

УДК 233-534

Ritual as a Way of Change, Preservation, Stabilization: Extrahistorical, Prehistorical and Historical Time

Elena A. Lisina*

Analitika Rodis

7 Rogozhskaya st., Noginsk, 142400 Russia¹

Received 3.02.2011, received in revised form 16.06.2011, accepted 18.10.2011

The article is devoted to the question of social and cultural functions of a ritual. The analyses of rituals and customs of the past and present show the growing meaning of rituals in human life. The author comes to the conclusion that a ritual, let it be traditional or spontaneous, practiced by thousands of people or by an individual, sacral or ordinary, supports personal consciousness of participation in the over-personal creating and organizing the world.

Keywords: ritual, social human society, culture, myth, symbol, allegory.

Here the paradox comes out: the pressure of thought, search, creative energy in the highest degree are shown not in least overregulated to life sphere (in a life), and within the limits of the most severe regulations – in the ritual.

A.K. Bayburin

Adaptability and modern society

Current state of both Russian society and the world community is characterized by the instability shown at all levels, from economic to the ideological. In this situation special value is given to the scientific problem of adaptability, that is an ability for changing and acclimatizing to the condition of the new environment (natural or social).

As J. Petruciyova notes, «The question is the following: will the multicultural civilization

create new cultural identities due to the change of the existing identities, or will it create a society without identities and without any depth in that sense that cultural identity will refer to the private sphere of human life (viz. The problem of correlation of cultural and civil identities in multicultural societies)?»¹.

So, in the year 2010 the collective monograph reflecting the results of the Programs of basic researches of the Russian Academy of Sciences Presidium «Adaptation of the People and

* Corresponding author E-mail address: analitikarodis@yandex.ru

¹ © Siberian Federal University. All rights reserved

Cultures to Environment Changes, Social and Technogenic Transformations» (2006-2008) was published². It considers the issues of adaptability, social evolution and development from various points of view (such as linguistic factors, social processes and archaeological data), however hardly ever mentions the ritual behaviour which is, as it is known, «adaptive from the several points of view»³. Thus the data testifying to high level of ritualization of separate epochs is repeatedly mentioned in the monograph.

This inattention to the adaptive role of ritual behaviour can be possibly explained by the fact that within the limits of the solid collective monograph (and, as far as it can be understood, within the limits of the Program of basic researches) first of all the results and the signs of adaptation and social evolution (from the point of view of archaeology, history, linguistics) are considered; whereas adaptation mechanisms, except for economic and household ones, practically remain out of the researchers' attention. At the same time, the issues of the society adaptation mechanisms for changes in nature and environment seem to be the most important for constructing an adaptation and generalization of adaptive experience of the mankind.

Regarding the experience of the world researches of the ritual, it is one of the most powerful, flexible and widespread mechanisms of adaptation of the individual and society to any changes in any sphere. «The beginning of the XXI century is marked by revival of rituals in all spheres of public life, including religion»⁴. Also as preverbal practice, the ritual is one of the most ancient mechanisms of cognition and accumulation of experience.

The social functions of the ritual: from the prehistoric to the future

Functionality (social) of the ritual is determined, as a rule, by quite a small amount of

directions. So, G. Dumézil, the author of many works on the social role of ritual, allocated the following basic functions of ritual: religious and legal (morals, law, order), military, productive and economic. These three functions are transparently connected with the trinomial caste division of the archaic society into priests, soldiers and farmers.

E. Durkheim marked out the functions of the individual socialization (disciplining, preparatory) and the integrating function (group/collective association), and also reproducing (traditions, norms, values) and psychotherapeutic effect of the ritual action. Durkheim's classification of the ritual functions is considered to be one of the most authoritative. Further researches offered lots of other probable social functions of the ritual, from regulatory and ordering⁵ till the function of the external forms of behaviour classification⁶.

Let us try to build a functional model of the ritual formation in the way it can be recreated, proceeding from the modern level of scientific study. This model can have important methodological value for revealing the functions of the ritual on the modern level of its everyday and existential existence. We suggest that the basic difference of our ritual functions system is, first, its considering the chronological model of the ritual functions formation (since the prehuman history time), and second, its highlighting the key moments of the ritual importance for culture and society.

So, N. Tinbergen, researching the social behaviour of animals, also investigates the evolutionary functions of the ritual back in prehuman society⁷. He names the most significant factors of adaptability of the ritual actions: firstly, the «ritualized releasers» are always well appreciable and simple. «Ritualization usually conducts to specialization of the releaser at the presentation of such «sign stimulus», i.e. releasers «materialize» them in a certain sense. Secondly, ritualization aims at making every

releaser different from any other belonging to this or that taxon»⁸. Thus, already in fauna rituals it is possible to see some adaptive functions meant to simplify the cooperation inside the species. In this case, the animal rituality is naturally not connected with a series of myth images in any way; the researcher connects the occurrence of semiotically significant actions, i.e. releasers, with casual «by-products, a discharge of nervous excitation in the form of intentional movements or the displaced activity»⁹. The emotional reaction expressed in non-standard body movements becomes significant and it can be saved in the form of more complicated, ritualized recognizable forms of communication. This way, the initial function of the ritual on the pre-human (=prehistoric) level of its existence was communication.

According to the Nobel prize winner, ethologist K. Lorenz, in the process of genesis the rituals turn from communication forms into «independent motivations of behaviour because they turn to the new purpose, achieving which becomes an organism's pressing need»¹⁰. Further, as the researcher notices, the ritual receives new functions – «that are aggression restraint and building up communication between the representatives of the same species»¹¹. Thus, communicative function, becoming more complicated and specialized, develops into the function of aggression control and building up personal communication; V.D. Shinkarenko designates the three basic functions of ritual arising at this stage as follows: struggle interdiction within one group; closed group deduction; distinguishing from other similar groups. The expected behaviour within one group, or «good manners» as the factor of aggression restraint – is at the same time a marker of separating one group from the others.

