

Intermedial Analysis of V. Tsoy's Rock Album 'Blood Type'

Svetlana Andreevna Petrova

Assistant Professor, Department of Russian Language and Literature, Faculty of Philology, Pushkin Leningrad State University, Russia, 196605, Saint-Petersburg, Pushkin, Peterburgskoe sh. 10. Email: siversl@yandex.ru

Received April 11, 2016; Revised July 07, 2016; Accepted July 25, 2016; Published August 18, 2016

Abstract

The paper aims to present a possibility of the intermedial analysis of Viktor Tsoy's rock album "Blood Type". The rock-album is analyzed as a literary cycle, and different intertextual connections with literary traditions are demonstrated in it. The poet shows the specific art world in which there is a new character like Hamlet, who tries to perceive the world out of illusions. Victor Tsoy used myth and intertext to open the new philosophical problems of the world and also artistic possibilities of music.

Keywords: Intermediality, Victor Tsoy, Poetry, Russian Rock-Poetry, Rock Album, Cyclization, Hamlet, Consciousness.

1. Introduction

Victor Tsoy was Soviet musician, singer and songwriter of Korean-Russian origin whose songs are still very popular in Russia after his death in 1990. Many of sentences from his verses are used in modern Russian literature and language:

"The song poetry has developed system of articulation methods of harmonization and entropy of an implicit and verse metrorhythm. So, experiments in the field of rhythmic allow representatives of rock poetry "to convert" samples of the Russian classical prose into meter texts only due to articulation receptions (...) The singing poets (the 1980-2000th) modify traditional literary graphic means of expression at the expense of resources articulation, musical, etc." (Gavrikov, 2012, 9-10).

V. Tsoy became famous in Europe after the rock-concerts called 'Red Wave' in 1986-1987 (Tsoy, 1991). In 1978 he created the musical band to play rock music 'Palata 6'. Then he was expelled for poor progress from school. He arrived in another school on the specialty woodcarver. In 1981 he met a friend A. Rybin and they together created the new rock command 'Garin and Giperboloidy', and then they had renamed it as 'Kino' – translated as 'cinema'. During the soviet period rock-music has been forbidden. But after 1985 a new period of politics started known as *Perestroika*. Rock authors have got freedom to write and sing their songs.

V. Tsoy created more than hundred songs. His poetry is characterized as mythological, urbanistic, romantic and symbolistic. Also in his poetry we can find many modern problems of life, such as, war and peace, individuality and society, ecological troubles, love and treachery, nature and civilization and so on. In 1987-1990 his concerts had taken place at stadiums which had been occupied by people completely. So he was very popular and is still so now in Russia. His songs are used in Russian films. The asteroid # 2740 is called in honor of V. Tsoy. It also needs to say, that V. Tsoy had acted as hero in Rashid Nugmanov's movie "Needle" (1988) (Tsoy, 1991). For this role he became the best actor of the year in 1989 in USSR.



Stamp of Russia, Viktor Tsoi, 1999, 2 r.¹

2. Methodology

The rock-poetry is a new type of literature (Domansky et al. 1999-2016; Pilyute, 2010; Tolokonnikova, 2000); it is the intermedial poetry.² The intermediality is the new theory (Borisova, 2004; Tishunina, 2001; Tishunina, 1998) for such kind of arts, in which different sorts of art media are used; or we may call it synthesis of arts.³ It is the new methodology for analysis of literary creations. The intermedial theory has been founded in comparative science in Germany (Hansen-Löve, 1983; Scher, 1968). The generation of meaning of one art through the language of another has the basis of synesthesia, i.e. it is characterized by certain properties of consciousness of the author (Gruhn, 1978).

M. McLuhan allocated an intermediality perspective from isolation in spheres of art history, developing the idea of communication media as an extension of human body and as a certain sort of message or information transfer: "The moment of the meeting of media is a moment of freedom and release from the ordinary trance and numbness imposed by them on our

senses" (McLuhan, 1994, 55). He noted the existence of innovative function of arts synthesis, determining each of communicating type different by formal signs of transferring concrete esthetic information (McLuhan, 1988, McLuhan, 2013). Such problems were discussed in works of the authors like N. Luhmann (1986, 1996), S.D. Sauerbier (1976), E.W. Hess-Luttich (1991) and so on. There is also the semantic stereophonism, which characterizes the specific structure of intermediality (Petrova, 2010). So intermediality is the specific methodology for the analysis of a separate work of art, and language of art, and culture in general relying on the principles of interdisciplinary researches.

