

THE SPECIFICS OF RECEPTION OF THE “RUSSIAN TEXT“ IN THE POEMS BY JUDITA VAIČIŪNAITĖ

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Abstract. *The paper concerns the specifics of reception and interpretation of several important topics of the “Russian text” of culture (the painting ‘Lilac’ by M. Vrubel, I. Turgenev’s manor in Spasskoye-Lutovinovo, the concept ‘Cherry Orchard’) by Lithuanian poet Judita Vaičiūnaitė (1937–2001). Her poems “In Front Of Vrubel’s ‘Lilac’” (1957), “At Turgenev’s Homeland” (1960), “Cherry Orchard”¹ (1976) are analyzed from the point of view of the existential thought which was characteristic for*

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- 1 G. Bernotienė commented that *Vyšnių sodas* (“Cherry Orchard”) is the original title of a poem from Žaliakalnis (“Green Mountain”) series of poems published in *Pergalė* (Victory) magazine in 1976. The translation of this poem by L.Soushkova was entitled “Cherry Orchard” (1987). Although, in the 3-volume *Writings* the poem is entitled by the first line [*The orchard has already been long chopped off*]. G.Bernotienė. *Komentarai* [Comments]. In: Vaičiūnaitė, J. *Raštai: 3 tomai* [Works In 3 Volumes]. 3th volume, Vilnius: Gimtasis žodis, 2008, p. 604.

the Russian culture of 20th century. Vaičiūnaitė's intermedial strategy is considered as it reveals in the poems mentioned above the issues which are topical for Lithuanian culture and literature, namely the ones related to overcoming time, space, oblivion, and to confronting the destructive drives of the destiny. The paper focuses on the analysis of the compensatory function of the existential type of conscience for representing the problem of an artist's destiny in the condition of the Soviet regime and for preservation of the values of Lithuanian culture.

Key words: context of literary text, interaction of arts, Soviet Lithuanian literature, existential thought, elements of existential literary structure, the values of a culture.

Introduction

This paper seeks to answer why the Russian cultural text was used by the Lithuanian poet in the situation of the Soviet culture and how it functioned in the context of her creative work.

J. Vaičiūnaitė's poetry connections to Russian culture were analyzed in the aspects of intertextuality, intermediality, translation as literary relations in the works by Virginija Balsevičiūtė, Marina Romanenkova, Gintarė Bernotienė². In order to study the issue in a wider cultural research aspect, in the aspect of a values dialog, it is worth to consider already dated discussion in an emigrant publication *Metmenys*, No. 48 (1984) which was dedicated to Lithuanian culture in comparative aspect. Renowned Lithuanists and cultural researchers Vytautas Kavolis, Violeta Kelertene, Rimvydas Šilbajoris discussed moral responsibility of representatives of the Soviet Lithuanian culture. Dealing with the specifics of relations between the Lithuanian poets and the "world outside Lithuania"³, V. Kavolis raised the problem of preservation of the bases of Lithuanian culture in the process of reception of the "elements of all societies, cultures and histories"⁴ in the perspective of "impossibility for a researcher of the Soviet Lithuanian literature to define what is an authentic understanding in it and what is a tribute or an opportunistic omission"⁵. The researcher presented an analysis of the poems by E. Mieželaitis, S. Geda, J. Marcinkevičius, J. Degutytė, J. Vaičiūnaitė,

- 2 Balsevičiūtė V. *Juditos Vaičiūnaitės kūryba* [Judita Vaičiūnaitė's Poetry]. Vilnius: Vilniaus pedagoginio universiteto leidykla, 2009; Romanenkova M. „Lietuvių ir rusų kultūrinių ryšių raiška Juditos Vaičiūnaitės eilėraštyje „Prie Vrubelio „Alyvų““ [Lithuanian-Russian Cultural Connections In Judita Vaičiūnaitė's Poem "In Front of Vrubel's 'Lilacs'"], *Socialinių mokslų studijos*, 2012, Nr. 4 (4); Bernotienė G. Ideologizuoti intimumą: ankstyvieji Juditos Vaičiūnaitės poezijos vertimai į rusų kalbą [To Ideologize Intimacy: Early Translation From J.V.'s Poems Into Russian]. *Colloquia*, 32, 2014.
- 3 Kavolis. V. Pasaulio srautas ir sąmonės archeologija [World Flow And Archaeology Of Conscience]. *Metmenys* [Foundation]. 1984, 48: 3.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

