



FROM MAGIC TEXTS TO CHILDREN'S CHANTS: GENRE TRANSFORMATION IN KARAKALPAK, TURKMEN, AND ENGLISH FOLKLORE

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ABSTRACT

The article comparatively examines the historical and functional transformation of incantations and nature-related chants in Karakalpak, Turkmen, and English children's folklore. Drawing on the Karakalpak badik, Turkmen chants addressed to the sun and rain, and the English examples Ladybird, Ladybird and Rain, Rain, Go Away, it explores the functions of address, imperative, repetition, and personification. The transition of magical texts from ritual contexts into children's repertoires, where they acquire playful and aesthetic qualities, is interpreted as a form of genre transformation.

Introduction. Ritual-seasonal and magical songs within children's folklore are distinguished by their preservation of historically ancient layers of oral creativity. Their earliest examples are associated with human perceptions of the possibility of influencing natural phenomena, diseases, and invisible forces through words. Such texts formed a whole system with a specific ceremony, time of performance, action and religious purpose.

In the course of historical development, a portion of magic recitations broke away from their original religious environment and passed into the repertoire of children. As a result, songs aimed at driving away diseases, calling for rain, bringing out the sun, or influencing the movement of creatures began to perform the functions of play, nature observation, emotional attitude, and aesthetic pleasure. However, their ancient poetic patterns of appeal, imperative verb, repetition, personification and demonstration of the expected result have been relatively stable

The scholar G.S. Vinogradov studied children's calendar folklore as a system related to a specific season, natural phenomenon, and performance situation. The scientist notes that children welcome the first rain, warm sun, and rainbow with special chants-spells. In these texts, the reference to natural phenomena as living beings shows their connection with archaic thinking [1, 27-28 p.].

According to the functional approach of the scholar M.Yu. Novitskaya, the genre affiliation of a folklore work is determined not only by the form of the text but also by the performance situation and the leading function. For this reason, the same composition of the

chant can serve as a magical formula in the ceremony, and in a children's circle as a game call [2, pp. 12-18].

The article uses historical-comparative, functional, and structural-poetic methods to analyze the typological commonality of texts in three peoples, arising from similar social tasks rather than genetic links.

In folklore, "darim" is the collective name for magical-healing texts used to ward off illness, transfer harmful forces from the human body to another creature, object, or space, and protect a person from misfortune. In Karakalpak folklore, it has forms such as badik, gulapsan, and porkhan chants. The Karakalpak scholar N. Dawqaraev shows that in the magical layer of Karakalpak ritual folklore, pre-Islamic shamanic beliefs and later Islamic views are interconnected. According to the data provided by the scientist, the porkhan or folk healer performed a special chant in order to "transfer" the disease from the human body to another object. Badik and gulapsan were sometimes accompanied by actions such as taking the patient outside the aul or passing them through the fire [3, pp. 141-142].

In the text of Badik, the disease is imagined as a living being:

Kósher bolsań, kósh, bádik, (If you want to move, move, Badik,)

Tawlarğa kósh... (Move to the mountains...)

Kósh-kósh. (Come on). [3, pp. 141-142].

The repetition of the imperative verb "kósh" in the text serves as a magical formula aimed at transferring the disease from the human body to another space. The representation of disease as a living being is based on the principle of archaic personification [3, pp. 141-142].

The compositional structure of the poem consists of the following parts: naming a disease or harmful force; directly addressing it; ordering to leave or move; indicating a new space or object; reinforcing the command through repetition.

In this structure, the main place is occupied not by logical argumentation, but by faith in the power of the word. Repeating the command several times reinforces the executor's desire and creates psychological confidence in the participants of the ceremony.

In English children's folklore, the chant "Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home" also preserves a magical-compositional model consisting of naming a creature, addressing it, and commanding a specific action. Ione and Peter Opi cite variants of this text recorded from the 18th century onwards [4, pp. 308-310].

Turkmen sayings are cited as follows:

Gün çykdy, (The sun came out,)

Güläleç çykdy, (The poppy blossomed,)

Harman başyna, (Onto the threshing floor,)

Jäjek çykdy (The little insect came out) [5, pp. 42-43].

In this text, the images of "Gün" and "güläleç" are linked based on the harmony of sound and content, while the repetition of the verb "çykdy" rhythmically confirms the change in nature [5, pp. 42-43].

Darim is not a genre created by children. It was recited by a porkhan, a healer, an elderly woman, or another elderly performer with ritual experience. Children, by observing, memorizing, and imitating the movements and speech formulas of adults, incorporated certain parts of them into their repertoire.

In children's performances, complex ritual movements and faith in the actual transference of the disease are weakened. However, commands such as "go," "get out," "move," sound repetitions, and short rhythmic formulas have been preserved. As a result, the sacred text became a conditional game and an aesthetic chant.

Also, in the English children's folklore, Ladybird, Ladybird, the child addresses the beetle and demands that it fly home:

Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home.

