

ON THE TYPOLOGY OF RITUAL MODELS OF SPACE

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Among the main ways of defining the content of the ritual text the most common, perhaps, is the translation of the main ideas of the ritual into the term of space relations. The time aspect, however, does not vanish completely, and it cannot vanish, as in the ritual time and space aspects are inseparable. Time becomes the inner property of space, its "fourth" dimension.

The common feature for various space models used in different rituals into "our space" and "alien space". In the most general terms, "our space" is the world owned by the man, while the concept of the "alien space" relates to the space owned by animals, gods, and also to the world of death. The balance between the two spheres is maintained with the help of a continuous exchange of various values: people, crops, food, etc. The broken balance can be restored with the help of (and in) the ritual which presupposes a direct contact between the "human-owned" and the "alien" spaces.

Usually the alien space is considered as the secondary to the human-owned space (a distorted twin-image of the reality), but from the point of view of myth and ritual, they have rather opposite relations, as the cosmos (human-owned) has come out from the chaos (alien), but not vice versa. The alien world is as if something primordial, it has been existing before the human-owned world appeared. Therefore, the man tends to treat the alien not only as something destructive, opposing him, but also as the force that has given the initial impulse to the birth of the man-owned world, and is providing the latter with the "resources".

The fact that the concepts of the binary structure of the world are universal and stable, is far from being occasional. It has deep psychological roots. What is the meaning of the binary structure?

Firstly, the concept of the binary structure helps to find a satisfactory explanation for every crisis, every break in the natural course of events. Here the problem of either the explanation is true or "false" has no importance. Which is important, is that the model fulfills this function, and actually, in terms of relationship between the man-owned space and the alien world every extreme situation, both imaginary and real, can be explained.

Secondly, with this model we can not only satisfactory explain the problem of destroyed balance, but also to solve it, because the ways of its solution are transferred to the sphere of communication, dialogue, which is, perphas, the most "explored" area with a traditional set of methods for removing the contradictions. Building-up of the second (alien) world immediately had several consequences.

An outer view upon what is happening in the human world appeared, which resulted, in its turn, in moral and ethic evaluation of the events. A partner (partners) joined in a dialogue about the highest life values. The source of life, the driving force became fixed in space, if not in time. As a results, the world acquired a more stable structure, and the position of the man in the world became mere definite.

There appeared not only a possibility, but also psychological grounds to build up a certain pattern of behaviour (both with the outer world and within the socium) on the principle of mutuality and equivalence. The relationships between the parties suggest a sort of an agreement which is valid till both parties stick to their obligations; accordingly, every break in the pattern in this case is considered as a violation of the obligation taken.

This model not only suggests the existence of the human-owned and the alien in the frames of the whole, but also establishes "personal" relationships with all the possible consequences: subjective estimations, emotional background, the tendency to achieve maximum benefits from the taken obligations, etc.

None the less important, both in psychological and other aspects, is the fact that this model of overcoming the crisis situation offers an opportunity to keep the situation under control and to design optimum ways of removing the crisis.

It should be noted that at a certain stage of historical development of the human mind this model of living through extreme situations was not only appropriate, but also very rational. Besides, its deep roots and remarkable vitality testify to its correspondence to psycho-psychological mechanisms based on the principles of exchange, mutuality and equivalence.

The images of the alien world are very contradictory and versatile, even if we speak of a certain particular sphere of the alien world, e.g. about the world of the dead. The abundance of information does not elucidate the picture, but rather makes it more complicated. It can be described by such characteristics as darkness, or, on the contrary, eternal light; disproportion to the man and anomaly; seasons do not change: there is either a continuous coldness or a continuous heat, the connection with water and dampness; mirror images (everything is like in the human world, but in the mirror reflection); the fertile area or a fruitless desert. Finally, the alien world can be characterized by the absence of any characteristics: by "neither" locus, the world of non-existence, non-things, non-events, non-phenomena.

According to V.Ya Propp's true statement, "there is no uniformity in describing the "other" world. The descriptions are versatile. We may say in advance that there are no nations having absolutely uniform concepts of the "other" world. The concepts are always versatile, and often contradictory.

