

Pushkin's allusions in the comedy of A. P. Chekhov "The Cherry Orchard"

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Abstract. The study of Pushkin's allusions in the works of Anton Chekhov has been carried out for several decades. The relevance and novelty of this topic is associated with new observations and searches for intertextual connections, the expansion of the context of analysis, including in connection with the appeal to the dramatic works of the writer. This work considers the allusions from the works of A. Pushkin "The Queen of Spades", "Boris Godunov" and others, their role in the artistic whole of the comedy of A. P. Chekhov "The Cherry Orchard". The effectiveness of the approach which was outlined in the studies of R.G. Nazirov in the 1990s, as well as S.A. Kibalnik, M.V. Litovchenko and other domestic scientists is confirmed. Literary allusions resonate in Chekhov's artistic world, cumulatively marking a transitional stage of cultural and historical life and its personal comprehension. The intertextuality of Chekhov's works allows us to create an integral image of Russian culture: the semantic relations of allusions and reminiscences are combined with the multilayered symbolism of sound, hearing, gesture, touch - in general, the experience of time and the multiple meanings of words. The semantic "expansion" of Chekhov's play text leads not only to comparisons with Russian classics, but also to an open finale - a future literary context, implementing the "principle of plot uncertainty" and removing the uniqueness/truthfulness of any interpretation.

1 Introduction

Pushkin's allusions in the works of Anton Chekhov has been studied for several decades. The relevance and novelty of this topic is associated with new observations and searches for intertextual connections, the expansion of the context of analysis, including in connection with the appeal to the dramatic works of the writer. In 2000, N.E. Razumova stated: "There is a need for a new understanding of our cultural heritage, which is impossible without a deeper and more unbiased study of it" [1]. In 2007, in Kemerovo State University, M. V. Litovchenko defended her Candidate's dissertation "Pushkin's tradition in the prose of A.P. Chekhov". In her review of said dissertation, Razumova wrote "The appropriateness of comparing Pushkin and Chekhov does not require extensive substantiation, just because their works are at both borders of the classical period of Russian literature, opening and completing it... Chekhov's specific "literariness" ... makes it especially productive to study the various retrospectives of his relations with Russian culture." [2].

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Indeed, by the beginning of the 21st century, there were enough historical and literary comparisons collected to suggest that Chekhov consciously turned to the works of Pushkin and other Russian literary classics. Actually, the effectiveness of the approach which was outlined in studies R. G. Nazirov in the 1990s [3] in connection with the study of the functional role of Pushkin's motifs in the subsequent tradition is confirmed. Considering the reinterpretation of Pushkin's plots (Onegin's storyline, the motif of a poor man's robbery, the storyline about the sorcerer-traitor, the storyline about the separation of lovers, etc.) in subsequent literary pursuits of Russian authors, Nazirov has identified the main ways of transforming these motifs: "1) substitution of the place of action and historical timing; 2) re-emphasis, including inversion of the subject and object of action and substitution of the denouement; 3) contamination (successive fusion of the storylines or motifs); 4) combination of the storylines by including one in the other (inclusion); 5) overlapping or combining of the storylines (fusion); 6) reduction of the storyline; 7) amplification (distribution, inclusion of repetitive motifs); 8) paraphrase: free rendering of the storyline or the part of it; 9) quotation of the story structures, the so-called quasi-quotes; 10) cryptoparody, i.e., parody without specifying an object and with the implicit nature of ridicule." [3].

Modern researchers continue to supplement and to clarify the functions of allusions, quotations, reminiscences, and storyline convergences in Chekhov's works, including determining the role and significance of Pushkin's meanings and images in the artistic world of Chekhov's prose. [4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9].

Addressing one of Chekhov's most significant plays, we would like to expand the range of observations leading to a comparison of Pushkin's and Chekhov's works, to understand the role of Pushkin's allusions in Chekhov's dramatic text.

2 Materials and methods

S. N. Efimova considers the expansion and clarification of methodological approaches associated with the study of Chekhov's works in her review of the book "Chekhoviana. FROM THE XX TO XXI CENTURY: RESULTS AND EXPECTATIONS. M.: Nauka, 2007. 688 p." [10]. Meanwhile, the main material of all studies devoted to Chekhov is the historical and literary context, especially the intertextual connections of Chekhov's works with the works of predecessors and contemporaries [11]. Generalizing research approaches, in our work we rely on the comparative and historical and historical and functional methods.

