

Key Images of the Argentinean Poetry of the Early XX Century

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ABSTRACT

The article studies the peculiarities of the verbalization of the main concepts in the Argentinean poetry of the early XX century. The poetic images of the Pampa, the city, the conventillo and the tango are considered to be the key images of the mentioned period.

Keywords: the image, the Argentinean poetry, the early XX century, the Pampa, the city, the conventillo, the tango.

Introduction

Every poetic piece of art is a reflection of culture. While creating a poem, the author processes reality through his or her own particular philosophy of life and the national language picture of the world. Although the poetry reveals the reality through the special individual perception, it reflects not only the author's subjective understanding of the world embodied in the language, but also the objective reality. The poetic picture of the world reflects the individual poet's concepts as well as the ethno specific and universal concepts. The poetry reflects simultaneously the objective reality and the author's attitude to the events and facts of reality, as well as his her thoughts and feelings, formed under the influence of the national and cultural characteristics of the society in a certain historical period. The verbalized image of the world built in the minds of the members of a particular ethnic group represents culture, and it changes at the same time as the culture does. The aim of this article is to outline the peculiarities of the reflection of the main concepts of the Argentinean culture of the early XX century in the Argentinean poetry of the mentioned period. The early XX century is characterized by the gradual expansion of the conceptual space of the Argentinean poetry due to the emergence of new meanings, values in the culture of Argentina of that time as well as ethnical and cultural impact of the new concepts on the traditional culture.

The most widespread image in the Argentinean poetry of the early XX century is the image of the Pampa. The word "pampa", which comes from the Quechua language, means a broad plain with low vegetation. The ethno-cultural concept PAMPA plays a key role in the Argentinean national picture of the world. This concept embodies the Argentinean understanding of the space that has such characteristics as immensity, openness and freedom of movement. A substantial number of images is based on such

conceptual characteristics of the concept PAMPA as immense space, infinity and immeasurability: “Deja de ser eterna lejanía... Nunca permitas, campo, que se agote/nuestra sed de horizonte y de galope” (Oliverio Gironde, Campo nuestro), “¡No haylímite!.. la niebla se desprende,/y a su paso se aleja el horizonte” (Rafael Obligado. La pampa), “Aquí también. Aquí, como en el otro/Confín del continente, el infinito áhi arriba suspendidos en la inmensidad el Universo/y abajo la inmensidad de la pampa y tanto espacio empieza/a curarlo’ el pecao” (Leónidas Lamborghini. La cura’ el mate), “Y el campo abierto con la luna a lo lejos a la derecha” (Rodolfo Enrique Fogwill. El ingeniero Alvaro de campos maneja “su” Chevrolet en la ruta a Sintra).

The combination of the elements of the religious and mythological worldview in the Argentinean poetry is demonstrated in the images that describe the Pampa as God by means of addressing the Pampa as the Christians usually address God, using the second person singular: “Pampa: ... te desgarran ... estás en los cielos” (Jorge Luis Borges. Al horizonte de un suburbio), “¿Me demandas? ... algo tuyo me levanta ... Te veo y me estremezco: mi alma siente/que tu misma grandeza la aniquila” (Rafael Obligado. La pampa). The image of the Pampa as God is also formed by allusions to “The Lord’s Prayer”: “A veces soledad, otras silencio,/pero ante todo, campo: padrenuestro” (Oliverio Gironde. Campo nuestro), “Pampa sufrida y macha que ya estás en los cielos” (Jorge Luis Borges. Al horizonte de un suburbio). In the early XX century the Argentinean nation has become a multinational unity looking for its national identity due to the rapid development of cities, a significant increase in population caused by the European immigrants, contacting and mixing of different types of cultures, mentalities, attitudes, customs and traditions.

At that time the image of the gaucho with positive connotations appears in the Argentinean poetry. This image existed in the poetry in the previous century as well, but it had mostly negative characteristics. At the beginning of the XX century the image of the gaucho became a part of the Argentinean self-identification. The image of the gaucho is closely related to the image of the Pampa. The gaucho is a tamer of horses who lives and works in infinite space of the Pampa. In the early XX century the gaucho has become a national symbol, a kind of a mythological hero. The poetic image of the gaucho is created by using numerous attributes with positive connotations: “Símbolo pampeano y hombre verdadero./Generoso guerrero,/amor, coraje,/¡Salvaje!/Gaucho, por decir mejor./Ropaje suelto de viento,/protagonista de un cuento/vencedor./Corazón/de afirmación” (Ricardo Güiraldes. Al hombre que pasó). In the poetry the image of the gaucho is frequently based on the hyperbole with biblical allusions when the gaucho is described as an embodiment of God: “aquel ... que rige a los hombres de la llanura/y los trabajos y los días/y las generaciones de los toros” (Jorge Luis Borges. Dulcia linquimus arva), “El domador Celedonio Barral/Domó en la pampa todos los caballos” (Leopoldo Marechal. Epitafios australes), “Por el brazo derecho que recoge la luz/y por la mano izquierda que sostiene la nave... domador de alazanes,/quiere hacer dela tierra su timbal” (Leopoldo Marechal. El canto de alegría).