A typical example: concepts of the location of the "other" world. Folklore and mythological texts usually mention its "exact" coordinates: under the earth, under the water, in the sky, behind the mountains, in the North or in the West, etc. According to those sources, the main feature of the "other" world is its remoteness. Nevertheless, the man was always feeling its closeness.

This world might begin immediately behind the threshold or even in the house /cellar (podpol), place behind the stove (zapechye). In burial rites the borders of the human-owned and alien worlds come very close to each other. We may even speak of a temporary absence of the borders (cf.: invitation of parents to have a meal, treating of the deceased, in the place of honour, putting food on the window-pane, etc.). In other ritual situations the borders of the "other" world may move further from the centre of the human-owned world (cf.: the marginal role of the bath-house (banya), barn (ovyn), river, etc.). Thus, the border between the worlds is mobile. As the human-owned world be-

comes more actual, the border moves closer to the centre, while the sphere of the alien becomes more abstract; on the contrary, the detalization of the "other" world results in the expansion of the human-owned world, in its penetration into the alien world (even if mentally).

The alien world ends where the human world begins, and the border moves alongside with the man. This is particularly noticeable in the rituals (and corresponding folklore and mythological texts), where we deal with the model of penetration of the subject (the hero) into the "other" world. This journey is a successive overcoming of a number of borders, and each border is thought to be the main one, but when overcome, it is not the main border any more; the main border becomes the one to be overcome next.

The mentioned peculiarities suggest two opposite types of concepts about the "other" world fixed in corresponding texts.

1. The alien world is distant from the human world, and to reach it, certain efforts are required. In this case the main attention is focused on approaching the barrier between the alien and the human-owned worlds, designing models of overcoming the barrier and establishing contacts. In the texts describing this models (e.g. in fairy-tales, in transitional rituals) the main space category is the *journey*, "far" and "dangerous" being its main characteristics.

2. The alien world is in the immediate vicinity to the human world. In this case the man concentrates his efforts on strengthening the border, making it impenetrable, withholding from unwanted contacts. For the texts describing this model [mythological tales (bylichki) about the tricks of "impure" spirits, charms (zagovori) using the motif of putting up "the iron stockade" (tyn), elements of calendar, burial, birth and occasional rituals, etc.], the main category is the *border*.

It is worth noting here that the main property of the border in this model-- its impenetrability-- is time-dependent: on the one hand, the wide-spread beliefs about the revelry of "impure" spirits in special time periods (at noon, in the midnight); on the other hand, ideas about a gradual weakening of the borders, loss of strength, which asks for a regular strengthening of the borders with the help of special rituals [cf.: annual rounds (ob'yezd, obhod) of borders performed by tsars in an ancient in the Near East tradition; see Ardzinaba, 1982]. In light time the borders move further apart, in dark time they move closer (cf.: Lithuanian beliefs saying that one cannot point with his

finger to the sky, otherwise he may hurt God's eye, and therefore suffer pains after death).

Each model has its own attitude to the alien. O.A. Sedakova has formulated this idea based on the materials of the Eastern-Slavic burial rituals: if the ritual includes the participation of the soul of the deceased (funeral repast rites in the North and Centre of Russia, the lands along the Volga, Byelorussia) or if the burial rituals include the elements of wedding rites (the Carpathians, Byelorussia), then the prevailing tendency is to break borders between the "life-death" areas, to help the deceased to reach the "other" world and to establish a contact with him through the border. The land of death is thought to be distant from the land of "living beings". If the elements of wedding rituals are combined with laugh elements (the Ukraine, especially the Carpathians), then the dominating tendency is to strengthen the border between life and death for the safety of the living. Laugh, mockery is the preventive magic against death whose area is thought to be very close to the human world.

