

Comparative Poetics of Russian and Tatar Literatures: Basic Concepts and Methods¹

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Abstract

The article substantiates the essence of comparative poetics as a special area of scientific research, which was formed in the context of the ideas and methodological settings of comparative literature. They determined that Russian and Tatar literature complement each other in a dialogue, contributing to the generation of new meanings. In the framework of comparative poetics, a special place was occupied by comparative genology, based on the traditions of historical-genetic, hermeneutic and structuralism methods. Formed in the field of comparative discourse, it involves the study of genres of various literatures within their national identity, the correlation in which each of the art forms retains its unique features. They concluded that a common lyrical-epic form, similarity to performative, can become common traits of the Nesar genres and poem intention in prose for the perceiving consciousness. In the work about Tolstoy "The thread of the sacred rosary broke" (1910) by G. Tukai, which has common features with a poem in prose, there are also the elements of poetry of other oriental genres, and above all kasydy - the canonical form of lyric poetry. Among them are the following ones: the indivisibility of subjective and objective (author and reality); the appeal to the antithesis, which forms around itself the semantic field of other paths (metaphors, epithets, parallelism), creating an image of a huge, universal longing for Tolstoy.

Keywords: Comparative Poetics; Russian Literature; Tatar Literature; National Identity.

1. Introduction

At present, one of the relevant areas of modern comparative studies is the comparative poetics of Russian and Tatar literature as one of the most important aspects of comparative literature studies.

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Comparative poetics of national literatures is a new area of theoretical research, the subject of which is “the differences in their compositional and architectonic forms that are revealed in the process of comparative analysis of works belonging to different national literatures”, which are not identical and unique in relation to each other (Comparative Poetics of National Literatures: Textbook, 2018).

The undertaken concept represents the essence of the comparative method established at Kazan University by the end of the 20th century. Unlike comparison, “juxtaposition does not absolutize the identity of a particular literature. On the contrary, it considers the clash of identities as an opportunity to reach agreement between different literatures through mutual understanding” (Safiullin, 2010).

The purpose of the proposed work is to elucidate the place of comparative poetics in modern comparative studies, its basic methods and concepts that distinguish it from general and historical poetics; to substantiate comparative genology as one of the sections of the comparative poetics of national literatures.

Genre as a traditional category of literature has the greatest value in comparative studies (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Frow, 2006; Sibgatullina et al., 2018; Mollaeiet al., 2014). Genre in the aspect of the dialogue of literatures is not only a “theoretical construct”, a combination of formal elements of artistic creation and perception. In the space of dialogical relations, genre accumulates the features of people national identity (genre as the factor of national identity), its “world image”, the features of thinking, and “the structure of thought”.

It is the sphere of unique, i.e. of the things associated with the special, non-repeating properties of each of the literatures participating in the dialogue that actualizes the problem of genre correlation, their correlation in inter-literary space. The latter arises in different ways: for example, in the field of reader's reception (here it conveys the “clash of genres”, their “imposition” in the perception of foreign language literature), in the minds of a writer, a translator, and also in the field of special scientific research.

2. Methods

The concept of the proposed research was greatly influenced by the works devoted to the specifics of the comparative method in comparative studies (Comparative Poetics of National Literatures: Textbook, 2018; Amineva et al., 2015; Bekmetov, 2015; Gaynutdinova et al., 2018) and others, as well as the studies in the field of comparative poetics (Gáfrik, 2013; Miner, 1987; Adedeji, 2018).

The relevance of the undertaken theme is related to the fact that a comparative study of genres develops the theory of inter-literary dialogues, which is based on the recognition of each literature life uniqueness in dialogical relations with the “other” (M. Bakhtin, V. Bibler, V. Yauss, Yu. Lotman). Bakhtin wrote about the

connection between dialogue and the genre in his work “The Answer to the Question of the New World Editorial Office”. Considering the main principle of the dialogue of literatures - “out-of-place” and “location inside” – Bakhtin (1979) emphasized the role of genres in revealing the deep meanings of works existing in the field of dialogue. “Genres are of particular importance,” the researcher writes. Over the centuries of genre existence (literary and speech), the forms of vision and understanding of certain aspects of the world have been accumulated there. Genre serves as an external template for a writer-craftsman, but the great artist awakens the semantic possibilities inherent in it” (Bakhtin, 1979).

The historical genetic method plays a significant role in comparative genology concept creation, which allows one to identify the origins of genres, the “genes” (core) of speech utterances, and also to consider their formation in national literature. It has been established that genesis plays a key role in comparative genology, which is based on the concept of a dialogue of genres, their correlation with each other (Freidenberg, 1995).