So, for example, a teenager's behaviour in the family rather differs from his behaviour in the

company of friends; in other social groups (like sports collective, music “party”, psychological training etc.) there always occurs a change of the social roles, which manifests itself, in particular, in the change of the ritual actions characteristic for the given social group.

It is obvious that the present function of the ritual that is actively working in the modern life, already reveals its adaptability. The ritual (behavioural skills connected with accumulation and transfer of extra verbal experience) becomes a mechanism of adaptation to a new social sphere; thus it is easily acquired and reproduced, along with providing the individual with harmonious assimilation with the new environment.

Most likely, this extrahistorical (rather the human experience of history) stage can determine the occurrence of the guarding function of the ritual. Repetition of the known, development of the familiar became a care guarantee at collision with the probably dangerous unusual. This feature has been noted by the American psychoanalyst E. Berne¹². Safety of the ritual as a traditionally reproduced action, is connected with the fact that «the ritual authorizes only familiar actions or behaviour which has already been repeatedly tried earlier and has not led to any negative experience»¹³. The ritual does not only unite the members of a social group but also acts as the guarantor of their safety.

Gnoseological (or «noethical» after V.N. Nechipurenko,) function of the ritual concerns formation of a human society as it is connected with carrying over the ritual sense to another coordinates system, that is verbal system. So, the most ancient beliefs, as well as religions of modern nonliterate societies, first of all appear as a set of rituals, special schemes of religious behaviour. The myth – a word – becomes a way of subjecting and cognition, interpretation and fixing of the ritual practices, but not vice versa. So, according to the researches carried out by N.A. Bernstein¹⁴,

speech and ritual construction occurs at various morphological levels of the movement genesis, formed on different phylogenetic stages of brain development. In the beginning, at the spatial field level (C) the ritual is formed, and then with the advent of the level (D), after millenia, – so is the speech.

As the English religion researcher R. Smith notices, people form general behaviour rules earlier than expressing these general principles verbally; political institutions are older than political theories, and in the same way religious institutions are older than religion theories¹⁵. V. Emelyanov writes about the pre-mythological ritual texts of Sumer¹⁶. So, as a way of the world cognition and experience preservation the ritual precedes the verbal form, representing possibly the most ancient, syncretic, synesthetic form of cognition dramatically different from the abstract-verbal form rooting in the subconscious.

As an explanatory example it is possible to present, in particular, two close definitions of two areas of life given by C. Castaneda in his theory of tonal and nagual. Without going deep into the issues of ethnographic reliability of his books, let us note out the lines which determine the relation between tonal and the world of logically-verbal understanding (rationality, verbality, limitation, sociality), and between nagual and the ritual part of human behaviour (extrarationality, corporality, extratemporariness, metaphysics). As Castaneda wrote, «Tonal and nagual are two different worlds. In one you speak, and in the other you act»; it is possible to witness nagual, but it is impossible to speak about it. Describing tonal as the world structuring experience that grasping the person soon after the birth, Castaneda precisely reproduces the formation of the logical and conceptual device of the modern culture with its eternal inner dialogue, which is opposed to the unspeakableness of nagual.

From the chosen point of view it is possible to comment on the plot formation scheme constructed by V. Propp: ritual (induction) – myth (e.g., about a hero) – fairy tale (e.g., about Fool the Snakefighter). The literary plot with its preservation of the ritualistic roots («loss – search – finding» = «death – afterlife – a new birth» plot scheme) becomes a follow-up of this chain. Reducing the level of esoteric, the verbal language of the plot tried to master the ritual in the form of a myth, fairy tale, a work of literature. Survivability of the ritual form in the plot explains both its importance for the culture and the complexity of its verbal interpretations: becoming a myth or a fairy tale, the ritual suffers damage and loses itself.

It is no coincidence that till today the ritual cannot be retold (verbalized, explained, interpreted) well enough: «The irreflexive behavioural character of the ritual reveals itself in its cognitive characteristics as a «silent knowledge», inaccessible to focal consciousness»¹⁷. This feature of the ritual “is blamed” by some researchers of making the ritual action “senseless”, asemantic etc. «In our opinion, imperceptibly and absolutely ritual does not deserve the bad reputation it has gained among researchers: it is unanimously estimated as an empty external shell which does not have “deep” spiritual value, as a form of authoritative control»¹⁸. Actually, as the modern historical and ethnographic data show, the ritual is not “insufficient”, but it is a form alternative for the verbal focusing of sense, knowledge, preservation and transfer of experience. The multithousand-year existence of the ritual along with speech tells also in favour of this conclusion – possibly, the senses transferred by the ritual are at a certain degree inexpressible neither within the framework of a myth, nor of a scientific work, no matter whether it is a work on history, the ethnography, the anthropology, mythology or

psychoanalysis. Nevertheless the description of the ritual accessible to verbal language, its social functions in particular, is at least capable of aiding the rehabilitation of gnoseological potential of the ritual and its multilevel importance that is beyond the horizons of not only ordinary knowledge, but also of any verbally expressed thinking.

Further, among the ritual functions it is necessary to note preservation and transfer of experience from generation to generation; it is «one of the ways of social communication as it represents a way of nonverbal transfer of socially loaded senses»¹⁹. Obviously, the ritual was the first way of forming historical, chronological thinking, the first reference point of time structuring in the prehistoric world view: «Formation of any experience begins with a ritual»²⁰.

