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Philological Knowledge and Philological Analysis as Part of the Memory Studies Research Area

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Abstract: Within the Memory Studies research area the use of the philological approach occupies a lacuna position due to the actual absence of analytical works devoted to this issue, which determines the relevance of the study in question as well as its theoretical and scientific-practical significance. The purpose of the investigation is to establish the validity of the philological analysis methods application to the study of literary works in terms of its results expansion into the Memory Studies research field, with special attention to the social and historical significance of events that serve as an impetus for artistic text creation. The methodological basis of the research deals with complex approach to the analysis of the artistic text, which includes the use of methods obtained as the result of philological knowledge development as referred to vertical and global philological context issues. This concerns creative techniques and strategies implementation, as well as the process of penetration into socio-historical and worldview phenomena, characteristic of the given historical period, along with a certain literary tradition. In the course of the investigation we may come to the conclusion that the philological basis of the work by William Shakespeare under consideration is an allegory containing a large number of social and historical implications. The results obtained enable the researcher to use them both as the stimulus for further philological studies as well as the basis for the investigation within the Memory studies research field.

Keywords: literary artistic text, global philological context, vertical context, philological background knowledge, Shakespeare, allegory, Memory Studies, social-historical implications

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Филологическое знание и филологический анализ в составе исследовательской области Memory Studies

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Аннотация. В исследовательской области Memory Studies использование филологического подхода занимает лакунарную позицию в связи с фактическим отсутствием аналитических работ, посвященных данной проблематике. Цель работы – выявление валидности применения методов филологического анализа к изучению литературно-художественного произведения с точки зрения использования его результатов в исследовательском поле Memory Studies, с особым вниманием к социальной и исторической значимости событий, выступающих в качестве побудительного начала в создании художественного текста. Методологической основой исследования послужил комплексный подход к анализу художественного текста, включающий применение полученных в результате развития филологического знания методов вертикального контекста и глобального филологического контекста, позволяющих раскрыть сущность реализации творческих приемов и



стратегий в художественном тексте, а также проникнуть в суть социально-исторических и мировоззренческих явлений, характерных для данного исторического периода, наряду с особенностями литературной традиции, обусловленной определенной эпохой. Основным результатом проведенного анализа явился установленный в ходе исследования факт, что филологической основой рассматриваемого произведения Уильяма Шекспира является аллегория, содержащая большое количество социально-исторических импликаций, что позволяет оценить как собственно научную филологическую значимость данного произведения, так и выявить очевидную необходимость осмысления полученных данных в терминах исследовательской концепции Memory Studies.

Ключевые слова: литературно-художественный текст, глобальный филологический контекст, вертикальный контекст, филологическое фоновое знание, Шекспир, аллегория, Memory Studies, социально-исторические импликации

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Introduction

The problem of information and knowledge correlation as referred to natural human language representation occupies a special place within the domain of significant scientific problems of interdisciplinary character. It is a well-established fact that knowledge is a set of formalized experience, values, contextual information and interpretation, which form the basis for the evaluation and integration of new experience and information processing represented via new knowledge formats in human mind and language [Prokhorova et al., 2012, p. 104–110]. The formats in question are discussed in the field of cognitive science primarily; as for their linguistic representation, they refer to the application of their specific peculiarities and respective abilities, and to the field of philological investigation in terms of the functional approach [Vishnyakova et al., 2022, p. 704]. The connection between language and thinking is manifested in human cognitive activity and finds its representation in various areas, among which human memory as a repository of past experience occupies a special and very significant place. Language, along with other carriers of human memory, is the most important construct and representative of images of the past and present, as well as the prospect of constructing the future. Here both the collective and the individual types of memory as well as their interrelation should be taken into account. As is well-known, the Memory studies investigation procedures are applied to the Humanities area and, according to a number of authors, there is still much to discuss and find out as regards their empirical base and research methodology elaboration [Kansteiner, 2002; Roediger, Wertsch, 2008].

