



NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

*Natalia A. Tuliakova*

**PREDANIE, LEGENDA,  
SKAZANIE: THREE GENERIC  
LABELS IN VLADIMIR  
ODOEVSKY'S WORKS**

BASIC RESEARCH PROGRAM  
WORKING PAPERS

SERIES: LITERARY STUDIES

WP BRP 26/LS/2018

## **PREDANIE, LEGENDA, SKAZANIE: THREE GENERIC LABELS IN VLADIMIR ODOEVSKY'S WORKS<sup>2</sup>**

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the words *predanie*, *legenda*, and *skazanie* started to be used by Russian writers as a generic label. The present paper considers the texts with these labels in their titles or subtitles written by Vladimir Odoevsky. First, constituent features of the corpus of the texts labeled as *predanie* are identified. Then the same categories are explored in the texts marked as *legenda* and *skazanie*. The aim of the research is to ascertain whether these texts are built according to similar or different generic patterns. I argue that Odoevsky treated the notions differently, and the generically labelled texts reveal different genre strategies.

JEL Classification: Z.

Keywords: V. Odoevsky; Russian literature; genre; generic label; legend; tradition; tale.

---

<sup>1</sup> National Research University Higher School of Economics – Saint-Petersburg. Department of Foreign Languages. E-mail: ntulyakova@hse.ru

<sup>2</sup> The article was prepared within the framework of the Academic Fund Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in 2017- 2018 (grant № 17-01-0012) and by the Russian Academic Excellence Project “5-100”.

## Introduction

Vladimir Odoevsky, one of the major figures in Russian Romanticism, has been receiving much scientific attention for the last fifty years. Generic aspects of his work have been covered by a number of papers [Cornwell 2001; Skripnik 2008; Kiselev 2008; Smulakovskaya 2008; Kulishkina 2014, and others], which indicates the topicality of the generic approach. The existing literature, however, does not touch upon the question of correlation between three genres in his oeuvre – *predanie*, *skazanie*, and *legenda*. However, it is important to consider their role on the writer's legacy. Odoevsky intentionally speculated on them within the framework of views on folk lore, which Cornwell even calls a “theory of legend – or “epic” in its broadest sense, to include tale and folk song” [Cornwell 2001: 6]. The present research compares Odoevsky's texts with these generic labels in order to establish the relations between them.

In the Russian literature of the time, the words were sometimes used as equivalents. For example, Boris Fedorov's poem “Rayskaya ptichka” (*A Paradise bird*, 1829) had a generic label *predanie* and *legenda* in the same book (in the text and in the table of contents respectively). A similar incident occurred with Valerian Olin's “O rozhdenii Petra Velikogo” (*On the Birth of Peter the Great*), which in 1830 was published with a subtitle *legenda*, and in 1835 with the generic marker *predanie*. This makes it difficult to distinguish between the genres and casts doubts on the existence of border between them. The problem is compounded by the absence of the terms from literary dictionaries and encyclopedias of the given period. Although the terms started to be differentiated by Russian folk scholars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it may be stated that in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the awareness of the distinction between these folk genres was too low. As for the terms referring to literary genres, they are hardly ever fixed even in contemporary academic literature.

The present article compares the texts labelled as *predanie*, *legenda*, and *skazanie* by Vladimir Odoevsky. The choice of the labels is accounted for by two reasons. First, they seem to be cognate as they are all associated with folk narratives, often becoming objects of stylization, hence they may be confused. What is more, Odoevsky united some of the texts in the book “Opyty rasskazov o starinnykh i sovremennykh narodnykh predaniakh” (*An attempt of relating ancient and contemporary folk traditions*, 1844), and explained the relations between the terms: “Обыкновенно сему слову <предание> присволяется значение: древнего сказания, я принимаю это слово в более простом и общем его значении, т. е. в значении всего, что передается от лица к лицу”<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> “Typically, the word *predanie* is treated as an ancient tale, but I understand it in its simpler and more basic meaning, as something passed on from one person to another.” All translations in the paper are mine.

[Odoevsky 1944: 43].<sup>4</sup> Secondly, the number of texts called *predanie* by Odoevsky and the level of consistency is high enough to speak about a certain generic pattern. It enables the researcher to compare them with the ones called *legenda* and *skazanie*, the number of which is much lower. Comparing the texts by the same author will allow us not to consider individual stylistic peculiarities.

The aim of the research is to establish if the texts with these generic labels follow the same or different genre strategies and to clarify Odoevsky's understanding of the notions. Although the paper does not purport to answer the question about the three genres maturity in the given time period, the results of the undertaken research may be used while exploring these genres<sup>5</sup>.

