

Poetic System Interaction By Yanka Dyaghileva And Egor Letov*

Anton S. AFANASEV, Tatyana N. BREEVA, Jury V. DOMANSKY

Kazan State Federal University

Abstract. *This research is devoted to the problem of mutual influence among two representatives of Siberian punk rock: Yana Stanislavovna Dyaghileva (Yanka) and Yegor Letov. The main methods of the study were the comparative-typological method of literary text study, which makes it possible to detect similarities and differences between them, as well as historical and literary method that helps to identify the available influences of art systems and develop the corresponding chronological chains. In the course of the analysis, we came to the conclusion that Yegor Letov's influence on Yanka can be distinguished on several levels of a poetic text: ideological-thematic, syntactic and strophical. The interaction of the poetic systems of these authors on the ideological and thematic level consists in the appearance of social problems in Yanka's lyric texts, where the main opposition is the socially engaged opposition "we/ them". The level of grammar allows you to discover the abundance of syntactic parallelisms in Yanka's texts. At the strophic level, Yegor Letov's influence is observed through the use of short vers libre by Yanka - one of the favorite Letov's forms. In his turn, Yegor Letov considers Yanka's creativity as a source of intertext: one can find references to the Yanka's poetic heritage in the compositions "Night", "Ophelia" and "Centennial Rain". Besides, Yegor Letov creates two dedications to Yanka: one lifetime ("About the Mishutka (The song for Yanka)") and one posthumous ("Ophelia"). The specificity of these texts lies in the fact that the image given in the title and somehow correlated with Yanka's life and work becomes the starting point for Letov's purely philosophical structures and reflections, not related to Yanka directly.*

Key words: Yegor Letov, Yanka Dyaghileva, influence, stanza, syntax, ideological and thematic complex, intertextuality, initiation songs.

Introduction

Yegor Letov, of course, is the most significant and a key figure of Siberian punk rock. There is only one person from this get-together, which can be put side by side / together on a single pedestal. The thing in this case is about Yana Stanislavovna Dyaghileva (Yanka).

In Yegor Letov's biographical myth (as well as Yegor Letov in Yanka's biographical myth) Yanka takes the position far from the last one. Having acquainted at the First Novosibirsk Rock Festival in April 1987, they communicated until Yanka's death. At the end of 1988 after a year and a half of their life together they parted, but "they often played in joint concerts almost to the end. Sometimes Yanka addressed Yegor, he helped her".¹ Yegor Letov is also included in the "text of the death" by Yanka. Numerous Internet portals, including the official website devoted to Yanka Dyaghileva's memory, you can read the following facts from Y.S. Diaghileva's funeral: "There were tiresome dances, a sea of vodka and drugs, Egor's screams that Yanka's death is life-affirming, and therefore there is no need for tears and remorse, you need to have fun and enjoy life. They listened to Yanka's favorite music <...> After the funeral, the drunk Yegor came bursting into Yanka's house, where her father and stepmother were

* The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

¹ Yanka Dyaghilevam, Biography, 2017: <http://yanka.lenin.ru/biography.htm>, accessec 30. 06. 2017.

sitting at that moment, silently walked into Yanka's room, took out all the boxes from the table, and poured them into his backpack".

However, Andrey Mashnin, who attended Yanka's funeral, wrote in "My Kamchatka" community: "The Internet often says that the funeral was noisy and that Letov arranged a rally there. Olka and I do not remember anything like that. We attended funerals many times, and that was the same, the usual. If something were out of the ordinary, we would definitely pay attention and remember. But there was her farther and all her friends. Letov, would not arrange such a show there. Everyone was very depressed. And we left there quite quickly, and all together. So I do not know who remembers something unusual now" (My "Kamchatka" // URL: https://vk.com/andreykamchatka?w=wall-140724076_2245, free access. Checked on 30.06.2017.)

We do not intend to find out the true state of things that took place to be. In this "biographical" part of the study, we wanted only to fix the moment that a close enough communication between two artists of the word could not but affect their mutual influence in the sphere of creativity. Therefore, our goal can be identified as the identification of Yanka's text in Yegor Letov's works and Letov's text in Yanka's poetic heritage.

