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ANTINOMIES IN ARTISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS OF POETS OF THE SILVER AGE

The article considers questions, related to conflict sphere in the lyrics of the Silver Age. The article focuses on the theoretic aspects of the lyric conflict analyzed in innovative and ontological perspective. It demonstrates the results of comparative analysis of the lyric conflicts in the work of poets-modernists, in particular, symbolists and acmeists. The authors highlight the multi-level and multi-aspect character of the lyric conflicts, including their external and internal causes. According to the authors, the research uncovers that the origins of a lyric conflict stem from logical and philosophical notion of antinomy. The authors distinguish a number of foundational antinomies -- namely, ontological, existential and aesthetic -- in artistic consciousness of the Silver Age poets. The suggested classification serves as a basis for the detailed analysis of chosen texts by Aleksander Blok, Andrey Bely, Anna Akhmatova, Nikolay Gumilev, Marina Tsvetaeva and others. As a result, it is demonstrated that the mentioned antinomies become a foundation for semantics, inspiration, imagery and plot of the poetry. The authors have a fundamentally new approach to study the Silver Age poetry. First, they conceptualize extensive variety of genres in lyrics and poetry. Second, they approach conflict not an inherent notion, but the one interconnected with other levels of the text, with the identity of the author and the leading philosophies and aesthetics of the epoch, taking their origin in neoplatonism and phenomenology.

Key words: acmeism, ontological, existential, aesthetic antinomies, conflict, narrator, antithesis, oppositions, lyric plot.

Problem statement and approaches to the topic

Many researchers, investigating work of the Silver Age poets, point to conflict of their artistic consciousness. The conflict in a literary text, however, is a multilevel notion. First of all, the conflict reflects antithetical connections between various elements and sense levels inside the text, secondly, it represents inner contradictions of the author and, thirdly, it shows difference of potentials between the author and the text (particularly, such text categories as lyric subject, addressee, character etc.).

According to A. G. Kovalenko, it is important to connect the category of conflict with more universal philosophical argument, to be exact, with the notion of *antinomy*. Antinomy (as a contradiction in affirmation, or contradiction of affirmation to oneself) is semantically extensive and dialectically flexible notion. Therefore, it emerges as a more delicate tool

by means of which it could be possible to embrace all variety of concrete interrelations – “conflict of contradictions, collision of oppositions (characters, words, senses, meanings)” [12, p. 8].

Thus, the idea, appearing as a “supporting structure” of the whole “conceptual building” in the given article is as follows: an antinomy, or opposition, reflecting “binary structure of the human reasoning” forms the foundation of literary conflicts. Further, we consider foundational antinomies, making the basis of artistic consciousness of the Silver Age poets.

Presentation of the main material

Ontological antinomies are common to all the Silver age poets. They signify perception of external and internal world, world of nature and world of culture as contrastively opposing, yet at the same time, paradoxically identifiable categories. In symbolist view of life, dating back to neoplatonism [13, p. 201],

ontological antinomies produce tragic discordance of almost any lyric theme, whether it is about love passion or historic destiny of Russia.

Thus, love in the imaginative world of In. Annenskiy, V. Bruysov, F. Sologub, A. Blok is an unattainable ideal, the future is painted in eschatological colours. Simultaneous contrast and implicit parallelism of real being and internal aspirations and expectations of a character lead to conflict unraveling of the lyric plot, based on “flowing” antitheses, which paradoxically synthesize discordant representation of the external world with internal difficulties of the lyric subject. For example, imagery of Blok in his poem “Foreseeing you. As years are passing...” “The sky is blazing, - you will soon appear <...> But how I fear: You image will be changed, / and the suspicion you’ll evoke will be austere, / Your features will appear to me as strange...” [6].

Ontological antinomies of poets – acmeists create a new, *phenomenological* implementation of process modeling, occurring in consciousness. Phenomenological background in work of N. Gumilev, O. Mandelshtam, and A. Akhmatova becomes most noticeable while comparing their method of objectification of emotion with discoveries of philosophers – phenomenologists, primarily, E. Husserl [8].

These poets have creatively mustered the principles of constructing meaning by comparing external associations with internal “events”, thereby phenomenologically modeling the processes taking place in the psyche. A reader of their poems, also, does not perceive emotion in the finished form, but follows a shift in the focus of the author’s consciousness: stopping at the same *landscape* or *material* as the subject of emotional experience; the reader perceives them in the same sequence and in a similar evaluative vein. As a result, “repeating” the work of the author’s consciousness, the reader reconstructs the feeling according to his soul experience and his system of values [11, p. 8-39].

