

My Small Apple Has Rolled Away: Poetic Peculiarities of Funeral Laments for Children in Ukrainian and South Slavic Folklore Traditions

O K S A N A M Y K Y T E N K O

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ABSTRACT. Traditional notions about death at a young age shape the special character of funeral rituals for children and are reflected in associated funeral lamentations. These funerals are generally subject to the most mournful sympathy and sincere grieving owing to the emotional basis of the texts. At the same time, it was not common to mourn after the death of a baby or the first child. It is evident that there is a tendency to enhance the social status and the age of the dead child through ritual, e.g. by using specific vestments. The motif of the *death-wedding* seems to be the most relevant in this cycle. We also examine the traditional opposition of male / female children (especially evident in the South Slavic folklore tradition), reflected on the lexical level. The poetic style of the text is based mainly on two artistic “codes” – vegetal symbolism (metaphors of withering etc.) and zoological symbolism. The stylistics and composition found in these mourning rituals are characteristic of improvised folklore texts.

KEYWORDS: funeral mourning, children, ethno-poetics, Ukrainian and South Slavic folklore.

INTRODUCTION

The theme of funeral mourning in Slavic studies has “many various aspects (ethnographic, folkloristic, musicological, etc.) and considerable literature” (Толстая 1999: 135). Lidia Nevskaya’s work on the problem of reconstruction of the semantic structure of Balto-Slavic (Lithuanian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Russian) mourning as a verbal code for funeral rites has become a milestone (Невская 1993, 1999). The works of Svetlana Tolstaya (Толстая 1999) and Lyudmila Vinogradova (Виноградова 2000) cover the conceptual field of funeral rites among the Slavs, while the mythological content of the funeral rite in relation to ritual vocabulary and folk terminology of the Eastern and Southern Slavs is revealed in the works of Olga Sedakova (Седакова 1979, 1983). Irina Koval-Fuchylo looks at the modern Ukrainian tradition of funeral mourning (Коваль-Фучило 2014), and in my own

work, funeral mourning is examined as a verbal code of a funeral text, the semantic integrity and communicative content of which are revealed in the text as a category of culture. Conceptual and semantic analysis allows the researcher to explore the deep archaic layer of the ritual text and to determine the specifics of its poetic expression as a genre of traditional folklore rooted in an ethno-cultural tradition (Микитенко 2005, 2008, 2010; Mykytenko 2012).

Among the factors that have contributed to the disappearance of funeral mourning traditions in different countries in the second half of the 20th century are social, cultural, and religious changes (Farghaly 2019: 10). At the same time, funeral laments belong to the most stable – central – part of the folklore tradition and form one of its most important family-ritual genres. The verbal text of the funeral lament concerns the open folklore system and at the same time is marked with the high stability of traditional worldview, as it preserves and demonstrates peculiarities of ethnic culture – the “memory of tradition” (Гацак 1997: 104). Here, a comparative approach is taken to analyze the ethno-poetic peculiarities of laments for children based on material from South Slavic (Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbian) and Eastern Slavic (Ukrainian) traditions. The material covers a wide chronological period of living tradition, from the 19th century to the second half of the 20th century and the study covers semantics, poetics, and pragmatics. Marked with especial semantic significance among other rituals of transition, funeral rituals consistently manifest the notion of “passage” on all its levels and reveals the deepest oppositions of life and death, especially in the variants intended for a child’s funeral. This opposition reaches its peak in funeral laments, with meaning represented in the text not only semantically, but also poetically. The opposition of life and death as the principal meaning is additionally proven by the inclusion of a number of semantically significant tokens, including gender, color and plant codes, etc. The concrete textual expression – conceptual-semantic, compositional-stylistic, and artistic-poetic – is determined by the ritual basis of the folklore text which relies on improvisation in the ethno-poetic traditions of specific regions.

MORPHOLOGY OF THE RITUAL TEXT

The specifics of customs and rituals accompanying the death and burial of children is not well studied both within a particular ethno-cultural tradition and in comparative terms. The funeral of children aroused interest mainly because of the symbolic and demonstrative discrepancies between them and the “normal” version of the practice – the adult funeral.