The ritual was a way of recreation and affirmation of the sequence that is identified with the sequences of natural life; it is reflected in the calendar cycle. Moreover, the ritual structured experience, creating “notches” (V. Turner), the marks that support the memory. By reproducing a ritual, its executors move from one mark to another, broadcasting the senses which are thus transferred from one person to another, from one generation to another. That is when «the world kept by the memory continued its existence and was transferred to the subsequent generations in the form of signs and symbols»²¹. Then the custom/ceremony participates in generalization of the past experience: «the ritual focuses attention, including it in some certain frameworks; it recovers memory, connecting the present with the relevant past»²².

Here it is possible to give an example from one of the most ancient sacred books of mankind – the Holy Bible. The accessory to God of the selected people is marked not in the last instance by their execution of some certain rituals: so, the features of sacrificial rituals (in particular, refusal of human sacrifice) and

circumcision characterize Abraham’s belief; restoration of circumcision, celebrating Easter with bread and many other features of ritualistic character are the main features of the early Judaism till the First temple. The abundance of everyday life ritual details in the first books of the Bible, undoubtedly, reflecting the historical data, testifies to the ritualistic nature of the religion formation, giving an example of the purest, passionate and metaphysically high monotheism in the Ancient world.

The eternal circulation of natural/life cycles reproduced in the ritual could not do without its changes and crises: day was replaced by night, spring – by summer, childhood – by youth, and life – by death. Ritualistic predictability of these transitions caused psychological comfort of the individuals (or groups, in case of induction), experiencing the transition moments. Psychological conditionality of the transition ceremony execution has been investigated well enough, since the fundamental work by Van Gennep. In the works by other researchers we also see the idea of the psychological value of the ritual at judgement of changes and the transitive conditions, precisely formulated by A. Bayburin: «The ritual is a special program of behaviour which helps the collective to overcome the critical points of life»²³. By V.N. Nechipurenko’s remark, the ritual «underlies the formation of social institutes that serve as a tool of rhythmic regulation of the social order»²⁴. V.N. Toporov directly speaks about «a dense, evident and total network of identifications with its rules of transitions (transformations)»²⁵, developed in the mythological and ritualistic consciousness for the purpose of maintaining the metaphysical identification between the human being and space, micro- and macrocosm.

Nevertheless, the therapeutic effect of this ontological feature of the ritual has hardly been investigated for modern consciousness and has

not yet received any theoretical comment in sociology despite the fact that the present days are the time of fast changes characterized by the change of social, material, household, ideological, cultural conditions of life more than any other time.

The ritual can be considered as an original energizer that eases or removes stressful conditions, both on the level of a single individual, or the whole society. By means of its game and catalyzing functions the ritual facilitates releasing the aggression and, therefore, the relief of social and individual pressure. The given thesis can be confirmed by considering various socio-, ethno- and subcultural communities, though absolutely polar in the geographical and actually cultural aspect (if we take it in the system of values), and also a number of modern psychotherapeutic and psychocorrectional procedures and/or practices.

Popular writer and psychologist Robert Johnson notices: like the burning bush which protected the eyes of Moses from a sight of Jehovah, like the animal forms of Zeus covering Semela from his enormous force (until she, by nonsense, wished to see Zeus in all his divine might and was killed as a result), the ritual protects the fragile ego of consciousness of the individual and the tribe from the brute force of the unconscious. When the ancient and primitive people, sending the rituals, said that «they are going to gods», in their archaic language it meant that they approached the great and awful archetypes of the collective unconscious²⁶.

We could prove our statements, in particular, even with the method of casual sorting of the analysis subjects: on the example of one of the day circle divine services, liturgies (orthodox Christianity), worship ritual (Tantrism – see above), or on the example of the ritual symbolizing the seven steps of the soul achievements (the description of the sheikh – Senussi) in one of

the mystic orders of Islam, or on the example of the pastime in Parisian «brasserie» (as personal ritual), or rituals of Ancient China etc. The harmonizing function of ritual is visually shown in all of them.

Realization of the ritual's transitive function is closely connected with the fact that the ceremony, as a rule, is not a spontaneous, momentarily generated action in any way. Like art culture of the traditional aesthetics times (the Middle Ages in particular), it has no author, it is not generated from anything, but aspires to be as close reproduction of the immemorial sample as possible, thus restoring the due order of things, once set and nowadays supported by means of the ritual: «Recurrence of time and «roundness» of the Earth reflect the general initial scheme which sets the general rhythm to space and time, creates certain security, guarantee, «cosiness», adjusts the expectation of what has already happened, prevents the horror that is invariably connected by a person living in the space epoch with open condition, with openness, especially with linearity in its purest way»²⁷.

The ritual can and should be considered as a general, archetypal scheme of transformation of any change, no matter if «it concerns relations, work or the points of view...»²⁸. The ritual is a kind of mediator that helps to overcome oppositions, «to cross the semantic border» (Yuri Lotman) and thus to make any changes less stressful.

Repetition of the past, true and correct, becomes the guarantor of reconstruction of meaningfulness of the life order, a sign of victory of the (traditional) Cosmos over the (casual, not ordinary, unexpected) Chaos. So, for example, building a temple has the sense as an attempt of reconstructing the Universe structure; in the same way, both a housewife, and a business lady, preparing the New Year reception, will prefer cooking the traditional goose with apples and Russian salad, – not because modern recipes (or

take-away food from a supermarket) are worse or less tasty, but because the ritualized New Year's feast should, on a subconscious impulse, recreate "the eternal", order, traditional image of the New Year table²⁹. In the modern society taken as a whole, rather many actions of ritualistic character can be approximately explained with the words like «they have been doing this for ages» (i.e. so should be; so it is correct!) – such ceremonies bringing deep satisfaction like, for example, baptizing babies in unreligious families, superstitions like knocking against the wood and many other things. We should not forget that such «superficial» explanation is connected with complexities of verbalizing the ritual aspect of life; the real explanation, which is the aspiration to recreate appropriate behaviour model, lies in the subconscious.

