

German-Language Prose of the 1960s: 'Fiction and Non-Fiction', Intertextuality

By

Gilfanova Gulnara Tavkilevna

Kazan Federal University, Naberezhnye Chelny Institute of Kazan Federal University

89871847163

ORCID ID 0000-0002-8173-6268

Scopus ID 56426464200

Email: Gulnara_tav@mail.ru

Salimzanova Dilyara Ajratovna

Kazan Federal University, Naberezhnye Chelny Institute of Kazan Federal University

89872755404

ORCID ID 0000-0001-8056-1673

Email: gilfanova_di@list.ru

Abstract

The article analyzes the specificity of the individual style of the famous German-speaking poet and writer Johannes Bobrowski. The author's multifaceted literary talent was vividly manifested in his original prose: genre originality, 'non-frame' compositional structure of short stories and novels; use of oral speech and careful selection of linguistic means; a conceptually new look at world events and Germany's tragic past; fiction and non-fiction, intertextual dialogue with German classics.

Keywords: artistic historicism, fiction and reality, intertext, German prose, J. Bobrowski

1. Introduction

The prose fiction of German literature in the second half of the XX century (taking into consideration East Germany) is undergoing radical changes, "posing" new questions, which became major in the critical years of the last century (1990s), especially at the turn of the century (XX-XXI centuries). In the creative laboratory of the German-speaking poet and writer Johannes Bobrowski (1917-1965) works of a new level were created, especially connected with a synthesis of "fiction and non-fiction" and intertextuality.

Philosophical ideas of German thinkers (Klopstock, Herder and Hamann) were the basis for artistic historicism in the style by Bobrowski: creation of universal history; preservation of universal value of each national culture and geographical space, homeland of J. Bobrowski, Sarmatia (part of Eastern Europe between Vistula and Volga, densely populated by Sarmatians, inhabitants of Russian steppes). He writes a selection of short stories "Belendorf and other stories" ("Boehlendorff und andere Erzählungen"), "Mouse holiday and other stories" ("Mäusefest und andere Erzählungen"), "Prophet" ("Der Mahner"), novels "Levin's Mill" ("Levins Mühle: 34 Sätze über meinen Großvater", 1964) and "Lithuanian claviers" ("Litauische Claviere", 1966). He speaks about the most significant, the main thing for him in hints, at the level of subtext: the unreal happening talks about the real tragedy of the German people, about the German invasion of Poland (the novel "Mouse Festival").

The problem of intertextuality as a category of intertextual interaction is also relevant for Bobrowski's prose. Intertext is the generation of this process, and elements of the predecessor text in the form of quotations, allusions and reminiscences are its components. It

becomes the basis of a creative dialogue between author and reader.

According to R. Barthes opinion, intertextuality is the key to understanding and interpreting of any work, which “<...> is woven of quotations, references, and echoes; these are all cultural languages <...>, old and new that go through the text and create a powerful stereophony”, the game of quotations is in fact a game of cultural “languages”, in which “no one language has an advantage over another.” (Bart, 1989). It is legitimate in this connection to speak of Bobrowski's individual style, which is based on the preceding literary tradition.

The intertextual aspect of Johannes Bobrowski's creativity work is the subject of research by foreign and domestic literary scholars, as evidenced by Andreas Degen's collection of bibliographic studies, which includes over 300 sources (Degen, 2017): Maria Bare and others "Voices of the Past" (2012) ” (Behre et al., 2012), Andreas Degen“ Poetics of Prose (short stories and novels) by J. Bobrowski ”(2004) (Degen, 2004), Otto Eberhardt "The novel by Bobrowski "Levin's Mill. The role of “musicians” and music and commonality with romantic poetics”” (2012) (Eberhardt, 2012), Ola Fix “Polyphonic author and polyphonic text. Bobrowski's story "In Memory of Pinnau" (2011) (Fix, 2011), Daniela Friel "Poetics of Bobrowski's short story" A Letter from America ". The problem of text perception” (2016) (Frickel & Filla, 2016) and others.

2. Methods

The artistic comprehension of German history of the 20th century fills the poetic and prosaic works of J. Bobrowski with content. Using archival documents describing the chronicle, he "artistically interprets what really happened" (Striedter, 1977).

German literary critic P. Albert writes that the writer managed in his epic works to recreate a complex historical picture of German reality at the end of the 19th and first third of the 20th centuries and to make an invaluable contribution to highlighting the problem of "overcoming the past" in Germany (Albert, 1990).

The ideological and artistic complexity of his works is due to the identity of the author's worldview, which has incorporated elements of various humanistic cultural and philosophical systems (Klopstock, Herder, Hamann), including those developed by humanity in the Middle Ages.

The synthesis of the intertext of German classics in the prose of Johannes Bobrowski and the active ‘inclusion’ of fiction in real events described by the writer in his neo-historical novelism reveals stylistic features, namely, the multidimensionality of the author’s work.