T. Venclova, V. Daunys in the aspect of such notions as “moral thinking”, “pangs of conscience”, “the domain of moral activities”, “Lithuanian self-conscience”⁶, which he believed to have implied the meanings of confrontation and originality as the specific traits of the Lithuanian mentality. In his search for a substantive solution to this problem, V. Kavolis focused on the works by J. Degutytė, J. Vaičiūnaitė, T. Venclova and pinpointed “in the Soviet Lithuanian literature <...> two topics which express the authentic inner experience: the preservation of the individual humanism (‘loyalty’ in extreme situations or ‘benevolence’ in the every-day life) in the face of threatening and destructive agents of history, and a junction of moral treason and moral impulse in the relationships”⁷. According to the researcher, “the most devoted champions of loyalty to the deathbed were symbolized by the images of Antigone and Emilija Pliaterytė and were, in fact, referring to Janina Degutytė and Judita Vaičiūnaitė. The works of both of them feature the recurring topic of the defeat of the loyalty in the face of the powerful destructive forces. The revival of moral phenomena would be the most reliable element of the existence of the man in the Being. In the women’s poetry moral obligation is revived through the feeling which is out of control of the ideological system, and once revived it carries the sincerity of the human nature. Although, everything sincere and natural dwells on the level of mythological conscience. Is it possible – amongst the flow of life – to find support in the ancient beliefs?”⁸. The answer is of course positive: such moral phenomena along with the elements and episodes of the Lithuanian history all together constituted Vaičiūnaitė’s basic understanding of the world and the man, and Kavolis appreciated it as an undoubted value of her poetry.

But what happens when Vaičiūnaitė refers to a text of a different culture? Kavolis’s ideas of the Lithuanian literature as a cultural matrix appear to be akin to Yu. M. Lotman’s concept of the semiosphere of culture and particularly the statements about the crucial culture generation function of the text that is “alleged to be true”⁹ or, as Kavolis put it, authentic within its own culture. Does this feature of poetry persist in reception of a foreign cultural text?

The notion of the “Russian text” implies a cultural and semiotic whole which is aware of its own peculiarities and of its borders with other spheres. Lotman’s definition of culture as a “complex of texts or a complicatedly arranged *text*”¹⁰ (italics by Lotman. – M. R.), is based on the measure of the verity as a “grasp of the system of the cultural code”¹¹ owing to which a work of art can be read as a text. The existence

6 Kavolis, *supra* note 3, p. 16, 18, 22.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

8 *Ibid.*, p.12.

9 Lotman, Yu.M., Tekst i funkcija [Text And Function]. *Semiosfera* [Semiosphere]. Sankt-Peterburg: “Iskusstvo SPB”, 2000, p. 436.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 436.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 437.

of a culturally relevant “text viewpoint” – a certain position from which the truth is known and any deception is impossible”¹², according to the scholar, turns relative the urge for intelligibility of a language of a given art (especially, literature), demonstrates a high degree of the semiotic character of its organization as a text and opens up a way to its interpretation.