Certainly, the times are always changing, and the culture, customs, traditions replace one another. During the time of change, what happens in the ritualistic side of the person and the society? Being orientated towards the repeated, eternal, timeless here facilitates the ritual's finding its another major function, that is transforming, i.e. the function of maintenance of the psychological safety at cardinal crises in the life that are connected with the appearance of something brand new that has never been there before.

Even the Holy Bible example shows that at the preservation of the verbal apparatus and the text support, the ritual image of the faith that inspires it can be almost completely changed (since customs of the Old testament) as the ritual, unlike the book, does not only receive some new interpretations, but can also change under the influence of new trends.

Without a similar ability, the ritual would not have preserved up till now. Practically, we can hardly name any rituals that remained from the archaic mankind. The life of the today's human

is ritualised in the absolutely different way than a couple of centuries ago: it is structured by other ceremonies, often individual and spontaneous, often ordinary. However, no matter how strange it may sound, perhaps, today the transforming function of the ritual takes the major place in the society while in the traditional culture it is not fundamental. The matter is that the person of the last two centuries – let us not forget the Chinese metaphor! – lives in the epoch of changes. The changes in the politics, culture, society are so global and fast that they demand powerful compensatory mechanisms and adaptive practices. This way or another they also have the ritualistic character.

Let us consider such sign of the last century life as the TV. As L. Nabokova and N. Koptzeva note, «The possibilities of the television are unlimited in the sphere of generation and implementation the typical set of images; the essential neo-mythological characteristics of mass media enable us to speak of this phenomenon as of the most active and even aggressive subject of sense-formation in the modern social cognition»³⁰. Watching TV, where along with the news there are entertaining programs, concerts and movies, no doubt, forms easier attitude of the information consumer to the world politics events, accidents and the incidents that are the subject of the news programs. For many people watching TV is an essential morning and evening ritual helping not only to relax, but also to receive some serious and tragic information about changes in our changing world in the softened form compensated by entertaining "layers". The mass media researches are totally right when they speak of the unrealism of the world image created by the news programs, shown alternately with advertisements. However, they may be not considering the implied psychological sense: without the entertaining part, the TV watching ritual wouldn't carry out its transforming function, wouldn't play down

the impression about inevitable changes in the world.

Possibly, the mass character of the rituals in totalitarian regimes is caused by strengthening of this function: as a rule, their establishment is connected with violence, social, economic and cultural revolutions. In these conditions the requirement for ritualistic compensation arises: if not satisfied, it can lead to the regime crash. As I. Demichev notes, «As the principles embodied by the custom are postulated and re-actualized in the ritual, without it the custom loses its meaning and gets lost in the due course that leads to social disintegration»³¹. It is no coincidence that Stalin did not close churches during the Great Patriotic War; refusal of the habitual, settled psychological ceremonial help could lead to revolutionary rebellions in the society exhausted with the reforms of the first five-year planning periods.

As we see, transforming function of the ritual is closely connected with its political function. As a traditional action, the ritual in its political sense, undoubtedly, gravitates to the statement instead of negation, and to conservatism instead of revolution³². For this reason the political function of the ritual is as a rule connected with the statement of the present power, and the force of this cultural action is considerable enough: so, one of properties of arising Soviet culture was ritualizing the public actions (demonstrations, oaths, competitions, etc.). The political institutions of the present time (like elections, referenda, meetings) have a doubtless ritual sense. As Radcliffe-Brown noted, the governor symbolizes the unity of the nation, «and the rituals surrounding him are the things which help to support the patriotic feelings»³³.

Certainly, some actions of ritual character (like meetings, strikes etc.) can express anarchical views or political views oppositional to existing ones, however, as the example of the USSR shows, such tendencies can be transformed, with

the sufficient efforts of the political practice, into corresponding pro-political rituals (e.g. demonstrations or show trails, concerts supporting the dominant party). Thus, political socio-cultural function of the ritual can be connected both with the statement, and with the negation of the existing power, and this tendency in many ways depends on the governmental policy.

In other words, the character of a political ritual depends on its organizers; both meetings and strikes are not spontaneous rituals, but they are organized by certain leaders. V.N. Nechipurenko writes that modern social «secular types of rituals form some kind of a plane projection, a simulacrum (similarity of similarity <...>) of sacral rituals which, unlike simulacra forms of the social organization, keep the living nerve and force of familiarizing with the experience of the numinous»³⁴.

The issue of “turpitude” or sense loss in the modern rituals is complicated enough. No doubt, unlike archaic antiquity, today’s rituals are not connected directly with any sacral experience; nevertheless, the cultural and social functions the ritual performs can give some ground for specification of the axiology of the present rituals. In this respect the theory of traditionalism with its concept of supervalue which defines the development vector of the civilization can be helpful (God in Christian civilizations – Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant; communism during the Soviet period etc.); the difference of the supervalues is not a sufficient basis for strict estimation. Another question is whether it is possible to find any supervalues in the modern Western society; however, here the ritual role cannot be underestimated. Perhaps, it is one of the last ways into the sacral accessible to the modern human, keeping it in the symbolical communication with the possible supervalue.

This way or another, it is necessary to remember that political culture as a part of the

general culture of a society should include actions of ritual character; otherwise the opposition forces offering their ritual actions become more active. Thus, being the form of knowledge and experience accumulation, political rituals gain the features of the people's will expression, though in a rather archaic form.