3. Results and Discussion

The fictional and the real, in a special way, are overlap in of Bobrowski's story "The Mouse Holiday". From the very beginning the story gives the impression of being unreal: the reader finds himself in an empty shop, where the only item is furniture, a chair. The main character, named Moise Trumpeter, invites the guest to sit down, and on the threshold, at the door, in the light of the moon, mice are hustling, trying to share a crust of bread. The apparent simplicity of the story is clearly imaginary, behind the "avarice" of the superficial, at first glance, action of the novel is hidden deeper meaning. The impression of absurdity created by this stage composition is enhanced by the appearance of Moise's guests, who seem to occupy all space: the sun and the moon. The moon, having come to visit, "loses" its unreality and

becomes Moise's interlocutor. Moise and Moon, "the old man and the old woman", watch the dancing mice and "rejoice", a kind of idyll has been recreated in front of the readers. The description of the first days of the war in Warsaw is accompanied by a "play of light and shadow". The change, which takes place almost imperceptibly, is fundamental: a German soldier enters the scene - a game, the tale ends abruptly. The combination of the real and the surreal is concentrated in a small space.

The author visualizes the light in the image of the moon as opposed to the young soldier who embodies the "shadow." The involuntary spectators of the "mouse theater", Moise and the German soldier, play certain roles as historical objects on the stage of the "world theater", roles that are imposed on them by the political circumstances of Europe in the beginning of World War II. J. Bobrowski approaches to the description of the image of the representative of the so-called new power in a delicate way. The writer endows the German with the traits of a typical son of an average German bourgeois: A young man, a "mediocre" fellow traveler, not necessarily inclined to aggression, he becomes unconsciously and emotionally as indifferent part of a functioning destruction machine (Dehn & Dehn, 1972; Ge, 2021; Ge & Lai, 2020).

4. Summary

In the second novel by J. Bobrowski "Lithuanian claviers" (eighth chapter), intertextual connections are manifested. The correlation of the previous ("The Seasons") and the new texts is clearly traced, the writing of an opera about Kr. Donelaitis ("The Singer of His People"). The opera is a work about the Lithuanian poet Donelaitis, and, at the same time, is the result of the joint creative work of the philologist Voigt, the musician Gaven and the teacher Poshka. The polyphony in their opera is a multicolored folk life. The folk memory of the long past events of the German and Lithuanian people's lives in the image of the teacher Poshka, a collector of Lithuanian folk songs (dain). The text of the eighth chapter of the second novel by Bobrowski ("Lithuanian claviers") is permeated with "dotted quotations" from the poem of the Lithuanian poet ("Blessings of Autumn"). The author refers the reader to the text of the poem of K. Donelaitis and begins this chapter of the novel with the words: "Let us give the name as "Lithuanian wedding" or "At the Lithuanian wedding" (Bobrowski).

From the fragments below it follows that I. Bobrovsky conducts a creative dialogue with Herder and Donelaitis, turns to the life of peasants, expresses a popular point of view, trying to find the reasons for the tragedy of the German people (previous wars and the last - World War II), looking for ways (methods) of its solutions: "Let's revive the description <...> We will populate <...> people <...> we will settle Pime <...> Laures, <...> Enskis, <...> Jonas <...>" (Bobrowski); "This damned Slunkyus, a sneak, a loafer <...> and his uncle, nicknamed Peleda, which means a mouse eater <...>, a chatterbox Bleberis" (Bobrowski); "A wedding takes place here" (Bobrowski).

5. Conclusions

The Sarmatian space, which exists only in the imagination of the writer (the first novel Levin's Mill"), an accidental guest (moon) at the Mouse Festival (the story "Mouse Festival"), personifying the unreal and coming to life in the artistic text of J. Bobrowski allow tracing the connection between the fictional and the real ... This determines the specificity of the artistic historicism of Johannes Bobrowski. The artistic interpretation of the intertext of the classical heritage of Herder and the embodiment of the ideas of German humanists, Lithuanian philologists about the unity of the German and Slavic peoples (Lithuanians, Russians, Poles,

Gypsies) through art, folklore and common history is the second novel of the writer "Lithuanian Claviers".

Thus, we came to the conclusion that the texts of the novels of Johannes Bobrowski are intertextual, since their themes are connected with historical events and have a documentary basis. However, reality and fiction are synthesized in them in a special way and the transitions are not specifically indicated. All "voices" are united not only in sound, but also in the content of what was discussed by the means of them. The "voices" of the past personify philosophical ideas and become part of the intertext. Thanks to this, Bobrowski's prose simultaneously acts both as a "capacitor of cultural memory" and as a "generator of new meanings" (Lotman, 1972), which arise as a result of the transformation of quotations, dialogue with German classics.

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About Author

Salimzanova Dilyara Airatovna

Candidate of Philology, Associate Professor of Philology at the Naberezhnye Chelny Institute of KFU. The author of 50 scientific papers (including in English) and 5 monographs. The developer of 2 electronic learning resources for foreign language teaching in a higher educational institution. Areas of expertise: phraseology, linguistic world image, multilingualism.

Gilfanova Gulnara Tavkilevna

Associate Professor of Philology at the Naberezhnye Chelny Institute of KFU. Research and Teaching and Learning Specialist on master's and bachelor's programs. Author of more than 80 scientific articles, including those indexed in the Scopus, WOS, RSCI databases. Areas of Expertise: artistic experience; individual style; historical reconstruction; reception; historical prose; J. Bobrowski.