In her study Russkij bylinnyj epos na Severe, Anna Astakhova points out several texts of byliny that contain fairy tale (skazki) motifs collected for the most part from Marfa S. Kriukova in 1937 and 1938. Astakhova noted with curiosity that these were essentially folktale and fairy tale motifs that had somehow become epic.

A similar study of folktale and fairy tale themes in the Serbo-Croatian epic has recently been completed by Maja Bošković-Stulli. Whereas Astakhova only mentioned the movement of these themes as part of her larger study, Bošković-Stulli directs her study right at the various aspects of the problem. While the delineation of the epic form is less precise in her materials she nevertheless finds many similar transformations occurring when a plot goes from tale to verse form. Aided by the availability of numerous archive recordings, her search for pattern in change yielded these results: "The song does not depart from the folktale only in these external, formal attributes. Or, more exactly, these features are actually an expression of a deeper internal revolution."2

In other words, the transitions demand both component and structure change. Bošković-Stulli examined several songs and, while her description of change involved is quite valid (as we shall see below), her analysis of cause is less clear. She writes:

"The general and basic condition which makes possible and gives impetus to the transition of the tale into epic form is the vitality of the folk epic itself, its creative activity and how widespread it is. Wherever the epic song no longer exists in a creatively active form, it is natural that the tale will not be transformed into the epic form."3

This statement when applied to the Russian materials raises a few problems. In 1937 and 1938 when the majority of the following texts were recorded, the sung epic was hardly more than an antiquarian's curiosity piece. Additionally, there is in Western culture an inherently conservative audience-performer relationship. The people want to hear that to which they are accustomed. In an area where the epic is a viable form, this sort of audience reinforcement will be strongest thereby counter-acting extreme innovation.

The essence of this paper is to examine the nature of change involved when a Russian fairy tale or folktale is presented in epic (byliny) form. This will be only an introductory excursion into the problem because little of certainty can be presented with the relatively small number of relevant texts.

Ideally, we should have a body of tale texts and similar epic texts from the same informant, in this case Marfa S. Kriukova, in order to precisely note the change as the tale moves from genre to genre, structure to structure and story to song. Since this for the moment is impossible, what we
can do is compare the epic texts with basic variants given in both the Andreev and Aarne-Thompson tale-type indexes, in hopes of finding the antecedents that the singer might have used in creating the recorded performance. This will help to set some guidelines for methodology in continuing this study.

This comparison should, for my purposes at least, indicate two of the areas folklorists are concerned with when studying a folkloristic act: one, the creativity of the performer in a culturally controlled situation; and two, the strength of a generic form in focusing that creativity.

The first element will be determined by the way the performer changes motifs and weaves in the locally relevant materials indicative of an oikotype.

The second element can be deduced from the recognizable points of byliny form and structure that can be found in the presentation. (It is my feeling that in order for a study of this type to have significant value, all of the folkloristic concerns should be examined; that is each of the following areas is important with respect to both the performer and his audience: perception, morphology, change, context, function, abstraction, creativity, fit, intention and expression. I hope that by examining form [morphology] as to change in component and structure, we can arrive at some of the other concerns, even now -- forty years after the fact.)

The earliest known recording of fairy and/or folktale motifs in a byliny comes from Rybnikov's collection, the 1861 edition. This is Vol. 1, No. 76, "O Vanke..."4 That this is the earliest recorded text of this type probably is indicative only of the fact that collectors resisted recording such mutant formations; the date cannot be interpreted as a chronologic guidepost to evolutionary change. The singers themselves made no distinction between the plots or types of songs that they sang. It has been the academics who have divided byliny from stariny and historical songs from byliny.5 Therefore, the texts included in the collections represent the value judgements of the collector or editor, who generally knew in advance of field collecting just what genres and texts he wanted to obtain. It is this sort of prescriptive collecting that most likely accounts for the paucity of tale derived texts in the early collections.

