



BETWEEN AN ANGEL AND A DEMON: V. M. SHUKSHIN'S STORY "SURAZ" IN THE CONTEXT OF RUSSIAN CLASSICS

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ABSTRACT

Intertextual analysis of Shukshin's story "Suraz" revealed the writer's orientation towards two main pretexts - Pushkin's story "The Shot" and Lermontov's novel "A Hero of Our Time". Despite the desperate rebellion, Shukshin's hero is unable to escape the behavioral stereotypes imposed on him by the world of culture. The teacher, who compared Spirka Rastorguev with Byron, unwittingly "programmed" his entire future fate. The romantic model of behavior becomes decisive for him.

KEY WORDS: *intertextuality, reminiscence, context, motive, plot.*

In Shukshin's works the names of literary characters, titles of books, paintings and films appear every now and then, and direct references to plots and motifs of world art appear. For a writer who persistently proclaimed "the truth of life" as almost the only criterion for artistry, this is not entirely usual. And yet there is no paradox here. Shukshin just needs a reason to once again emphasize the superiority of the natural man over the man of book culture. Yu. M. Lotman wrote that in Pushkin, "the closer the hero is to the world of literature, the more ironic the author's attitude towards him" [1]. Shukshin has the same thing.

Teacher Galina Petrovna from Shukshin's first novel "The Lyubavins" unexpectedly sees similarities between Yegor Lyubavin and Gogol's Andriy:

"You look like... you know who? On Andria.

- Which Andrey?

- To Andria. From "Taras Bulba". But your character is probably not like that. Why are you so gloomy?

"Some kind of balabolka," thought Yegor and said nothing" [Shukshin, 1987, p. 209].

The artificial parallel between Yegor Lyubavin and Andriy does not so much characterize the hero of the novel as exposes the falsity of the entirely bookish worldview of the city teacher, who perceives Siberia through the prism of the works of Jack London.

The main character of the story "Suraz", Spirka Rastorguev, is no longer compared to this or that literary character, but to Byron. Again, the school teacher, and also a city dweller, is surprised at Spirka's striking similarity to the English poet:

"Spirka's life turned askew early. He was only in the fifth grade, and all sorts of stories began to happen to him. The German teacher, a quiet, touchy old woman from the evacuees, looking closely at Spirka, said with surprise:

- Byron!.. It's amazing how similar it is!

Spirka hated the old woman.

As soon as "Anna und Martha Baden" came up, his soul ached - he would go again: "No, this is amazing!.. The spitting image of little Byron." Spirka is tired of this. One day the old woman began as usual:

- Incredible, no one will believe it: little Bai...

- Yes, you went to... - And Spirka made such obscenities that a drunk man would be ashamed of"

[Shukshin, 1989, p. 113].



Spirka reacts to comparison with Byron in almost the same way as Yegor Lyubavin. The difference is that, despite the desperate rebellion, the hero of “Suraza” is not able to escape the behavioral stereotypes imposed on him by the world of culture. The teacher unwittingly “programs” the entire future fate of Spirka Rastorguev. The romantic model of behavior becomes the main, determining one for him.

Let's consider one of the characteristic situations of the story, when Spirka goes to the next “lair” - to the “lonely” Nyura Zavyalova. The background will be a scene from the novel by M. Yu. Lermontov “A Hero of Our Time”.

"Suraz":

"I knocked on the window.

- Well? - the sleepy Nyura asked displeasedly, looming vaguely like a white spot outside the window.

Spirka was silent, thinking about Nyura <...>.

- What are you standing for? – asked Nyura. – The door is open... Don't wake up the old people.

Spirka stood. There was some cruel curiosity in his character: what would she do now?

- Spirka!.. Well, what are you talking about?

Silence.

- Go, or what?

Silence.

- He's an alarmed fool... He wakes you up, and then he starts... Well, go to hell! – Nyura went to the bed.

Spirka silently crept along the hallway of the hut, where the old Nyurins were snoring, and found himself in the upper room.

- Why are you freaking out?

Spirka felt unbearably sorry for Nyura... What the hell, really? It's better not to come then” [Shukshin, 1989, p. 119–120].

"Hero of our time":

"I stayed next to her; it was clear that my silence bothered her, but I swore Don't say a word - out of curiosity. I wanted to see her get out of this predicament.

- Either you despise me, or you love me very much! - she finally said in a voice that contained tears. <...>

- Answer, speak up, I want to hear your voice! <...>

I didn't answer.

- You are silent? - she continued, - perhaps you want me to be the first to tell you that I love you?..

I was silent...

- Do you want this? – she continued. <...>

- For what? – I answered, shrugging my shoulders” [Lermontov, 1965, p. 100–101].

It is more than obvious that Spirka's behavior is “quotable,” but only up to a certain point. “Unbearable pity” is, of course, a departure from the role. Shukshin signals that for Spirka the mask of an immoralist superhero is inorganic. Pechorin is much more consistent. “There are moments when I understand the Vampire...” he admits in his diary [Lermontov, 1965, p. 101], etc. In the soul of Spirka Rastorguev, a painful struggle of natural kindness, selflessness, sacrifice with romantic immoralism and individualism unfolds.

Much in the strange twists of the character of the main character of the story clarifies the Pushkin context. Reminiscences from “The Shot” in Shukshin's story are quite numerous - from the coincidence of the characters' ages to such a fundamentally important motive as “deferred revenge”. The scene of unrealized revenge is also a clear variant of Pushkin's substratum.

"Suraz":

"Spirka raised his gun.

Sergei Yuryevich turned deathly pale... And then Irina Ivanovna suddenly screamed, so terribly, so loudly, frantically, demandingly, so unlike herself - so small, smart, with warm soft lips - so completely inhumanly bitter, desperate. And she fell out of bed and crawled, stretching out her arms...