### ***Predanie, skazanie, legenda in the discourse of the time***

At the turn to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a shift to a new epoch in poetics [Averintsev et al 1994: 33], Russian literature acquired a number of new notions and terms, many of which are genre-related. The process was reflected in titles of literary works, which in the given period included various generic labels, often new (anecdote, melody, episode, dramatic fantasy). It revealed Russian writers' interest in the genre as a category, as the shift from canonical literature to the epoch of individual work was characterized by a dramatic, "tantamount to a revolution" [Duff 2009: 39]. transformation of the genre category.

Nevertheless, new generic labels should not be taken at face value. The relations between a generic label and the corresponding genre are not necessarily the relations of equivalence, as the former may serve a tribute to fashion, tradition, or even be ironic. According to Aleksandr Aleksandrov, most texts written before 1840 were called *povest'* [Aleksandrov 1985: 3] notwithstanding their generic peculiarities. However, in many cases generic labels may be treated as an explication of the author's generic intention [Zyryanov 2008: 182], as a sign of the text belonging to a certain genre. It is reasonable to start the analysis of new genres of the time from studying generic labels and their mapping as the role of individual artistic perception was very high at that time.

*Predanie, legenda* and *skazanie* were among such generic novelties. The number of texts with such labels was not very high, but it steadily increased throughout the century. The

---

<sup>4</sup> Italicized by Odoevsky.

<sup>5</sup> It is almost impossible to find English equivalents to the words *predanie*, *legenda* and *skazanie*. For the sake of convenience only, in the paper the texts denoted with the label *legenda* will be called legends, *predanie* – 'tradition', and *skazanie* – 'tale'. These English words may somehow render the meaning of the Russian counterparts. The labels or the terms will be transliterated, though.

lexicographic and corpora analysis clearly indicates that it was the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when these words started to be used in a new way.

By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the word *predanie* had developed four meanings, fixed by the Dictionary of the Russian Academy. Two of them (“betrayal” and “implementation/application”) were not related to narratives, and the other two referred to certain types of narration: “rule, prescription, ritual” and “historical events communicated to us by word of mouth” [Slovar’ 1796: 4, 513]. The analysis of the historical subcorpus of the Russian National Corpus demonstrates that in relation to narratives, before the 18<sup>th</sup> century the word *predanie* was used mostly in the third meaning and had a salient religious component, referring to the Holy Scripture, for instance, or the words of saints in general. Starting from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, however, some changes can be traced. The word started to be actively used in the fourth meaning, especially within phrases with the attributes “mifologicheskoe” (*mythological*), “drevnee” (*ancient*), “lyubopytnoe” (*curious*), “vernoe” (*truthful*), etc. At the same time, the religious sense started to lose its significance. These changes coincided with the interest in folk lore and the Old Russian literature, which was perceived as a kind of old narrative contrasted with the contemporary practices.

The term *skazanie*, which had three meanings in the Dictionary of the Russian Academy (“the act of saying”; “a narrative”; “construing” [Ibid: 3, 383-384]), showed the same trend, appearing in the texts with the attributes “chudnoe” (*miraculous*), “izustnoe” (*oral*), “chudesnoe” (*wonderful*), “semeynoe” (*family*), “basnoslovnoe” (*incredible*) and being used in the second meaning, although much more rarely than in the first one.

Contrary to the first two words, the borrowing *legenda* was new to Russian culture. Though fixed by lexicographers only in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, it entered the Russian language in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and was used to refer to saints’ biographies as well as folk narratives [Krylova, Tulyakova 2017]. First the Latinism coexisted with the Slavic term *zhitie* but, unlike *predanie* and *skazanie*, experienced the impact of western practices and became more secular in meaning, referring mostly to narratives originating from folk lore.

It is clear that by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the words *predanie*, *skazanie* and *legenda* started to be applied to written texts as a product rather than the process, which may be interpreted as a prerequisite for their inclusion into paratextual elements. The interaction of literature and folk lore, which resulted in significant transformations of the genre system [Iezuitova 1976: 96], may as well have been revealed in emergence of the genres with corresponding names.

## Predanie: generic pattern

In the 1820s Odoevsky demonstrated a certain interest in the genre of tradition, as well as in folk lore in general, which he considered a valuable source of material for new Russian literature: “Вообще быт, предания, поверья сего народа в высшей степени заслуживают внимания и суть неоцененное сокровище для литературных произведений”<sup>6</sup> [Odoevsky 1840: 19].