"O Vanke..." is number 329 (Elena the Wise) in Andreev's Ukazatel'. He encapsulates the story thusly: a hero three times hides from the maiden with the help of animals (or other helpers), in the village, in the stomach of a fish, and the feathers of a bird; finally, the maiden cannot find him and he "receives her hand."6

The song gives this basic story with few deviations in either structure or component. The Tsar in the song takes on the role of the maiden in the story insofar as he sets the tasks for Vanka. Mar'ya, the actual maiden, is a passive nonentity who is kissed and hugged before each adventure but has no active role. Other than this the plot remains the same; the structure is unchanged. "O Vanke..." contains its share of epic epithets: "open fields," "good steed," "bold youth," and so forth. The components have changed just enough to reduce the story for the most part to two characters, the Tsar and Vanka, setting up the binary juxtaposition necessary for epic form and dialogue, but the plot remains the same.
The next three songs to be examined are numbers 91, 92 and 93 in the collection recorded from Marfa S. Kriukova. The consecutive numbering of these songs is due to a grouping made by the editor, Yurij Sokolov. These songs were collected from Kriukova along with several others during a twelve month period from August, 1937 to August, 1938. The sparse field notes give only date and place of collection, the name of the transcriber and a statement as to from whom Kriukova learned the song.

Number 91, "Zhenit'ba Ivana-Tsarevicha," is less a tale or an epic than an example of Kriukova's literary talents. A young Tsar meets Fate and persuades him to reveal the young Tsar's future. Fate agrees. The young Tsar will meet a girl and fall in love. Then she will fall ill with an ugly infection. Through various magical means he manages to effect a cure and all is happy ever after. This is much the same as Andreev's type 934.

Kriukova uses over 900 lines to tell the tale. Instead of using fairy tale elements to prolong the denoument, Kriukova uses the standard forms of epic retardation: repetitious dialogues and digressions. However, the tale is still basically intact. Some sections have been expanded to retard the story but there is little structural or component change. One wishes for more information about audience response to this as in reading it seems redundant to the point of boredom. For example, lines 65-145 contain just one of the many repetitious passages involved when Fate and Ivan converse, each repeating the statement of the other before asking his own question.

The above comments on the development of "Zhenit'ba..." are really deduced only by way of inference since only one tale text of this tale type is known. Though it deals also with an anthropomorphic Fate, it does so with strong religious overtones that are completely missing from Kriukova's text. Though it is the only text available, its emphases and place of collection remove most of its comparative value.

Kriukova, number 92, "Zhdan-Tsarevich." This song presents some unique problems for this study. As Astakhova points out, this plot and motif apparatus has never been collected in tale form. This first part of the song about the illegitimate birth of the hero and his search for his royal father is a widely known and used motif. The second part of the song is apparently loosely based on Andreev's type 530B for such features as the golden-maned horse and golden deer as helpers of the hero. However, integral features of type 530B -- three brothers with the youngest, the most foolish, who receives three brides and finally distributes them equally among his brothers -- are either absent or present only in the most vestigial forms. Though the structure has altered radically for the second part of the song, the reasons for this change are not clear but may exist within certain traditions of the Kriukova family.

Kriukova, number 93, "Kupecheskaya Doch' i Tsar." The daughter of a wealthy merchant has a liaison with a disguised tsar, and bears for him a son. The son goes in search of his father but on the journey he meets a young princess and is somewhat smitten. The girl's father, the Tsar, discovers the pair together and casts the young man into prison. By means of a shirt the young man is recognized as the Tsar's natural son and the princess's brother.

This is a fairly common story in Slavic folk literature; in fact, it provides the base for the first part of the preceding song, number 92.
ever, the components and structure are closer to number 91 and Rybnikov's number 76. That is, still the fairy tale but with the story given mostly in dialogue which makes each scene a binary confrontation -- an essential of epic style. Aside from that change, it is in form the same story as that that Andreev has condensed from the only text ever published. This is type 873.

