

## **BEHAVIOURAL PATTERNS OF FARMERS IN RUSSIAN CULTURE (ON THE MATERIAL OF EVERYDAY TEXTS)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The life of each ethnic group takes place in relatively the same conditions of existence, which quite naturally gives rise to members of the ethnic community's views on the same subject, common criteria, and similar behaviours. Thus, the surrounding human world has a certain elements of uniformity that typify human behaviour, that is, subordinate to the norms developed and accepted in the community. Stereotypes dictate both the form and content of actions. Stereotyped behaviour doesn't need the motivation. The most powerful argument in favour of this mode of action is a reference to the law of their ancestors. The present study focuses on studying the stereotypical behaviour of the Russian peasant, reflected in folk superstitions. The authors analyzed the sources that precisely recorded standards of behaviour established historically, and came to the several conclusions. Constant monitoring of the environment allowed the farmer to form behavioural patterns under risk and uncertainty of farming. People's signs based on the concept of cyclicity of time and events. An important condition governing the behaviour of the farmers, was the observation of celestial bodies, phase of the moon. Large number of texts will focused on the biological "indicators" – plants, animals. Much more superstitions are advisory in nature than prohibitory. In our work we use the terms “signs” and “omens” interchangeably.

***Keywords: language, linguistics, national culture, stereotype, folk omens***

### **INTRODUCTION**

Everyday texts, including folk superstitions, signs, proverbs, fixed in various reference books, dictionaries, etc., provide an opportunity to identify the dynamics of the behavioural stereotypes formation of the Russian farmer. The basic material for our study was folk omens, which are based on knowledge and understanding of native speakers' ordinary consciousness of the natural conditions of human existence [1]. Time-tested predictions based on the presumption of a hidden connection between natural phenomena, object properties and human life events are focused not only on the regulation of human behaviour in conditions of risk or uncertainty, but also on the translation of significant norms and symbols, as well as on communication within the community. Popular signs represent a constantly evolving genre of folklore, demonstrating the features of its functioning in language use as ways of expressing prohibitions, permissions, cautions, admonitions, advice, etc., and can be characterized as the interpretation of certain situations that used by native traditions<sup>1</sup> to construct their behaviour [2].

## THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION

The ancient farmer had to rely on the proven life practice based on centuries-old experience of omens that cover all typical often difficult to explain the phenomena of nature. N. Afanasiev noted in the middle of the XIX century: "By the nature of the everyday life, pastoral and agricultural, a man was entirely devoted to mother nature, on which all his well-being depended, all the means of his life. It is clear, with what power of attention he had to follow her various phenomena, with what unremitting diligence he had to look at the movement of the celestial bodies, their luster and extinction, the color of the dawn and the clouds, listen to the thunder and the winds blow, to see the opening of the rivers, the blooming of trees, the arrivals and departures of birds, and so on and so forth [3].

The statement of the scientist that in the forming of the pagan worldview a special role belongs to natural phenomena, it is fair also and in relation to the folk omens which depict the most ancient knowledge. Since ancient times, people have tried to understand the phenomena of nature, to identify the presence or absence of causation between them, in order to be able to anticipate, predict certain changes in the weather. From the earliest times in human consciousness co - exist two notions about time as a sequence of related events "life circles" (cyclical time) and time as a unidirectional translational motion (linear time). In materialistic philosophy linear and cyclic time is opposed as "natural-scientific" and "naive", archaic. Archaic civilization is distinguished by the notion of time as rotation of a circle, rising from the seasonal and calendar cycles (Averintsev 1975, Lotman 1987, Meletiskii 1991; Yakovlev 1992). Naturally, because the "cyclic consciousness" is built on the typification (identification of what is, with what was not once), and linear - on individualization.

## SEASON-RELATED OMENS

Within the framework of cosmological consciousness, the events that occur turn out to be significant in so far as they relate not to the future but to the past state, the events of the present appear as a reflection of the original past, that is, the present is evaluated not by future but by past events. In other words, what is happening does not give rise to the future, but it can be seen as a foreshadowing of the future. Indeed, what happens in the present and what will happen in the future acts as a reflection or symbolic representation of the same condition as signs of this condition. The connection between these signs is encrypted in the very code of the world order. If we know this connection, we can predict the future by the events of the present, guided by the cosmological consciousness [4]:

What kind is the winter, that kind the summer will be, with its transforms:  
*Winter summer builds // According to the winter falls summer // Summer rich harvest portends a cold winter // If winter is hot, the summer is cold // If the winter has blizzards - the summer will be of bad weather // If the winter is*

*frosty - the summer is dew // Winter without snow - summer without bread // If the winter is snowy - summer is rainy // If in the winter water subsides, the summer will be clear // Seven years the winter according the summer, and seven years the summer according the winter.*

Thus, people's folk omens are based on the notion of cyclic time, which is related to the idea of natural cycles, the infinite returns and repetitions of the same events. The trait of ties repeatability (not singularity) is characterized by proposals, which are repeated periodically reproduced communication situations [5]. The repeatability of an action is an aspectual value that expresses the repeated reproduction of an action in time and space, regardless of the number of repetitions and transmitted in the language by means of different levels. The frequency of repeatability is based on grammatical, lexico-semantic and contextual factors and may be specified as multiple, regularity, generality, temporal uncertainty, usuality.