Methods

This article continues the research of authors in the field of Russian rock poetry specifics study.² During the development of this problem, the main methods have been the comparative-typological method of literary text study, which makes it possible to detect similarities and differences between them, as well as the historical and literary method that helps to reveal the available influences of art systems and develop the corresponding chronological chains.³

Results

In the course of the performed analysis, we came to the conclusion that Yegor Letov's influence on Yanka can be distinguished on several levels of a poetic text: ideological-thematic, syntactic and strophic. Already from this list it can be seen that Letov's form and not content found the largest reflection in Yanka's lyrics. This has its logical explanation: a poet-intellectual, the admirer of A.I. Vvedensky and V.V. Mayakovsky, the continuer of the Russian avant-garde

² A. S. Afanasev, T.N. Breeva, "Gender picture of peace in Russian women rock-poetry (poetic novels «Sprinter» and «Stalker» by Diana Arbenina)," in *Journal of Language and Literature*, VII (2016), no. 1, p. 159–162; A. S. Afanasev, T. N. Breeva, "Gender worldview in modern Russian literature," in *Turkish online journal of Design Art and Communication*, VI (2016), special issue, p. 3043–3048; A. A. Sergeevich, "Culture code in biographical myth structure (a case study of poem collection «Notebook of words» by S.Y. Surganova," in *Journal of Language and Literature*, VI (2015), no. 1, p. 262–266.

³ S. A. Petrova, "Intermedial analysis of V. Tsoy's rock album «Blood Type»," in *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, VIII (2016), no. 3, p. 242–251; Y. B. Steinholt, "You can't rid a song of its words: Notes on the hegemony of lyrics in Russian rock songs," in *Popular Music*, XXII (2003), no. 1, p. 89–108.

traditions Yegor Letov creates the texts that challenge the social norm at an early stage of his work but these texts are shocking and extraordinary by form. The lyrical subject of this period of creativity is blurred and not defined clearly, and the dominants of the ideological and thematic level are alogism and absurdity.

The favorite figure of speech during this stage of Yegor Letov's creativity is syntactic parallelism. At that whole poems can be developed at this reception. Small poems will be particularly indicative here. Let's give two examples. The first is the poem "I fell down in the puddle with all my sky ...": "I fell in the puddle with all my sky / I fell out of the puddle with all my knock / I flew off to the puddle by all my evening / I flew in the puddle by all my whisper, The principle of repetition is semantic and structure-forming here: each line repeats the words "I", "puddle", "all my", action verbs and final nouns are varied. Thus, the lines built on syntactic parallelism include both constant and variational lexemes.

The second example is the poem "The gardens of unintelligible importance": "The gardens of unintelligible importance / Irons of unknown manufacture / Roads of unknown application / Water of unclear amount / Hair of incomplete capacity / Trees of ambiguous causality / And a caterpillar from the side", There are no lexical repeats here (although, as in the first case, there are phonetic repetitions). The specificity of this option is that phrases not sentences are syntactically paralleled here.

Yanka's lyrics has frequent examples of syntactic parallelism. According to the collection of poems by Yanka Dyaghileva compiled by Yakov Sokolov, Yanka created only 9 art texts before the acquaintance with Yegor Letov, and three of them ("Leave the wolf pack in the world ...", "Drew the icon - and forgot them under rain", "Little words for verses ... ") reveal syntactic parallelism, however, the marked Letov's structures are not observed.

The first changes of the figure of speech we are considering in Yanka's use belong to June 1987. We have in mind the poem "Classic depression": "The souls from repentance are all around / Despair without movements / Stillness without outcomes / Unacceptance without influences / Non reaction before leaving / Unnatural black phobia / Frivolous thinking of broken windows"¹. In this example, a clear method of Yegor Letov's poetics - syntactically paralleled word combinations - is quite clear.

It should be noted that Yanka's syntactic parallelism Yanka is used at the beginning of the text very often. The most representative in this respect will be the late composition "Take feet from the ground", consisting of two parts: declamatory and song. An original origin is completely built on syntactic parallelism: one parallel replaces another, and this can be continued indefinitely.

Yanka's works, entirely built on this method are less frequent. Among such texts, you can distinguish the poem "Execute us with a firm hand ..." and one of the last creations "Hurried - / It turned out. / Refused - / Drowned. / Looked back - / No one. This small text is important for our research and the fact that it shows one more sign of Letov's poetry - a short vers libre.