The philological approach to the analysis of literary texts can be regarded as an integral part of the research conducted in the field of Memory studies that is of an interdisciplinary character. It is assumed that within the Memory studies investigation area, where the category of narrative tends to be the basic research category, the notion in question can refer to any kind and genre of literary text that possesses social and historical information.

The purpose of the present investigation concerns the problem of the validity of philological approach in connection with the Memory studies research area and procedures. As has been mentioned above, the new investigation area in question has not received all the attention it deserves from the point of view of philology based on linguistics and literary studies. As can be seen from a number of publications Memory studies analysis mostly deals with other branches of science that refer to the domain of the Humanities, such as Sociology, Political Studies, etc. and has not yet been considered in terms of philology except for a few separate works of Russian linguists [Vishnyakova et al., 2022] Thus, the topicality of the problem under consideration deals with the urgent need to conduct research in the field of interdisciplinary relations of philology and

other scientific domains in order to elaborate the new methodology in terms of text analysis application to Memory studies procedures.

The most important role in understanding the specifics of a literary text, which reflects the peculiarities of the epoch, belongs to a certain literary method as well as the use of the appropriate artistic techniques that allow one to penetrate into the essence of the historical events and social processes both explicitly and implicitly presented in the work of literature. As for the methodology, which lies in the basis of the analysis in question, the deep and thorough investigation of a literary work is stipulated via means of vertical context and global philological context interconnection that helps to identify literary text creative techniques and strategies, as well as the circumstances and world-view specificity, typical of a certain historical period. The attempt to demonstrate the particular role of allegory as the philological basis of William Shakespeare's work "The Rape of Lucrece" is made, for allegory here possesses a great number of social historical implications, and its analysis enables one to appreciate both the linguistic and literary significance of the text in question as well as the results of the philological research and philological knowledge application forming the indispensable foundation for the Memory studies analytical process.

Methodology

The traditionally singled out basic sections of philology are linguistics and literary criticism, and, according to D.S. Likhachev, one of the most important principles of philological cognizance is that of historicism based on the notion of historical credibility [Likhachev, 1989], as it refers to the facts of culture and concerns itself with the process of the conventional reflection of historical reality interconnected with virtual artistic space creation through text. This interconnection is determined by the particular epoch and the genre a certain work of art belongs to. It should be noted in this connection that genre conceptions deserve special attention not only from the point of view of literary process analysis, but also in terms of Memory studies investigation procedures [Erll, Nünning, 2005; Echterhoff, 2008]. Philological knowledge can be discussed in terms of its poly-paradigmatic character and defined as the result of the cognition of reality on the basis of penetration into the text material, which causes special informative and emotional state of consciousness obtained by a human being in the course of the active reflection and the reproduction of the vigour of real and unreal worlds represented as the outcome of creative processing and skillful linguistic performance. These methodological principles underlie global philological analysis of literary text procedures, which allows to penetrate into the essence of epochal transformations and manifestations that concern the direct impact on the process of artistic reality formation, in some cases reflecting the spirit and the specifics of a certain historical era no less accurately and thoroughly than precise fixations of a historian. This happens due to the use of the emotional-expressive-evaluative potential of language, aimed at recreating emotional and mental states of man within a given social and historical environment. It is this specificity of the philological description and analysis that determines the importance of including the area of philological knowledge into the broad research context of the Memory Studies domain.

Within the domain of philology the reliable methodology has been elaborated by O.S. Akhmanova and her followers, in which such issues as socio-historical and global philological vertical contexts became part and parcel of philological analysis [Akhmanova, Gyubbenet, 1977; Lipgart, 2018]. The notion of vertical context, proposed in the 70-s of the last century and developed by a number of scholars, refers to the information of historical and philological character objectively incorporated in a given literary work (or literary movement), whose understanding requires the possession of certain background knowledge. But not only that. In this case, the concept of *philological knowledge* in the proper sense of the word comes to the fore. Generally speaking, the notion of philological knowledge can be referred to the issues of vertical context as well as the global philological context reflecting the socio-historical and philosophical aspects of the literary process. It is a well-established fact that the approaches to Memory studies differ in terms of their basic