The concepts of the human-owned and the alien worlds, their closeness or remoteness in time and space vary also depending on the situation. In everyday life different categories of the alien have different positions; thus, characters of higher levels (gods) are more remote than characters of lower levels. In his everyday life the man is in contact with demonologic beings [home-spirit (domovoi), forest-spirit (leshii), etc.]. The contact with the higher representatives is usually established through the ritual. Here the ritual is the only regulated way of contacts between people and gods. Accordingly, the contact with the lower categories of the alien in the most common life situation illustrates a certain ritualization of everyday life. Thus, the common beliefs about the location of the alien are the following: the higher is the position of the supernatural being in the hierarchy of the alien, the further it is from the man, the more complex is the ritual.

In the context of the ritual everything is different. The concept of the alien becomes distinctly pronounced (actualized), which increases the semiotics of the space. Every element, every object, particularly those, that have or may have the function of the border, are estimated according to their belonging to the human-owned or to the alien. The man feels himself to be tightly surrounded by the alien.

According to space structures used in rituals, the latter can be divided into two main types: vertical and horizontal (i.e. all the

events happen mainly either in the vertical or in the horizontal planes).

The vertical plane is essential primarily for the rituals directly describing the creation of the world or world's separate fragments (calendar rituals, rituals associated with building). Here the idea of the centre is of special importance: the ability to find the only point in time and space through which all the world lines of force are passing; the human-owned world concentrates around this point on the earth, and the alien world - in the sky and (or under the earth. Therefore, perhaps, for calendar rituals so typical is the opposition of light and darkness, earthly light and heavenly light.

In rituals of this type the time relationships are non less essential than the space ones, and often come to the foreground (cf.: actual for calendar rituals motives of links with ancestors, with the past). Here, if we may speak of a subject, the subject is developing rather in time than in space. Transference in space is less important for these rituals, and they do not play the subject-forming part, as, for example, in transitional rituals, where the hero is passing through the border between the worlds. In calendar rituals there is no transition from one world to another.

In terms of space, the reason for the ritual to be performed is the narrowing of the human-owned, reducing it to a point. The borders between the human-owned and the alien established in the past lose their strength, become blurred. The area of the alien tends to absorb the human world (cf.: the revelry of "impure" spirits in calendar rituals).

Another variant is the loss of bonds between the elements once having constituted a single world, the main bond being between people and God. These ideas seem to be counter-directed, but actually they remarkably match, because they use both properties of the border: to separate areas in space and to provide a regulated connection between them, which results in so typical (not only for calendar, but also for occasional rituals) a duality of actions oriented both to the separation and limitation and to the connection, establishing links.

The theme of *separation* finds its expression in making round (obhod) of the area (house, yard, village), searing of crosses on doors, windows, gates. The latter is a special interest, as alongside with the renewal and strengthening of the borders, the opposition "light-darkness" is introduced.

In the frames of the same idea we may interpret the carrying of a straw-man (tchuchelo) or old things out of the village [cf. also: finding and dispatching an old woman or a witch (ved'ma) - characters personifying the image of the old, and also alien - in such rituals as Kupala].

Semantically more complex is the dismemberment of an offering, as, apart from allotting their share to every participant of the ritual (among them - a deity), this act may symbolize the world threatening to collapse.

The theme of *connection* (establishing or reestablishing weakened bonds) is also expressed by different models. The most obvious model is the connection of the earth with the sky with the help of a tree, a pole, a heap of old things, branches prepared for the fire, straw-man, etc.

Very close to the theme of connection is the motif of *collection*, which is mainly associated with the offering, but not only with it. In critical situation the socium must be represented in its most full form, and therefore every ritual begins with collecting the participants. All things too must remain in their places (cf. a strict interdiction on lending something before the ritual). The area of the "own" becomes more dense, i.e. acquires the properties that are to be expanded into the rest of the world. More directly this idea is expressed in preparation of the ritual offering-meal "made up collected" of different elements that eventually form the whole (like the Byelorussian "prizhanina").

The offering, symbolizing the idea of integrity, is used to achieve the integrity with respect to the whole world. In rituals it looks like putting the offering up or, less frequently, down, for example, hanging the offering on the tree (cf.: putting a horse skull on a pole together with the wheel in Kupala rituals in Poles'ye), throwing gruel into the fire during Shrovetide carnivals, etc.