In the same decade Odoevsky wrote at least five texts which he marked as traditions: “Smertnaya pesn” (*Deadly song*, 1824), “Teni praotsov” (*Ancestors’ shadows*, 1824), “Besstrunnaya lyutnya. Persidskoe predanie” (*Stringless lute. A Persian tradition*, 1825), “Raduga. – Tsvety. – Inoskazania. Indiyskoe predanie” (*Rainbow. – Flowers. – Allegories. An Indian tradition*, 1824), “Zavetnaya kniga. Drevnee predanie” (*Sacred book. An ancient tradition*, 1826).

In academic literature these texts are mainly treated as apologues [Turyan 1991: 90; Shtern 1979; Kiselev 2008: 45]. However, it can be argued that they should be construed differently, as Odoevsky applied the term *apolog* to a number of texts deliberately (“Chetyre apologa” (*Four apologues*, 1824)). As for traditions, the writer emphasized their generic nature by repeatedly using the generic subtitle *predanie*: “Smertnaya pesn” and “Teni praotsov” form a mini-cycle “Sanskritskie predania” (*Sanskrit traditions*), which in its turn is included into “Opyty rasskazov o starinnykh i sovremennykh narodnykh predaniakh” and thus clearly expressing his generic intention. In addition, the texts are structurally different, and Minyona Shtern finds that the texts called traditions are more complex in composition than the rest of apologues [Shtern 1979: 115]. Still, the clear link between traditions and apologues is important because it helps to map the latter as a didactic genre [Galich 1825: 203], as even in the Romantic period, division of literature into didactic, descriptive, sentimental was topical.

The five traditions share a number of properties which can be regarded constituent, as they are consistently repeated: composition, setting, modality. Hence, these features will be treated as generic properties, and comparison with the legend and the tale will be based on these categories.

Odoevsky’s traditions are all short prosaic texts. The laconic, even lapidary form enables the reader to perceive them very quickly. Shtern illustrates the writer’s scrupulous choice of words by comparing Odoevsky’s manuscripts and the published versions of the texts [Shtern 1979: 113]. The traditions are devoid of details, descriptions, anything that would create a unique image, even when a landscape is described. It results in some similarities between the texts and the genre of parable [Ibid: 116].

---

<sup>6</sup> “On the whole, the customs, traditions, and beliefs of this people deserve attention and are a neglected treasure for literary works.”

On the other hand, traditions are characterized as intimate narratives, often written in friends' albums initially and being intended for a devoted circle only [Kiselev 2008: 47]. For example, "Zavetnaya kniga" is preceded by the phrase "Написано на первом листе альбома А.Н. Верстовского"<sup>7</sup> [Odoevsky 1824: 201]. The cycle "Sanskritskie predania" also has a note "В альбом Кн. З.А. Волконской"<sup>8</sup> [Odoevsky 1844: 77].

The first generic property can be defined as composition, or plot structure. Tradition is frequently described as a metaphoric, allegoric, or symbolic text [Kiselev 2008: 48]. It generally has no conflict on which a plot would be based and is constructed as an extended metaphor founded on allegorical meanings of certain words [Shtern 1979: 114]. Some of them ("Smertnaya pesn", "Teni praotsov") are serve an illustration of a general principle, according to Shtern [Ibid: 116].

On the whole, traditions are two-dimensional narratives, where one layer is used to refer to another one, as is done in a certain type of allegories, defined in the poetic dictionaries of the time as "mixed" (*smeshannaya*) [Ostolopov 1821: 1, 73]. The denoting layer is often very brief, however, it is clearly expressed.

At the same time Odoevsky's traditions tend to reproduce a mythic narrative. To start with, the absence of details and concretization allows the author to reach a high level of abstraction, although it varies from text to text.

The earlier traditions are more didactic. In "Smertnaya pesn" the level of abstraction is lower, as the idea is embodied through a sequence of event. This tradition illustrates a common truth about a wonderful song with a typical episode, and it is obvious that it is not a singular one: "В таинственной Индии хранится предание о чудной песне, древними богами завещанной человеку. Простолюдины боятся петь ее, ибо она сжигает певца"<sup>9</sup> [Odoevsky 1844: 77]. What kind of song it is, what it is about, why it burns its singer, the tradition never tells. "Teni praotsov" is constructed as two parallel episodes (a Brahmin cures a man, and the gratitude is for idols; he fails to cure a man, and the curse is for him), and its allegorical meaning. What distinguishes the text from the parable is the reference to tradition ("гласит предание"<sup>10</sup>). The truth which Odoevsky communicates to the reader in this tradition is a didactic rather than philosophic.