gnoseological and axiological premises, which may refer to the modes and principles that some of the literary works as well as their descriptions and criticism are based on. For example, in the course of the analysis one can be confronted with arguments borrowed from the relativistic theory with its basic postulate that absolute truths or values simply do not exist and man is a measure of all things regardless of scientific knowledge or objective data [Vesey, Foulkes, 1990, p. 253-254]. It goes without saying that the conceptual basis of the study in question refers to the notion of the global philological context representation, which includes the entire specter of conditions and factors under which a literary work is created.

Results and Discussion

Memory studies are particularly difficult to conduct when some influential group of ideologically engaged literati has done its best to erase the very mentioning of the facts and people central to a certain episode of history. Distant though the sixteenth century England may seem to us, its literature is privileged to have been honoured by the presence of no less a person than William Shakespeare himself, whose life and works have been studied meticulously by generations of scholars. This being objectively so, one might surmise that at least here memory will remain intact and no deliberate subterfuge or natural obliteration will take place.

This, however, is most emphatically not the case, for this period in the English history has been doctored with exceptional thoroughness as it was marked by the religious reforms which led to the global destruction of the existing social system, to murder and execution on an unprecedented scale and to the redistribution of property comparable only to the period of the Norman Conquest. The people on the winning side and their descendants who understood that their political gains and financial success could have disappeared at any moment had the representatives of the old Catholic aristocracy returned to the position of power had a vested interest in whitewashing the more problematic historical figures like King Henry VIII a little greyer, in altogether suppressing the more unpalatable evidence and in placing what remains into a shockingly false cultural paradigm. This approach practiced for about 4 hundred years has resulted among other things in rendering some literary texts written by Shakespeare and his contemporaries both tedious and barely comprehensible, and to recover the true meaning of these texts and to appreciate their aesthetic value we are to reconstruct both the context in which they were created and to explain why the texts which were widely acclaimed by Shakespeare's contemporaries, for example, are no longer admired even by professional philologists.

William Shakespeare's narrative poem "The Rape of Lucrece" [The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, 1954, pp. 1087-1105], published in 1594, may be treated as a brilliant illustration of the validity of memory studies. The heroine of this poem, wife to a Roman general Collatine, is raped by Tarquin, son to the last Roman king, after which Lucrece divulges the details of this horrifying experience to her father and to her husband and then commits suicide, unable to cope with the infamy of the event. The initially bewildered relatives supported by their friends revolt against the regime, Tarquin and his family are exiled and the republican rule is eventually established in Rome. The text containing 1855 lines thus conveniently retold, a modern reader may assume that this poem, whose content may be summarized in 7 lines, really deserves the dismissive attitude adopted even by professionals and that here Shakespeare who is generally not defamed for wordiness and muddle-headedness had for once lost his intellectual vigour and the power of discrimination. Except that he had not.

For Shakespeare's contemporaries this text was so exciting that it ran into 6 separate editions during the poet's lifetime, an achievement not seconded even by "Hamlet" with its 3 editions or by the Sonnets which were published only once. The still extant copies of the poem survive in the form of shreds, so enthusiastically had they been read by the grateful audiences. This alone taken into account, one may feel a bit uncomfortable about the awkward fact that modern anthologies of English literature do without this narrative poem: in the six thousand pages of "The Norton Anthology of English Literature" [Abrams, 2012] no place for "The Rape of Lucrece" was found;

equally oblivious are the compilers of “The Norton Anthology of Poetry” with its 2182 pages of densely printed text [The Norton ..., 2005]. If we allow Shakespeare’s contemporaries at least some measure of good taste, can it be that something is wrong with the present-day treatment of the poem and that in this case it is not the contemporaries’, but the modern editors’ collective memory that fatally fails them or is fatally flawed?