Rock-poetry has to be considered as the intermedial works, in which people can get the message of music and verbal text affect together (Shak, 2010). Rock-poetry has the specific genre – album, the cycle of songs. From the perspective of intermedial methodology in rock-album two types of arts interact: music and poetry.

In the present discussion the tools of intermedial analysis are used in order to bring out the multilayered meanings in V. Tsoi's art, which are also deeply interconnected with the cultural conditions of the times.

3. Discussion

In this paper an intermedial analysis of the rock-album *Blood type* (1988) by V.R. Tsoy has been made. It needs to be noted that the album *Blood type* became a kind of rotary: after the release of this cycle of songs in the Soviet society "kinomania" started, which points to the wide popularity of the genre. It also marked a specific trend in the artist's poetic career. (Tsoy, 1991). Some parts of compositions from this album were included into Rashid Nugmanov's movie *Needle* (1988). In that film the new type of the neoromantic hero, who resists ordinary consciousness, was presented.

According to the plot of this film the hero, a drifter, came from nowhere and at the end of the movie is gone also nowhere, symbolizing thereby the way character. In the song V. Tsoy wrote about death and fight. In the text neoromantic motives of fatal way which is necessary to go are established.

I can pay but I don't want victory at any price
 I don't want to put my foot on somebody's chest
 I'd like to be with you, just stay with you
 But the star high in the sky calls me: go!
 "Blood Type" (Tsoy, 1991, 323)⁴

On the one hand, it is not only the way character, but also the fighter who at the time of refusal of opposition, refuses a victory owing to a choice of certain other mission with the star calling for him. This song is in a strong position in the album cycle because it is starting it, standing at the beginning, and it concentrated in itself all semantic tendencies which will be developing further in other works included in album. But it is necessary to pay attention to the key concept which sounds as a refrain and repeated the name of cycle (Domanskiy, 2000) and the first song – "blood type".

First, the motive of spilled blood designates possible wounds in a fight. Second, as the medical term – it means a separate individual trait on which nature divided all people into groups. Thus, in the album the importance of existence of the inevitable moment of people

division on certain social associations on concrete signs (“my serial number”) is centralized. The same semantic element is included in further texts.

It has to be admitted that the division into “we” and “they” is demonstrated in the second song of the cycle. The character stands before a choice of correlation with a certain group of the subject, designated as “you”.

They speak: they mustn't risk,
 Because they have a house, in the house light burns.
 And I don't know who is right between us.
 Rain is waiting for me in the streets.
 Dinner is waiting for them in the house. (...)
 And if you are bored suddenly by your tender light,
 There will be a place for you with us; the rain will suffice on all.
 Look at the clock; look at a portrait on a wall,
 Listen - there, behind a window, you will hear our laugh.
 “Close the Door After Me, I Am Going Out” (Tsoy, 1991, 324)

“They” – are those who prefer certain closed space, convenience, comfort of life (dinner), material benefits. So time, idols and other restrictive ontological elements hanging on walls are for them. But the opened space, laugh as released from time and from idols – are for the character. The word “rain”, in fact, with a word “dinner” creates antagonistic communication on value “food” – the rain expresses a certain spiritual food, spiritual development in opposition of material life. At the same time, the motive of way also develops, the character made a choice. A refrain “Close the door after me, I am going out,” tells about it, as choice of delimitation.

In the following song the division of persons into groups receives new property – possibility of a choice is removed: “someone has to become”, i.e. the person is inevitably defined to the set identification. All is presented on the general background of the same inevitable division and opposition of fundamental categories of space: Earth and Sky.

Somewhere there are people for whom there is a day and there is a night.
 Somewhere there are people who have a son and have a daughter.
 Somewhere there are people for whom the theorem is right.
 But someone becomes a wall, and someone becomes a shoulder,
 Under which the wall will tremble.
 The Earth.
 The Sky.
 Between the Earth and the Sky there is a War!
 “War” (Tsoy, 1991, 324)

At the same time this spatial opposition becomes the uniting factor for the people. But we will note also that this symbolical opposition is used, first, in lyrics from capital letter, secondly, rather often and in an accent place – in a refrain; these lexemes have symbolical value. They are identical to significant ontological categories of Good and Evil, but they can't be replaced by them as there is no explicit and interior indication of such value. It is hard to say, on which side the Good, and on which one the Evil is meant. From the point of view of tradition the Good will be symbolical of the Sky, but in the following song the poet refuses it.