"Zavetnaya kniga", which does not even feature a central personage, relates how some sacred truths were lost to the humankind. Although the essence of this book is not disclosed, the

---

<sup>7</sup> "Written on the first page of A.N. Verstovsky's album."

<sup>8</sup> "To Princess Z.A. Volkonskaya's album."

<sup>9</sup> "In the mysterious India there is a tradition about a wondrous song bequeathed by ancient gods to man. Common people dare not sing it, as it burns the singer."

<sup>10</sup> "tradition has it"

idea seems to originate from Schellengian philosophy and support the “contention that the separation of mind and nature was a ruinous dissociation resulting in the fragmentary experience of self in modern minds” [Harrison 2013: 349]. In “Raduga”, the central personage witnesses a vision which bears cosmogenic or etiological character: the tradition tells the origin of the rainbow, flowers, and allegories.

The second feature which stands out and may be considered nuclear for Odoevsky’s traditions is a peculiar setting. All the narratives are related to the ancient East (India or Persia), the culture of which Odoevsky carefully studied [Cornwell 1998: 89-90], and may be considered as Oriental stylization. It is revealed through direct references to these countries, and also through using specific realia, such as titles (Brahmin), typical names (Raja), mythological creatures (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva), typical food (rice). The words serve mostly as signs of this culture and navigate the reader. Stylization becomes more credible as the reader may be worse acquainted with the eastern culture than with occidental one, and not reproach the author with any inaccuracies or errors.

The epoch chosen is a very distant one, with the boundaries being extremely vague: “В первые дни мира, когда земля и небо были еще неразлучны, когда земля улыбалась небом, и небо не поглощало в себе всех земных чувствований, когда наслаждения людей были земные и небесные вместе, когда все были браминами...”<sup>11</sup> [Odoevsky 1826: 201]. The choice of this temporal frame reinforces the allegorical and mythopoeic character of the narrative.

Thirdly, Odoevsky’s traditions are characterized with a certain modality. The narrator is never personified and does not reveal any bonds with the rudimentary personages. It seems important that the authenticity of the texts is never questioned or even commented on. The veracity of events is not disputed either – they are presented as a sacred truth.

Vitaly Kiselev suggests that being embedded into the “Opyty rasskazov”, the traditions started to embody an ancient wisdom, the same for the humankind, and spoke about art and knowledge [Kiselev 2008: 48]. According to Kiselev, traditions (or apologues, as he names them) fulfil the main function of art in Odoevsky’s philosophy – prophecy and restoration of lost knowledge [Ibid: 48]. What is more, many traditions choose this function as its key image: the sacred book, a wondrous song, an etiological myth.

---

<sup>11</sup> “In the world’s first days, when the earth and the sky were still inseparable, When the earth was smiling with the sky, and the sky did not absorb all the human feelings, when people’s pleasures were both earthly and heavenly, when everybody was a Brahmin...”



The analysis shows that the level of consistency is so high that it is possible to speak about a certain genre pattern. The effect is reinforced by the texts being created in the same time period. Overall, Odoevsky's tradition is a narrative that tries to restore a myth on different levels, and may be defined as a mythopoeic genre.

### **Legend and tale: composition, setting, modality**

The features of the legend and the tale stand out against the generic background of Odoevsky's traditions, which makes it easier to identify the similarities and differences between them, even though their number is much lower.

Odoevsky named at least two texts as legends. The first one is "Starinnaya legenda" (*Ancient legend*), a fragment of unfinished narrative "Vichentsio i Tsetsilia" (*Vicencio and Cecily*, 1828). It is very short (109 words) and can hardly be taken into account in the present article because of its vagueness. The second text, "Finskaya legenda" (*Finnish legend*), was included in "Yuzhny bereg Finlyandii v nachale XVIII stoletia" (*Southern coast of Finland in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century*, 1840), and later in the diary "Salamandra" (*Salamander*, 1844).

Only one text marked by the writer as a tale – "Neoboydenny dom. Drevnee skazanie o kalike perekhozhey, i o nekoem startse" (*Unavoidable house. An Ancient tale about a pilgrim and an elder*, 1840). Scholars identify it as a legend [Kiselev 2008: 49], a philosophic parable [Zimileva 2017: 40], a fairy-tale resembling hagiography [Eremeev 2002: 87].

Similarly to the tradition, Odoevsky's legend is short, but in a different way. While the concise form of tradition is explained by the intentional absence of detailing, Odoevsky's legend is used as an embedded narrative, and much information is provided in the embedding text. This means that the legend does not have to inform the reader of many details.