The next two songs will be discussed at greater length because of the larger pattern of structural change that appears. The first example of this larger change is number 94 in Kriukova's collection, recorded in 1938, "Pro Oleshenu." This is Aarne-Thompson tale-type 327C with wide distribution in the Indo-European culture area. The Types of the Folk-tale lists 38 variants with numerable versions. Andreev lists under 327C, "Ivan and the Witch," 29 versions from the Russian collections.

In fairy tale form the tale has few structural deviations. Thompson gives the story essentials as" "The wife or daughter are to cook him (the hero) but are thrown into the oven themselves." In terms of Propp's functions, the story usually involves the following:

I. Absentation of members of the family
II. An interdiction is addressed to the hero (usually some form of "When the witch comes, don't speak, or move, or make any noise, etc.")
III. The interdiction is violated
XVI. The hero and the villain join in direct combat
XVIII. The villain is defeated
XX. The hero returns

One typical version is number 40 in Smirnov's Sbornik russkikh skazok, entitled "Mitoshka." While fishing, Mitoshka is fooled by the witch imitating his mother's voice. He comes to shore, is captured and brought to the oven. However, he places his hands and feet in such a position that it is impossible for him to enter the oven. He requests that one of the witch's daughters (or helpers, or workers) show him how to get into it. As soon as the daughter is in the pan, Mitoshka pushes her into the oven and bakes her and proceeds in like fashion with the remainder of the ogres. He then returns home.

In Afanas'ev's collection, the hero is a bold youth who lives in the forest with his friends the cat and the sparrow. He is told that when his friends are away, the Baba Yaga will come to count the spoons and he should not speak. Of course, he does speak and is captured by the witch but is rescued by his friends. This occurs twice more and on the third time his friends are unable to save him. He is taken to the witch's home where the four-fold incident with the oven takes place. With the villains all baked (or at least half-baked) he returns to his friends and they live happily ever after.

If, as Propp points out, all fairy tales are really the same story then one could expect that the tale given in epic form should still have a predictable tale structure, as we have generally seen above. However here, such is not the case. The story as related by Kriukova is a fusing of the "code" epic hero with a large amount of everyday reality from her own environs and only loosely held together by the fairy tale plot. While type 327C is manifest in the text, it "hath undergone a (white) sea change."
Kriukova's story begins with an added tale concerning the protagonist's father, a peasant who had three sons who were all heroes. They grew up and went off to far-away lands to do heroic things because life was so poor and wretched at home. In soap opera fashion the story continues with Oleshinka's birth to his then aged parents; it tells how his mother dies and his father remarries a widow, who "from the first" did not like Olesha. We are treated to family feuds and we see how Olesha finally ends up (after a touching scene only slightly removed from Crime and Punishment where Olesha cries in the street that he has no one to care for him) with his grandmother where he lives until his twentieth birthday. Then, to make his way in the world, he repairs an old boat and becomes a fisherman. It is at this point that type 327C enters the song.

Instead of an interdiction or warning, Olesha actively goes in pursuit of confrontation with the villains, in this case the daughters of the witch. He sees them on the shore while he is fishing and he warns them, but they persist in annoying him. So he comes to shore and ties them to a white birch tree with their own hair. He goes to their house and eats all of their food. He then returns to taunt the captive young witches. They in turn tell him to beware the return of their mother, the Baba Yaga.

The active role of the hero at this point is completely outside the fairy tale structure but is in agreement with the dynamic hero of the epic.

Olesha rows away singing, "I have eaten all of the witches' food. Today the Baba Yaga shall have nothing" (lines 134-5). The witch returns home and finds her daughters captive and her cupboard empty. The daughters explain what has happened. The next morning as the witch leaves (Baba Yaga apparently having a daily job of work like the other local residents) she instructs her daughters to get Olesha into the oven, as she expects to have Olesha-meat for her supper (line 137). As Olesha is on the sea catching fish, he sees again the weird sisters and this time they try to ply him with more sensual pleasures: kisses, cakes and mush (lines 206-13). In true "heroic" style, he spurns the kisses but accepts the food (lines 216-17). The witches encourage Olesha to get into the oven saying that the heat will bring color to his cheeks and make him more attractive! He gets into the pan but, following the fairy tale motif, he places his hands and feet in such a manner that the witches cannot get him and the pan into the oven. Olesha claims ignorance and asks the witches to teach him how. The oldest goes first and as soon as she is in the pan, Olesha pops her into the oven and likewise with the two remaining witches. He then returns to the sea to fish.