Roofs of houses shiver under weight of days,
 The heavenly shepherd grazes clouds,
 The city shoots at night in fraction of fires,

But night is stronger, its power is great.
 "Quiet Night" (Tsoy, 1991, 325)

Here the sky puts the hostile pressure upon earth, as it is showed by the lexemes of Tsoy's poetic system. In the last song of the cycle 'Legend' a line is shown which is also removing a positive connotation of this element: "As the sky laughed, and then bit its tongue". As a whole, the sky and earth are not allegorical designations of Good and Evil, but certain symbolical categories or myths in the art world created by the author. Let's note that the poet used some elements of myth in the earlier poems (see songs "Kamchatka", "Trolleybus"), but from this album the mythological becomes a fundamental tendency in Tsoy's works.

In the song "Quiet Night" also there is a division of groups:
 Those who have nothing to wait go in the way
 (...)
 And that who goes to bed...
 "Quiet Night" (Tsoy, 1991, 325)

'Sleep' here gets a connotation of passive submission of reality; those who are characterized sleep are shown as the opposition of the persons "who are rescued", who ceased to be silent, who started acting, who didn't submit to the power of initially hostile night. Those who go on the way (development of a subject of the way character) find a certain rescue. The images of neighbors symbolize ordinary consciousness to which various impregnations of the creative life stir aspiring to the new. Knock of the hoofs, preventing to fall asleep, has something in common with lines in the penultimate song of the cycle "Passerby":

I come home at night.
 I start the tape recorder,
 And the neighbor behind a wall groans,
 He saw a bad sleep.
 "Passerby" (Tsoy, 1991, 328)

This underlined asocial hero is a protest against stagnancy of society and its conformism; he attempts to wake up the world, which sounds like a malicious violation of law and order of the normal world. But this asocial image is perceived by the hero from a self-ironic position. He would behave differently in another world, but he should obey to a certain degree the existing order. The dual position is brightly expressed in the song "Mother, All of Us Are Seriously Ill". The need for a choice "to float or not to float" equates the hero's consciousness with that of Hamlet for perceiving the world out of illusions. Relation with Shakespeare's tragedy is maintained also by inclusion of motive of poison. And again inevitable division into groups is presented:

The blow is higher than a brush tormenting a flesh,
 But instead of blood in veins poison stiffened.
 Slow poison.
 The destroyed world.
 The injured foreheads.
 The bread broken in two.
 And here someone cries, and someone is silent,
 And someone is so glad,
 Someone is so glad.
 "Mother, All of Us Are Seriously Ill"
 (Tsoy, 1991, 326)

The horror of the situation is underlined by her ordinariness, after inevitable choice and the struggle the peace is still not achieved; this destroyed the world and poet demonstrated the seriousness of world's illness. In the song, besides illness, the necessity of fight is established totally for all. But if not to fight, it is possible to wallow in an ordinary bog which is shown in the song "Boshetunmay" following on the cycle.

We drink tea in old apartments,
 We wait for summer in old apartments,
 In old apartments where there is light,
 Gas, phone, hot water,
 Radio receiving station, floor – parquet,
 Bathroom separate, house brick,
 One family, two families, three families...
 It is a lot of utility rooms,
 The first and the last – not to offer,
 Near the subway, center ...
 "Boshetunmay" (Tsoy, 1991, 326)

"Boshetunmay" is known as the name of a drug. The poet develops a subject of painful illusiveness of the world by including the drug in such context. He also draws a picture of illusory comfortable life amid the decay and spoilage on the one hand, and the inner world of man – on the another hand. Therefore the choice is necessary, but also the struggle is certainly not leading to anything. The condition of this reflexive Hamlet's experience "to be or not to be" is presented in the following song "In Our Eyes":

In our eyes it is shouts "Forward!"
 In our eyes it is hails "Stop!"
 In our eyes it is birth of day
 And it is death of fire.
 In our eyes it is starlit night,
 In our eyes it is Paradise Lost,
 In our eyes it is the closed door.
 What is it necessary for you? Choose!
 "In Our Eyes" (Tsoy, 1991, 327)

The poet uses couples of antonyms to transfer contrast of the chosen parties. Theater as art is very important for rock-poets (Yarko, 2014). So words from Shakespeare's tragedy are appropriate: whether to go forward or to stay here – though daily expectation of approach doesn't lead tomorrow to anything. In this album the pronoun "we" is especially frequent. Such association and identification through this word of the poet with subjects perceiving his work also resulted in special popularity of this album. At the same time it created in the album a picture of the world which is rather realistic. Art corresponds to real living conditions of existence of many people. And when the poet identifies himself with *everyone*, this also influenced on special mass recognition of the album. In the second part of the cycle the poet included such songs in which this association at the "we" level is shown:

On the street snow lost the whiteness,
 In a glassiness of thawed snow we see the moon.
 We go; we are strong and vigorous...
 The frozen fingers break matches,
 From which fires will be lit.