It is next to impossible to imagine that the Shakespeare editors – the undoubtedly learned people that they are – are unaware of the fact that “The Rape of Lucrece” continues the time-honoured tradition of representing the Lucrece story popular among the writers and painters since antiquity. Equally implausible is the assumption that the editors are not familiar with the non-Lucrecian texts by Shakespeare’s contemporaries or near-contemporaries who had repeatedly developed the subject of the male domination over their reluctant feminine partners forcibly made to accept the advances of the predators or preferring death to the violation of their human integrity. The texts in question are predictably unanthologized: Edmund Spenser’s “Complaints”, Samuel Daniel’s “The Complaint of Rosamond”, Michael’s Drayton’s “Matilda the Fair” have been ignored by the Norton editorial boards, though some other works by these authors are found in the anthologies, while Thomas Churchyard for all his popularity among the Elizabethans is missing altogether, the Jane Shore we encounter in “The Norton Anthology of Poetry” [The Norton ..., 2005, p.1952-1954] being an obscure 20th century writer (b. 1947) and not the Jane Shore from Churchyard’s poem “Shore’s Wife”. The literary texts just mentioned formed part of William Shakespeare’s and his contemporaries’ collective memory [Asquith, 2018], but modern editors obligingly remove them from the collective memory of modern readers on the grounds that “Mirror for Magistrates”, for example, which includes Churchyard’s poem, has no “literary merit” [Harvey, 1967, p. 547] – with the notable exception of Thomas Sackville’s contribution to the 1563 edition.

Literary merit thus denied to the numerous works belonging to the genre of lamentations, Shakespeare’s narrative poem is treated by many with comparable irreverence – because it is, unbelievably, “overstocked with words” [Shakespeare, 2008, p. 58], which implies that literary merit here is also questionable. The simple fact that the allegedly long-winded texts like “The Rape of Lucrece” may be long because they contain more than the mere plot and are endowed with the additional allusive plane seems uncorroborated to the relativist minded critics who insist that in Shakespeare’s case the immanent approach to interpretation is the only acceptable one and that looking for allegory in his texts is no more and no less than “the category error” [Kastan, 2014, p. 39]. According to David Scott Kastan, one of the leading relativists in modern Shakespeareology, nothing is known for sure about Shakespeare’s religious beliefs, the much talked-of topicality of his texts cannot be proved either, the discussion of the nation’s collective memory is irrelevant, and as a result what we are left with when reading his texts is the intricate interweaving of words used to pass on immediate plots [Kastan, 2014]. What Kastan insists on is that if a particular allegorical interpretation cannot be proved to be the only possible explanation of the idea of a text, it means that the author of this text made no use of allegory generally. An interesting twist of logic it is, analogous to saying that if a certain man once mistook a certain dog for a cat, cats as a category do not exist.

To us it is the relativist approach as practiced by Kastan and many others that appears to be the truly colossal category error. It is not just a matter of choosing the wrong methodology and of marginalizing the contrary evidence, which in Kastan’s book is carried out to the letter: when introducing the contrary evidence he periodically relegates the names of the opponents and the titles of their works [Asquith, 2005; Milward, 1997; Wilson, 2004] to the notes, resorting to this childish trick in order to retain the intellectual virginity of the less inquisitive reader [Kastan, 2014, p. 48]. However innocent its postulates, relativism in the long run leads to destroying the conditions for critical thinking, it compromises both creative intellectual effort and people capable of it, and derides the very concept of collective memory. Aghast at the subterfuge, the intellectually alert scholars and thinkers keep defying relativism, and further on we will try to make our modest contribution to fighting the relativist tendencies as displayed by some specialists in the Shakespeare studies.



In our case it will be an attempt to prove that allegory lies at the very heart of “The Rape of Lucrece” and that the tacit negative assessment of this text, offered by some Shakespeareologists, is due to the deliberate eradication of an all-important layer of historical and literary information from the collective memory of so many readers of Shakespeare.