"Finskaya legenda" is a framed episode which relates the events of the wars between Russia and Sweden, the birth of Peter I and Charles XII of Sweden, foundation of Saint-Petersburg, floods that ravage the city. The narrative deploys mythological images (Sun, Moon, Sea, Mountains), but these natural elements are only signs of real historical figures and events, which are represented through a lens of mythological notions [Pashaeva 2017: 72].

While the tradition fulfils the same function as the myth was supposed to have at the time, the legend mythopoeticizes history rather than reproduces a myth. Odoevsky's traditions, as has been already mentioned, are two-dimensional. The legend has only one dimension, i.e., the reader

has to decipher the text and reveal the historical meaning. In case of the legend, the writer deploys alienating technique and depicts something very familiar to the reader from an unusual perspective.

The tale “Neoboydenny dom” uses a popular plot of sinner-to-saint transformation and tells a story of an old woman who lost her way to a convent. She wandered in a forest for a day and encountered the same house three times. Each time she spoke to a house-dweller, who was the same man, but of different ages: an adolescent in the morning, a mature man at noon, and a weak old man in the evening. Although the pilgrim did not notice the twenty years’ lapses in time, the man, whose name was Fedor, recognized her and confessed being a bandit and having murdered her son and daughter. The old woman forgave him and ultimately persuaded the felon to repent and go to the convent with her, after which she easily found her way and met her children, safe and sound, only forty years older. Fedor became a pious monk and some time later attended the dying pilgrim and confessed her.

The tale is much longer than the traditions and the legend, but the volume is not only down to a more complicated plot. The text is a triple repetition of the same episode: the old woman’s encounter with Fedor on a forest clearing. Her route there, her conversation with the man and its outcome is almost identical, apart from the time lapse. Odoevsky even uses the same words to emphasize the structure of his narrative. After the third meeting both personages attend the convent, and each episode is viewed once again retrospectively, as the memories of the old woman’s children.

Like the legend, the tale is one-dimensional. Still, the plot definitely has a second layer and speaks about the humanity rather than a story of a particular woman. The tale, like the tradition, is guided by symbolic and mythic logic [Kiselev 2008: 56]. The tale combines mythical, religious, and folk images and concepts rather than establishes a correlation between history and myth. Myth enters the tale through abundant archetypical images [Zimileva 2017], the system of which reminds that of a fairy-tale.

However, there is no direct correspondence between the denoting and the denoted layers in the tale, whereas the legend uses a straightforward cipher. Some events do not receive any explanation: the old woman’s wandering in the forest, her inability to mark the time flow, the mystic dreams of her children. This tendency of “obscuring a message of <...> potentially sacred import” and love for “elaborate, idiosyncratic puzzles” [Putney 2011: 188] is even more vivid in the tale than in the traditions and the legend.

Contrary to the tradition with a redundant imagery, the tale emphasizes the denoting level, which is vivid and imaginative. The tale is highly dramatic and presents a certain riddle to the reader, makes them look forward to the denouement. It is clear that Odoevsky's legend operates with historical notions, while the tale is completely devoid of them. It seems unusual, given that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the word *skazanie* was mostly used in the titles of historical narratives<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, the tradition tells about primordial events the results of which are seen throughout history, while the legend shows history through myth, and the tale communicates some universal truth which does not have any starting point.

As regards the setting of the legend and the tale, it is very different from that of Odoevsky's tradition, which bears a salient Eastern character and is at the same time devoid of real temporal and local features.

The topos of "Finskaya legend" is well known to the Russian reader, which allows them to understand the process of interaction between myth and history. Marietta Turyan called this text "an example of creating a myth with the material familiar to the reader" [Turyan 1991: 311]. However, it is a Finn – a foreigner, an outsider who describes the events occurring in Russia, which accounts usage of exonyms (*veineleisy*, *rutsy*, *tietai*) and the outward view on the events.

As for the tale "Neoboydenny dom", its topos has recognizable features, which are related to the domestic place: "Давным-давно, в те годы, которых и деды не запомнят, на заре ранней, утренней шла путем-дорогою калика перехожая; спешила она в Заринский монастырь на богомолье, родителей помянуть, чудотворным иконам поклониться"<sup>13</sup> [Odoevsky 1844: 57]. The narrative involves so many realia related to Russia (*kalika*, *rushnik*, *zern'*, etc.) that the reader is likely to feel the domestic atmosphere.

