

Section 4. Philology

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*Babayeva Malahat Ramiz gizi,
Phd, dos., ASPU, Department of Literature*

INNOVATIONS AND INTEGRATIVENESS OF MODERN FOLKLORE

Abstract. Azerbaijan's culture, formed on the basis of rich historical traditions and values, has a special value as a socio-cultural institution that embodies the moral integrity, national-moral values and uniqueness of our people in the conditions of modern globalization.

In modern conditions, because the quality of determination of the national culture of each nation is directly conditioned by folk culture and folklore in the new accultural situation that has manifested itself, the use of the opportunities of folklore resources in terms of national interests is of particular relevance. This depends, first of all, on the approach to folklore as a system and the examination of its structure at the level of modern theoretical and methodological requirements. The above-mentioned necessitates completely different approaches and defines new tasks in the science of national folklore studies.

Methods: Comparative, theoretical analysis and generalization; qualitative empirical methods: observation, interview).

Keywords: Azerbaijani folklore, culture, universalism, eclecticism, philological studies.

Introduction

Social folklore studies as a social-humanitarian discipline it has a special scientific universality in terms of scientifically understanding all stages of progress, defining the genesis of humanity, modeling its formation, evolution, and even scripting its perspective. Universalism is conditioned, first of all, by the mutual dialectical relationship of the internal structural elements ("folk" and "lore") that make up the phenomenon of folklore within the national cultural system and the functional character of this relationship. Therefore, the investigation of the structure of folklore as a socio-cultural system, especially the functionality that manifests itself in the status of the quality of certainty of this structure, is of special scientific relevance in our modern day.

On the other hand, the multidisciplinary study of the functional structure of folklore is of special importance not only from a scientific-theoretical point of view, but also from a national and general social point of view. Because folklore, which manifests itself as universal knowledge in the ethnic memory of the people – in the oral tradition, as an experience covering the most diverse areas of life, and which includes various parameters of the ethnos' worldview – mythological, religious, psychological, ethical, aesthetic, philosophical views, is approached precisely from the functional structural aspect of its socio-cultural. It is scientifically explained what role and function it performs in the context.

Almost two hundred years of theoretical experience of world folklore studies proves that, as in Soviet folklore studies, folklore should become the object

of research not only of philological studies, but also of psychology, culturology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, ethnography, and it should be treated multidisciplinary in the synthesis of all these disciplines. It is a pity that, unlike the world theoretical practice of folklore studies, the history of the practice of multidisciplinary investigation of the functional structure of folklore within the national cultural system in Azerbaijan coincides with recent years.

Folklore is taken here as an object of research in the synthesis of two closely related aspects – folk culture taken as a theoretical concept in the most general sense, and Azerbaijani folklore, which constantly updates and establishes itself at a more concrete level. Historically, the Azerbaijani people have had a rich folkloric creativity, this creative process continued with different functional rhythms in different epochs of our national history, as a result of which numerous epics, tales, proverbs and parables, poems, folk songs, folk games and performances, etc. examples of folklore have appeared.

Modern scientific studies give great importance to thinking models, require differentiation of knowledge on the one hand, and integration on the other hand, and on the third hand, continuous social demarcations make society more and more dependent on material foundations.

A literary work, a film quotation, a newspaper report do not exclude folklore analysis if they satisfy a greater or lesser number of “folklore” criteria [1, 65]. To what extent such an analysis can be considered necessary and preferable, probably depends not so much on strictly scientific as on extrascientific, that is, on social factors: institutionalization, social prestige of the scientific discipline corresponding to this analysis, ideological engagement, etc.

A good illustration of the folklore effectiveness of television in this case is not only popular television series or, for example, TV quizzes, but also advertising or even television news.

The computer space of the Internet, which already today contains a boundless repository of all

kinds of information, also seems to be of interest for folklore analysis, at least in the sense in which it allows one to judge the informational, thematic and proper discursive priorities of its “inhabitants”. The fundamental “pluralism” of the Internet “archive” in this sense already has the advantage that it provides grounds for identifying the most stable and typified traditions of information consumption and communicative impact on the audience [2, 89].

Turning to television, the Internet, materials of the “yellow press”, comics, popular songs, advertising, it becomes clear what role latent archetypes of social psychology and the mechanisms by which they are supported, for example, rumors and gossip, play in the formation of the folklore discourse of everyday life. To answer the question of how the latter are generated, how they are transmitted and reproduced, today it would probably already (or still) be impossible without the use of folklore methods of analysis, that is, without comparing materials that make it possible to judge the possible range of narratives that are source for these rumors. The concept of “context” can be taken quite literally with this method – it is the discovery of texts that, in total, potentially, allow their own foreign text implementation. Another question is to what extent such potentially source texts are actually “folklore” [3, 178]. For understanding modern folklore, however, this complexity is inevitable and relevant.