Stunned by the relativist revelations to the effect that in Shakespeare studies discussing allegory is a category error, and at the same time knowing for sure that allegory permeates the 16th century English literature, one feels somewhat at a loss when thinking of what to begin with in order to refute this revoltingly untrue thesis.

Should it be Cardinal Wolsey’s opulent style of living and his overreaching himself in closing some monasteries and confiscating monastic lands and wealth that had alerted Henry VIII to the hitherto unheard-of opportunities in dealing with the English church, very much the same way the boastful Collatine of Shakespeare’s poem had inflamed Tarquin’s imagination and triggered his envy at the very beginning of “The Rape of Lucrece”?

Should it be the credentials of King Henry VIII as a rapist who in close cooperation with some eager opportunists had succeeded in destroying the very heart of his country – its Catholic religion and can thus be allegorically identified as the Tarquin of “The Rape of Lucrece”? When Lucrece says (601) that Tarquin is “a god, a king” (though technically he is just a king’s son) and then compares him, “a sovereign king”, to “a sea” (652), and when later she herself is called “the late-sacked island” (1740), “bare and unpeopled” (1741), are we to take these words literally and not allegorically, thus getting to the very limit of absurdity? The poem is allegorical throughout, and allegory in it is consistent, as the reader repeatedly comes across metaphors like “her bare breast, the heart of all her land” (439), “to make the breach and enter this sweet city” (469), a “never-conquered fort” (482) describing Lucrece before the rape, and phrases like “her mansion battered by the enemy” (1171) and “If in this blemished fort I make some whole” (1175) showing the sorry state of the main character of the poem after she is ravished.

Should it be Henry’s initial indecision, closely resembling Tarquin’s initial qualms, when the English king was gathering the opinions of the leading European legal and ecclesiastical authorities to get support for his plans to annul the marriage with his first wife? Once decided upon breaking with Rome and annulling his marriage, as well as on confiscating the church property and on closing the monasteries, Henry acted with lightning and ruthless efficiency aided by his perversely capable minister Thomas Cromwell, a former disciple of Cardinal Wolsey, but the decision itself had been carefully premeditated.

Should it be the activities of Henry’s predatory opportunist companions whose policies must have brought forth Lucrece’s otherwise inexplicable monologue concerning Opportunity and its vile influence over people (874-938)? A choice example of such kind of opportunism, which the addressee of the poem would easily place within the familiar political and ancestral paradigm, is the biography of Thomas Wriothesley (the unscrupulous grandfather of Shakespeare’s patron) who amassed a breathtaking fortune during his decades-long and morally untenable service to the royal family.

Should it be the potentially suicidal debate concerning the possibility of dethroning an incapable or tyrannical monarch – a debate whose participants would sometimes be imprisoned (the way it happened 5 years after the publication of “The Rape of Lucrece” to John Hayward, the author of the play “Henry IV”) or would narrowly escape arrest (this was the case with Shakespeare and his fellow-actors after they performed Shakespeare’s play “Richard II” on the eve of the Essex rebellion, without discarding the notorious deposition scene which had been carefully crossed out by Elizabeth’s censors at the time the play was first performed). Only the geographically inaccessible and carefully guarded luminaries like cardinal Robert Bellarmine could feel safe when involved in such kind of polemics.

Should it be “Venus and Adonis” by William Shakespeare (1593) as an explicit allegorical answer to John Clapham’s Latin poem “Narcissus” (the central image here being that of an irresponsible and wayward handsome young man whose untimely death was caused by self-love)?