Although both in the legend and the tale the narrative is about Russia, the country is not named, and the reader recognizes the place themselves. In the former case depiction is performed through defamiliarization, in the latter – through the look from inside. Odoevsky uses words and expressions typical of peasants' speech: "Ахти, ... замешкалась я, окаянная; не поспеть мне к заутрене, хоть бы Бог привел часов-то не пропустить" [Ibid: 57], "Никола тебе навстречу."

---

<sup>12</sup> "Russkie skazania. Pervoe o slavnem i velikom knyaze Ryurike" (1824); "Skazania sovremennikov o Dimitrii Samozvantse" (1831-1834); "Skazania russkogo naroda o semeynoy zhizni svoikh predkov" (1836-1837) by I. Sakharov.

<sup>13</sup> "A long time ago, in the times which our grandparents won't even remember, at the break of dawn, a woman pilgrim was making her way; she was hurrying to Zarynsky convent for a prayer, to remember her deceased parents, to bow down in front of marvelous icons."

While Odoevsky's traditions narrate about a very distant past, temporal dimension of the legend and the tale is more tangible. The legend mixes different time layers. On the one hand, it has etiological bearings, and speaks about the Golden age, which in Finnish mythology is associated with the image of wonderful mill Sampo. On the other hand, recent history is incorporated into the narrative. Pavel Sakulin states that Odoevsky used many historical and ethnographic sources to condense in the story, and had to adjust them to the plot of "Salamandra" [Sakulin 1913: 1, 75-56]. Thus, the legend demonstrates a combination of cosmogenic ideas with real historical events.

In the tale, time becomes the object of perception rather than a means of description. Although the category of time is central in the text, there are no indications when the events occurred, even at the level of the century, and history is not involved whatsoever. The only temporal marker, the reference to the past, heightens the status of the events described and their veracity.

Nevertheless, time is indicated as morning, noon, and evening, which has several meanings. First, the parts of the day correspond to the stages of Fedor's life (youth, adulthood, old age); secondly, they show the degree of his sin, as he turns into a hardened murderer; thirdly, they hint at the peril that the old woman undergoes: she is tempted to condemn Fedor for what he did to her children, since the deadliness of his sin increases as the day goes by: not only did he kill them, but they were also denied a chance of praying before death.

The domestic setting of the legend and tale is different from the oriental setting of the tradition. In the legend Russia is defamiliarized, and in the tale it becomes a universal topos.

Concerning the modality of the legend and the tale, it had some differences from that of the tradition, which is presented as universal truth.

The narrative of the legend cannot be characterized as credible or incredible: it is highly ambiguous. On the one hand, in the preface to the story Odoevsky proclaims legends to be distorted versions of historical events caused by certain reasons:

[...] известия о всем происходящем в мире до них доходят в виде искаженных слухов; в каждой хижине этот слух дополняется каким-либо чудесным рассказом (ибо Финны большие рассказчики), и так мало-помалу происшествие, вчера случившееся, у них

обращается в баснословное предание: явление любопытное, объясняющее до некоторой степени, каким образом образовались древние мифы<sup>14</sup> [Odoevsky 1840: 17].

On the other hand, the depiction of the old Finn communicating the legend contradicts the narrator's own statements: "Старик <...> печально наклонил голову, седые локоны нависли на его бледные морщины, он сложил руки на коленях и, качая головою, стал говорить, как будто самому себе"<sup>15</sup> [Ibid: 24-25]. The mystical events that occur later in the embedding text seem to support the mythopoeic view on history, so the local legend may contain a grain of truth rather than just be a distorted version of real facts. Odoevsky is convincing that scholars do not generally see this contradiction.

The modality of the tale is unlike from that of the traditions and the legend. On the one hand, it is inferior to the solemn tone of the former, both because of the informal style and the choice of a lower subject. On the other hand, the veracity of the narrative is not questioned as it is done in the legend. The sources of the story are not commented on, and the narrator is preoccupied with the old woman's outlook. Until the very end the reader cannot solve the mystery of what is happening, and that emphasizes the reader's role. While the tradition does not require the active reading, as the narrator did the main work, in the tale deciphering the meaning behind the old pilgrim's wanderings is the reader's duty, and the meaning may vary.

Thus, it may be stated that the legend and the tale involve the reader more actively by changing the status of the text and choosing a lower level of solemnity.

## Conclusion

Odoevsky's traditions created in the 1820s form a corpus of texts with a number of steady key features. The message of the genre is communicating to the reader an old truth coming from the East and originating from the primordial times. The truth is presented as a 'mixes allegory', in the terms of the time, with both the image and its meaning presented in the narrative.