Of a special interest is the subject of final, closing (razbornyh) songs analyzed recently by T.A. Agapkina and A.L. Toporkov: maidens collect all songs sung during a festival, e.g. the Shrovetide carnival, into a sieve and put in on the pussy-willow, i.e. send them upwards. The songs return to the earth with the help of birds dropping the sieve down (Agapkina, Toporkov, 1986, pp. 80-81). Similar subjects motivated interdictions on singing songs during certain periods, on eating meat which has also been "sent" upwards, etc. It is interesting that songs enter the group of typical symbols of offering: they are

collected, put into a sieve and placed on the top of a tree. We may say that the semantics of this subject correlates with the idea of the creation of the world with the help of special verbal texts. Besides, we may speak of a strongly pronounced isomorphism of two codes: culinary and verbal.

In the second case we deal with burying the pot with gruel into the earth [cf.: "burying the arrow" in the ritual round dance (vozheniye streli/suli) when maidens bow wheat-ears to the ground saying: "God goes into the heaven, grain comes into the ear" ("paishou gaspodz' na nebyasa, Patsagnu zhyta za kalasa)], burying in the foundation of the house horse skull, coins, incense and other ritual symbols.

In both cases the offering helps to restore lost bonds - in rituals of the mentioned types those are mainly vertical bonds.

The rituals where the action takes place mainly in the horizontal plane have a developed conceptual sphere with a relatively limited set of ritual means. The essential part of the subject (the contact with beings from "other" worlds, their response to people's actions) may be not expressed in the ritual at all (though still there are rituals-dialogues analyzed by N.I. Tolstoy-Tolstoy, 1984). These fragments are realized mainly on the level of ritual ideas. Thus, relations in the vertical plane are earnestly commented in verbal texts (a typical example - the ritual of inviting spring) (vesnyanka), which compensates the shortage of ritual actions.

The vertical model is characterized by partner's unequal position, when one of them is, by definition, higher than the other, and therefore special texts are used, typical for the communication with characters of a higher level (prayers, requests, charms, etc.) Generally speaking, this type of relationships is "inconvenient" for the man, not psychologically, but also physically: actions in the horizontal plane are much more natural. Even in calendar rituals the vertical model is almost never represented in this pure form. It is either supplemented with horizontal movements, or is completely transformed into the horizontal plane (cf.: dispatching of a character symbolizing the past time period according to the model of the burial rite).

Rituals of the horizontal type (rituals of the life cycle) have a strongly pronounced subject character, as their heroes cross the borders of the worlds. As shown in other papers (Baiburin, 1971, Baiburin, Levinton 1978, 1990; Sedakova, 1981), the language of space is the most convenient language for describing subject rituals not only

from outside (the investigator), but, which is more important, from inside of the tradition (see above about space terminology of birth, wedding, burial).

When describing the structure of transitional rituals we usually base on a classical three-part model: separation from the community, being outside one-owned space (the boundary period) reincorporation into the community. In one of the last papers (Baiburin, Levinton, 1990) we suggested to differentiate meanings and concepts expressed in rituals, pertaining exclusively to the content of the ritual, to the level of its interpretation, which allowed us to observe an essential difference between the rituals "framing" the human life (burial and birth rituals) and "middle" rituals (initiation, wedding). Formally in "framing" rituals only one element of the universal complex "death-/re/birth" is expressed, but it is represented both conceptually and "empirically". On the level of the ritual reality the subject of these rituals has a "linear" character: either first part (in birth rituals) or the third part (in burial rituals) of the model are absent, while in "middle" rituals we observe the complete structural form ("circular" subject); These rituals include both elements of the complex "Death-/re/birth, but only in their symbolic expression. A more detailed analysis of real and symbolic in ritual transitions may suggest other corrections relating to the structural models of transitional rituals.

In terms of space relations (the horizontal plane) the urgency of the ritual is dictated by the violation of the principle of uniformity of interrelating spheres. The aim of the ritual is to restore the destroyed order and to strengthen the border between the communicating worlds.

