frequent in its first meaning: *заработать на хлеб насущный* (Анатолий Рыбаков “Тяжёлый песок”); *хлеб насущный добываю врачеванием* (М.И. Саитов “Островки”); *зарабатывали на хлеб насущный* (Михаил Шишкин “Венерин волос”); *добывать себе хлеб насущный* (Дмитрий Бак “Внеклассное чтение”). There are two verbs that usually occur in collocation with the phrase analyzed. They are *зарабатывать* and *добывать*.

The biblical phrase under consideration is used in lyrical prose in the meaning “make an honest living”: “*Венец всех дневных свершений и забот – вечерняя трапеза, святая, благостная, в тихую радость и во здравие тем она, кто добыл **хлеб насущный** своим трудом и потом*” (Виктор Астафьев “Царь-рыба”). In the texts outside lyrical prose, this biblical phrase is used in the meaning “cheat enriching oneself at the expense of other people” and is pejorative: “*Дорого, мамаша, дорого, но приходится как-то зарабатывать на **хлеб насущный**: хочешь жить – умей вертеться, не так ли?*” (Саша Соколов “Школа для дураков”).

In Turgenev’s “Acia”, the biblical phrase under study is used in opposition to careless youth: “*Я был здоров, весел, деньги у меня не переводились, заботы ещё не успели завестись – я жил без оглядки, делал, что хотел, процветал, одним словом. Мне тогда не приходило в голову, что человек не растение и процветать ему долго нельзя. Молодость ест пряники золочёные, да и думает, что это-то и есть **хлеб насущный**; а придёт время – и хлеба напростишься*” (И.С. Тургенев, “Ася”). Lyrical architectonics of this text is built on philosophical inquiry into true values that a person can only comprehend through the years: youth is cakes and ale; wisdom is daily bread.

Language captures mentally represented entities of the world that are important in this culture. Linguistic consciousness grasps what is particularly significant for both cognition and communication. This is precisely why “the world is presented in our linguistic consciousness in the perspective provided by the concept sphere of the certain ethno-lingual culture” (Alefirenko, 2010, p. 89).

Language and culture in the lyrical text demonstrate unity of national and cultural values and vividly expose the following mental representations:

- conventional wisdom (*«всякому свой жребий, на это обижаться нельзя. Бог и колосьев не сравнял»*, “Божье древо” И.А. Бунина; *«Глаза человека – это есть вывеска души»* “Заячий ремиз” Н.С. Лескова; *«Нет разлук и потерь, доколе жива моя душа, моя Любовь, Память!»* “Роза Иерихона” И.А. Бунина),
- precedent phenomena (*«Бог на небе, за звездами, с лаской глядел на всех: масленица, гуляйте!»* » “Лето Господне” И.С. Шмелёва),
- spiritual and religious perception of the world (*«Притупились чувства, померкла душа»* “Яма” А.И. Куприна; *«Православная наша вера, русская... она, милок, самая хорошая, весёлая! и слабого облегчает, уныние просветляет, и малым радость»* (“Лето Господне” И.С. Шмелёва).

The genre of lyrical prose encapsulates core values and has characteristics of authentic Russian culture and intercontextuality interwoven into aesthetic and subjective value of the literary work.

Emotional and sense perception of the world is considered a peculiar feature of the Russian mentality (Alefirenko, Arutyunova, Wierzbicka, Von Humboldt, Kolesov, Potebnya, Rilke, Khrolenko, Shmelev, etc.). For instance, literary works by I. S. Turgenev contain approximately 160 various words for nominating sadness (*тишина, эмоция, ожидание, тревога, печаль, чувство жизни, красота, горесть, страх, радость, сожаление*, etc.) and approximately 360 words for nominating joy (*тишина, молитва, воспоминание, восторг, чувство, волнение, красота, свет, солнце, любовь, восторг, молодость*, etc.). Words *тишина, чувство, эмоция* are used to speak about sense perception of both sadness and joy. Accordingly, mental representations of lyrical prose texts reveal implicit meanings that expose spiritual distinctiveness of the Russian national character and stand in as memory engrams (Chafe, 1996). For instance, in the texts by present-day prose writer Krupin, there is a network of mental associations *милый*

дом – берёза – чувства – память – душа (sweet home – birch – feelings – memory – soul).

«Милый мой дом, берёза моя, которая всегда узнавала меня и сейчас тихо и ласково своими ветвями со свежими листьями касается моих щёк. <...>. Чувства определяют поступки и формируют память. А память – может быть, главная составляющая души» (“Событие, вписанное в вечность” В.Н. Крупина).

Similar architectonic model is found in lyrical prose works by Paustovsky: *лесной дом – сосна – чувства/звуки – память – душа/сердце России* (house in the forest – pine tree – feelings/sounds – memory – soul/heart of Russia).