Phenomenological and inherent to human mind, perception of being and consciousness in their indissoluble “inseparability and disunity” inextricably acquires new facets of verbal embodiment in the work of the Silver Age poets. This happens due to three discoveries by the authors. First, an understanding that emotional experience in the sphere of psychology – is not a final result, but the process of continuous formation and transition, occurrence and weakening of contradictions. Second, a realization that in lyric transfusion this continual establishment is possible only through imaginary installation of opposed elements, forming unbroken binary oppositions of those

or other semantic identifications. Third, mythopoetic identification of a part and a whole, game of internal and external plans of being, verbal level of texts and sub-textual meanings.

We suppose that these psychological and poetic findings led to a qualitatively new level of lyric transfusion of life of a soul. The author not just acknowledges one or another emotional state, but by means of metonymic details reveals the most intractable and tenuous processes, occurring both in the consciousness of a heroine, and in objective reality – in the modality of both present and future tenses.

Moreover, the archetypal quality of the lyrical consciousness of the heroine / author is the presence of an internal conflict, which becomes the “hidden engine” of the lyrical collision, where He and She, space and time are drawn into. Most often, the artistic details form the building blocks that create spiritual, sensual, temporary and spatial discrepancies. This could be illustrated through the context of the poem by Anna Akhmatova (included in the cycle “Turmoil”):

Air was stifling from scalding lighting.
His glances were like sunbeams.
I only winced, feeling: this one, this one
Only this one can tame me.

Leaning down - he will say something.
The blood rushed away from my face.
Let love be forever laid on
My life like a grave stone base.
[2]

In the first two verses we can observe how Akhmatova builds a spatial antinomy, contrastively dividing semantically related images – “lighting” and “sunbeams” by way of grammatical means (namely, adversative conjunction “but”). However, if “lighting” refers to characteristics of space, “sunbeams” are a metaphor of views of a hero – addressee and the lyric heroine concentrates her attention on him. At the same time the author complements the description of the external reality with imaginary patterns, characterizing sensitive perception of the heroine, but not mental or spiritual, more likely, corporeal: “it was stifling”.

Further, in the semantic space of the poem (as well as in the next two poems included in the cycle) we see a syntagmatic alignment of the rigid semantic oppositions of *His* micro-actions (external, portrait details) and *Her* sensitive reaction to them (sensual-corporeal details: «I only winced ...», «The blood rushed away from my face»).

The bifurcation point of these contradictions – the *external* (independent on *Her* will) and *internal* layers of the image is the heroine’s awareness of

the acute conflict of “life” and “love”, free will and passion, which she feels. This is comparable to the antinomy between the lost feeling of «having wings» and the current inability to «take off and fly» in the second poem. The material metaphor of Love – the “gravestone” in the modality of obligation (“Let... be... laid”) emphasizes the absolute – at the given moment – *insolubility* of the conflict.

The existential antinomies, in the artistic world of the Russian modern poets, give rise to conflicts within the consciousness of lyrical heroes. This inner opposition in the worldview of symbolism turns out to be a reaction to the absolute fusion of dreams and reality. For instance, in acmeism, this leads to total disunity of visibility and existence. These antinomies can be considered an archetypical invariant of the consciousness of the Silver age poets. Therefore, the variants will be the following antitheses: a) ideal – material; b) spiritual – carnal; c) heavenly (transcendent) – earthly (material); d) poetic – prosaic.

These antitheses comprise the main conflicts of the work of poets-modernists. Moreover, they can all exist in the space of one work. Let us show the realization of these antinomies in the context of Marina Tsvetaeva’s poem “An attempt at jealousy”. It is not by chance that we turned to this author. The peculiarity of Tsvetaeva’s creative strategy lies in the fact that her idiopoetics has incorporated all the artistic valencies of the Silver age poetry, including symbolist and acmesitic overtones. Here is the text of the poem:

How is your life with the other one?
Simpler, isn't it? – One stroke of the oar! –
<...>

Of me will be a floating island
(In the sky, not on the waters):
Spirits, spirits, you will be
sisters, and never lovers.
<...>

How is your life with a stranger?
From this world? Can you (be frank?)
Love her? Or do you feel shame
Like Zeus' reins on your forehead?
<...>

How is your life with a piece of market?
Stuff, at a steep price.
After Carrara marble;
How is your life with the dust of
plaster now? (God was hewn from
Stone, but he is smashed to bits.)