Traditional concepts surrounding an unwarranted death at a young age reflect a deep-seated understanding of an unspent life and of lost potential, both of which

contribute to the special nature of the funeral of children and unmarried persons (Седакова 1983: 206). Thus, such cases evoke the most powerful sympathy and sincere mourning, and the associated texts are dominated by emotional lyrical elements, dominated by notions of the innocence of a child's soul.

At the same time, some children were considered "impure", e.g., the unbaptized, those born out of wedlock, firstborn newborns, stillborn babies, etc. Because of this "impurity", they were often buried either outside consecrated areas, namely, at a distance of 40 steps from the cemetery, without a cross, or in a separate part of the cemetery (Maced. *во некоја ограда, во некој незнаен гроб* 'in some enclosed place', 'in some unknown grave'). In other cases, there was a symbolic introduction into the Christian community. Among the southern Slavs, a cross made of two branches tied with a red thread was placed on the grave (Лозанова 1989: 21). If the newborn was especially weak and might die, he was baptized earlier than the 40th day so that he or she would not die without a name – Maced. *без име да не умира*. Such children were thought to turn into invisible young birds which were especially dangerous for women giving birth, as they took away their breast milk (Ристески 1999: 109). According to Ukrainian belief, dead children born out of wedlock and unbaptized under the age of 7 years old, turn into small birds, fly in the evenings, shout "kshtu", and ask: Ukr. *Хреста!, Хрести мене, хрести мене!* 'Baptize me!' (Етнографічний... 1912: 357, 386, 390). At the same time, it was believed that whoever hears such words should throw Ukr. *рунець* 'a white scarf or a piece of cloth' up or in the direction from which the cry was heard, while saying: Ukr. *Як ти пан, нех ти́ буде Ян, а як панна – нех ти́ буде Ганна* 'If you are a man, let you be Yan, and if you are a lady, let you be Hanna' (ibid.: 386).

In some ethnocultural regions, the death of an infant is not mourned. In Polica, for example, if the baby died, villagers came Serb. *на радовање* 'to rejoice'. The father of the dead baby was told: "Be glad that you are now called the father of an angel", the mother was called "the mother of an angel". At the same time, they answered: "We hope to God you will rejoice too". The dead children are not mourned, but in tears, they say hello to the previously deceased (Ivanišević 1905: 91).

It was not accepted to mourn the death of the first child, "for the sake of the good and the health of the rest and future children" (Зечевих 1970: 48). The mother in general "does not dare to weep for a child uncontrollably" (Ястребов 1886: 464). In the Crnorečki ('Black river') district, it was believed that the father should not mourn the death of the first child so that future children would not die (Мачај 1892: 156). In the villages of Aleksinsko Pomoravje, parents did not go to the cemetery (Антонијевић 1971: 159); instead, they had to go around the house three times from right to left, then lock themselves in the house (Мачај 1892: 165), or, sitting opposite each other, they had to hold bread and wine in their hands with a sieve placed on their heads (Антонијевић 1971: 35).

In the Skopska valley, the parents of the deceased firstborn were not allowed to cry or show their grief; moreover, they had to laugh and have fun, “as if nothing had happened”. The child was buried along with the cradle, belongings, and clothing. In this case, the mother of the child, festively dressed and decorated with flowers, had to sit with the dead child until the funeral participants returned. In addition, it was not acceptable for the mother to visit the grave of the child at any time in the future (Филиповић 1939: 463). In the Mariovo region of Macedonia, the mother of the deceased first child should not show any signs of grief at all, attend the funeral, or wear mourning. Moreover, in order to stop death, she should dance the ceremonial *opo* ‘circular dance’ (from left to right) near the deceased child, perform a ritual and sing a magical song Maced. *за да го пукне лошото* ‘to beat the evil’ (Ристески 1999: 97). Protective actions were also taken in the event that the penultimate child died; parents were decorated with flowers and feathers, which, when visiting the grave, were attached to the cross on the grave on the first Saturday after the death (Шневайс 1929: 270).