“Folklore” is unimaginable without the “rules” of folklore – thematic and genre preferences, theoretical and methodological skills, but just as any rules require exceptions, the folklore of the “rules” turns out to be bordering on the folklore of “exceptions”, that is, such cultural phenomena that problematize the very the concept of folklore, make us think about other terminology and other ways of their analytical description [4, 173].

Obviously, the lexical, genre, actional, idiosyncratic features of the folklore “whole” do not exist outside the “non-folklore” particulars. Meanwhile, it is clear that if such an interpretation were “folklore”,

it would no longer be an interpretation, but would itself be its subject. “Folklore” elements incorporated into the “non-folklore” space is another side of the same problem. Receptive aesthetics, focusing on the reader’s interpretation of literary works, proved (and in fact proceeded from the fact) that the perception of a literary work can be endowed with authorial functions. Reading can be seen as a creative act, and the reader as a creator claiming the right to be considered, if not the author of the work he reads, then, so to speak, the author of his subjective reception. The authorship of the writer and the “authorship” of the reader to a certain extent balance each other, and it is obvious that in the existence of such a social institution as literature, this balance in one way or another forces one to reckon with itself. Is it possible to say that the reception of a folklore character is different, since it is devoid of the indicated balance of “legal” claims and “legal” responsibility [5, 54].

The potential openness of the sphere of folklore a priori presupposes the diversity of analytical and synthetic research methods applied to its study. The question of the expediency of combining such methods within the framework of one scientific discipline – namely, folklore – is posed today as a question of whether, keeping in mind the diffusion of traditional forms of scientific knowledge as homogeneous and self-sufficient scientific disciplines. Let us not forget that the “blurring” of the subject of folklore is accompanied by the blurring of the subject of other social sciences, the “mixing of genres” in intellectual life in general. From this point of view, the question of why, being related to different disciplines, folklore tends to remain a separate discipline, can probably be redirected to other social sciences related to folklore. It seems that the theoretical innovations of folklore in this case represent a process typical for the development of any science. Any science is subject to revision due to individual components of its discourse, particular additions, auxiliary hypotheses, ad hoc hypotheses, etc. The possibility of folkloristic study of culture is determined in

this sense by the sufficient “configurability” of the methodology used, – the priority of some criteria of scientific analysis over others, greater relevance of some aspects of reality and lesser – others. There is only one difficulty here: there are more and more of these aspects, and the desired configurability seems to be more and more intricate [6, 234].

A logical step in the development of folklore theory in this situation is the rehabilitation of methodological eclecticism. This rehabilitation, as I think, is quite justified. The habitually negative attitude towards the term “eclecticism” is explained by psychological and ideological claims to represent the truth within the framework of one institutionalized doctrine. Meanwhile, already from a historical point of view, it is clear that the unity of such doctrines and the methods correlated with them is itself the result of epistemological and institutional eclecticism. Any scientific discipline is eclectic in its origin and to a certain extent “interdisciplinary”, being not only free, but also dependent on other scientific disciplines and methods associated with these disciplines. The critical pathos of poststructuralism played a generally useful role here, as it drew the attention of researchers to those aspects of historical and cultural reality that resist their “metanarrative” unification and reveal a heterogeneous set of possible discourses of description. The explication of such outside of methodological eclecticism, in my opinion, is hardly imaginable – examples of neo-holistic approaches to the study of culture in this case are quite illustrative. It is important to emphasize the following: no matter how broadly and often vaguely folklore is understood today, the methodological eclecticism of folklore studies does not prevent the study of “folklore reality” just because this study can never be the study of “all folklore”, “folklore in general”, but always is the study of some one aspect, one fragment of sociocultural reality, requiring its own analytical explication and its own methodological reservations [7, 34].

The dissemination of folklore materials at the expense of materials from other social sciences sig-

nificantly complicates both the definition of folklore itself and the folklore theory proper. Evidence of this is tautological definitions of the type: folklore is what “encourages folklorists to talk”, “everything that folklorists are interested in” [8, 231].

From a historical point of view, the construction of a “folklore” object takes place on the “frontier territories” of history, literature, anthropology, etc. It can be argued whether modern folklore borrows its objects from other humanitarian disciplines, but it cannot be denied that these disputes at least remain relevant. If it is necessary to reckon with the “multi-disciplinary” nature of folklore, the modern folklore researcher today faces a paradoxical situation: he is dealing with an object of study that opposes its exclusively folkloristic interpretation.