“Narcissus” was commissioned by William Cecil (the guardian of so many orphaned underage English aristocrats, Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton, included) and was addressed humiliateingly to the very same Earl of Southampton, the only known benefactor of Shakespeare and the dedicatee of his two narrative poems. In “Venus and Adonis” the situation is reversed, the youthful Adonis is not a self-loving, but a lovable character, victim to the predatory passion of the ageing Venus who is instantly recognizable as Queen Elizabeth I. Lascivious and flippant though it may seem to an uninitiated reader, “Venus and Adonis” in fact is also a sobering reminder of the grave dangers and the grave perils people like Southampton faced on the daily basis because of the hostility of the powers that be, and it comes as no surprise that next year Shakespeare would present to Henry Wriothesley the results of “the graver labour” he had promised to his patron in the dedication to “Venus and Adonis”. Whatever the objective differences between the two narrative poems by Shakespeare, the key political message they bear, as neatly summarized by Clare Asquith, is very much the same: “death awaits those who allow themselves to be diverted, delayed, and finally overcome by those in power” [Asquith, 2018, p.156].

Should it be the suppression of the allegorical texts like Edmund Spenser’s poem “Mother Hubbard’s Tale” (1591) or “The Isle of Dogs”, a comedy by Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson (1597), whose performers ended up in jail? Elizabeth’s censors and pursuivants were advanced interpreters of seditious allegory and were keen on rooting it out, unafraid of falling into a category error much detested and sweepingly diagnosed by modern relativists.

Should it be the unseemly competition between Lucrece’s father and husband for the ownership of her soul when they start quarrelling over her dead body, the way various factions within Catholicism claimed to be the sole inheritors of the true spirit of the pre-Reformation England? After some altercation, Collatine and Lucretius are brought to their senses by Lucius Junius Brutus, an enigmatic figure, either promising a coherent national opposition leadership in the absence of one, or hinting at a possibility of acclaimed émigré military commanders like William Stanley returning to their native country at the head of a foreign expeditionary force.

It is our firm belief that all the eight points neatly summarized by Clare Asquith [Asquith, 2018] and discussed above at some length – concerning 1) Wolsey the fortune amasser causing the ill-fated envy of his royal master, 2) Henry VIII the rapist, 3) Henry VIII the unready, 4) Henry’s opportunist companions, 5) the admissibility of tyranny, 6) the interpretation of “Venus and Adonis”, 7) the suppression of allegorical texts, 8) the final part of “The Rape of Lucrece” – did form part of the collective memory of Shakespeare’s contemporaries, which is to be reconstructed nowadays by all those interested in understanding the true meaning of his second narrative poem. If relativists try to cast this interpretation aside as fanciful and irrelevant, one simple argument will suffice to undo their refutation: in 1613, not long before he left London for good, Shakespeare bought the so-called Blackfriars Gatehouse which had served as an illicit Mass-centre before the purchase and which would continue serving in this capacity during Shakespeare’s tenancy of it and further on after his death, until the Fatal Vespers of 1623 brought irreparable damage upon the house both in the physical and in the political sense [Lipgart, 2018]. This dangerous act of lending respectability to the property to be used by people commonly described as traitors shows Shakespeare’s habitual verve and elan and, coupled with his father’s Spiritual Testament, his family and personal ties with the condemned Catholics, his intensely pro-Catholic poem “The Phoenix and the Turtle” (1601), to name but a few, allows one to confidently interpret his allegorical texts within the paradigm of recusancy, non-conformism and resistance typical of the social and religious milieu he had been born into.

Conclusion

Philological knowledge with its analytical and creative potential is regarded as part and parcel not only of the philological analysis proper. It also plays an important role in the Memory studies research process. Philology combines both linguistic and literary aspects of the analysis and is used as the scientific basis for understanding the role of language in historical information



transfer via means of various linguistic and literary devices appropriate for a certain period of the society historical development. A convincing example illustrating the point is the use of allegory in works by Shakespeare. Here it is intended not only to produce a certain stylistic effect typical of the world of imagery but also to encode the specifics of the epoch it characterises in terms of certain creative method and information transfer issues. The analysis of the functions in question is determined by the profound knowledge and skills of a scholar who is required to be a real expert to understand the intricacies of the global philological context. Philological knowledge within the Memory studies investigational paradigm underlies the processing of information accumulated and ordered in a certain historical period, and also the phenomenon of new knowledge production in the field of collective and individual memory manifestations, samples of which may be excerpted from the literary art thesaurus.

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