The upper limit for the use of the “child’s” version of the funeral rites is the age perceived in traditional culture as the time of transition from childhood to adolescence, in Catholic regions also validated by the confirmation ceremony which marks the achievement of religious maturity, thus 7–12 years (Лозанова 1989: 20). So, in Podolsk province, a deceased child who had not reached the age of seven was celebrated with a “child’s funeral” and it was said that Ukr. *вмерла дитина* ‘a child died’, whereas children older than 7 years were called Ukr. *парубок або дівка* ‘a young boy or girl’ (Етнографічний... 1912: 387) and buried as adults – Ukr. *як дорослу людину* (ibid.: 388). The age of the deceased – 7 years – called for specific aspects of ritual practice, including functionally significant forms of verbal communication, funeral laments in particular, as well as a special form of notification of death in some South Slavic regions.

The symbolic increase in social status and age was reflected in the vestments of the dead. So, besides the fact that the toys the children played with during their lifetime were usually put in the coffin (Мијатовић 1907: 76), as well as various sweets, Ukr. *медівнички* ‘honey-cakes’, *поморанчи* ‘oranges’, the dead children were also clothed, Ukr. *як до слюбу: дівчину у вінок, хлопця у кучму з квіткою* ‘as for the wedding: a wreath for the girl, a fur-cap with a flower for the boy’ (Етнографічний... 1912: 339). Since they had died before they could be married, it was customary to “place a gilded wax ring on their fingers” (Етн.36.: 300). The motif of the “death-wedding”, present at all levels of the ceremonial text, is found in both the Ukrainian and the South Slavic traditions (Микитенко 1998, 2010: 171).

MORPHOLOGY OF THE VERBAL TEXT

“Mother’s Mourning” as a Genre Type – Content

Vojislav Đurić has classified the laments and highlights several types of burial mourning based on the kinship ties between the mourner and the deceased, as well as on the ceremonial moment, and suggests that the mother’s mourning is “one of the most important types” (Ђурић 1940: 75). Maternal pain of loss cannot be compared with anyone else’s: Serb. *све је друго, мајка једно* ‘everybody is something else, mother is only one’. In Balkan tradition, the mother mourns the death of her children for years, often her entire life.

As observed in Vasil Hadžimanov’s records of gravestone inscriptions for the victims of the 1963 Skopje earthquake, the majority of the fragmentary Macedonian texts focus on the mother’s mourning (Hadžimanov 1965: 75–77). Mental trauma, especially when the only son dies, can inspire deeply penetrating and emotionally impressive laments, for a mourner endowed with a poetic gift. Novak Kilibarda defined such examples as “intimate”, and Novica Šaulić – as “emotional” (Шаулић 1929: 11; this volume, *Српске народне тужбалице*, ‘Serbian Folk Laments’, contains many vivid examples of “emotional” laments for children).

Maternal pain does not subside with the passage of time, and the son or the daughter will always remain a child for the mother. Thus, in the following Ukrainian text (recorded in 1983), a lament for a daughter who tragically died in adulthood and left three children orphaned, the mother refers to her daughter as “a baby”:

Укр. *Йй-йю-йой, дітинко моя, дітинко...*
Я тебе в недільку цілий день визирала,
Я ся тебе не могла дочекати.
Йй-йю-йой, мені ввечері прийшли, повіли,
що моя дитинка перевернулася на тракторі...
 (Мишанич 1999: 34–35)

Йу-йо-йоу, baby, my baby...
 I looked out for you the whole day on Sunday,
 Couldn’t wait for you to come.
 Йу-йо-йоу, in the evening they came and took me,
 Told me that my baby has fallen from a tractor...¹

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 1 All extracts from folklore texts are translated by the author of the article.

The lyrical foundation of laments for children does not weaken with the passage of time, so “epic distance”, which in other cases leads to calmer, more objective descriptions, an expansion of the text, or the appearance of traditional, clichéd motifs, does not apply. Such laments can represent a “whole story”, as, for example, a Bulgarian lament recorded by Rayna Katsarova which tells of a refugee who lost her two children and became a foster mother to three orphans, one of whom also tragically died (Кацарова 1969: 180).