3 Results and discussion

The brevity and laconism of Pushkin's prose resonates not only in Chekhov's narrative style. Turning to the topic "Pushkin's allusions in the comedy "The Cherry Orchard", we found that there are not as many specific observations and comparisons as one might assume. Meanwhile, the text of the drama with its rich literary context, by definition, cannot but refer to the Pushkin tradition of experimental drama. Taking this point as an axiom, we can see several direct references to the works of Alexander Pushkin - "The Queen of Spades" and "Boris Godunov," and in key plot and composition points: at the beginning and at the end of the action.

Here is an example:

CHARLOTTA. (Gives a pack of cards to *PISCHIK*). Here's a pack of cards, think of any one card you like.

PISCHIK. I've thought of one.

CHARLOTTA. Now shuffle. All right, now. Give them here, oh my dear Mr. *PISCHIK*. Ein, zwei, drei! Now look and you'll find it in your coat-tail pocket...

PISCHIK (Takes a card out of his coat-tail pocket). Eight of spades, quite right! (Surprised.) Think of that now!

CHARLOTTA. (Holds the pack of cards on the palm of her hand. To *TROFIMOV*). Now tell me quickly. What's the top card?

TROFIMOV. Well, the queen of spades.

CHARLOTTA. Right! (To *PISCHIK*.) Well now? What card's on top?

PISCHIK. Ace of hearts.

CHARLOTTA. Right! (Claps her hands, the pack of cards vanishes.) How lovely the weather is today!

A mysterious woman's voice answers her, as if from under the floor, "Oh yes, it's lovely weather, madam." [12]."

It should be noted that allusions to "The Queen of Spades" unite the secondary characters, creating a literary and cultural background that clarifies the main event of the drama. However, the sequence of Hermann's cards (three, seven, ace), as well as the reference to the "seven" in the context of the comedy are ruined. The reader remembers the madness of the hero who constantly repeats: "The three, seven and ace. The three, seven and queen". This sequence seems to be "misrepresented", distorted, like a context breaking into "fragments". Based on the research of L. K. Bayramova and M. V. Ivanova [13], we claim that in the post-Pushkin's tradition of the 19th century, a mention in speech of this train of words ("The three, seven, ace") means an indication of madness. It is interesting that the Queen of Spades falls to Trofimov, as to the unlucky Hermann, and the ace of hearts (happiness in love) falls to Pischik. If we compare the semantics of the characters' names here, the meaning of the scene is clarified. Peter Trofimov (as an apostle of the new faith) got what he wished for - the Queen of spades. How will this resonate in his future? By his fallen illusions? The author allows the reader to speculate on the given associative path.

The part of the surname "Simeonov-Pischik" is derived from the Hebrew "Simeon" ("heard by God"). Let's remember that Simeon the God-Receiver knew that he would not die until he saw the Messiah. If we analyze this context, it should be mentioned the name of another character - Epikhodov - Simeon Panteleevich. Here a parodic context appears, using to the best effect the different meanings of the names and functions of the characters: who do Epikhodov and Simeonov-Pischik meet in the person of Trofimov? After all, Epikhodov never kills himself, both (Epikhodov and Simeonov-Pischik) remain alive. It is interesting that the name of Pischik - Boris Borisovich - refers to the name of Boris Godunov (this connection might seem accidental, but the allusions to Pushkin's tragedy given below leave no doubt). Thus, there is a simultaneous allusion to both biblical times (waiting for the Messiah) and the Time of Troubles. The surname "Pischik" ("pipe for luring birds") can in this context (of course, in a parodic way) be compared with the trumpet voice of Revelation.

The remark about "gorgeous weather" is also a kind of mystery. The characters wait for disaster, and it comes, but the weather, contrary to apocalyptic sentiments, is beautiful. Several times the characters of the play, including Ranevskaya, recall that they left Russia during Holy Week and were caught up in the snow in Paris [14]. The blooming garden in the homeland is blighted, the fruit is not gathered. Both time and space, names and allusions are symbolized.

Let's go back to another comparison:

"*EPIKHODOV*. As a matter of fact, independently of everything else, I must express my feeling, among other things, that fate has been as pitiless in her dealings with me as a storm is to a small ship. Suppose, let us grant, I am wrong; then why did I wake up this morning, to give an example, and behold an enormous spider on my chest, like that. (Shows with both hands.) And if I do drink some kvass, why is it that there is bound to be something of the most indelicate nature in it, such as a beetle?

Pause.

Have you read Buckle?

Pause [15].”

The reader finds the text absurd and meaningless, but here is an example from “The Queen of Spades”: «Two fixed ideas can no more exist together in the moral world, than in the physical two bodies can occupy the same place at the same time. The three, seven and ace -- soon drove away Hermann's recollection of the old Countess's last moments. The three, seven and ace -- were now in his head to the exclusion of everything else. On seeing a young woman, he would say: "How elegant she is!... Just like the three of hearts". If he was asked: "what is the time", he would reply: "five minutes to seven". Each fat bellied man reminded him of the ace. The three, seven and ace - pursued him in his sleep, taking all possible forms. The three bloomed in front of him in the image of a magnificent big flower, the seven appeared as a Gothic archway, the ace as a huge spider.” [16].