Further let us get to the communicative side of the ritual. One of its main social and cultural functions is gnoseological; it is carried out in the special forms of the parity of sense and actions within the ritual.

So, the allegoric function is one of the major communicative functions of the ritual. First of all, the ritual (though it is not always considered by researchers) is not what it seems to be, it is not limited to what it consists of: movements and the poses, repeated actions are only the tip of the iceberg, behind (under) which the huge layer of cultural experience is hidden. The ritual was possibly one of the first attempts to express the inexpressible; if consider its pre-verbalism and syncretism, it is possible to speak of the uniqueness and universality of the allegoric function of the ritual. As a form of allegory, it is not connected with the conceptual and logic apparatus of verbal thinking; it transfers understanding of existence by the person in all completeness of its feelings, first of all, in a figurative and artistic way.

Allegorical meaning is the major property of the ritual without which any serious research of the subject is impossible. Its difficulty lies in the in cultural distinctions determining distinctions of the allegory mechanisms: the signs composing the ritual are a part of the sign system opened only for the ritual participants or experts (which means, carriers of the same cultural tradition), and can appear closed for the carriers of other cultures (for example, for ethnographers).

The analysis of the ritual actions' allegoric meanings nowadays is done regularly, only in psychoanalysis and psychotherapeutic practice;

thus in the logic analysis of the ritual it is necessary to consider its extraverbal character resisting to the verbal description, and also its possible polysemy. So, Freud's interpretations of personal rituals are allegorical, in the respect that he deciphers the spontaneous actions of ritual character strictly in one sense concerning complexes of sexual character set in the childhood etc. It is no coincidence that C. Jung introduced the archetype concept into psychoanalysis, expanded and completed Freudian system of interpretation: he added archetypical "top" to the libido "bottom", restoring the rights of collective subconscious on high motivations.

As a whole, the allegoric function of the ritual can be defined as the shortest way to the ontological and existential constants that exists on the subconscious (and nonverbal) level. So, performing some superstitious actions (e.g. spitting over the left shoulder) bears magic function of influence on thin matters, the salvation from the evil. This "dialogue" with the thin world does not demand any mental efforts, it is "built in" existence of the person.

Here we pass to another major function of the ritual, defined in the symbolical way of an allegory used in it: «Word play of the ritual should be clear to any person taking part in it, since it addresses to the symbolical Universe and to our subconsciousness»³⁵. The symbol, among other kinds of an allegory, is a relevant term for describing the mechanism of the ritual senses designation (as far as they can be expressed in verbal terms; we will remember apophatic, negative experiences of mystic theology). The symbol has its polysemy, hierarchy, and also hermeneutic infinity: a number of the senses expressed in the symbolical sign, begins with household impressions and leaves in metaphysical depths. The symbol exists in constant updating of the senses that makes it extremely mobile and deep, multifunctional and polysemantic in

the way of registration and transfer of cultural experience.

Besides, unlike allegory or emblem, symbolical designatum is indissolubly (!) connected with the sign which expresses it. A symbol is an indissoluble unity of an image and a sign, which means that for its interpretation not only verbal and logic sign coordinates system is not enough; cultural and aesthetic coordinates system, an image, indissoluble with a sign, is searching for an aesthetic estimations is also necessary. So the aesthetic value of the ritual is determined: any military dance, shamanistic ritual, a prayer, fortune telling bring to participants both existential restoration of harmony with the world and aesthetic pleasure; and, unlike the first, the second is accessible not only to its participants, but also to the outside observers. From the ritual aesthetics, such quasi-ritual forms of creative activity as folk dances, folk songs etc. were born. Here the main task is the preservation of the aesthetic part; however formal preservation of outside of the symbol is not capable of keeping its symbols inside the tradition.

So, the symbolical function of the ritual lies in the use of an extraverbal symbol potential with its hermeneutic possibilities and aesthetics for as compact and deep expression of cultural experience as possible.

When it is a question of allegory, its expression is inevitably connected with concealment; Aesopian language is opened for an understanding one, however for a stranger (as demonstrated by today's literary criticism) the allegory can be closed. Hermetic function of the ritual is connected with sheltering the cultural senses under outwardly obscure actions; in this respect the ritual is a storehouse of the designatum: the storehouse which is closed from strangers. We dare to assume that the hermeneutic failures of some certain researchers coming to the conclusion of its insignificance are connected

with performance of the hermetic function of the ritual. Hide and express at the same time, transfer the meaning to the knowing one and to conceal it from the ignorant are one of the major functions of ritual.

What does the ritual hide? The answer to this question is pointing out the metaphysical function of the ritual. As the most ancient form of cultural self-determination connected with dance, song, word, myth, archetype representations, the ritual, on the top of its symbolic meaning, takes a way to metaphysical knowledge (in relation to pre-philosophic and extraverbal knowledge). It expresses the most significant ultimate values of the culture connected with images of cultural heroes, creation and wreck of the worlds, symbolical death and revival etc. And these images and situations are not described (as in a myth or a fairy tale), but are experienced, become essential existential constants of the personal life. The individual (and society) becomes a projection of eternal images and the plots concerning the deepest achievements of the human cognition. «Implementing ... symbolical behaviour, a person enters into relations with space and history, where he scoops motivation to escape from the routine interests and adaptive behaviour»³⁶. As A. Nesteryuk notes, even in such natural sciences as cosmology «the subject of cosmological research and its "object" are in a certain sense inseparable»³⁷.