The lyrical subjectivity of the lamenter imbues the elegiac text with subtle lyricism. The sound of an individual voice shapes the vocalized monologue. In such laments, the unabating pain of loss pulsates, and the lamenter’s attention, if it is directed to the past at all, is mainly focused on the expression of the sorrowful feelings of the present moment. At the same time, traditional rhetorical questions are organically combined with the memories that arise associatively in the poetic vision of the performer.

Based on the traditional genre opposition of life and death, laments for children, like other thematic cycles of the genre, emphasize the irrevocability of the loss. This is achieved by reciting the ongoing activities of the deceased’s peers, from whose circle he or she is already excluded. In this thematic cycle, perhaps the most characteristic artistic device seems to be the psychologically justified antithesis of the deceased and his or her peers. The mother’s heart cannot reconcile the tragedy of loss, and every glance at the deceased son’s or daughter’s peers causes her to relive her pain. In the following Ukrainian text (recorded in 1998), a sincere, grief-stricken mother cannot imagine that:

Ukr. <i>Усі будуть дітки ходити,</i>	All children will walk,
<i>Й усі дітки будуть гратись,</i>	And all children will play,
<i>А я ї не матиму кого дивитись...</i>	But I will not have anyone to look after...
(Коваль-Фучило 2000: 201)	

The sincerity of feeling and deep lyricism which permeate the memories – the epic part of the lament – are distinctive stylistic features. As noted above, memories of the past, full of subtle lyricism, are focused on the expression of the present, i.e. grief over loss, and rarely address the need to tell the audience about the personal qualities or actions of the deceased. Thus, the lament becomes a direct conversation between the mother and the child, portrayed in imaginary remembered conversations. This direct speech and associated rhetorical questions serve as a climax of mourning, resolved by a formula which expresses deep despair:

Укр. <i>Ой мамочко, мамочко, будь самейка.</i>	Oh mommy, mommy, stay alone.
<i>Вже мене тепер не будеш глядіти,</i>	You will not look after me any more,
<i>Вже я відійшла від віс назавжди.”</i>	Now I have left you for ever.
<i>Ой моя ти донечко мила,</i>	Oh my dearest daughter,
<i>Як же я тепер буду без тебе?</i>	How will I live without you?
<i>В мене не буду ні радості, ні милості,</i>	I will have neither joy nor happiness,
<i>Як же я буду той денечок переживати?</i>	How will I be able to live through the day?
(Ibid.)	

In traditional records the expression of despair is associatively combined with the idea that it might have been better not to have children than to lose them and their future help and support in old age. Modern records, quite understandably, do not reflect such socio-economic motives.

Among the genre-specific themes and motifs of the cycle, the most elaborate are the traditional, formulaic reproaches of the deceased and of previously deceased relatives who “lured”, or “took them away”. Rhetorical questions ask who the deceased “enraged” after leaving his or her relatives, call for compassion for the loved ones, and speak with them, etc., all shot through with the concepts of unjustified and unnatural death at a young age. Traditional ideas about the continuation of life in the “other world” and concerns for the fate of the deceased are filled with appeals for the previously dead to meet him or her.

Perhaps the most significant traditional motif in maternal laments is the mother’s loneliness, commonly conveyed by the image of ‘a cuckoo’ (Serb. *кукавица*, Ukr. *зозуля*). The connected motif following from it, the *fear* of loneliness, often manifesting in a desire to have died in place of the son or daughter, is not reflected in every detail of the thematic cycle (Вулетич-Вукасовић 1899: 154; Парашкевов 1907: 403). Nevertheless, in laments for small children (as opposed to those who died at a young age in general), these motifs are likely to be more of a tribute to tradition than psychologically motivated moments, and they are more often presented in the event of the death of an only son. In Mariovo, it was customary for a mother to cut her braids as a sign of mourning for her son (Ристески 1999: 96). In the traditional culture of the Balkans, mourning for girls was less extensive and they were, moreover, mourned only by women, while men did not express their mourning in any special way (Филиповић 1967: 144). At the same time, laments for daughters were “often more tender” (Ђурић 1940: 79). When expressing this tenderness, the mourner often stipulates that she is “shameful” as there are mothers whose sons have died, but they are not showing their grief and Serb. *с тијем силе* ‘overcome themselves’.