The representatives of the alien world penetrate into the human world with inevitable consequences: illnesses, death, loss of cattle. A similar situation is initial for the marriage. Bridegroom coming to the bride's home symbolizes assault, capture, breaking in; at the same time the bride in the bridegroom's house is also associated with a danger for its inhabitants. In other words, the bride and the bridegroom are mutually dangerous (use the typical for the wedding motif of hostility between the parties).

The birth of a child is accepted in a somewhat different way. In principle, the model is similar: the coming of a stranger is again associated with a certain danger. In the ritual, however, all the participating members rather help creating the situation (cf.: actions di-

rected to opening the doors for the newly-born: undoing the knots, opening the tsar gates in the church) than resist it, as in the wedding ritual [the ritual character of the opposition is obvious - cf.: invitation of the bridegroom before the wedding, especially on the feast of the Intercession of the Holy Virgin (Pokrov): "Father Pokrov, cover the damp earth and my young self" - Dal, 1984, II, p. 319]. Positively estimated is also the prepared in advance "coming" of ancestors for the repast meal (here, however, precautions should be taken against "unplanned" coming of the dead). Thus, the situation of appearance of the alien in the human world have both positive and negative variants. Sudden appearance of the alien is treated negatively, while the prepared coming has a positive meaning and results from regulated relationships between the two worlds directed against a spontaneous interventions of the alien.

The rules of ritual behaviour are also different: the alien is either dispatched from the human world or is transformed and becomes the part of the human-owned.

In the first case the main category is the road, the transition from one's own into the alien accompanied with the actions at cleaning the life space of death and reestablishing the border between the human-owned and alien worlds. The road is different for the real and imaginary participants of the ritual. The Death returns (with its prey) back from the human world. For the deceased it is the one-way road to the land of the dead, and, simultaneously, the change of the status - from a living being to the dead man. To the participants of the funeral procession it is the road to the border of the alien world and the return to their own world. Thus, here we see all possible variants of transitions. The fullness and symmetry in the realization of the space model is emphasised by the circular way (the road "there" and backwards), but the road of living people finds its ritual expression, while the road of Death belongs to the conceptual sphere. At the same time, the deceased ends its ritual way at the cemetery, while the rest part of his way into the world of the dead, as well as the possible coming back, remain in the conceptual sphere (Baiburin, Levinton, 1990, p. 69).

These transitions result in reestablishing status quo (uniformity of the human-owned space, the border between the areas of life and death).

In the second case (transformation of the alien into one's own) the direction of the movement is different: from the periphery of the

human-owned space (where the birth takes place) to its centre. Here the category is also present, but in a weaker form if compared to the burial rituals. Several reasons are responsible for that. Firstly, marked is always the way to the alien world, and not to the human world. Secondly, the ritual way of the baby and the woman giving birth to the child does not suppose crossing the border between the worlds; that is why, incidentally, as the periphery place (the place of birth) different parts of the village, yard and even the house may be used [with the exception of the house sacred place "the red corner" (krasnii ugol) in relation to which the rest of the space is peripheral]. In the latter case the formally represented way is reduced to the minimum, and belongs almost completely to the sphere of concepts rather than to the ritual reality.

In the conceptual sphere the child is moving from the alien world into "this" world. The first stage is the transition from the inner world into the outer space; then - into the inside again: house, the red corner, the cradle. The open space is believed to be dangerous for the baby. To "soften" this sudden change of the worlds, people create the environment which is associated (close) with the "other" world. This idea is proved by various regulations aiming at closing the space, its narrowing (putting into cradle, swaddling, covering with blankets), and, finally, at reconstruction of the fragment of the alien world in the centre of the human world. The ritual burial has a perfectly symmetric pattern also stipulating a gradual transition, but in the opposite direction: from this world to the "other" one (hence often mentioned seemingly paradoxical similarities in birth and burial rituals, relating to the time of transition, motives of light and darkness, openness-closeness, different re-encoding of the type: house-coffin-cradle, et al.).