It is also important that the extramental part (within the framework of the verbal and logic apparatus) of the ritual is connected with the reference to the subconscious, archetypical level of personal existence. In many ways the ritual passes by the consciousness, it is a requirement to solve serious psychological conflicts on the subconscious level. In the individual way the ritual is also perceived as a kind of influence on the metaphysical state of the world that makes the ritual participant confident of the forces and

of possibility of correction of the “wrong” order of things: whether it is the linking of a binding thread that disturbed Hamlet, or the simple maintenance of a world order by performance of simple, however significant actions.

Here we pass to the last function of the ritual that has a bright ontological character. It is the creative function: as a cultural, psychological, social phenomenon, in the heart of its symbolism the ritual has creation: «Closing the diachronic and synchronic aspects of cosmological life, the ritual reminded of the creation act structure and the sequence of its parts, as though went through them once more, but in a stronger way, and by that verified occurrence of the person in the same cosmological universe which has been created «in the beginning»³⁸. «The basic theme which is present in this or that kind in any ritual, is the theme of the world creation»³⁹. The participant of the ritual, consciously or subconsciously, plays a role of the demiurge. The recreation/maintenance of the world stability while the familiar recreated form of the ritual guarantees the success of operation, removing the burden of excessive responsibility. Thanks to that the ritual reproduces the metaphysical rhythms of time, «the subject of ritual feels itself involved in the demiurgic processes and events and is executed by the feeling of cosmo-creating mission of its own»⁴⁰.

It is possible to allocate this ritual function in M. Eliade’s descriptions that say that the creation rituals are needed for restoring the destroyed Space from Chaos, and for restoring the due way of social life. Besides, according to Eliade, «any act of man becomes successful so far as it precisely repeats the action which was carried out in the beginning of time by god, the hero or the ancestor»⁴¹. This remark is fair in the light of the past of rituality: its genesis, undoubtedly, concerns the epoch of traditional aesthetics when the authorship and innovation questions were

treated in favour of immemorial repetition of the ideal original cause.

This function of the ritual is the one that can explain the total effect of global psychological satisfaction that the ritual execution brings. Certainly, this function works in an absolutely different way for the rituals of different degree of sacrality, spontaneity and scale; however, to sum up it is possible to tell that exactly this function determines the uniqueness of the ritual as personal and social experience, explains its safety and constant reproducibility in culture.

Thus, the ritual considered in the aspect of comparison of diachronic and synchronic directions of its action as a social and cultural mechanism, possesses sufficient number of the functions that form its importance.

It is necessary to notice that actions of ritual character activate the dextrocerebral consciousness that is rather topical for the Western culture which is focused on logical activity of the left hemisphere. Being first of all a «body action», pre- and extraverbal way of cognition and world acceptance, the ritual also revives the syncretic in the person, calling to the primary unity of words and gestures in pre- and nonliterate culture. V.N. Nechipurenko sees basic communication of the ritual with the “space” rhythm, «harmony of spheres» that, in particular, predetermines the social role of the ritual, which goes as follows: «the existential sense of the ritual consists in building and supporting of harmonic, rhythmical social order»⁴².

Conclusion

Our list of the ritual functions may be “obviously incomplete” (A. Bayburin), just like any other list and classification offered by the researcher of rituality, due to the immensity of ritual values, many of which, as appears, will be revealed in the future, both in relation to traditional cultures or to the modern rituals. At

the same time we believe that our list names those roles of the ritual which are most important in its social value.

Here it is important to underline such an often forgotten property of the ritual as pragmatics: a problem of survival of a community, its social, existential and ontologic existence, has been solved by means of the ritual in the ancient time and now (despite change of the cultural matrix); ritual becomes its “guarantee”⁴³. Operating by the principle «from chaos – to cosmos», whether it be a spontaneous action or an action prepared by the old culture, practices by many thousands or by

an individual, sacred or ordinary action, the ritual supports personal awareness of participation in an over-personal and over-world principle that is creating and ordering the world. It is obvious that it is impossible any alternative to the ritual, as it is impossible to invent more convenient and many-functioned instrument than human hands. Like them, the ritual is a product of centuries-old perfection; like them, it can be replaced (perhaps) by other mechanisms in some procedures, but not in general. Only in the ritual the person feels the integrity of life and integrity of knowledge⁴⁴, giving him the rootedness in the Universe.