How do you live with one of a
thousand women after Lilith?

[15]

The motif-figurative unfolding of the lyrical meaning in the artistic space of the poem happens in the “nesting doll” principle: the author puts several symbolically related meanings into the figurative matrix one after another. The lyrical heroine, whose archetype is Tsvetaeva herself, simultaneously incorporates the semantics of heaven, Soul-Psyche, sacred ethereal, divine-royal origin etc. Her rival is embodied in imaginative paradigm sharply opposed to this exceptionally high number of images. So, if a metaphor of the heroine-author is Carrara marble, then the imaginative equivalent of her rival is “dust of plaster”. If the heroine associates herself with Sinai, her rival is associated with “a piece of market”, if she is Lilith, her rival is Eve, if the heroine has magic charms, her rival is a “worldly woman without sixth senses”.

In addition, the analyzed poem fully reflects other facets of antinomic structure of modernist consciousness. For instance, we observe a principle of “world responsiveness” that appeared as a merge of several mythological archetypes in one space – Old Testament, ancient and apocryphal imagery, which generally creates some intertextual chord of polyphonic meaning.

Finally, “An attempt at jealousy” is notably based on ontological antinomy. One can hear an existential challenge in contrastively-symmetrical structure of the poem, permeated with rhetorical questions. The challenge is issued not only, and not so much for the rival. This is a rebellion against unfairness of life; this challenge is for unrighteous world ruled by market laws; the world where “dust of plaster” is in higher demand than Carrara marble.

It is worth mentioning that internal contradictions of the author often lead to antinomy of the heroine, which cannot be restricted to a single image. Many critics, memoirists and researchers wrote about ambiguity of the image of the lyric heroine not only in the first two collections “Evening” and “Chetki” (which were projected by the readers onto Akhmatova) but in other books of the poetess. In this regard, the following opinion of P. Fokin (a compiler of collection of memories “Akhmatova without luster” and the author of the introductory article to it) is especially symptomatic: “The image of Akhmatova is constantly ambivalent... Now she is a “mockery of Tsarskoye Selo”, then “leprous”. Now she is a “joyful sinner”, then a mournful howler. Helpless and powerful. “Haughty” and “humble”. Now she is closed up and then she is in a crazy swirl of “akhmatovka”. Now she is a beggar, in poor garb of penitence with a bag, then she is squandering money and presents. Leningrader and

Moscowite. Interlocutress of Dante and Pushkin – a communal flatmate. Wife without a husband. Mother without a son. Russian poet with Tatarian name. Everything had organic life in her” [3, p. 11].

Aesthetic antinomies in the Silver age poetry are determined, on the one hand, by a sharp sense of the border of their own and another’s poetic world, and, on the other hand, by their orientation to “world responsiveness”, with an option of a dialogue, and polemics with predecessors and contemporaries, and above all, with fellow writers.

The mentioned antinomy evokes a new communicative strategy. Actually, all of the Silver age poetry is a reverse monologue. This strategy actualizes genre of letters and forms a new subgenre (more specifically, the meta-genre): cycles of letters. It is possible to recall the cycles of letters by Bryusov, addressed to Andrey Bely, Vyach. Ivanov, his letters to collective and group addressee “To the younger”, “To a poet”, “To a young poet”; cycle “Letters” by A. Blok, addressed to poets-symbolists and acmeists; the letters between Gumilyv, Akhmatova, Mandelshtam.

Finally, the extensive “messenger cycles” by Marina Tsvetaeva, addressed to Blok, Akhmatova, Mandelshtam, Mayakovskiy, Pushkin are well-known. Almost all prominent poets of the Silver age turned to Pushkin, starting from V. Bryusov and K. Balmont, and ending with V. Mayakovskiy and S. Esenin.

At the level of poetics the communicative strategy of «worldwide responsiveness» leads: a) to mythologization of images of addressee and the lyrical “me” of an author (compare the images of Balder and Loki, with which the characters in poetic correspondence between Bryusov and Bely identify themselves); b) to introduction of the role-playing poetry, in which the lyrical hero tries on mythological and literary masks (compare lyric ballades by Nikolay Gumilev, where a cultural and historical hero, a Spanish conqueror and a stranger Don Juan etc. is involved in) [7, p. 153; p. 188; p. 172]; c) to receptive tactics and phenomenon of stylization, to the effect of intertextuality [10, p. 156-176; 9, p. 223-237].