Like comparative literature studies in general, comparative poetics and genology, in particular, appeals to the hermeneutical method (Bakhtin, 1979; Gadamer, 1975), within the framework of which the concepts of understanding and interpretation of texts have developed. In particular, Bakhtin poses the problem of “distant contexts” in his studies, speaks of “endless updating of meanings in new contexts” (Bakhtin, 1979)

Let’s note another thing. In the framework of the hermeneutic method, the concept of scientific homology was formed, and justified in the works of the Spanish Philosopher Panikkar (1971). According to his convictions, “the term “homology” proposed here refers to the geometric concept of homology as a sequence of concepts belonging to different cultures. This method does not imply that, first of all, one system is better than another or that points can be interchanged, transplanted, so to speak, from one system to another. It only reveals the homological relationships” (Panikkar, 1971).

Note that the principle of scientific homology and homological correlation is most significant in Russian classics and Tatar literature genre comparison of the early XXth century: here they represent different types of cultures, artistic thinking and national identity.

Thus, comparative poetics, its study is based on the most important concepts of modern literary criticism, comparative studies, in particular, the ones that encompass various forms and aspects of “foreign” and “own” interaction.

3. Results and Discussion

Consideration of genre as a meaningful category endowed with the ability to preserve “semantic phenomena”, certain ideas about a person in its stable elements, and to reveal new semantic depths in interaction with the “other” allows us to consider

dialogue as a necessary and, at the same time, objective condition of “life” genres in the context of different cultures and “world images”.

How does a “clash” of genres occur in receptive consciousness? What ideas and genre elements make up their mutual enrichment, because unlike the content of a literary work, does the genre and the meanings that it embodies have a greater abstractness, blur, tending to performative?

We believe that when different national literatures meet, a genre expressing a “different” identity and “structure” of thought can act as a “signal” for perceiving consciousness in order to bring to life what is a universal form of artistic thinking, which exists in different diffuse variants in national literature.

Thus, the similarity of their small lyro-epic form can become a common intention of small genres - *neser* and poems in prose - for the perceiving consciousness. *Kitga* (*kyytga*) in the lyrics of Tatar poets (G. Tukai, S. Babich) and an excerpt as the genre of Russian romantic poetry of the 19th century (A.S. Pushkin, M.Yu. Lermontov, A. Fet) are similar in content: the world appears as a fragment of being there, the universal and the eternal is revealed in details.

The possibility of a dialogue of different genres, transmitting dissimilar pictures of the world and national identities, is supported in its own way by modern concepts that have developed in the field of structural narratology. So, V.I. Thupa, reflecting on the connection between discourse and genre, pays special attention to the term “performative”, which is a kind of “self-presentation” of narrative discourse. “It [performative] does not report anything. Performative discourse changes the very communicative situation by which it is generated” (Tyupa, 2013). In the field of lyrical performative, uniting the system of poetic genres, the leading place belongs to “the moment of self-determination of poetic consciousness”. The main performatives of choral significance (the choir as the genetic basis of the lyrical genres) are “praise” and “affront”, “threat and peace”, “complaint and desire”.

Let us make an assumption: the performatives of lyrical forms in different national literatures allow us to describe what acts as their universal basis for a dialogue. For example, the elegy genre in Russian poetry of the 19th century is comparable to the gazelle in Tatar literature of the beginning of the 20th century in terms of their appeal to the world of the past, in which the dream remains, and to the expression of the hero’s state harmonization (“the light from darkness”) caught in crisis moment.

At the same time, this performant common for meditative forms of lyrics - the poetry of “complaints” and “desires” — is original in the gazelle genre (for example, “Broken Hope” by G. Tukai), in which the existential sense of farewell to life, the awareness of lost opportunities, irreversible for the hero, striving for the world of God as a place of refuge for his suffering soul. Such aspects of the performative complaint are the distinguishing basis that represents the named genres as unique and homologous.

Let's give another example.

Gabdulla Tukay's work "Məbarək təsbih əzelde" ("The thread of the sacred rosary broke", 1910), dedicated to L. Tolstoy's death, is the example of rhythmic prose. Some researchers (D.F. Zagidullina, Z.Z. Rameev) define his genre as n eser. The poet himself wrote about this in the epigraph: "My conscience made me write in prose. The task is so huge that the narrow scope of the verse does not allow to complete it" (Tukay, 1975).

The principle of the homological correspondence of genres in the field of combining different cultural identities and artistic meanings is implemented in its own way within the work of the Tatar classic.

The study confirmed that the work by Tukay, on the one hand, correlates with a poem in prose, based on the tradition of short verse lines. According to Yu. Orlitsky, verse prose, in contrast to "traditional" prose, where stanzas are of arbitrary volume and stand out solely on semantic grounds, "serves to create a verse-like vertical rhythm in prose that arises as the result of neighboring stanza comparison" (Orlitsky, 2002).

An illustration of verse prose in Russian classical literature is, for example, the famous work by I.S. Turgenev "I am sorry ..." (1878).