Description of home in architectonics of lyrical prose frequently appears together with description of memories, nature, and sense perception of the past. Contemplating relation between art and language Potebnya (1990) notes that “like words of a language art is not expression as much as it is a way of creating thought. Like words of a language art serves the purpose of evoking particular subjective mood both in its creator and in its recipient” (pp. 29-30). Authors verbally influence readers’ emotional response and perception of values presented in texts of lyrical prose. In this light, lyrical prose discourse is a mental tool of comprehension and establishing subjective sensuous interpretation of the information obtained.

Mental presentations of sensuous interpretation of lyrical prose are primarily unfolded in lexicon. According to Wierzbicka (1999) “the way people interpret their own emotions depends, to some extent at least, on the lexical grid provided by their native language” (p. 26). Texts of lyrical prose frequently describe joy interlinked with sadness and sorrow: *«в танцевальной зале всё сияло и изливало свет, тепло и радость... – и музыка настойчиво, в сладостно-бесстыдной печали молила всё об одном, всё о том же...»* (“Господин из Сан-Франциско” И.А. Бунина).

The author’s interpretation of the emotions shows through dispersion of the lyric in the context rather than through one word: *сияло и изливало свет, тепло и радость; музыка* did not *молила*, but did it *настойчиво, в сладостно-бесстыдной печали*. Dispersion of the lyric is understood here as a synthesis of variation in nomination and language expressive resources.

Accordingly, emotional experience or emotional state of mind is dispersed in the architectonics of lyrical prose through both accumulation of author’s implicit intentions and through synthesis of language expressive means.

Characteristic aspects of mental representations in the text of lyrical prose are expressed in description of the soul together with the feeling of joy:

«Вишня цветёт – душа радуется...» (“Память лета” Б.П. Екимова);

«На душе у меня радостное и тихое...» (“Лето Господне” И.С. Шмелёва);

«...тихая, глубокая радость опустится на твою душу, как солнце в вечерний час» (“Автобиографические заметки” И.А. Бунина).

The author’s sense perception and emotional response are represented through dispersion of the meaning, semantic distribution in which emotional architectonics of the context influences the point made in the whole story. Emotions are related to silence, calm state of mind suitable for inner self-talk. In texts of lyrical prose, inner speech implies recollecting images that give impetus to creating ideas and collecting thoughts and finally, leads to communication of these thoughts. In the Old Testament, calm is associated with Divine Revelation. In the third book of Kings the phrase «звук абсолютной тишины» (the sound of absolute calm) is found. In the Bible, the word “тишина” (calm) is used three times in collocation великая тишина (great calm) (The Gospel of Matthew Potebnya, 1990, p. 26; The Gospel of Mark Langacker, 1999, p. 39).

Analyzing the reason for “a separate word seeking combinations with other words” Potebnya (1990) concludes that it is not only a word that can “share the perceptual image underlying it” but the image itself “can be shared” and “associated with others” as “a prerequisite for the wholeness of the literary text” (p. 33).

The feeling of joy in lyrical prose is revealed through the image of tears as “a prerequisite for the wholeness of the literary text”:

«Слов у него не доставало, зато радостные слёзы красно говорили» (“На горах” П.И. Мельникова-Печерского).

In texts of lyrical prose, there is oxymoron *радостные слёзы* (joyful tears) and collocation *сладкие слёзы* (sweet tears): *«Сладкие слёзы ...сдавили ...горло»* (“Белая лошадь” И.А. Бунина).

“The Russian word slezy (tears) is used much more widely than its English counterpart with reference to external expression of emotions, and has a much wider range of collocations.” [10: 222] Apart from expressive character of its meaning the collocation *радостные слёзы* is used both as an expressive means being a synthesis of personification and simile and as an element of nomination – дождь: *«И то же самое в лесу хвойном и лиственном – не дождь пошёл, а как будто пролились радостные слёзы»* (“Лесная капель” М.М. Пришвина).

Characteristic aspect of lyrical prose texts is fusion of Orthodox faith and joy: *«... приходи в субботу ко всеошной, в алтарь, кадило будешь подавать. Наденем на тебя стихарь, и будешь ты у нас церковнослужитель! Согласен?»*

Через смущение и радостные слёзы я прошептал нашу деревенскую благодарность:

- Спаси Господи!» («Святое святых» В.А. Никифорова-Волгина).

«И разве не радость чувствовать свою связь, соучастие «с отцы и братьи наши, други и сродники», некогда совершавшими это служение» («Жизнь Арсеньева» И.А. Бунина).

5. Conclusions

Orthodox Christian topics expose the character's inner world and represent mental centre of the lyrical prose text. At this center there are precedent phenomena that demonstrate collective memory engrams in lyrical prose and define cultural, conceptual and religious depth of the literary work. Exploring language and religion Mechkovskaya (1998) comes to the conclusion that their interrelation is one of the factors that shape national mentality and at the same time “motivate unique characteristics of the group as well as those that it shares with other nationalities” (p. 37).

Accordingly, mental representations of the Russian lyrical prose texts emerge out of authentic Russian culture. Linguistic means through which they are revealed demonstrate subjective codes of the author's mind that are deciphered by readers of lyrical prose.

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