### CELESTIAL BODIES-RELATED SIGNS

Agricultural work required taking into account the change of natural phenomena during the year, as it was important for the farmer to know whether to expect a severe winter, hot and arid or cool and humid summer, cold or warm spring and autumn. What was taken into account in the preparation of the weather forecast? First of all, the movement, shape, size and time of appearance celestial bodies – the Moon and the Sun. Observations from the ancient times over the Moon and the Sun allowed the farmer to determine the nature of the upcoming weather, the most favourable periods for agricultural work. Importance is attached to what weather is in the new moon or in the first days after, before the first quarter - the weather for a long time will depend on this: *If for a long time we had had clear weather - new moon will bring the rain // In the fifth day of the new moon there is almost always a strong wind // If on the sixth day the new Moon will seem fiery red, the wind will be.*

Signs of a bizarre position of the moon are associated, apparently, with the primitive misconceptions about this body. The most significant parameter is the presence of the moon *horns, ears, hooves*, etc. Their different form, color, the intensity could help to make not only short-term, but also long-term forecasts: *The moon with horns down - to the heat // The new moon with horns on midnight (up) - the winter cold will be cold and the summer with winds // The young Moon with horns towards the mountain - to the bad weather; the horns of the moon are sharp and bright - to the bucket, steep - to frost // The Moon with "ears" - to frost (light pillars from the moon) // Month on the hooves - to the cold, back to heat, rain or snow.*

A lot of signs, which record the influence of the phase of the moon, used for sowing and planting. Signs warn against sowing in the new moon, full moon, apparently, recognized as favourable: *Not to sow bread in the new moon, it will be not viable, the new moon will pull life from the seed // Bread should be planted in the full moon (or on the wane of the moon) // Spring rye and wheat sow in full*

*moon, and oats - two days later, or two days earlier // In the new moon (the full moon) the tree shouldn't be felled.*

### **PRECIPITATION-RELATED SIGNS**

Precipitation-related signs, especially rain, were very important for agricultural activities. The upcoming rain could be predicted not only by meteorological signs, but also by the behaviour of animals, especially pets: *Roosters singing in the rain // the Blackbird to the bad weather rarely shouts // Cat hides its face under the paw - to the blizzard // Chicken flies across the house - to frost // Goose stands on one leg - to the frost // Goose paw pressed - to the cold // In winter the horse lies down - to warmth // Horse snores - to the blizzard // The cock sings in the nighttime - to bad weather.*

Plants have long been considered to be "live" natural barometers, Most representatives of the flora respond well to the moisture content in the air and soil, the upcoming rain, the slightest changes in the environment: *The flowers of the meadow droop before the rain // The Scales of spruce cones cover before the rain // Buds of thistles before the rain straighten hooks // Flowers of field bindweed are compressed before the rain // Fir before the rain picks up branches // Carrot tops wilts before the rain // The rain on palm Sunday heralds the harvest of millet and buckwheat // From the leaves of the willow profusely dripping moisture before the rain // The clover emits a pungent smell before the rain // Flowers smell stronger before the rain.*

### **AGRICULTURE-RELATED SIGNS**

From the depth of centuries, farmers have learnt to use biological indicators in agriculture. On the territory of Central Russia field work starts in the beginning of the third decade of April. Calendars, Chislennik, Mesyatseslov point, when you can and cannot do anything in the certain day, however the peasant is no longer trusted to natural signs. Focusing on plants, animal behaviour, insects, the position of stars in the sky and other indirect signs, the farmer could accurately determine the beginning of sowing: *Sow barley while viburnum is flowering // Sow barley when the viburnum blooms // When (if) from the willow and vine fluff is flying, sow late oats // Sow flax, when the rowan blossoms // Sow peas when the oak blossoms.*

Natural signs could point to a restriction of time limit: the farmer was supposed to have time to sow and plant until certain changes in the nature: *You can sow as long as the bird cherry blossoms.*

According to natural signs, the farmer could determine when it was time to harvest and what will be the harvest. He could focus on both natural phenomena and the behaviour of animals and plants: *If the blueberries are ripe, rye is ripe // In the spring there are a lot of alder cones - a good crop of peas // If the cranberries are ripe, they oats have come // If garlic is frozen - the rye has frozen // If on arrival the rooks sat just right on the nest - to the*

*crop // The snow or fog, dropped on the New year, foretell the harvest // Thunder in June predicts a good harvest // Moths fly low - to the harvest // The Rowan in bloom - to harvest of flax // On the Annunciation it is frosty - to the milk mushrooms crop.*

## CONCLUSION

It is very important that everything related to the material culture, to one's own actions and rituals, applies also to the values, ideals and attitudes of people and how they think about the world and about one's life. As to the Russian people, they “do not like a certain calendar calculation of time and willingly means time for their rural works, timing the beginning or the end of such works to the famous holiday” [6]. Thus, a special role in the linguistic expression of national-specific attitudes and norms of behaviour is played by folk omens. The main idea of Russian people's folk omens is related to the law of natural cycles, the infinite returns and repetitions of the same events. All of these types of national-driven behaviour expressed in verbal forms, as mentioned earlier, represent the certain way-organized code of conduct. The observation of celestial bodies, phase of the moon was the base for taking decisions about planting and picking the harvest. More studied folk omens are advisory in nature than prohibitory.

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