Conclusion

To sum up, the discovered antinomies, firstly, reflect dynamically tense relations between various elements and semantic levels in the texts of almost all poets-modernists, not only revealing the ontological, existential and aesthetic contradictions of the Silver age poets, but also demonstrating the ways of their creative solution at the level of poetry. The difference of potentials between the author and the text, reflecting the inner world of the subject in polar, sometimes mutually exclusive forms, due to phenomenological discoveries, as a rule, is removed through a system of identifications and reverse metaphors. At the same time, the triad of antinomic constants explains the mechanism of relationships of the Russian modernists with predecessors and contemporaries.

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АНТИНОМІЇ В ХУДОЖНІЙ СВІДОМОСТІ ПОЕТІВ СРІБНОГО СТОЛІТТЯ

У статті розглядаються питання, пов'язані з конфліктоферою в ліриці Срібного століття. Особлива увага приділяється теоретичним аспектам ліричного конфлікту, розглянутого в інноваційному – онтологічному - ракурсі. Представлені результати порівняльного аналізу ліричних конфліктів у творчості поетів модерністської орієнтації, зокрема, символістів і акмеїстів. Піднімається питання про різномірність і різноаспектність ліричних конфліктів, а також про зовнішні і внутрішні причини, що їх обумовлюють. Новизна дослідження вбачається в тому, що природа ліричного конфлікту сходить, згідно з уявленнями авторів, до логіко-філософського поняття антиномії. Показано, що в художній свідомості поетів Срібного століття можна виокремити ряд базових антиномій, а саме: онтологічні, екзистенційні, естетичні. Пропонована класифікація покладена в основу скрупульозного аналізу обраних текстів Олександра Блока, Андрія Білого, Анни Ахматової, Миколи Гумілова, Марини Цветаєвої та ін. У підсумку, доведено, що зазначені антиномії стають якоюсь базою смислового, мотивно-сюжетного, образного розгортання віршів. Актуальність дослідження обумовлена принципово новим і оригінальним підходом до поезії Срібного століття, що дозволило, по-перше, концептуалізувати великий і вельми різномірний за темами, мотивами і жанрами ліричний матеріал, по-друге, категорію конфлікту розглянути не імманентно, а у системних взаємозв'язках з іншими рівнями твору, включаючи категорію автора, а також з провідними філософсько-естетичними напрямками епохи, висхідними до неоплатонізму і феноменології.

Ключові слова: акмеїзм, онтологічні, екзистенційні, естетичні антиномії, конфлікт, ліричний герой, антитеза, опозиції, ліричний сюжет.

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АНТИНОМИИ В ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОМ СОЗНАНИИ ПОЭТОВ СЕРЕБРЯНОГО ВЕКА

В статье рассматриваются вопросы, связанные с конфликтоферой в лирике Серебряного века. Особое внимание уделяется теоретическим аспектам лирического конфликта, рассмотренного в инновационном – онтологическом - ракурсе. Представлены результаты сопоставительного анализа лирических конфликтов в творчестве поэтов модернистской ориентации, в частности, символистов и акмеистов. Поднимается вопрос о разноразности и разноаспектности лирических конфликтов, а также о внешних и внутренних причинах, их обуславливающих. Новизна исследования видится в том, что природа лирического конфликта восходит, согласно представлениям авторов, к логико-философскому понятию антиномии. Показано, что в художественном сознании поэтов Серебряного века можно вычленить ряд базовых антиномий, а именно: онтологические, экзистенциальные, эстетические. Предлагаемая классификация положена в основу скрупулезного анализа избранных текстов Александра Блока, Андрея Белого, Анны Ахматовой, Николая Гумилева, Марины Цветаевой и др. В итоге, доказано, что указанные антиномии становятся некоей базой смыслового, мотивно-сюжетного, образного развертывания стихотворений. Актуальность исследования обусловлена принципиально новым и оригинальным подходом к поэзии Серебряного века, позволившим, во-первых, концептуализировать обширный и весьма разнородный по темам, мотивам и жанрам лирический материал, во-вторых, категорию конфликта рассмотреть не имманентно, а в системных взаимосвязях с другими уровнями произведения, включая категорию автора, а также с ведущими философско-эстетическими направлениями эпохи, восходящими к неоплатонизму и феноменологии.

Ключевые слова: акмеизм, онтологические, экзистенциальные, эстетические антиномии, конфликт, лирический герой, антитеза, оппозиции, лирический сюжет.