At the end of the day the Baba Yaga flies home and discovers her daughters cooked in the oven. She swears vengeance and sets out to find Olesha. He however is prepared, having brought with him a damask steel knife, an iron club and other implements of destruction. Here the story takes on a more heroic tone. Baba Yaga calls Olesha to the sea shore. He arrives and they fight. He dashes the witch against the rocks, cuts her into pieces, and throws the pieces into the forest for the bears and wolves to feed on. He then goes to the witches' house and there finds money, gold, silver and other fine things. He returns home to shouts of joy and admiration. His long lost heroic brothers return home and proclaim him to be a hero. Olesha provides for his father, who has returned from the hard life at the factory. Then, at long last, Olesha goes off to the south where he has "probably married and settled down" (lines 357-58).
In 1938, when the above was recorded, the transcriber noted that this story had not previously appeared in bylina form. Kriukova claimed to have learned it from within her own family.  

There are a few crucial areas in this song where the epic form and its plot and character demands have substantially changed the tale. The first is the above-mentioned dynamic character of Olesha. He does not wait for disaster to strike; he is not passive, reacting only to his misfortunes as in the fairy tale, but rather his actions are drawn in heroic terms. Like Beowulf, he attacks the demons in their lair. He is not fooled by the wiles or craft of the villains but by direct action he changes the course of his otherwise tawdry existence. He attacks the young witches as soon as he sees them. He is not afraid; he even taunts them and laughs at their misfortunes: clearly an epic boldness.

Secondly, there is a structural juxtaposition of types of activity within the song. Once type 327C begins (at line 96) the hero is either fighting or fishing, the one activity following the other. In the same way that the challenges and hunts are carried out in "Volk Vsealavevich" or in "Dobrynya and Zme" or other similar bylina, this structural opposition adds force and intensity to the story. It is not a part of the fairy tale.

An interesting epic motif here is that of the treasure of the monster. The dragon always guards a treasure; in overcoming evil one gains wealth. Kriukova's audience must not have noticed any incongruity between the ordinary work-a-day witches of the White Sea area and the treasure trove in their home.

These epic devices have changed the story so that it can no longer fit the functions of the Proppian outline. The blending of local features into bylina commonplaces give us an indication of the creativity, if not of Marfa Kriukova, then at least of the tradition within which she performs. Such features as the poor and difficult childhood of Olesha; the fact that his father was forced to go to live at a factory; that local economic conditions forced the migration of older siblings; that Olesha finally gets work as a fisherman in a boat that he himself has repaired; that the witches tempt him with cake and mush: these are all local realities which lend a certain credence to the story. In fact, there appears to be a constant effort on the part of the local tradition, by use of the above-mentioned devices, to bring the presentation of the plot close to the reality and world view of the audience. At only one point in the song does the narrative leave empirical reality (metaphysical and Weltanschauung arguments aside), that is when Olesha is fishing on the sea and the Baba Yaga comes flying past him (line 267).

Without knowing in what form the story came to Kriukova, we can still point to the decisive differences between the basic tale and her song presentation. How much of her performance is due to her own creativity must at this point remain an open question.

The last tale is number 121 in Kriukova's book, the title of which translates: "The soldier and the hunting trip of Peter the Great." Here again we have a widely distributed tale current throughout Russia and the West. Aarne-Thompson lists the tale as type 952 with over two dozen variants. Andreev reports four versions, and Astakhova mentions several others. Most of the Russian versions have gravitated to the figure of
Peter the Great. The basic tale: a soldier meets with the king while hunting but does not recognize him. The two seek lodgings for the night with an old woman. The king goes to sleep. The soldier discovers that they are in the house of robbers. The soldier kills all the villains and is rewarded in the end by the king, whom he finally recognizes.

