Nino Tchintcharauli

Tbilisi State University Tbilisi, Georgia

Musicalization of James Joyce's "Ulysses" Eleventh Episode

At the beginning of the twentieth century English writers were challenged as the mimetic modes of depicting reality suffered crisis. Modernist writers increasingly detached themselves from the Senecan principle of imitating nature, which shaped and moulded the narrative for centuries. Instead, the modernist focus shifted toward the representation of the mental state of man, which led to the adoption and elaboration of diverse narrative techniques, including the introduction of musical forms to the realm of literature. The musical element in literary modernism does not refer to mere phonetic imitation of musical sounds. The combination of music and literature in modernism implies the conscious adaptation of musical structures. Musicalization of literature involves the transformation of musical forms like fugue, sonata, quartet, etc. in such manner that syntactic structure of the texts becomes musical. Thomas Mann, Aldous Huxley, Thomas S. Eliot, Andre Gide, Hermann Hesse, James Joyce and other great modernist writers of the twentieth century employed this poetic method. Such interrelation of musical and literary forms is of special importance in James Joyce's works and, namely, in the case of "Sirens" — the eleventh episode of Ulysses. Most major scholars unanimously agree that the that "Sirens" is based on fugue, is specific, fuga per canonem. The author himself wrote of this in a letter to Harriet Weaver, expressing his determination to style this episode in the form of a fugue. Not many studies are dedicated to the issue of musical poetics of "Sirens" as well as its significance to the poetics of myth in "Ulysses". The paper will analyze the artistic implication of the musical structure of the Joycean fugue in the eleventh episode of "Ulysses" and its relation to the overall mythological layer of the novel.