Scholars Ione and Peter Opi study it alongside children's nature epics addressed to insects, citing variants of this epic recorded since the 18th century [4, pp. 308-310].

The Karakalpak "Badik" and the English chant are not equal in content. The artistic text is aimed at expelling the disease from the human body, while the English text directs the movement of the insect. Nevertheless, there is a common invariant in their poetic structure:

name an object - address it - issue a command - expected action.

While in Badik, the disease is called "migration," in the English saying, the beetle is required to "fly away." In both texts, a non-human object is transformed into a participant in speech communication. However, this similarity indicates not a direct historical connection between peoples, but a common typological structure characteristic of magical thinking and children's sayings.

Ladybird, Ladybird is not perceived as a true magical ritual in the current performance. The child puts the beetle in their hand and observes its flight. Consequently, the primary goal of exerting influence turned into emotional communication and play with nature. In this case, the ancient command formula was preserved, but its function was changed.

In Turkmen children's folklore, the sun's emergence from behind the clouds is greeted with the following chant.

Gün çykdy, (The sun came out,)

Gülälek çykdy. (The poppy blossomed,)[5, pp. 42-43].

In the following lines, the action is associated with the threshing floor and the world of children (Türkmen halk döredijiligi, 04, pp. 42-43).

Ýagyş ýagara geldi, (The rain has come to fall,)

Saman suwara geldi, (The straw has come to be soaked,)

Gyzlar oýnara geldi, (The girls have come out to play,)

Heýjan elek-jan elek, (Hey-jan, elek-jan, elek,)

Gyş gutaryp ýaz geldi (Winter has ended, and spring has come) [5, pp. 42-43].

In this example, rain, water, spring, and children's play form a chain of interconnected seasonal images. The phenomenon of nature is combined with the onset of social activity [5, pp. 42-43].

The English text "Rain, rain, go away, / Come again another day" differs from the Turkmen example in the direction of the expressed wish. In a Turkmen chant, rain is welcomed as a sign of prosperity and spring, while in an English chant, it is asked not to interfere with children's play. However, both examples have a way of personifying a natural phenomenon and directly referring to it [4, p. 360].

Nevertheless, in both examples, the rain is personified and the desire to influence its movement is expressed.

Scholars Iona and Peter Opi, analyzing the historical forms of this chant, note that in the 17th century, there was a custom of children driving rain with a chant or a spell. In 1659, the scholar James Howell presented a version of it that encourages rain to go to Spain [4, p. 360].

This information indicates that the historical function of the chant has changed as follows: first as a spell aimed at influencing the rain; then as a seasonal children's chant; now as a playful chant performed by singing.

The cultural assessment of natural conditions in Turkmen and English texts is not the same. In a dry climate, rain is welcomed as an important condition for crop yields and survival. In the humid English climate, rain is reflected as a phenomenon that prevents children from playing outdoors. Consequently, the general poetic model is filled with various semantic meanings in accordance with the national natural environment.

A comparison of Karakalpak, Turkmen, and English examples allows for the identification of the following stages in the development of magical expressions.

The first stage is the sacral stage. It is believed that the chant directly influences reality. Badik should remove the disease, and the rain should call or drive away the phenomenon of nature.

The second stage is ritual stabilization. The text is associated with a specific time, space, and action. Badik is performed around the patient, and nature chants are performed in connection with the sun, rain, or spring.

The third stage is the transition to children's repertoire. Children master the shortest, most rhythmic, and most expressive parts of an adult's chant. Not the entire system of the ceremony, but the formula of address and command is preserved.

The fourth stage is the matchmaking. Commanding a disease, insect, or natural phenomenon is not a real magical operation, but a conditional game. Sacral trust is replaced by rhythm, rhyme, and emotional attitude.

The fifth stage is aestheticization and literarization. The chant becomes an independent chant from the ritual, is included in folklore collections, and is reworked in professional children's literature.

This process can be conventionally expressed by the following formula:

magical act - ritual chant - children's imitation - playful chant - aesthetic text.

However, not every text goes through these stages completely and in the same order. Some ceremonial chants partially retain their religious function, while others have become fully children's chants. Therefore, transformation is not the complete disappearance of the ritual, but a change in the ratio of leading functions.

In general, the Karakalpak Badik, the Turkmen sun and rain chants, and the English examples Ladybird, Ladybird, and Rain, Rain, Go Away differ in their historical origin and content. However, in them, address, command, repetition and personification form a common poetic model.

In Karakalpak Badik, the word is interpreted as a sacred force that removes illness from a person. In Turkmen nature epics, the sun and rain are associated with seasonal prosperity and children's play. In English examples, the ancient command directed at insects and rain has become a playful dialogue.

Thus, the transition of magical sayings into the children's repertoire is not a loss of the ancient text, but its functional reorganization. Although the function of sacred influence has weakened, the appeal, command, refrain and rhythm have been preserved as the historical memory of the text.

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