

The Search of the East or Apofatic Reality in V.Khlebnikov's Poem "Shaman and Venus"

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the poem of Velimir Khlebnikov "The Shaman and Venus" (1912) in a branched cultural and historical context. The subject of research is the apophatic tradition in the work. Much attention is paid to the spatial-temporal model and the position is evening - morning, since the main events in the poem are carried out at the frontier hour. The evening light is connected with the image of shaman and the dawn hour with the image of Venus. Through the images of the title characters, two images of the world and two cultures are indirectly manifested, as well as a clash of the masculine and feminine, evening and non-evening light, which leads to a state of lack of time and points to sacred geography in the poem. The study is based on a holistic analysis of a literary text using structural-typological, comparative, comparative, system-integrated (cultural) research methods.

Keywords: dialogue of cultures, apophatic tradition, space and time, poetry of V.Khlebnikov, myth

I. INTRODUCTION

When we talk about apophatic tradition in Russian literature, we usually mean the presence of lexemes in the text that have the semantics of the ineffable, the unknown (the poem "Inexpressible" by V. A. Zhukovsky, unknown paths from the beginning of the poem "Ruslan and Lyudmila" by A. S. Pushkin), or images of death, since the phenomenon of death is apophatic in nature [1]. However, as the analysis of the poems by V. Bryusov, A. Blok, N. Gumilyov, O. Mandelstam showed, the mythology of luminosity and the birth of evening and non-evening light, are directly related to the apophatic tradition [2]. This phenomenon of the appearance of light in darkness, which is typologically similar to the image of the black sun in Russian literature [3], is found. "Among the names of Christ" there is non-evening light - a non-sunset, non-fading eternal light. It's according to the observation of the authors of the article "Evening light and non-evening light" and many cultural traditions, in the esoteric and exoteric aspects of Christianity and Islam. [4]. If we turn to the culture of Islam, then it is worth mentioning the Sufi tradition, the phenomenon of a "luminous person", a heavenly teacher, a guide for a Sufi, who sees through the Face of the Beloved the light

of the Most High. This tradition of exaltation of the Beloved, ascetic unrequited love in its cosmic manifestation typologically corresponds to the teachings of the Russian philosopher V.I. Solovyov about Great Sofia. Studies in the field of world mythology of the poet Robert Graves and the anthropologist Raphael Patai convincingly show that the Black Virgin in Islam, in Judaism "are of Sufi origin ..." [5]. Therefore, we must take into account this dialogue of cultures or even the synthesis that arises in Russian literature, especially when we write about the work of Velimir Khlebnikov.

The Russian poet Velimir Khlebnikov saw as the main task of his work the unification of cultures of different peoples and countries, going beyond the limits of one national image of the world, but at the same time preserving "Slavic" and "Asian" voices, as evidenced by his story "Children of the Otter" (1913). Researchers of Khlebnikov's work have long been developing the problem of the dialogue of cultures in his poetics, paying particular attention to the "continent-ocean". This topic was developed in the works of H. Baran [6], A. Parnis [7] and E. Sylard [8]. However, the synthesis of cultures, which was embodied to a certain extent in the search for the East, we find not only in the story "Children of the Otter", but also in poems. The object

of this article is the 1912 poem "The Shaman and Venus". The subject of the article is the synthesis of cultures in the poem of Khlebnikov, the eastern cultural tradition.

II. THE SEARCH OF THE EAST IN KHLBNIKOV'S POEM

Velimir Khlebnikov in his program document, autobiographical prose "Svoyasi", wrote about the "diary of the spirit", about the need to keep such a diary: "I conjure future artists to keep accurate diaries of their spirit: look at yourself like in the sky and keep accurate records of the rising and setting of stars of one's spirit" [9]. Here the poet has in mind the internal state of concentration, the concentration of his "I": "This spiritual poverty of knowledge about the inner sky is the brightest black Fraunhofer feature of modern mankind" [9]. The problem lies in "gaining" one's "I", one's true spiritual essence, and determining its "geographical spiritual coordinate". This spiritual search was carried out by the poet in the poem "The Shaman and Venus", which has recently been increasingly addressed by researchers from the point of view of identifying the Siberian text, the topos of "Siberian Athens" [10].