The socially conditioned, traditional differences in the perception of male versus female children are directly expressed at the lexical level, particularly in

the Serbian and Montenegrin folklore traditions, and in the Serbian language in general, in which words for male children are connected with positive meanings, and for female with negative ones: Serb. *срећа* ‘happiness’ (male children), Serb. *туђа вечера* ‘someone else’s supper’ (daughters). Those who did not have sons were called Serb. *саморанци* ‘lonely’, and those who had several daughters, were characterized in such phrases as Serb. *притисли су га тамнице* ‘gloom is around him’. These ideas defined the corresponding lexical “code” of the lament, oriented mainly to praising deceased males, including children, whereas:

Serb. <i>Ђевоке су празна кућа,</i>	Girl’s empty house,
Ледна кућа, тужна срећа,	Freezing house, sad happiness,
Код њих нема разговора,	There is no talking to them
Но жалости и кукање,	But grief and crying
Куку браћо под ранама!	Oh, my wounded brothers.
(Шаулић 1929: 106)	

The Creativity of Syntax and Lexical Techniques – Texture

Most of the texts of this cycle are constructed taking into account the lyrical moment, achieved by the actualization of corresponding genre syntax and lexical techniques. The text is ordered based on the technique of tautology – lexical, morphological and synonymous – which manifests itself both at the level of rhythm and sound, and at the semantic level, giving the text expressiveness, emotionality and lyrical orientation. Repeatability, variation of thought, and characteristic terseness of information are underlined, with the goal of creating the most expressive image and emotional utterance possible, striving for the emotional unification of performer and audience. Laments for children are a vivid example of characteristic structures, such as the stringing together of homogeneous nominal, diminutive, and verbal endings that create a synonymy of poetic images that unfolds within individual blocks of fragments.

A characteristic feature of the poetic language of mourning as a genre is its “excessive” nature, which is achieved by the use of appropriate lexical-semantic and stylistic textual models that facilitate folk improvisation at moments of the highest emotional and psychological stress. Grouped around traditional stereotyped concepts, the constructions form a fundamentally open synonymic series of texts, supported by rhyme and rhythmic repetition and morphological assimilation. These features are manifested most clearly in the laments for children:

Укр. *Ой, яка ж твоя хата темная, дитино моя висушена! Ой, яка ж твоя хата холодна, дитино моя, дуже голодна. Ой, яка ж твоя хата вузенька, дитино моя, серюю близенька* (Етнографічний... 1912: 54).

Oh, how dark is your house, my dried up child! Oh, how cold is your house, my child, so hungry! Oh, how narrow your house is, my child, so close to my heart.

Appealing to the dead often becomes the main compositional and content element of the text: “The mourner repeats the name of the deceased or another appeal to him or her several times as the only text” (Кацарова 1969: 188). The attribute-nominative concept of the appeal is represented by the name in a stable link with determinants (qualitative or predicative). In addition to stereotypical forms, bright metaphorical images and metonymic names appear spontaneously in the stream of improvisation, the laconism of which eliminates the need for detailed poetic tropes: Bulg. *мило чедо, загубено* ‘dear child lost’; *мила рожбо* ‘dear mother’s child’; *хубаво чедо на мама* ‘beautiful mother’s child’; *мамина игроорка* ‘mother’s playful girl’; *мамина песнопойка* ‘mother’s singing girl’; *мамина блага душица* ‘mother’s dearest soul’; *мамино цвете, неразуѣфнало* ‘mother’s flower bud’; Maced. *мило чедо, слатко чедо, измачено, застрамено* ‘dear child, sweet child, exhausted, anxious’; *изгор мајке* ‘mother’s conflagration’; *мачна душа* ‘suffering soul’; *златно чедо* ‘golden child’; *златно чупе* ‘golden jar’; *злато ти галено* ‘pampered gold’, etc.