- ¹ Petruciyova J. In the Trace of Human Identity // Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences. – 2010. – 3. – P. 615-624. [in Russian]
- ² Adaptation of the People and Cultures to Environment Changes, Social and Technogenic Transformations. – Moscow: Russian Political Encyclopaedia, 2010. – 544 p. [in Russian]
- ³ Shinkarenko, V.D. Semantic Structure of Social and Cultural Space. Game, Ritual, Magic / V.D. Shinkarenko. – Moscow: URSS, 2009. – 231 p. [in Russian]
- ⁴ Seligman, A., Veller, R., Piet, M., Simon, B. Long Live Ritual! (Rituals and Their Consequences: Where Sincerity is not Necessary // Historical Phylogly and Sociology of History. – 2009. – №2. – P. 171-183. [in Russian]
- ⁵ Wilson, M. Rituals of Kinship Among the Nyakynsa. – London, NY: Oxford University Press, 1957. – 287 p.
- ⁶ Marett, R. R. The Threshold of Religion. – London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1914. – 223 p.
- ⁷ Tinbergen, N. Social Behaviour of Animals. – Moscow: Peace, 1993. – 152 p. [in Russian]
- ⁸ Ibid. – P. 123.
- ⁹ Ibid. – P. 124.
- ¹⁰ Lorenz, K. Aggression (So-Called Evil). – Moscow: Amphora, 2001. – 349 p. [in Russian]
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Berne, E. Games People Play. People Who :Play Games. – Moscow: Progress, 1988. – 648 p. [in Russian]
- ¹³ Shinkarenko, V.D. Semantic Structure of Social and Cultural Space. Game, Ritual, Magic. – Moscow: URSS, 2009. – P. 114. [in Russian]
- ¹⁴ Bernstein, N.A. About Movement Construction. – Moscow: Science, 1990. – 255 p. [in Russian]
- ¹⁵ Smith, R.W. Lectures on the Religion of the Semits. – N., L. – 1907. – P. 20. [in Russian]
- ¹⁶ Yemelyanov, V.V. Sumer Calendar Ritual (Category ME and Spring Holidays). – St. Petersburg: Oriental Studies of Saint-Petersburg, 2009. – 432 p. [in Russian]
- ¹⁷ Nechipurenko, V.N. Ritual: Genesis of Social Life and Subjectivity Formation: Doctor of Philosophy dissertation.: 09. 00. 11. – Rostov-on-Don, 2002. – 329 p. [in Russian] – P.14
- ¹⁸ Seligman, A., Veller, R., Piet, M., Simon, B. Long Live Ritual! (Rituals and Their Consequences: Where Sincerity is not Necessary // Historical Phylogly and Sociology of History. – 2009. – №2. – P. 171-183. [in Russian]- P. 175.
- ¹⁹ Nechipurenko, V.N. Ritual: Genesis of Social Life and Subjectivity Formation: Doctor of Philosophy dissertation.: 09. 00. 11. – Rostov-on-Don, 2002. – 329 p. [in Russian] –P. 18.
- ²⁰ Shinkarenko, V.D. Semantic Structure of Social and Cultural Space. Game, Ritual, Magic. – Moscow: URSS, 2009. – P. 114. [in Russian] P. 122.
- ²¹ Ibid. – P. 119.
- ²² Douglas, M. Cleanness and Danger. – Moscow: CANON-press-TS, Kuchkovo pole, 2000. – 288 p.
- ²³ Bayburin, A.K. Ritual in Traditional Culture. – St. Petersburg.: Science, 1993. – P. 22.
- ²⁴ Nechipurenko, V.N. Ritual: Genesis of Social Life and Subjectivity Formation: Doctor of Philosophy dissertation.: 09. 00. 11. – Rostov-on-Don, 2002. – 329 p. [in Russian] –P. 15.
- ²⁵ Toporov, V.N. About Ritual. Introduction to the Problem // Archaic Ritual in Folklore and Early Literal Documents. – Moscow: Science, 1988. – P. 11.
- ²⁶ Johnson, R. Dreams and Imaginations. The Analysis and Use. – Kiev: Vakler, 1996. – 176 p.
- ²⁷ Ibid. – P. 14-15.
- ²⁸ Rebillio, P. Travelling of the Hero: Ritualizing of Mysteries // Spiritual Crisis: When Personal Transformation Becomes Crisis. – M: AST, 2003. – 340 p. [in Russian] – P. 332.
- ²⁹ Kruglova, T., Savras, N. Ney Year as a Feast Ritual of the Soviet Epoch // Ural State University Newsletter. Series 2: Humanitarian Studies. – 2010. – № 2. – P. 5-14. [in Russian]
- ³⁰ Nabokova L., Koptzeva N. Television Myths Creation as an Analogue of Traditional Myth-Reality // Journal of Siberian

- Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences. – 2011. – 4. – P. 126.
- ³¹ Demichev, I. The Custom, the Ritual and the Problem of Social System Stability // Bashkir University Newsletter. – 2009. – № 3. – P. 963-965. [in Russian]
- ³² Bogdasaryan, B. National Political Ritual in the Context of History of the Russian Daily Occurrence // Tourism and Service Institute Newsletter. – 2008. – № 3. – P. 3-13. [in Russian]
- ³³ Radcliff-Brown, A. R. Method in Social Anthropology. – Moscow: Canon-Press, 2001. – P. 146. [in Russian]
- ³⁴ Nechipurenko, V.N. Ritual: Genesis of Social Life and Subjectivity Formation: Doctor of Philosophy dissertation.: 09. 00. 11. – Rostov-on-Don, 2002. – 329 p. [in Russian]. – P. 17.
- ³⁵ Kirilenko Yu. The Philosophic Dimension of the Ritual: Ritual as a Language Game // Tomsk State University Newsletter. – 2010. – № 341. – P. 42. [in Russian]
- ³⁶ Nechipurenko, V.N. Ritual: Genesis of Social Life and Subjectivity Formation: Doctor of Philosophy dissertation.: 09. 00. 11. – Rostov-on-Don, 2002. – 329 p. [in Russian]. – P. 15.
- ³⁷ Nesteruk A. Cosmology at the Crossroads of the Natural and Human Sciences: is Demarcation Possible? Part 1: Introduction // Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences. – 2011. – 4. – P. 560.
- ³⁸ Toporov, V.N. About Ritual. Introduction to the Problem // Archaic Ritual in Folklore and Early Literal Documents. – Moscow: Science, 1988. – P. 15. [in Russian]
- ³⁹ Bajburin, A.K. Ritual in Traditional Culture. – St. Petersburg.: Science, 1993. – P. 12. [in Russian]
- ⁴⁰ Nechipurenko, V.N. Ritual: Genesis of Social Life and Subjectivity Formation: Doctor of Philosophy dissertation.: 09. 00. 11. – Rostov-on-Don, 2002. – 329 p. [in Russian]. P. 16.
- ⁴¹ Eliade, M. Cosmos and history. – Moscow: Progress., 1987. – P. 57. [in Russian]
- ⁴² Nechipurenko, V.N. Ritual: Genesis of Social Life and Subjectivity Formation: Doctor of Philosophy dissertation.: 09. 00. 11. – Rostov-on-Don, 2002. – 329 p. [in Russian]. – P. 17.
- ⁴³ Toporov, V.N. About Ritual. Introduction to the Problem // Archaic Ritual in Folklore and Early Literal Documents. – Moscow: Science, 1988. – P. 17. [in Russian]
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.