Khlebnikov in his poetry adhered to the principle of interaction of world cultures: "The brain of the earth cannot be only Great Russian. It would be better if he was continental" [9], in his work we will find echoes and a peculiar synthesis of all superethnic groups - from Indians to Slavs. For these reasons, based on the creative installations of Khlebnikov, we use structural-typological and systematic methods for analysis that allow us to perceive the text in a wide space of world culture.

Khlebnikov did not give preference to any one cultural tradition, but strove for synthesis, which was clearly manifested at the linguistic level: "The Asian voice of the "Children of the Otter", the Slavic "Nine God" and the African "Ka". "Vila and Leshy" is the union of Balkan and Sarmatian artistic thought" [9]. At first glance, there is a separation and combination of cultural traditions at the same time, but the search for the "inner core" of man, his cosmic world axis, his spiritual homeland was expressed in this. We denote this as the "search for the East," or the eighth side of the world, which is not on a real geographical map. The term is borrowed from the Sufi tradition, which at the typological and biographical levels is close to the work of the poet. Khlebnikov himself gravitated to the culture of the East, to Persian poetry, he is often called the Russian dervish. But the discussion in our article will focus not only on revealing the Eastern tradition, oriental motifs in his poetry, which is described in sufficient detail in the works of P. I. Tartakovsky [11], but also on the "disclosure" of the cosmic diary of his

own Spirit, which " are "the heroes of the poem "Shaman and Venus".

Now let's make a little explanation, which will allow us to distinguish between the East geographical and East esoteric, corresponding to the ideas of sacred geography. In this regard, we turn to the Sufi tradition, the doctrine of the "luminous man", in which the Sufi is endowed with cosmic synthetic thinking and serves God, who is represented in the image of the Beloved. We prefer to speak in this case, following Rene Guenon, about the synthesis of cultures, and not about the syncretism that the scientist categorizes as profane science: it is synthesis that acts as the core of true religious doctrine, and not the false typology that syncretism is [12]. So, the East - "the direction in which the search for this" eighth climate "is carried out is not horizontal, but vertical ... <...> ... Heavenly Pole; this is the Pole with a capital letter, the extreme north, so extreme that it can be considered the threshold of the "other-being" dimension" [13]. A feminine is associated with this pole in Khlebnikov's poetry:

How cruel it is all! -

Said the maid, suddenly crying. -

Say at least you: Already from the East

Is there hostility to the beds of marriage? [9]

These lines we quoted from the poem "The Shaman and Venus" convey the speech of Venus, which refers to the shaman, a person from the "Far North". Here, a contrast and at the same time a combination of East and North is given, which consists in the images of a warlike virgin and a shaman:

There is courage in her eyes

And passions proud, angry heat:

She stood before him naked

And Shining with a magnificent veil. [9]

Researchers analyzing spatial models in the poem are right that the meeting of the East and the North is impossible from the point of view of real geography, and the action takes place in conditional Siberian mythological reality: "The hero of the poem - the Siberian shaman - appears in the narrative as either a "Mongol" or a "Mogol". He lives in conditionally Siberian and mythopoetic reality, free of historical specifics" [14]. However, this combination of two opposing mental principles, bodily (Venus) and the wise spiritual (shaman), is necessary from the point of view of cosmic ethics. It is noteworthy that this clash of two cultures - male and female gives rise to timelessness, and it is then that evening light and non-evening light arise. It is worth paying attention in this case not only to spatial models, but also to a special hour, to indicate the time of action in the work:

He fell silent and smoked quietly,
Looking into the evening space.
He loved to remove what he said
He is indifferent to the decoration. [9]