The poetic imagery of the cycle employs, in the main, two favorite artistic “codes”: a) ornithomorphic symbolism (rarely zoomorphic, for example, Bulg. *мило ягне* ‘dear lamb’); and b) the metaphor of a non-color or prematurely faded greens and flowers.

Ornithomorphic Code

The notion of a deceased person arriving to visit relatives as a small bird is one of the archetypal images in the lament tradition, but in texts about children this artistic device is permeated with a deep lyricism that creates expressive associative images. Defining children as chicks is closely related to the corresponding verbal attribute, itself aimed at creating an image full of tenderness and lyricism:

Bulg. *Изфрѣкнахте, мамо, като пиленца...* (Кауфман Н., Кауфман Д. 1985: 255).

My children fluttered away as chicks...

Ukr. *А ти ж нам, пташечко, цебетала й нас потішала,*

А хто ж буде цебетати, наша дочечко, наша цебетушечко? (Мишанич 1999: 32)

You have twittered for us, our little birdie, you gave us joy,

Who will sing for us now, our songbird?

The text fragment may represent a detailed tirade, as, for example, in a Bulgarian text in which the deceased daughter, who was such a notable Bulg. *песнопойка* ‘singer’ that people stopped to listen to her singing during her lifetime, is expected to return in the form of a sparrow:

Bulg. <i>И гледа, мама, и мисли:</i>	Mother watches and thinks
Дано се Пенка престори	Whether Penka will come
С некая гадинка да мине;	As a snake to her,
Дано с’ врапците премине	Or if she will come with sparrows
С’ врапците малко врапченце,	As a small sparrow,
Мама ще да га познае,	Mother will recognize her
Ако ми буде с врапците.	If she comes with sparrows.
(Маринов 1892: 242)	

A characteristic feature is the unfolded synonymic series of nominative-attribute combinations of ornithomorphic / zoomorphic / plant code with a general desemantization of the image. At the same time, the choice of the appropriate metaphor depends on both the poetics of traditional folklore and the artistic skill of a particular performer.

Plant Code

The main artistic and poetic technique of the cycle is the use of the lexico-semantic models of the “plant code”, fixed within the frame of metaphorical constructs. The metaphors of unblown greenery, withered flowers, or unripe fruits form a logical whole, designed to emphasize the prematurity of death. A metaphor is created based on a nominative-predicative or nominative-attributive model together with the introduction of a corresponding epithet. The attribute ‘green’, which refers to the semantic sphere of life and is associated with the plant world, in any folklore tradition means youth, as evidenced by the semantic intersections * young- / *green- (Толстой 1995: 316).

As a series of synonymous attributes expands, the text introduces the epithets Maced. *росан* ‘covered with dew’, Serb. *миришљави* ‘fragrant’, based on which an expressive metaphor of a flower, prematurely torn out by the inexorable death, is built.

In the Serbian tradition, the use of the plant code in laments for children is associated with the distinction between male and female trees. The “male” refers to the folklore symbols of heroic strength, endurance, courage – Serb. *бор* ‘pine’, *јаблан* ‘poplar’, *јавор* ‘sycamore’. Among the most beloved “female” trees is Serb. *јелвица* ‘spruce’, while an additional level of meaning is seen in the inherent attributes of the green denotata, and by the introduction of a synonymous definition – Serb. *танка јелвице моја* ‘my fine spruce’.

In the Ukrainian tradition of burial mourning and, in particular, in laments for children, the epithet “green” usually appears as an attribute of place and a marker of “this” world, rendered as a component of a poetic formula:

Ukr. *Пойду я тільки у зелений садочок, да вирву я кленовий листочок, да прикрию я своєї донечки слідочок, щоб і зозулі не кували, щоб і пташечки не літали, щоб моєї донечки сліду не із топтали* (Малинка 1898: 100).

I will go to my little green garden, pick a green maple leaf, and cover my daughter's footprint, so that cuckoos don't call, and birds don't fly, and they do not step on my little daughter's footsteps.