- No need! Oooh!! No need! Oooh! "And I wanted to grab the gun - on my knees - I wanted..." [Shukshin, 1989, p. 125].

"Shot":

"Silvio started taking aim at me. Suddenly the doors opened. Masha runs in and throws herself on my neck with a squeal. <...> With these words he wanted to take aim at me... in front of her! Masha threw herself at his feet” [Pushkin, 1978, p. 68].



The aspect of Pushkin's story that interests us was at one time deeply analyzed in the article by A. A. Vannovsky "New data on the influence of Shakespeare on Pushkin. (The riddle of revenge for the soul)." According to A. A. Vannovsky, "having forced his hero to take revenge with forgiveness for an insult, Pushkin, without suspecting it, came close to the greatest secret of the transformation of the human spirit, to the secret of the origin of the commandment to love enemies from the commandment "an eye for an eye," to the mystery of the spiritual evolution of Christ from Judaism to Christianity, disguised by Shakespeare in his "Hamlet" [Vannovsky, 1989, p. 402]. Silvio's plan of revenge, paradoxically, involves "giving himself up to the mercy of the enemy." "It turns out that Silvio is not only an executioner, but also a victim, not only an avenger, but also a redeemer." And Silvio's heroic death itself is "sacrificial in nature, he dies, unconsciously fulfilling the will of his new face, the face of the savior of human souls" [Vannovsky, 1989, p. 395, 400, 401].

Spirka Rastorguev's actions are far from strict consistency. It is no coincidence that the "bending" motif is one of the dominant ones in its characteristics. But he also faces the problem of a painful choice between revenge according to the pagan principle of "an eye for an eye" and the difficult desire to forgive the enemy: "After all, you have to wish something for a fierce enemy! You must at least mentally see him humiliated, crushed. Necessary! But... Spirka even fidgeted in his seat: he realized that he did not find any anger in himself towards the teacher. If he had thought to think about his whole life, he would also understand and remember that he never wished harm on anyone. But he didn't think so, but desperately resisted, arousing anger in his soul" [Shukshin, 1989, p. 131].

The ambiguity, "fracturedness" of the main character is realized, first of all, in the presence of two hypostases - Spirka and "Andel" and "striped snake" - this is how his fellow villagers alternately call him [Shukshin, 1989, p. 115, 119]. However, the versatility of the character is far from exhausted by this romantic contrast. It is appropriate here to address the issue of the title.

V. Dahl's dictionary records several meanings of the word "suraz", which are directly involved in the characterization of Spirka Rastorguev. "Surazny, stern, psk. vld. tmb. prominent, handsome, handsome. Surazha girl. An awkward horse, awkward. Surazitsa Psk. Sib. similarity similarity. <...> Suraz sib. born out of wedlock. <...> See strike Sib. prm. disaster, blow, grief" [Dal, 1991, p. 362]. The character's name is also chosen very subtly and greatly contributes to expanding the circle of intertextual connections. The etymology of this name is not entirely clear. According to A. Superanskaya, Spiridon (possibly from Lat.) is illegitimate. The controversial etymology contributes to the emergence of secondary meanings. There is a natural associative connection with Lat. spira - "coil", "curl" and from lat. spiritus - "breath", "spirit", "soul". The latter is especially noteworthy, because the motif of "breath - soul - spirit" varies throughout the story very persistently, for example: "The horror of what was going on in Spirka's soul!.. Shame, pain, anger - everything was mixed up there, suffocating" [Shukshin, 1989, p. 122]. Anger and vindictiveness cause "difficulty breathing," and, on the contrary, having defeated the "desire for evil," the hero sighs "deeply and joyfully" [Shukshin, 1989, p. 126].

The contradictions in which the hero is entangled are not resolved until the end of the story. Spirka's death is undoubtedly sacrificial in nature. However, it is clear that a suicide is not only a victim, but also an executioner. Suicide turns out to be the only way for the hero to reconcile opposites.

Intertextual analysis of the story revealed Shukshin's orientation towards two main pretexts - "Shot" and "Hero of Our Time". However, since "intertextuality does not mean a vague and mysterious accumulation of influences, but the work of transformation and assimilation of a multitude of texts, carried out by a centering text that retains the leadership of meaning" [Yampolsky, 1993, p. 69], there is a need to search for a single key to interpreting the story.

Dostoevsky helps to bring together the references to Byron, Pushkin and Lermontov in "Suraz", since all the main lines of the story go back to the fragment "That we are all good people" from the "Diary of a Writer" for 1876. It is Dostoevsky who puts the names of Byron, Pushkin, and Lermontov on a par: "The founder <...> of bad men in our literature was Silvio, in the story "The Shot," taken by the simple-minded and beautiful Pushkin from Byron. And Pechorin himself killed Grushnitsky only because he was not quite handsome in his uniform" [Dostoevsky, 1994, p. 45]. And it is precisely the concept of Russian national character, proposed by the classic writer, that becomes the grain of Shukshin's work: "If we valued and respected these evil little men so much in our time, it was only because they appeared as people of seemingly lasting hatred, in contrast to us, Russians, as you know,



are people of very fragile hatred, and we have always and especially despised this trait in ourselves. Russian people do not know how to hate for a long time and seriously <...>” [Dostoevsky, 1994, p. 45].

Hidden quotes from classical literature in Shukshin's later stories can be compared to the underwater part of an iceberg. It is in the sphere of intertextual connections that the main ideological potential of his works is accumulated.

Among the writers of the 1960s and 70s. Shukshin is one of the most prominent and consistent critics of Euro- and logocentrism in Russian culture. According to Shukshin, the dependence of Russian life on literature is far from being as harmless as it might seem at first glance.

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