I feel sorry for myself, others, all people, animals, birds ... all living things.

I feel sorry for the children and the elderly, unhappy and happy ... happier than unhappy.

I am sorry for the victorious, triumphant leaders, great artists, thinkers, poets ...

I am sorry for the killer and his victim, ugliness and beauty, oppressed and oppressors.

How can I free myself from this pity? It doesn't let me live ... like boredom.

Oh boredom, dissolved by pity! One cannot degrade even more.

It would be better if I envied!

And I envy stones (Turgenev, 1982).

It is distinguished by a small volume, like a poem: each line is equal to one sentence. Both in form and in content, as well as by rhythm set with anaphora (the first four sentences begin with the words "I'm sorry", like a stanza), it is perceived as a poem, with its characteristic lyrical richness and emotionality. There is no lyrical plot, the work is recognized as something meditative, in which the "point of view" of the subject clearly emerges: it expresses pity for everything that exists, and alive: there is pain, suffering in different forms of human existence that is difficult to avoid.

If we turn to the work "The thread of the sacred rosary broke" by Tukay, then it is easy to notice that in general the versed (short) stanza is not characteristic

of his work, in the sense in which the verse appeared, in I.S. Turgenev's works, in particular in prose poem "Sinilia".

Long lines in the work by Tukai are consistent with bejtom (couplet), which is based on the integrity of thought, semantic completeness of the verse. They [lines] are not divided into pauses (the miniature "The thread of the sacred rosary has broken" has no graphic omissions, functional pauses, as in Turgenev's work), each separate sentence is completed in meaning, which is enhanced by rhyme: it connects the parts of a whole sentence (internal rhyme), as well as individual parts of the work among themselves.

Bu el noyabr' ae kerde. Ləkin Rusiya koyashy bytən ellardagycha nuryn kimetmi, dən'ya jəzenə chyraen sytyp, salkynlyk birergə ashkymyj.

Bu el noyabr' ae kerde. Rusiyaneñ agar sulary bozlanmyj, haman aga da aga.

Bu el noyabr' ae kerde. Ləkin Rusiya kəz kənenə mahsus achy və yzak özgech açillər ismi.

Bu el noyabr' ae kerde. Ləkin kyjbla yaknyñ koshlary kitmi (Tukai, 1985).

An approximate inner rhyme is found in the selected fragment: kimetmi - ashkymyj. The endings of the words "bozlanmyj" - "[açillər] ismi" - "[koshlary] kitmi", referred to related lines, are similar in sound, which gives the work the integrity and melodic rhythm of the verse.

The following question arises: what other means and poetic techniques in Tukay's work "The thread of the sacred rosary has broken", which, as the author himself points out, written in prose, does a rhythm arise that is consistent with the rhythm of the poem in prose?

It is fair to assume that if the length of sentences in rhythmic prose is traditional (it is not short, versed), then not metric indicators (the length of the verse), but those properties of prose that are turned into the field of graphic and melodic drawing play a significant role for a poetic rhythm creation. So, in the named work by Tukai, anaphoric alliteration takes place as one of the varieties of rhyme: it goes through almost the entire prose text.

We believe that the creation of Tolstoy's image in the work by Tukai "The thread of the sacred rosaries broke" was also influenced by the qassida - one of the canonical panegyric forms of oriental poetry. The subjective (lyrical "I" of the hero) and objective (nature) are not divided in qassida, as compared with the lyric genres of European poetry. On the contrary, the structure of the eastern verse seemed to elevate deliberately, elevate to perfect splendor that is attributed to the natural world, thereby reducing both the complexity and contradictory nature of human feelings and their special character.

4. Conclusions

The comparison of Tukay's poetry with the Eastern qassida allows us to imagine the basis of Tolstoy's artistic perception of personality. Mostly it came from the values and worldview meanings of those genres (qassida, neser), different in form (prosaic and poetic) and performative, in which the sphere of the subjective experiences of the poet was not opposed to the world of nature, expressed reality. On this basis, the image of Tolstoy's multifaceted personality arose.

In the light of the genre problem, the title gains particular value: the mention of "sacred rosary", as well as the first words of Muslim prayer - bismillya - at the end of the work, most clearly emphasizes the unique artistic perception of Tolstoy's personality by Tukay, which stemmed from the dialogue of the Tatar poet with different cultural strata and genre traditions, among which Russian literature and oriental classics occupied a central place in it.

5. Summary

The study of the genres of Russian and Tatar literature allows us to reveal the peculiarity of inter-literary interactions at the present stage of comparative study development.

The study confirmed that such principles of comparative poetics, such as "out-of-location" in relation to the literature participating in the dialogue and "inwardness" in each of them, allow us to create the basis for mutual enrichment of homological genres, as well as to identify the "mechanisms" of correlation, internal "consent" in the space of national culture interactions by comparing their poetics.

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