The legend and the tale written in 1840 do not follow the pattern of the tradition, and the generic properties of the latter are not shared by them. What is more, they are different from each other, not only from the tradition. The legend is a personified narration which mythopoeticizes real

---

<sup>14</sup> "Tidings about everything happening in the world reach them distorted; in every hut the rumour is complemented by a miraculous story (since the Fins are great storytellers), and little by little an event which occurred yesterday turns into a mythical tradition: a curious phenomenon which somewhat explains how ancient myths emerged."

<sup>15</sup> "The old man <...> ruefully bent his head forward, his grey tresses hanging over his pale wrinkles, he folded his hands on his lap and, shaking his head, commenced to speak, as though to himself."

historical events, and the veracity of the text is dubious. The dramatic tale is built around archetypal images hints at some Orthodox truth without explicitly stating it.

The number of legends and tales by Odoevsky is deficient to speak about constituent generic features, and at this stage it is impossible to say whether the categories of composition, setting, and modality are nuclear for the genres. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the way they are presented is different. It is likely that Odoevsky did not fully develop a concept of legend or tale similar to the mature tradition, however, he must have felt the difference between the notions and titled the texts accordingly.

The conducted analysis supports Shterns' argument concerning the evolution of generic forms in Odoevsky's oeuvre, which coincided with the transformation of his attitude and ideas. According to Shtern, the original generic forms in Odoevsky's prose were created alongside with the changes in the writer's views on the human essence, on the meaning of life [Shtern 1979: 122]. Odoevsky moved from a tradition, which represented a sacred and eternal truth, the same for everybody, to understanding life as representing these laws. At the same time the changes may reveal the stages in Odoevsky's "constant search for connection between traditional myth and legend and everyday material reality," which, in Simon Karlinsky's view, determined Odoevsky's philosophy [Karlinsky 1966: 173]. The move from traditions to legends and tales coinciding with the evolution of the writer's philosophy [Mann 1998: 159-160] may also indicate eschewing the didactic focus and attempting to create new genres where the truth has to be construed by the reader.

## Works cited

- Aleksandrov 1985 – Aleksandrov, Aleksandr Vasilyevich. *Russky romantichesky rasskaz 1830-kh gg.: (Metod i zhanr): Avtoref. dis. ... kand. filol. nauk.* Kiev, 1985.
- Averintsev et al 1994 – Averintsev, Sergey Sergeevich, Andreev, Mikhail Leonidovich, Gasparov, Mikhail Leonovich, and others. *Kategorii poetiki v smene literaturnykh epoch*, in: *Istoricheskaya poetika. Literaturnye epokhi i tipy khudozhestvennogo soznania.* Moskva, 1994.
- Cornwell 1998 – Cornwell, Neil. *Vladimir Odoevsky and Romantic Poetics. Collected Essays.* Oxford, 1998.
- Cornwell 2001 – Cornwell, Neil. *The European "Nights" Tradition: Potocki and Odoevsky's "Russian Nights"*, in: *Vestnik Rossiyskogo universiteta družby narodov. Seria: Literaturovedenie, zhurnalistika.* 2001. № 5.