Color Code

‘Red’ (and, synonymously, ‘pink’) seems to be more common in the Ukrainian tradition; its functional-semantic role in the funeral laments is associated with folklore-poetic symbolism as a whole. As a symbol of beauty, health, and life of “this” world, the attribute is usually present in the synonymic series of nominative and attributive constructions in the metaphorical address to the deceased, and often constitutes an intentional characteristic of the denotata: Ukr. *ягідко* ‘a little berry’, *цвіт* ‘a flower’, *яєчко* ‘an egg’, *крашаночка* ‘Easter (coloured) egg’, *черешенько* ‘a sweet cherry’, *маківка* ‘a poppy’; Maced. *цорвен трондафил* ‘a red pink (carnation)’. Due to this “redundant” semantic repetition, the attribute can be omitted or replaced with a synonym symbolizing the flowering of nature:

Ukr. *Моя дитиночко, моя рудиночко... і моя роза повная, і моя роза червона, і моя ягода повная, і мій цвіточок, і моя крашаночко!* (Малинка 1898: 100).

My baby, my darling... and my rose in bloom, and my red rose, and my ripe berry, and my flower, and my Easter egg!

This overview of textual attributes would be incomplete without mentioning the ‘gold’ and ‘silver’ epithets, incorporated into the text to express the highest emotional measure. These are emphasized, for example, by the superlative form of the adjective ‘silver’ – Ukr. *найсрібнісенька*, or by a nominal construction which can also take on adjectival definition (Ukr. *дитино моя, золото моє, золото моє червоне* ‘my child, my gold, my red gold’). While widely represented in other cycles of burial mourning, in laments for children this attribute seems to be the most prevalent and stable in both the Ukrainian and South Slavic traditions. Widely represented in the Balkan-Slavonic material, the attribute relies on a common technique for the glorification of the deceased, primarily male, but may be present in a text dedicated to a young daughter as seen in the “golden apple” formula:

Bulg. <i>Раденце, златна ябълко...</i>	Radentse, golden apple...
моята златна ябълка,	My golden apple,
ама я малко подържах,	I held it for a short time
та чи я низ брег изпуснах	And it rolled down the shore –
не можах да я удържа...	I couldn't catch it...
(Кауфман Н., Кауфман Д. 1985: 154)	

The introduction of the “golden apple” metaphor to the poetic fabric is plausible both from the point of view of folklore poetics and the influence of the region’s epic traditions (manifesting the synonymy of ‘gold’ / ‘green’ attributes (Serb. *моја руко, зелена јабучко* ‘my hand, green apple’; *по тубрету злаћене јабучке* ‘golden apples on a tray’), as well as in terms of the presence of a death / wedding motif in the mourning for death at a young age. The symbolic use of a golden apple is common in the wedding ceremony and in the case of an unmarried death, it becomes a feature in the funeral rites. In the event of the death of a boy or a girl, Bulgarians usually made *оруглицата на смърта* ‘a death tree’ – a type of a wedding tree with chopped off branches, to which an apple or a quince covered with gold foil was attached (Маринов 1892: 249). The Serbs danced with a branch and an apple, which they then laid in the grave (Зечевих 1970: 118), while the Ukrainian text uses a metaphorical address to the deceased in a genre-specific construction, exhibiting the semantics of separation: Укр. *моє яблучко одкотилося* ‘my small apple has rolled away’ (Мишанич 1999: 34). Furthermore, in the Balkan-Slavic tradition, the symbol of the apple seems to have broader mythological connotations, with its presence in the ornaments of ancient tombstones found in a number of places in the region noted by Đurić in the *Appendix to Vojislav Čajkanović Dictionary* (Чајкановић 1985: 275).

CONCLUSION

The poetic features of funeral laments for children seem to be contiguous with the ethno-poetic tradition of a particular region, reflecting the universals of the genre characteristics of ritual texts. In every folklore tradition, artistic symbolism turns out to be a shared component of the texts’ poetical structure, offering models that are prevalent in certain traditions as well as characteristic features of the genre as a whole. Considering the inevitably incomplete understanding of the poetic system of laments for children, associated with the need for a comprehensive analysis of the genre in related traditions, and taking into account the inter-genre relationships of each particular folklore tradition, we can nevertheless conditionally identify stable manifestations in folkloric-artistic imagery and some deep conceptual models related to the universality of human experiences and feelings.