A conceptual concept that allows us to keep in mind the variety of possible descriptions of “folklore reality” in this situation seems to me the concept of folklore marginals – that is, texts that could probably become the subject of another analysis – sociological, literary criticism, psychological, etc., but at the same time they also reveal folklore phenomenology. It is worth emphasizing that, calling such texts marginal, there is no need to think that they certainly point to some deviant forms of social reality (which in itself, of course, is also not excluded), but only that the folklore component in explaining such texts cannot be considered the only one. In other words, these are texts that actually exist on the border of different ways of their analytical description. When proposing the concept of folklore marginalia as applied to possible objects of folklore analysis, it is important to keep in mind that we are talking about a methodological understanding of an already existing folklore strategy. The “marginal” nature of the texts studied by folkloristics is a factor that initially determines the formation of folkloristics itself as a scientific discipline. The researchers emphasize that the unity of a folklore object theoretically depends both on the unity of the relevant disciplines among themselves and on their fragmentation within themselves. Both in the past and in the present, the

“marginality” of folklore is revealed in the correlation of various levels of phenomenological fixation of a folklore fact: sociological, ideological, psychological, etc. In other words, speaking of folklore marginalia, I only emphasize the marginal, “boundary” status of the folklore [9, 23].

The circumstance that makes it possible to use this term in relation to the sphere of folklore interests is similar to the circumstance – the inextricable interconnection of already named and not yet named, “nameless” factors that determine the course of social events. In addition to objectified and “reified” images of social description, “there is an infinite number of forms of relations and types of interaction between people, insignificant and sometimes even insignificant, if we keep in mind individual cases, but nevertheless contributing to the constitution of society as we know it, to the extent that in which they penetrate into larger and, so to speak, official forms” [10, 42].

The diversity of scientific approaches and the implications of methodological pluralism in folklore today undoubtedly reflect some more general features in the development of scientific knowledge. Folkloristics here, as some sociologists think, may be only the most indicative as a particular case of this – the awareness of the diversity of realities, sometimes coexisting peacefully, sometimes not, but informing each other about those meanings that have already been constructed and studied. “A similar argument leads some researchers to the idea of the “postmodern” nature of folklore [11, 24].

An example directly related to folklore, in this case, can be the concept of “myth”, which forces us to reckon not with one – albeit arbitrarily wide – meaning of the term “myth”, “mythology”, but with a number of homonymous meanings. Schematizing the dissonance in the modern use of the term “myth”, reduces it to five main meanings:

- “1) the ancient idea of the world, the result of its development;
- 2) the plot-shaped and personified dogmatic basis of religion;

3) ancient myths used in art, which are functionally and ideologically rethought, turned, in essence, into artistic images;

4) relatively stable stereotypes of mass everyday consciousness, due to an insufficient level of awareness and a fairly high degree of gullibility;

5) propaganda and ideological clichés purposefully shaping public consciousness.

Originally used to refer to phenomena and events of the archaic past, today the terms “myth” and “mythology” are used in relation to the current everyday life, which thereby acquires attributes not so much of an archaic as of a universal order, as if “overturning” everyday life into the past, but the past “extending” into the present. Widely understood as “a way of conceptualizing the surrounding reality and human essence”, myth, on the one hand, seems to modernize tradition, and on the other, it gives modernity a valuable retrospective, the meaning of continuity, stability and predictability.

An important role in the scientific popularity of the term “myth”, undoubtedly, was played by its semantic flexibility and, so to speak, meaningful “boring” – metaphorical capacity, the ability to heuristically update and predict. The situation is similar when using other important terms for folkloristics – “ritual” or, for example, “initiation”, which are actively used not only in ethnographic and folklore studies, but also in sociological, psychological, and literary studies.

Conclusion. In a number of these concepts, the very term “folklore” today, as you can easily see, means different and difficult to correlate with each other things. On the pages of folklore works, the

problems of traditional folklore side by side with the discussion of folklore, for example, television programs, sports, wall graffiti, computer viruses, talk about gasoline and politics, acid rain and Coca-Cola, collective folklore and individual folklore and etc. Does this mean that for some of these themes, describing them with the help of folklore terminology should be eliminated? I would answer this question in this way. The use of folklore terminology (in particular, the terms “myth”, “ritual”) is determined today not so much by the general theory of “folklore” as by the already established – and emerging before our eyes – practice of social science research. It is clear that the discussion of the relevant practice depends on the unity of scientific communication and does not imply a radical difference in the language of scientists who call themselves folklorists. At the same time, it is important to remember that the practice of scientific communication is always wider than the linguistic rigorism of the theories that declare it. It is obvious that linguistic polysimy proper does not impede communication. There is no single idea of folklore and folklore today. The widespread destruction of traditional forms of folklore makes folklorists take a closer look at those cultural phenomena in which its traditional aspects appear in an innovative form. If the ways of describing such phenomena can be different, then these phenomena themselves – in the context of their possible description – can be considered as marginal. Whether the description of such marginalities will be considered folklore depends directly on the descriptive capabilities of other humanitarian disciplines. The marginal nature of folkloristics itself seems here, at least theoretically constructive.

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