Hermann's traits, like his illusions, are reflected in Chekhov's characters. The alogisms intensify the feeling, as from talking to the insane.

One of the opening lines of Chekhov's play: “What's the time?” (“*LOPAKHIN*. The train's arrived, thank God. What's the time?” [17]), simultaneously refers to Pushkin's "The Queen of Spades" and Shakespeare's "Richard III”:

“*LOPAKHIN*. Yes, time does go.

GAEV. Who does?

LOPAKHIN. I said that time does go [18].

“If anybody asked: "What is the time?", he would say: "Five minutes to seven" [19].”

The motif of the hero's mismatch with their time unites all the characters in Chekhov's play, but it is Lopakhin who introduces this motif - an allusion to the conqueror of new lands. This motif predetermines the fate of this very character: he will not become a conqueror.

Charlotta absorbs the traits of the Queen of Spades, the "magician," although we are faced with an ambiguous character:

“*CHARLOTTA* (*Takes a bundle, looking like a wrapped-up baby*). My little baby, bye-bye...

The baby seems to answer, "Oua! Oua!"

Hush, my nice little boy.

“Oua! Oua!”

I'm so sorry for you! (*the bundle back.*) So please find me a new place. I can't go on like this.

LOPAKHIN. We'll find one, Charlotta Ivanovna, don't you be afraid.

GAEV. Everybody's leaving us. Varya's going away. . . we've suddenly become unnecessary.

CHARLOTTA. I've nowhere to live in town. I must go away... (*Hums.*) Never mind... [20].”

This fragment refers to several contexts. First, to the inner one: Charlotta's performance parodically conveys the tragedy of Ranevskaya - the loss of her little son.

Second, to Pushkin's:

“Peasant Woman

(With a child.)

Drat you! stop crying, or else the bogie-man

Will carry you off. Drat you, drat you! stop crying!

<...>

Peasant Woman

(With a child.)

Now, what's this. Just when

It ought to cry, the child stops crying. I'll show you!

Here comes the bogie-man! Cry, cry, you spoilt one!

(Throws it on the ground; the child screams.)

That's right, that's right [21].”

In Chekhov, we encounter a parody of a parody, as Pushkin himself in the drama creates a parody of his poem of 1818:

Hooray! in Russia rides
A wandering despot.
Savior weeps bitterly,
Him and all the people.
Maria troubles Savior scare:
“Do not Cry, child, do not Cry, sir:
Buka, buka - the Russian tsar!” [22].

The dramatic play “Boris Godunov”, written in 1825 (printed in 1831), also symbolizes the temporal context (the Time of Troubles - the noblemen's uprising of 1825). Chekhov expands the symbolism of the chronotope (the Time of Troubles - the noblemen's uprising of 1825 - Pre-revolutionary situation of the early 20th century). The characters of the drama do not know where to go (the final images of the drama are the roll-call, the fog, the closed doors of the manor house).

Literary allusions, namely Petya's "Halloo!" voice, resonate like echoes in the artistic whole of the drama, collectively marking the transitional stage of cultural and historical life and its personal comprehension.

What are the meanings of cryptoparody (R.G.Nazirov)? According to S. A. Kibalnik, "...perception of a literary work implies, in the case of sensing intertextuality, a mental reference not only to the original text, but also back to the source text in order to immediately assess their correlation and the meanings which this intertextuality carries” [23]. Thus, the reader observes how meaning "grows" within the culture, what author's artistic intentions predetermine the semantic and figurative connections of the national literary tradition.

The above comparisons allow us to raise the question of the peculiarity of the formation of the ethical and aesthetic content of literature, which absorbs and processes the personal creative experience of the author together with the social and historical experience. In this case, the motifs of madness, mismatching with own time, plays, etc., and the expansion of the chronotope acquire a generalizing force. The fiction work itself becomes a symbol of the era.

4 Conclusion

The intertextuality of Chekhov's works allows us to create an integral image of Russian culture: the semantic relations of allusions and reminiscences are combined with the multilayered symbolism of sound, hearing, gesture, touch - in general, the experience of time and the multiple meanings of words. The semantic "expansion" of Chekhov's play text leads not only to comparisons with Russian classics, but also to an open finale - a future literary context, implementing the "principle of plot uncertainty" [S. N. Broitman, 24] and removing the uniqueness/truthfulness of any interpretation.

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