Try to sing together with me,
Get up near me...

"Try to sing together with me" (Tsoy, 1991, 327)

We want to see farther, than house windows opposite,
We want to live, we are hardy, as cats.
And here we came to declare the rights: "Yes!"
You hear a rustle of raincoats these are we...
We will act further!

"We will act further!" (Tsoy, 1991, 328-329)

The cycle of songs, which contrasts by quiet rhythm with all other songs, comes to the end of the album. It is a close on the musical rhythm and the melody to the song "Quiet Night". In a foreshortening of an intermediality we will note that the separate semiotics code is perceived as an information channel which, at the same time acting with another, supports and develops the set subject, influences other sides of perception. This is "semantic stereophony". Here the common subject and opportunity through one code are important to understand another and vice versa; it provokes the need to investigate the texts of rock-poetry as philological objects.

The songs mentioned above are also connected, in particular, by motive of a dream, the way. But in the last song the choice between action and inaction in favor of the first is finally made. The semantic significant rhyming in the poem notes this:

Among sheaves in a throat the lump shout restricts,
But the time came, and here shout or don't shout.
Only then someone won't be able long to forget,
As, being unsteady, fighters about a grass wiped swords.
And as clapped wings a black tribe of crows,
As the sky laughed, and then bit its tongue.

"Legend" (Tsoy, 1991, 329)

In the song the poet draws a picture, where there is nobody in the battlefield and where the alive already became similar to the dead. The poet defines the shout and swords as "a raven language" which is better for forgetting.

Also the hand shivered at the one who remained as alive,
And suddenly the instant suddenly turned into eternity.
Also the decline burned with a funeral fire,
And as a wolves stars from clouds looked.
As, having stretched hands, left at night lay,
And as alive slept side by side, without having dreams...

"Legend" (Tsoy, 1991, 329)

As such, life is an instant which comes to an end by leaving for "night of dreams". The uselessness of all types of fights and battles, which has been won and lost, remain in identical positions. In final lines the poet emphasizes on life only "the word", and death – the word, meaning "to sleep", and the word "life" – means waiting.

And life – is only the word,
There is only Love and there is Death...
Hey! And who will sing if all would sleep?
The Death is worth it to live,

And the Love is worth it to wait...

“Legend” (Tsoy, 1991, 329)

To wait is a certain action which needs to be done because there is something worthy expectations. And that it is worth it to expect, will surely be executed. Differently it wouldn't be worthy. The poet coded the message, the rhymed words developed in the separate text which has such concrete meaning.

Thus, the main idea of the album isn't division into groups, but uniting all in the face of both Death and Love. This theme is emphasized in the last song. The poet mythologizes time and space, connecting thus within the created art world the mythic with the ordinary household elements of reality.

4. Conclusion

So the music and literature are interconnected in rock-poetry, and this kind of art needs to be investigated as the intermedial texts. V. Tsoy was not only musician, who had made the songs, but also a rock poet, whose artistic creations need to be visited with new critical tools for fresh appreciation and reassessment of his genius.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express gratitude to my colleagues who supported me in work: Prof. Tatiana Vladimirovna Maltseva, PhD and Prof. Natalia Cuzminichna Danilova, PhD, from Pushkin Leningrad State University.

Notes

¹ Source: Wikipedia. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russia_stamp_V.Tsoi_1999_2r.jpg

² From the 1999 onwards articles on rock-poetry have been published in scholarly journals in Russia; for instance, *Russian rock-poetry: text and context* edited by Yu.V. Domanskiy. There are also some dissertations about it: Tchebykina E.E. (2007) *Russian rock-poetry: pragmatic, conceptual and form-semantic aspects*. Ekaterinburg; Shak T.F.(2010) *Music in mediatext structure* (on the material of art and animation movies). Rostov-on-Don; Pilyute U.E.(2010) *German and Russian rock-poetry: problems of typology*. Kaliningrad; Gavrikov V.A. (2012) *Russian song poetry of the second half of XX – beginning of XXI centuries as a text* (problem of interactions of literature with another kinds of arts). Ivanovo.