In the early XX century the social reality in Argentina changed that led to the appearance in the poetry of the realization of the concept CITY which is based on such characteristic as the limited and closed space. The image of the city is usually opposed to the image of the Pampa as the immense and unlimited space. Taking into account the echoes of the mythological worldview in the Argentinean poetry, the city can be described as a hostile space opposed to the Pampa as a place of harmonious human existence: “Olvidada pureza ... ese dolor de Buenos Aires... Ah, la ciudad la pudre y equivoca/Pequeña vida que dolor provoca” (Alfonsina Storni. Frente al mar), “Una plaza, como tan- tas,/en una ciudad vulgar” (Rafael Alberto Arrieta. Canción ingenua), “la ciudad los recupera hipócrita/y les impone los deberes cotidianos” (Julio Cortázar. Los amantes), “cómo quisiera rescatar/ese dolor de Buenos Aires, esa espera sin pausas/ni esperanza” (Julio Cortázar. After such pleasures). A city in the Argentinean poetry is described as a limited space that suppresses a person: “el horizonte estrecho/de la ciudad nativa” (Rafael Obligado. Echevarría), “para encerrar mi vida/en la estrecha ciudad” (Rafael Obligado. El hogar paterno), “¡Que pueda libertarme de su peso!” (Alfonsina Storni. Frente al mar).

A city also can be shown as an ill person: “el vi- gilante de la esquina detiene de un golpe de batuta/todos los estremecimientos dela ciudad” (Oliverio Gironde. Pedestre), “en una delirante actividad sin rumbo,/in- útil,/arbitraria,/febril,/idéntica a la fiebre/que sufren las ciudades” (Oliverio Gironde. Solo). The cultural and historical changes led to the development of the poetic images that verbalized new concepts, for example, the concept CONVENTILLO. The Argentinean city of the early XX century is impossible to imagine without such Argentinean phenomenon as the conventillo — a multi-family dwelling of immigrants in the poorest parts of cities [4, 68]. The word “conventillo” is formed by the nonspecific derivation from the word “convento” (“monastery”), and the evaluative suffix is used in the function of a derivative suffix. The word “convento” implies the security of a person in a monastery and the subordination to certain strict rules, while the word “conventillo” connotes people of different nationality living together in a small limited space: “A la luz de tu fa- rol cansado,/conventillo/yo también quiero cantar/tu cosmopolitismo abigarrado” (Raúl González Tuñón. Poema del conventillo), “Cada uno habla allí su pro- pia lengua,/no sea que otro la entienda” (Jewel Katz. En el conventillo). The multinationality of the image of the conventillo is shown by the use of proper names that denote nationality: “Me procuro primero un compadrito/un ruso, un francés, un cocoliche,/una vieja chismosa, un garabito,/un conventillo, una calle y un bo- liche” (Carlos Paoli. Sainetes argentinos), “La escena representa un conventillo./Personajes: un grébano ama- rrete,/un gallego que en todo se entromete,/dos guapos, una paica y un vivillo” (Vacarezza. Soneto).

In the early XX century the tango — a specific product of the Argentinean culture associated with immigration and assimilation processes — appears and quickly becomes one of the key concepts actualized in the Argentinean poetry of that period. Tango is a piece of poetry, a song and a dance that reflexes not only contradictory relationships between men and women, but also complex processes of intercultural synthesis of many

nations in the geographical area of Argentina. Tango was widespread in the overcrowded poor neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, where there were many immigrants from Europe. Tango is not just an Argentinean phenomenon, it is a unique phenomenon that was typical for the capital, Buenos Aires, which is described by the word “porteño” in the poetry: “Recuerdo las fiestas suburbanas/en los amplios patios porteños/... El tango temblaba su emoción/en la vigilia jubilosa del beso” (Alfredo Carlino. Evocación del baile en el barrio). The tango is usually called Argentinean, but in fact it is “porteño”, belonging to the capital of Argentina.

A lot of tango’s researchers claim that only the citizens of Buenos Aires can fully understand the sense of tango. In the poetry it is mentioned the approximate time when the tango was created and names of the streets and parts of Buenos Aires are specified: “Nació en los Corrales Viejos,/allá por el año ochenta./Hijo fue de una milonga/y un pesao del arrabal” (Miguel A. Camino. Chaquiras. El tango), “La cosa jué por el sur/y aconteció n’el ochenta,/aya en los Corrales Viejos,/por la caye de la Arena ...Jué un domingo, en los Corrales/cuando inventaron el tango” (Francisco García Jiménez. Jue un domingo, en los corrales), “Yo soy el tango.../Mi barrio fue Villa Luro,/mi academia fue el canyengue...” (Enrique Cadicamo. Yo soy el tango). Thus, as the study shows, the Argentinean poetry of the early XX century demonstrated the dynamics in the development of the poetic images. The key images in the Argentinean poetry of the mentioned period are the Pampa, the city, the conventillo and the tango. As the social state of the country changes, the appearance of new ethno specific images as well as the traditional images with new connotations is observed.

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