Since this is not a fairy tale, we cannot compare its structure with Propp. However, we can compare it with the above basic form and also with the changes of the previous songs as they are all (except Rybnikov's, the first and earliest) from the same singer. Although this is the last tale-song in the collection, it was recorded in September of 1937, nearly a year before the previous example.21

The king goes on a hunt into the forest with his soldiers. They hunt the grey goose, the white swan. As evening comes, they blow the hunting horn but the Tsar does not return. After much futile searching they conclude that he has already gone home and so they leave. He is, however, lost in the forest. Then the Tsar meets with Olesha, who identifies himself as the Tsar's favorite hunter.

Here Kriukova deviates from the story and gives a substantial digression showing how facile it is for the Tsar to pretend to be an ordinary soldier and yet how he explains the fine horses and weapons in his possession.

Together the Tsar and the soldier ride the "wide, open plain" (line 111). They encounter a stockade with fierce dogs and a seemingly magic witch. While investigating, the soldier rips his greatcoat in getting away from the dogs. Finally they come to the house of an old woman. They ask for food and shelter but the old woman claims to have little and serves them a poor meal. But the sharp-eyed soldier notes that the woman has stores of good food that she is hiding. He becomes suspicious and finally concludes that the house is a robbers' den. His companion, the Tsar, grows tired and retires to sleep but the soldier stays watchful and when the robbers do return, he is ready.

The old woman tells her charges of the rich guests and the robbers go one by one to try their luck. The vigilant soldier takes his sword and as each robber appears he lops off his scruffy head. He then does the same to the old woman, and likewise the young witch, who seems to be a sister to the robbers. The Tsar then awakes and they share the spoils of the robbers' treasure. They then go their separate ways until the soldier is summoned to appear before the Tsar. The masquerade is then over and the Tsar rewards the soldier.

It is indicative of the character structure in the bylina form that here again we have the dynamic hero. The Tsar has but a minor role and is nearly always off stage. The song would be equally as meaningful without the Tsar character. The seeming foundation for the action is again the decisive attack on evil and the monetary rewards of that action. The protagonist of the tale and of the bylina are not as different as in "Pro Olesha," but the epic tendencies are the same.

It is interesting to note that in both songs the enemies are dispatched one at a time. In fact, in formal terms both songs are essentially the same; an ordinary man grows to heroic stature in two phases; first, a contact with the villains (tying the witches to the birch tree, the incident with the stockade dogs) and second, a decisive victory over them.
It would of course be foolish to postulate a formal pattern for Kriukov's songs on the basis of these few texts. But it is useful to point to the similarities that have developed when she carries a set of subjects and motifs from one genre to another, from folktale to epic song.

My initial perusal of the material before and after transition to a new form seemed to indicate an abstracted pattern for the singer's formulaic process; a mental mold that she placed new plots into. However, further examination now leads me to hypothesize a variety of changes (though not less predictable) rather than an either/or situation.

It is my opinion that the varieties of change in a plot when it moves from tale to song are not due to any evolutionary factors predicated upon the length of time the song has remained in the singer's repertoire. We do not go from tale form to epic form in stages; rather, the evidence indicates that the final epic form is dependent on the initial tale form. A tale such as number 94 or number 121 which can easily lend itself to epic characterization when the tale is essentially one of a good vs. evil confrontation, will likely change in both component and structure from tale to epic form. Other tales, relating to the trials and tribulations of courting and marriage, misplaced royalty, and the like will have some component change but the tale structure which can not be easily shaped to epic form will remain relatively unchanged. The singer can do only as much change as the plot will allow.

NOTES

3. Ibid., p. 28.
8. Ibid., pp. 710-11.
10. Astakhova, op. cit., p. 194.
11. Ibid., p. 195.
12. Andreev notes (p. 61) only two Russian texts, both in *Skazki iz raznyx mest Sibiri*.


15. Ibid., pp. 213-14.


**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


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