³ Gruhn, W.(1978) *Musiksprache – Sprachmusik – Textvertonung*. Frankfurt am Main; Berlin; Munchen. In Russia there are also scientists, who developed intermedial theory: Tishunina N.V. (2001) “Methodology of intermedial analysis through the intersubjective researches, Methodology of humanitarian knowledge in the perspective of XXI century”. Saint-Petersburg. Serie “Symposium”. Issue 12. Saint-Petersburg., 149-154; Borisova, I.E. (2004) “Zeno is here: In defense of Intermediality”. *New Literature Review*, 65, 384-391.

⁴ V. Tsoy's texts are from the book translated by the present author Tsoy V. (1991) *Verses, documents, memories*. L. (SPb). 323-329.

References

- Borisova, I.E. (2004) Zeno is here: In defense of Intermediality. *New literature review*. Issue. 65, pp. 384-391.
- Domanskiy Yu.V. (2000) Cyclization in Russian Rock. *Russian Rock-Poetry: Text and Context*. Tver: TSU. Issue. 3, pp. 99-122.
- Gavrikov V.A. (2012) Russian song poetry of the second half of the XX – beginning of the XXI centuries as a text (problem of interaction of literature with another kinds of arts). Ivanovo: ISU. 585 p.
- Gruhn, W. (1978) *Musiksprache – Sprachmusik – Textvertonung*. Frankfurt am Main; Berlin; Munchen: Diesterweg. 180 p.
- Hansen-Löve, A.A. (1983). Intermedialität und Intertextualität. Probleme der Korrelation von Wort-Bildkunst. Am Beispiel der russischen Moderne // Dialog der Texte. Hamburger Kolloquium zur Intertextualität / Hrsg. W. Schmid, W. -D. Stempel. Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband. Vol. 11, pp. 291-360.
- Hess-Luttich, E.W. (1991) Literature and The Other Media. Teaching German in the Age of Multimedia Communication (= Special Issue of *KODIKAS/CODE*. An International Journal of Semiotics 14.1-2), Tübingen / Amsterdam / Philadelphia: Gunter Narr & John Benjamins 1991, 200 pp
- Luhmann, N. (1986) Das Medium der Kunst. *Delfin*, Issue 6. pp. 6-15.
- Luhmann, N. (1996) *Die Realitat der Massenmedien*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag GmbH. 220 p.
- McLuhan, M. (1988) *Laws of Media*. The New Science. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division. 252 p.
- McLuhan, M. (2001) *The Medium Is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*. New-York: Gingko Pr Inc. 355 p.
- McLuhan, M. (1994, orig. 1964) *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. London and Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 355 p.
- Petrova S.A. (2010) Pecularity of Intermediality Analyze of A.S. Pushkin's Poems. *Vestnik of Pushkin Leningrad State University*. Saint-Petersburg, Pushkin. 2, Vol.1. 17-24.
- Pilyute U.E. (2010) German and Russian rock-poetry: problems of typology. Kaliningrad: KRSU. 218 p.
- Sauerbier, S.D. (1976) *Gegendarstellung: Asthetische Handlungen und Demonstrationen, Die zur Schau Gestellte Wirklichkeit in der zeitgenossischen Kunsten*. Keln: W. König 277 p.
- Shak T.F. (2010) Music in mediatext structure (on the material of art and animation movies). Rostov-on-Don.
- Scher, St. P. (1968) *Verbal Music in German Literature*. London: New Haven. 256 p.
- Tishunina N.V. (2001) Methodology of intermedial analysis through the intersubjective researches. *Methodology of humanitarian knowledge in the perspective of XXI century*. Saint-Petersburg. Serie "Symposium". Issue 12. Saint-Petersburg. pp. 149-154.
- Tishunina N.V.(1998) *West-European Symbolism and the Problem of Inter-action of Arts: the Experience of Intermediality Analysis: Monography*. St. Petersburg: Education. 234 p.

Tolokonnikova. S.Yu. (2000) Mythological Antinomies in Russian Rock-Poetry. *Russian Rock-Poetry: Text and Context*. Issue 4, Tver', pp. 154-161.

Tsoy V. (1991) Verses, documents, memories. L.(SPb): New Helicon, pp. 323-329.

Yarko A.N. (2014) To the Question about Interaction between Rock and Theatre: The performance of the Theatre on Taganka "Vladimir Vysotsky" and the Bolshoi Theatre of Dolls "Alexander Bashlachev. Man Singing". *Russian rock-poetry: text and context*. Issue 15, Ekaterinburg, Tver'. pp. 69-78.