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Mano obuolėlis toli nuriedėjo: vaikų laidotuvių raudų poetika ukrainiečių ir pietų slavų liaudies tradicijose

O K S A N A M Y K Y T E N K O

S a n t r a u k a

Raktažodžiai: laidotuvių raudos, vaikai, etnopoetika, ukrainiečių ir pietų slavų folkloras.

Ypatingą vaikų laidojimo apeigų pobūdį lemia tradicinė pernelyg ankstyvos mirties samprata, kuri atsispindi ir laidotuvių raudose. Tokie atvejai paprastai sulaukia daugiausia užuojautos ir nuoširdžiausio gailėsčio – tai rodo ir labai emocingas lyrinis teksto pagrindas. Kita vertus, mirusio kūdikio ar pirmagimio gedėti nebūdavo įprasta. Mirus nekrikštytam kūdikiui, pavainikiui, pirmagimiui ar gimus negyvam kūdikiui, kurie buvo laikomi „nešvariais“, buvo siekiama pašalinti pamatinę *savas* – *svetimas* opoziciją, todėl jų palaikai būdavo laidojami arba už kapinių ribų, pavyzdžiui, už keturiasdešimties žingsnių nuo kapinių tvoros, ir be kryžiaus, arba atskiroje kapinių dalyje. Laidotuvių apeigose aiškiai matoma tendencija pakelti socialinį mirusio vaiko statusą ir amžiaus ribą (pvz., tam naudojamos įkapės). Apeiginės raudos šiuo atveju turi dvi plotmes – ne tiktai semantiniu, bet ir temų bei vartojamų poetinių priemonių požiūriu; tai atitinka bendrą apeigos pobūdį. Šiame raudų cikle bene svarbiausias atrodo *mirties* – *vedybų* motyvas. Ukrainiečių ir pietų slavų tradicijose šis motyvas aptinkamas visuose apeiginio teksto lygmenyse ir yra esminis. Gilūs jausmai ir nuoširdus lyrizmas, persmelkiantys prisiminimus, sudaro epinę raudos dalį ir lemia išskirtinį jos stilių. Būdingas raudų poetinės kalbos bruožas yra tam tikras „perteklius“, kuris pasiekiamas kuriant atitinkamus leksinius-semantinius ir stilistinius teksto modelius, palengvinančius improvizaciją paties didžiausio emocinio ir psichologinio sukrėtimo metu. Pagrindinė meninė ir poetinė priemonė, pasitelkiama vaikams skirtose raudose, yra „augalinio kodo“ leksiniai-semantiniai modeliai, įtvirtinti metaforinėse struktūrose. Poetinis teksto stilius iš esmės remiasi dviem meniniais kodais: augalų simbolika (vytimo, džiūvimo metaforos) ir paukščių (zoologine) simbolika. Metafora kuriama naudojant nominatyvinį-predikatinį ar nominatyvinį-atributinį modelius ir pridėdant atitinkamą epitetą, nusakantį žalumą. Taip pat verta atkreipti dėmesį į tradicinę opoziciją tarp vyriškos ir moteriškos lyties vaikų, kuri ypač ryški pietų slavų folklore ir kuri taip pat išreiškiama leksinėmis priemonėmis. Raudų stilistika ir kompozicija yra būdingos improvizuotam apeiginiam folkloro tekstui. Išryškinus tam tikrai tradicijai būdingus poetinės struktūros elementus, galima daryti išvadą, kad laidotuvių raudų tekstai aktualina esmines universaliąsias folkloro konstantas ir jų derinius. Negana to, raudų poetikos kūrimo principai ir sandara yra giliai įsišakniję jų tekstuose, o tai suteikia pagrindą vertinti šį žanrą (taip pat ir vaikų raudų ciklą) kaip endogeninį slavų folkloro kodą.

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