References

- Adaptation of the People and Cultures to Environment Changes, Social and Technogenic Transformations. – Moscow: Russian Political Encyclopaedia, 2010. – 544 p. [in Russian]
- A.K. Bayburin, Ritual in Traditional Culture. – St. Petersburg.: Science, 1993. – 237 p. [in Russian]
- E. Berne, Games People Play. People Who Play Games. – Moscow: Progress, 1988. – 648 p. [in Russian]
- N.A. Bernstein, About Movement Construction. – Moscow: Science, 1990. – 255 p. [in Russian]
- B. Bogdasaryan, National Political Ritual in the Context of History of the Russian Daily Occurrence // Tourism and Service Institute Newsletter. – 2008. – № 3. – P. 3-13. [in Russian]
- C. Castaneda, Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan. – Washington Square Press, 1991. – 272 p.
- I. Demichev, The Custom, the Ritual and the Problem of Social System Stability // Bashkir University Newsletter. – 2009. – № 3. – P. 963-965. [in Russian]
- M. Douglas, Cleanness and Danger. – Moscow: CANON-press-TS, Kuchkovo pole, 2000. – 288 p. [in Russian]
- G. Dumézil, Gods of the Ancient Northmen (UCLA Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore & Mythology. Publications, 3). – University of California Press, 1977. – 157 p.
- M. Eliade, Cosmos and History. – Moscow: Progress., 1987. – 200 p. [in Russian]
- V.V. Yemelyanov, Sumer Calendar Ritual (Category ME and Spring Holidays). – St. Petersburg: Oriental Studies of Saint-Petersburg, 2009. – 432 p. [in Russian]
- R. Johnson, Dreams and Imaginations. The Analysis and Use. – Kiev: Vakler, 1996. – 176 p. [in Russian]
- Yu. Kirilenko, The Philosophic Dimension of the Ritual: Ritual as a Language Game // Tomsk State University Newsletter. – 2010. – № 341. – P. 39-42. [in Russian]

- T. Kruglova, N. Savras, Ney Year as a Feast Ritual of the Soviet Epoch // Ural State University Newsletter. Series 2: Humanitarian Studies. – 2010. – № 2. – P. 5-14. [in Russian]
- K. Lorenz, Aggression (So-Called Evil). – Moscow: Amphora, 2001. – 349 p. [in Russian]
- R. R. Marett, The Threshold of Religion. – London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1914. – 223 p.
- L. Nabokova, N. Koptseva, Television Myths Creation as an Analogue of Traditional Myth-Reality // Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences. – 2011. – 4. – P. 119-127.
- V.N. Nechipurenko, Ritual: Genesis of Social Life and Subjectivity Formation: Doctor of Philosophy dissertation.: 09. 00. 11. – Rostov-on-Don, 2002. – 329 p. [in Russian]
- A. Nesteruk, Cosmology at the Crossroads of the Natural and Human Sciences: is Demarcation Possible? Part 1: Introduction // Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences. – 2011. – 4. – P. 560-576.
- J. Petruciyova, In the Trace of Human Identity // Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences. – 2010. – 3. – P. 615-624.
- A. R. Radcliff-Brawn, Method in Social Anthropology. – Moscow: Canon-Press, 2001. – 414 p. [in Russian]
- P. Rebillio, Travelling of the Hero: Ritualizing of Mysteries // Spiritual Crisis: When Personal Transformation Becomes Crisis. – M: AST, 2003. – 340 p. [in Russian]
- A. Seligman, R. Veller, M. Piet, B. Simon, Long Live Ritual! (Rituals and Their Consequences: Where Sincerity is not Necessary // Historical Phylology and Sociology of History. – 2009. – №2. – P. 171-183. [in Russian]
- V.D. Shinkarenko, Semantic Structure of Social and Cultural Space. Game, Ritual, Magic / V.D. Shinkarenko. – Moscow: URSS, 2009. – 231 p. [in Russian]
- R.W. Smith, Lectures on the Religion of the Semits. – N., L. – 1907. – P. 20. [in Russian]
- N. Tinbergen, Social Behaviour of Animals. – Moscow: Peace, 1993. – 152 p. [in Russian]
- V.N. Toporov, About Rituals. Introduction to the Problem // Archaic Ritual in Folklore and Early Literal Documents. – Moscow: Science, 1988. – P. 7-61. [in Russian]
- M. Wilson, Rituals of Kinship Among the Nyakynsa. – London, NY: Oxford University Press, 1957. – 287 p.

**Ритуал как способ изменения,
сохранения, стабилизации:
внеисторическое, доисторическое
и историческое время**

Е.А. Лисина

АНАЛИТИКА РОДИС

*Россия 142400, Московская область,
Ногинск, ул. Рогожская, 7*

Статья посвящена проблеме социальных и культурных функций ритуала. Анализ ритуалов и обычаев прошлого и настоящего показывает значение роста ритуалов в человеческой жизни. Автор приходит к выводу, что ритуал, будь он традиционным или спонтанным, многотысячным или индивидуальным, сакральным или обыденным, поддерживает в индивидууме сознание причастности к надперсональному принципу, создающему и организующему бытие.

Ключевые слова: ритуал, социальный, человеческое общество, культура, миф, символ, иносказание.