Like most rock poets, Yegor Letov's poetic texts can be divided into two groups: the texts that make a verbal component of a rock composition, and

traditional poems. Yegor Letov has quite a lot of such poems - about 1/3 of all written works. In contrast to the verbal component of the rock composition, almost all the poems are astrophic, and they are free verses by form. A special place is occupied by short vers libre in Yegor Letov's poetry - the poems consisting of 2-6 lines, in which, as a rule, a deep philosophical thought is formed. The examples of such short vers libres can be: "Speeches slow down / Words are repeated / Intonations do not change / Phrases are closed / And all over again - Playing aircraft / Under the bed", "The sky is of meat color / When you stumbled / on a dead mouse",⁴ "Everything I wrote / I lied about all this"⁵, "When I died / There was no one / Who would deny it", etc.

One of the favorite forms of poems for Yanka (not the verbal component of a rock composition!) was not so much vers libre as an astrophic white verse, at that some lines can be rhymed. There is a lot of examples of such texts: "Ch. K.", "A. B.", "The bucket was filled with lunar treacle to the edge...", "Unclear light through the snowstorm and meadow ...", "Wasteland - rags, smoldering smoke". Free verse is also found, but in small numbers, and unlike Letov's vers libre they are not short ("Wolves are fed - sheep are whole").

This situation changes in the works of 1989-1991, when the peak of activity has already been passed. In these years, Yanka creates several vers libra, which, no doubt, go back to Yegor Letov's poetic quest. Here are some of them: "The stars fall from the sky / with butts from the upper floors", "The cat melts on the fire / She knows how to scream / The man in himself knows how to be silent / the point of bitterness is dumb", "By the average circle / There's an escalator / And back along the rope / Path of the loop / Above all the beauties / Heights, emptiness and uncleanness". Here we observe the signs of Letov's style: unusual comparisons, the series of homogeneous terms, associativity.

A special place in this series is taken by the poem "The Oak rose...", dated on January 1991:

The oak rose I love you
Took off a table and you.
You can't understand.

We dare to assume that an original text of the poem mentioned above is Yegor Letov's poem "The Stairway to Heaven..." (1984):

The stairway to Heaven
the angels of ruined faith,
the church soldiers
are dumped dead on the roof .

Here are two examples of so-called visual poetry. And these cases are single for Yegor Letov's and Yanka's creativity. These texts can be read both horizontally (like traditional poems) and vertically (this interpretation is facilitated by large spaces between words within a single line and the aligning of the second and the third word in a column). "The ladder to the sky ..." can be considered as a poetic

⁴ E. Letov, *Poetry*, Moscow:, Publishing House "Vyrgorod", 2016.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

experiment by Yegor Letov, and the source for the poet was probably the poetry of the futurists, in particular, the poetry by A. Kruchenykh, V. Khlebnikov and V. Kamensky. "Yanka wrote her poem, focusing on Letov's text, and the last line ("You can't understand") can be read not only as an appeal to a conventional lyric object, but also as a game with a reader who must unravel the proposed Yanka poetic puzzle.

Discussion

It is more difficult to identify the influence of Yegor Letov's creativity on Yanka's poetry within the ideological and thematic level than in the cases we have already considered. The fact is that the poetic worlds of two authors are unique, unusual, and, most importantly, these artistic systems were formed in different subcultures. For Yanka, such a subculture was the subculture of hippies, for Yegor Letov - the subculture of punks.

As we noted above, Yegor Letov's early works, record the absurdity of the world, but the lyrical subject not only contemplates absurdity, but tries to fight it. And if in the texts of 1982-1985 the protest by Yegor Letov is extremely abstract, then in the works of 1986-1989 nonconformism takes on a pronounced social-political character. The core construct of the ideological and thematic level of Yanka's creativity is the discovery of the total tragedy of being and the inability of a man to escape this existential tragedy. However, the texts appeared in Yanka's poetry from time to time, in which the social problems were stated rigidly. It is revealed declaratively in the compositions "To the declassified elements", "Along the tram rails", "How to live", "We are knee-deep" and some others, where the main opposition is the socially engaged opposition "us" (subculture representatives) and "them" ("state" people). The appearance of such texts can be explained precisely by the orientation of Yegor Letov's creativity and the immersion in a punk subculture. Besides, we can assume that Yanka's sporadic inclusion of obscene vocabulary in their texts is also associated with Egor Letov's influence on her poetic language.