From the point of view of opposing the "framing" and "middle" rituals (the subject of the first is "linear", while of the latter-circular) of special interest are rituals of baptizing. Usually these rituals are considered together with birth rituals (as their "continuation"). However, by the type and structure, they tend to the "middle" rituals. The baby is brought out into the outer space, which is alien for him, and a number of actions are performed symbolizing his transformation; he is brought back, but already in another status [cf.: "took non-baptized, give back baptized" (brali nehreschyonym, otdayom hreschyonym)]. Here we deal with a "circular" subject, typical for the "middle" rituals.

In Eastern-Slavic tradition the "middle" ritual in full value is the wedding. There are special papers on the problem of organization of space in this ritual (Baiburin, Levinton, 1978, 1990). Here I mention but some moments. Actions taking place in the bride's locus seem to be similar to the model of death [cf.: the motif of bridegroom-the-undoer (ruiner)]. But there is also an essential difference. For example, people do not just try to dispatch the bridegroom; they are trying to make him "their own" man. His coming to the bride's home reminds of the coming of "parents" on the days of repast and their compulsory return to the "other" world. As to the bridegroom's locus, where the bride is the "alien" person, the tactics of adaptation is used, as in birth rituals. Here, however, the initial conflict is not completely resolved. The bride's family retains its uniformity, but at the expense of a loss. The bridegroom's family, on the contrary, loses its uniformity due to the "acquisition". The conflict situation co-existence of the "own" and the "alien" lasts till the birth of the child (cf.: the intermediate status of the "newly-wed"), and only with the appearance of a new "alien", the young wife becomes family's own member.

Representatives of the human world penetrate into the alien space. This model is common for the bridegroom, for ritual craftsmen (carpenters, potters, et al.) for a family moving into a new house, and, to some extent, for a woman giving birth to a child (rozhénitsa). If in the model "the alien in the own" the "own" has a passive role (at least at the first stage), here the "own" becomes active (the first subject type we may arbitrarily call "female", the second - "male"). Main efforts are directed not to defending the border, but to overcoming it. In other words, this type of ritual texts is connected with the expansion of the human world or filling it (in terms that are close to Propp's definition - the treasure to be found is in the alien world).

This type of subject presupposes a special preparation (unlike the "spontaneous" nature of the first one). To penetrate into the alien world, special methods and special knowledge are required. Methods and knowledge are provided by the ritual specialists - heroes assistants: midwife, bride-man, carpenters et al. (cf.: bride-man's "equipment": a whim, food, and, first of all, the ability to communicate with alien persons).

The road to the alien world, with all its known characteristics ("remoteness", "danger", et al.) has its specific features for examp-

le, the bridegroom goes not only "there", but also "back", i.e. his movements correspond to the "circular" model of the initiation ritual (thus partly filling the gap - the absence of a complete initiation ritual in Eastern-Slavic tradition. For those who move to change the place, the way is "linear" (no way back is supposed), and this feature is similar to moving of the bride into the bridegroom's house and the "moving" of the dead man into the "other" world.

Different purposes of coming into the alien world condition the ritual behaviour. Bridegroom's friends (druzhdina) imitate of the troops. Metaphors of war hunt, robbery are widely spread in wedding texts which gave wrong grounds to consider, for example, the "abduction" of the bride (umykaniye) as early form of Western-Slavic wedding rituals (cf.: Sumtsov, 1881). Interesting here, though, is that in the dialogue with the aliens (in the latter case - with the bride's party) another "language" is used (e.g. the "language" of the trade), and the conflict is resolved through the exchange.

The tactics of moving into a new house is somewhat different. Its main task is to transform the transition associated with crossing the border between the worlds into settling in a new place, i.e. the expansion of the "own" world and removal of the border. If the subject in the text about the bridegroom is connected with crossing the border /"there" and "back home", the subject of moving into a new house implies the change of the configuration of the main border, and, consequently, the change of the image of the world. The conflict is resolved not due to movements in space (cf.: the bridegroom returns home, which also means that the order in bride parents' home is reestablished, restored), but due to the imaginary "death" of one of the former inhabitants of the new house. In this case the death not only means the act of exchange, an offering to the "other" world, but, which is more important, it fixes and consecrates the new image of the world (cf.: ideas about the life in a new place: it starts growing roots only after the first dead-man had been buried at the cemetery).