Venus, which is likened to a star, as indicated by the semantics of the golden color ("gold and chalk"), appears in the cave at the borderline hour, neither day nor night:

The clock flew and ran
They were two in the cave.
And the pale shadows trembled
Around the evening rest. [9]

Of course, it is possible, as some scholars do, to attribute the poem to parodies, to perceive Venus as a doll speaking "typically a puppet speech" [15]. But the plot of the poem is based on a game that has a cosmic competitive character and is likened to agon, the sacred part of the mystery [16], the hero's ancient cosmic struggle with his antipode (see Pechorin's squabble with a smuggling girl). The shaman should not give in to temptation, be seduced by the tender mournful speeches of Venus, but he should not reject it either.

Through the image of Venus, the archetype of the female principle was expressed, as indicated by the appearance of a deer, which the shaman leads for her:

He runs out to meet
Kisses and caresses him,
Takes a young deer
Cut to pieces, and you're done
She cooked a simple dish ... [9]

According to world mythological representations, the totem of the Great Goddess, Artemis, Venus could be a deer or a bear. According to the observation of an English scientist, a researcher of ancient mythology Robert Graves, Artemis was called "lane-like" [17]. In this regard, the Russian poet is accurate: the supreme female deity must be sacrificed in order to achieve sacred knowledge. Graves' research provides an idea of the threefold White Goddess, whom the poet, priest should make a sacrifice as a ransom for the sacred knowledge and love of the Goddess. In addition, the supreme deity is represented in three forms, corresponding to the three phases of the moon: the young virgin (white) moon, the middle (red) moon, the old, the wilted moon (black). Here Khlebnikov is also ethnographically accurate, and in the ritual plan the statement of the young beautiful Venus that she is "old" does not seem absurd:

Find out! Do you know what you whisper in your ear?

You know? You know, I'm an old woman! ..

No one writes gentle letters

Nobody to meet the blue heights

He's not raising his lovers' eyes

But everyone slumbers with a book. [9]

However, the temptation to which the shaman does not succumb, verbal squabbles end with a ritual gesture - killing a deer, eating together, eating sacred forbidden food. The shaman, of course, is a wise man, the keeper of the knowledge of the knowledge of the North, was ready to meet with Venus, because he lived alone and refused worldly life:

She went to him. Like a monk

He lived alone in a dense forest. [9]

It is from this moment that the real spiritual path of the shaman begins, his "verification":

Strict keeping covenants

Duty to the aliens of the saint,

Mogol sat sorry

Bends of the body of the young. [9]

And after violating the ban on killing and eating a totem animal, Venus returns his usual face, and the shaman dies:

My dear sorcerer, forget everything!

And the hair waterfall is mighty red

And my eye is shameless fire

And chest, and hard and stone,

And the spirit of meekness fiery. [9]

We can say that this poem is about death, and in no other way than death, it could not end. If we turn to the Eastern tradition, then the shaman is the same stargazer or Pushkin's eunuch from the fairy tale "On the Golden Cockerel". Here the classic story unfolds, which is known to us from the works of V. Irving and A. Pushkin: a meeting of the astrologer, the sage and the beautiful princess (Queen of Shamakhan). However, this plot is modified by Khlebnikov and stylized under the Slavic tradition. As in other works, for example, in the poem "The Stone Woman", here "the eastern philosophical plot unfolds in the South Russian nature" [18]. The Tsarevna, in our case, the Venus of Breadnikovsky, embodies the Absolute of Beauty and she is the harbinger of the Black Light - this world is connected in world culture with the apophatic tradition, the birth of light in darkness [4]:

She entered the cave entrance

Outbursts of joy spring.

<...>

She stood before him naked

Shining with a luxurious veil.