So, we tried to trace, how Yegor Letov influenced Yanka's creativity. Now we will try to do a reverse operation and see Yanka's "traces" in Letov's work.

This part of the study will be much smaller than the previous one for one reason: Yegor Letov and Yanka met when Letov was developed as a poet, and a young girl who had just begun to create could not have had a strong impact on him. Besides, being confident of his genius, Yegor Letov, during Yanka's lifetime, treated her with leniency. In this regard, we were able to find Yegor Letov's references to Yanka's poetry and image. Here, first of all, the lexical / intertextual level and the songs of dedication to Yanka will be considered.

It is well known that Yegor Letov's poetry is filled with various reminiscences, allusions, explicit and hidden quotations. There are Yanka's works among the original texts, and all these texts were written by Yegor Letov in 1990-1991. So, for example, the poet introduces the image of coteyka in the poem

⁶ My "Kamchatka" // URL: https://vk.com/andreykamchatka?w=wall-140724076_2245, accessed 30.06.2017.

"Night" ("Koteyka's tail burned accidentally", "The gray coteyka puked with a cucumber", "The gray coteyka was pissing in a shoe". This lexeme goes back to Yanka's poetic (and everyday) language (see, for example, "Nyrka's Song": "Everything that happened, everything that she remembered herself / Koteyka swiped off the thing from the window sill with its tail"). Letov's song "Ophelia", which we will talk about below, has the following lines: "Rubber tram, galvanized May / Overdue ticket for a second session". Here are the references to Yanka's two poetic texts: the reader "Along tram rails" and the little-known "The form deforms the rubber lump of fatigue": "The Form deforms the rubber lump of fatigue / A cat on the windowsill erases everything by the tail" / "The exact command is we wake up gather and go / The black clothes obliges to dance at the stake / The forgotten city is the wasted limit / an overdue ticket. "Besides, there is also Yanka's biographical text in the quoted passage: the phrase "galvanized May" indicates the month of her death. Besides, another reference to Yanka's work is Yegor Letov's poem "One Hundred Years of Solitude" which goes back to Yanka's composition "The Centenary Rain". Of course, both texts are related to Marquez's novel "One Hundred Years of Solitude" genetically, but Yanka's poem is closer to the text by structure, the principle of associativity and an ideological complex.

In the context of the problem under consideration, it is impossible to pass by two compositions by Yegor Letov, which are songs of dedication to Yanka. We are talking about the poem "About the Mishutka (The song for Yanka)" (in vivo initiation) and the already mentioned "Ofelia" (posthumous dedication). The specificity of these texts lies in the fact that the image presented in the title and somehow correlated with Yanka's life and work becomes the starting point for purely Letov's philosophical constructions and reflections not related to Yanka directly. The title image of the first initiation, the mishutka, refers us to the general context of Yanka's creativity, in which the theme of childhood is one of the leading places, and to a separate poem "Stress on the syllable above the capital line...", where one of the main characters is the bear. However, in terms of its problems and spatial-temporal organization, it is the continuation of the composition "About the Fool" written earlier (compare similar grammatical constructions in the titles of both texts). In the second dedication, Yegor Letov addresses the literary context. The central image - Shakespeare's Ophelia - corresponds with Yanka's image through the motive of suicide and the way of its realization (drowning). Yanka's death here became the reason for the declaration of his philosophical conception - the statement of death as a life-affirming and joyful beginning ("Wonderful captivity, granite delight / The lemon path to the orange forest / An invisible lift to the floor without limits".⁷

Conclusions

Thus, in the course of our research, we established the fact of Yegor Letov and Yanka Dyaghileva mutual creative influence. Yegor's influence on Yanka's poetry can be found on the ideological, thematic, syntactic and stropic levels of the

⁷ *Ibidem.*

Anton S. AFANASEV, Tatyana N. BREEVA, Jury V. DOMANSKY

text. The reverse effect is observed through the songs of initiation and the situation of intertextuality.

*Poetic System Interaction By Yanka Dyagileva And Egor Letov, Astra Salvensis, V (2017),
no. 10, p. 367-373*