Two subject types (the "alien" in the "own", and the "own" in the "alien") actually belongs to two ritual subtexts. The general subjects is formed on the basis of correlated images of a woman giving birth (rozhenitsa) ("the own in the alien") and a newly-born child ("the alien in the own").

The existence of two main subject types, and, consequently, of two subtexts - two views on the same event - is directly connected with the organization of the members participating in the ritual.

PARTICIPANTS (COMMUNICATIVE ASPECT)

The ritual environment changes not only the perception of the outer world (mythologization of the surrounding space), but also the links and relations between people. The role in the ritual essentially differs from roles performed in everyday life. With a certain extent of prudence, we may say that the traditional community had two types of social organization: everyday (between rituals) and occasional (rituals proper). The occasional nature of the ritual structure has at least several manifestations.

1. Every type of rituals has its own, and sometimes very essential peculiarities of organizing the participants (cf. e.g.: character systems in birth and wedding rituals).

2. During his life the person plays different roles in the same ritual. For example, at the wedding the man, in the due course of time may play the role of a boy sitting on the bride's lap before the "first night", then - the role of a lad in the male company (mal chishnik); of a bridegroom, of a bride-man (druzhdka), father of a bride/bridegroom, etc.

3. The roles may be different at different ritual stages (see below). And this is quite natural, because the ritual, in principle, is orientated to the change of the status of main participants. From this point of view the ritual may be defined as the domain of changes. Finally, every ritual is unique, because the "cast" (the group of performers) always undergoes certain changes. Moreover, there are roles that cannot be twice performed by the same person (cf. statements: "One cannot be born twice... marry twice... die twice"). This does not mean that there are no general rules and principles of assigning roles to performers in different rituals. Here are some of them.

First of all we should note a distinct division of the performers into two groups. Generally speaking, this division correlates with the "duality" of the ritual, opposition of the "own" to the "alien". In everyday life the communication between "own" partners is prevailing, while in the ritual we deal with different types of communication: "the own and the alien", people and non-human beings (it is not by chance that every communication with a stranger has a ritualized character). In such rituals as wedding, the division of "performers" into two parties (bride's and bridegroom's) is quite obvious. In other rituals this division is less distinct. In the birth rituals, for example, vague, as it may seem, the division still exists: one group is

represented by baby's mother (rozhenitsa); newly-born child, midwife, and later - child's God-parents; the other group includes all other participants (e.g. neighbours invited for the meal after baptizing). Here the opposition is based on performers' relations to the newly-born child, as a being from the "other" world ("non-humans", "not quite humans"), i.e. the performers are arbitrarily divided into "humans" and "non-humans". In the course of ritual the "cast" may undergo essential changes.

Also vague is the division of participants in the burial ritual.

In O.A. Sedakova's opinion, it can be explained by the danger of belonging to the "group of the dead". Incidentally the share of "death" elements in birth rituals and of "birth" in burial rituals is much higher than one might suppose. This is also true for calendar and building rituals.

Thus, the general model of the ritual in the Eastern-Slavic tradition is rather simple and uniform, in spite of the variety of actual expressions. However, those not very complicated actions helped to solve the most fundamental problems of human existence: the transformation of the continuous into the discrete (time, life cycle since birth till death); "softening" of critical situations (birth, death, calamities and disasters); exploration of space. The meaning of the ritual should not be reduced to its mere functional role. The ritual helps to reveal distinctions and to establish bonds between human and non-human (in different variants); to remove the opposition Life-Death; to ascertain the similarity in relations between the man, the offering, the Universe. Perhaps, the collisions of the type mentioned appeared to be the most essential for the formation of the conceptual basis of culture, and therefore have been continuously actualized in the ritual.

Р е з ю м е

Статья посвящена рассмотрению пространственных моделей, реализующихся в ритуалах различных типов у восточных славян. Основное внимание уделяется описанию и интерпретации базовой схемы ритуального пространства, в соответствии с которой мир делится на "свой" и "другой". Сюжеты конкретных ритуалов можно рассматривать как следствия нарушений данной дихотомии.