It seemed like a fiery fire

Nispal, touching the snow shaft. [9]

In Sufism, Greatness and Beauty are "the two main categories of attributes relating respectively to the divine Being as *Deus absconditus* and *Deus revelatus*" [13]. Beauty reveals Greatness, Venus came to indicate the true spiritual path to the shaman, test it, test for the presence of this spiritual Greatness before death (in esoteric language this means to reveal the "light man", that is, the secret of the "midnight sun"). The shaman is not seduced by her beauty (here we mean bodily beauty, not Beauty as the Absolute), he perceives it as a guest:

"In vain you sat on a stump -

He's stabbing and will scratch you. "

<...>

Mogol sat sorry

Bends of the body of the young. [9]

The hero remains calm, as befits a sage:

He loved to remove what he said

He is indifferent to the decoration. [9]

Each "accomplishment", deed (and before us the initiation of the shaman - Venus unfolds) is preceded by the appearance of an "Angel", or, according to Sufi terminology, a Light creature, which Venus stands for Khlebnikov:

You are old and pale, yellow and dark,

I am a magnificent river!

In the wild cave, give me a corner

I pray to the gray-haired old man [9]

It seems that Venus asks only about "an angle in the cave", but, after translating it into the esoteric Sufi language, we understand that she asks for an angle in the heart of the hero. That is why it is appropriate to talk about the mystical Light, spiritual Light, which is visualized by Khlebnikov through the feminine:

She's on the vague face of a star

She looked timidly and sometimes

She was babbling quietly about something

Sang softly about something.

The sky turned pale and bright [9]

The heroine "sings" and "babbles", which made researchers compare Venus's speech with puppetry, children's speech, but it's not just a bread-making stylization of folklore or "costs" of avant-garde aesthetics, but in a ritual context a momentous event indicating a borderline hour: sunrise or a dawn meeting followed by a song. They say so quietly, inaudibly, especially Venus "humming" and "babbling" before the shaman's death. In addition, in Russian folklore, which Khlebnikov knew well, the early rising formula associated with turning points in a person's fate is axiologically significant: "From the morning - the beginning - the course, the fate of the coming day, depends" [19]. In the poem, Venus sings at the dawn:

And now morning. Shouted

Pale thrushes on spruce trees [9]

With the element of Light, solar symbolism, the image of a shaman is also connected, which at the last moment of his life turns into a swan and is compared with a snake:

And the swan lay at her feet

Like a snow-white snake.

He dying prayed

And touched the virgin of passion. [9]

If we draw a parallel with Russian embroidery, we will find in it, firstly, "the image of a woman raising her hands to the sun or to the sky," and secondly, the image of the sun in a paradigm with a swan pattern in the form of swan necks [20]. Note that in the ancient tradition, which was also very explicitly and implicitly manifested in the work of Khlebnikov, Apollo wandered in a chariot drawn by swans: "Apollo returned from the north again on swans, when it was summer, even the very middle of summer ..." [20]. Swans were an integral symbol of the "luminiferous" Apollo. Of course, we do not bring Khlebnikov to the oath of allegiance to the ancient or Russian folk tradition, but it is worth recalling that the image of Apollo was one of the "main symbols of the Silver Age" [21]. Khlebnikov in the poem "The Shaman and Venus" in a veiled form, not like in the works of K. Balmont or M. Tsvetaeva, expressed a bright Apollonian principle, consisting in the image of a shaman.

III. CONCLUSION

The search for the East, that is, the inner "I" in the poem "The Shaman and Venus", is associated not with real geography, but with sacred coordinates lying in the plane of the noumenal world. The search for his inner man of light, about which the poet wrote in his

autobiographical prose "Svoyasy", was expressed in creative practice, in the possible combination of two cultures, two mentalities, and began in a poem of 1912, and it is associated with the apophatic tradition of the generation of evening and non-evening light. An appeal to Russian folklore and ancient mythology even at the typological level allows us to better understand the title images of the poem, to highlight the ontological subtext in the work. Apophatism in this case manifested itself not so much on the linguistic level as on the figurative and in terms of spatio-temporal models: contrasting evening / morning, female / male, youth / old age. We encounter a similar state of affairs in the well-known poem of S. Yesenin "Letter to the Mother" [22].

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