- Duff 2009 – Duff, David. *Romanticism and the Uses of Genre*. Oxford, 2009.
- Eremeev 2002 – Eremeev, Sergey Nikolaevich. *Pravoslavnye motivy v literaturnoy skazke pervoy poloviny XIX veka*, in: Vestnik Tambovskogo universiteta. Seria: Gumanitarnye nauki. 2002. № 4 (28).
- Galich 1825 – Galich, Aleksandr Ivanovich. *Opyt nauki izyaschnogo*. Sankt-Peterburg, 1825.
- Harrison 2013 – Harrison, Lonny. *Reasonable to Ridiculous: The Inward Gaze of the Modern Self in Dostoevskii and Vladimir Odoevskii*, in: Canadian Slavonic Papers. Vol. LV. № 3-4.
- Iezuitova 1976 – Iezuitova, Raisa Vladimirovna. *Literatura vtoroy poloviny 1820-kh-1830-kh godov i fol'klor*, in: Russkaya literatura i fol'klor (pervaya polovina XIX v.). Leningrad, 1976.
- Karlinsky 1966 – Karlinsky, Simon. *A Hollow Shape: The Philosophical Tales of Prince Vladimir Odoevsky*, in: Studies in Romanticism. 1996. № 5(3).
- Kiselev 2008 – Kiselev, Vitaly Sergeevich. *Teleologia “Sochineniy knyazya V.F. Odoevskogo” (1844): printsipy sostavleniya, kompozitsiya, zhanrovoye tseloe*, in: Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Filologia. 2008. № 2.
- Krylova, Tulyakova 2017 – Krylova, Irina Alekseevna, and Tulyakova, Natalia Alexandrovna. *Slovo “legenda” v rechevom upotreblenii i v slovarnom otrazhenii: zaimstvovanie, funktsionirovanie, ideologiya*, in: Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Filologia. 2017. №. 45.
- Kulishkina 2014 – Kulishkina, Ol'ga Nikolaevna. *Ob odonom sluchae zacherkivaniya v rukopisyakh V.F. Odoevskogo*, in: Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta tekhnologii i dizayna. Seria: Iskusstvovedenie. Filologicheskie nauki. 2014. № 3.
- Mann 1998 – Mann, Yury Vladimirovich. *Russkaya filosofskaya estetika*. Moskva, 1998.
- Odoevsky 1824 – Odoevsky, Vladimir Fedorovich. *Raduga. – Tsvety. – Inoskazania*, in: Mnemozina. Moskva, 1824.
- Odoevsky 1826 – Odoevsky, Vladimir Fedorovich. *Zavetnaya kniga. Drevnee predanie*, in: Urania. Karmannya knizhka na 1826 god. Moskva.
- Odoevsky 1840 – Odoevsky, Vladimir Fedorovich. *Yuzhny bereg Finlyandii v nachale XVIII stoletia*, in: Utrennyaya zarya na 1840 god.
- Odoevsky 1844 – Odoevsky, Vladimir Fedorovich. *Sochineniya*. T. 3. Sankt-Peterburg, 1844.
- Ostolopov 1821 – Ostolopov, Nikolay. *Slovar' drevnei i novoi poezii*. Sankt-Peterburg, 1821.
- Pashaeva 2017 – Pashaeva, Tatyana Nizamovna. *Postroenie syuzheta fantasticheskoy povesti V.F. Odoevskogo “Salamandra”*, in: Vestnik Dagestanskogo universiteta. Seria: Gumanitarnye nauki. 2017. V. 32. № 2.

- Putney 2011 – Putney, Christopher R. *“The Circle That Presupposes its End as its Goal”: the Riddle Of Vladimir Odoevsky’s “The Sylph”*, in: Slavic & East European Journal. 2011. Vol. 55(2).
- Sakulin 1913 – Sakulin, Pavel Nikitich. *Iz istorii russkogo idealizma. Kn. V.F. Odoevsky: Myslitel’. Pisatel’*. Moskva: 1913.
- Shtern 1979 – Shtern, Minyona Savelyevna. *Apologi V.F. Odoevskogo i sud’ba didaktiko-allegoricheskikh zhanrov v russkoy literature pervykh desyatiletii XIX veka*, in: Problemy metoda i zhanra. Tomsk, 1979.
- Skripnik 2008 – Skripnik, Alena Vladimirovna. *Spetsifika zhanra “zapisok” v “Zapiskakh sumasshedshego” N.V. Gogolya i “Sil’fide” V.F. Odoevskogo*, in: Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. 2008. № 306.
- Slovar’ 1796 – *Slovar’ Akademii Rossiyskoy*. Sankt-Petersburg, 1796.
- Smulakovskaya 2008 – Smulakovskaya, Raisa Leonidovna. *Zametka kak fragmentarny zhanr (nekotorye tipichnye sredstva modelirovaniya)*, in: Vestnik Volgogradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Seria: Yazykoznanie. 2008. № 2.
- Turyan 1991 – Turyan, Marietta Andreevna. *Strannaya moya sud’ba: o zhizni V.F. Odoevskogo*. Moskva, 1991.
- Zimileva 2017 – Zimileva, Anastasia Olegovna. *Arkhetipicheskoe nachalo v rasskaze V.F. Odoevskogo “Neboydenny dom”*, in: Vestnik Tverskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Filologia. 2017. № 1.
- Zyryanov 2008 – Zyryanov, Oleg Vasilyevich. *Zhanrovye refleksivy v svete istoricheskoy poetiki*, in: Dergachevskie chtenia. T. 1. Ekaterinburg, 2008.

Natalia A. Tuliakova

National Research University Higher School of Economics (Saint-Petersburg, Russia).

Department of Foreign Languages; Associate Professor

E-mail: ntulyakova@hse.ru

**Any opinions or claims contained in this Working Paper do not necessarily reflect the views of HSE.**

© Tuliakova, 2018