Considering all the above stated about the authority of the texts within their own cultures, a question demands answering about their claim by another culture (literature). There is a productive perspective of comparative study of literatures in a question which was once raised by Lotman: “Why and on what conditions does a foreign text become important in certain cultural situations?”¹³. Let us recall some of Lotman’s considerations about the major parameters of comparative study of cultures. Development of any culture, according to the scholar, is catalyzed by the factor of complexification of the structure of individuality, the individualization of its inherent information coding devices; the impact of this factor, as Lotman believed, increases in the “epochs of the greatest development and complexification of the sociocultural sphere of life”¹⁴. The utmost condition of this process is, according to the scholar, “the act of exchange” which presumes the participation of the other – the partner in the exchange. “The least apt for the transmission” are, as it follows from the scholar’s ideas, the fictional texts which are “the systems with the significant inner ambiguity”¹⁵. In this case, in order to perform the exchange, “the mechanism of a non-adequate, relatively equivalent translation” comes into play, and this kind of translation is relevant both to the traditions of the given culture and its meta-descriptions and eventually it results in the creation of brand new texts. Such was to the scholar’s mind the *mechanism of creative thinking* (italics by Lotman. – M. R.): every new fact of the cultural contact increases the information value of the recipient culture, as a text “interiorised” by it “is capable in the new context of unveiling completely new concepts”¹⁶. The above quoted discussion attests the importance of analysis of information value of the texts of both cultures in the course of a comparative study; this analysis should designate a conventional “buffer” zone, where redistribution of the meanings takes place in accordance with the complexification of the structure of a certain creative individuality and its culture. This was what Kavolis wrote about, too. He believed that an artistic practice of a morally pure and polysemantic language (poems by J. Degutytyė, J. Vaičiūnaitė, T. Venclova) allows the national language in their poetry to actually participate in transcendence”¹⁷. Such kind of language, the scholar argued, allows for intercultural dialogue.

12 Lotman, *supra* note 9, p. 439.

13 Lotman, Yu.M. K postroeniju teorij vzaimodejstvija kul'tur (semiotičeskij aspekt) [Towards The Establishment Of Theory Of Interaction Of Cultures (Semiotic Aspect)]. *Semiosfera* [Semiosphere], *supra* note 8, p. 605.

14 Lotman, Yu.M., *supra* note 9, p. 606.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 613.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 608, 610, 613.

17 Kavolis, *supra* note 3, p. 19.

Getting the Answers

Thus, the margins of the “Russian text” in the vast poetic heritage of Vaičiūnaitė should first be designated with regard to the analysis of intra- and inter-literary phenomena constituting the author’s context.

First of all, there are quite numerous translations from Russian and Soviet poets, including M. Lermontov, A. Akhmatova, B. Akhmadullina, O. Bergholz, R. Kazakova, S. Kirsanov. Vaičiūnaitė’s translations are marked by the endeavor to adequate associations, expressionism of images, to exact strophic, metre, intonation correspondences, disregarding that, for example, the Lithuanian poetic language is not “identical” for translation due to prevailing feminine rhymes. It is remarkable that the poet confessed to have had no liking for translation! Within the rigorous limits of the Soviet cultural guidelines, it was not always Vaičiūnaitė’s free choice of the texts to translate, nor it was every time determined by the logic of her creative work. “There were a lot of texts to translate. Not always were they worth it, and most often I translated what was assigned to me. Quite often assigning translation jobs seemed to be a way to ruin the poet’s self. Once I translated the poems by Olga Bergholz, the poet who survived the Siege of Leningrad, I’ve started to be despairingly compared to this Bergholz. <...> This pressure is hard to express, but I’ve always felt it”¹⁸. It is curious that in her various interviews Vaičiūnaitė named other poets she appreciated – Blok, Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Mandelstam, Pasternak. Even though it was impossible to translate from Pasternak in 1950-60-s, his poetry was considered by Vaičiūnaitė as one of the cultural models: she admitted that all her literary generation matured under the influence of this very Russian poet. According to her words, Lithuanian students of 1950-s possessed experience and good taste, “they had not only self-censure, but also inner criticism”¹⁹. Also, one cannot overlook the painful influence or the fact of ideologically sophisticated and perfectly politically committed translations of Vaičiūnaitė’s poetry into Russian produced in 1960-70-s. G. Bernotienė rightly assumes that “the aesthetic value of a poem and its translation appeared to be a secondary factor for the publishing and propaganda industries back then, and this demonstrated the powerlessness of the poet in the making of an ideological literary product”²⁰. Vaičiūnaitė could not help seeing, nor changing anything when “rough and word-for-word translations utilizing the original text as a merely loose plot scheme” turned her subtlest poetic preterition into the victorious pathos²¹.

18 Vaičiūnaitė, J. *Raštai: 3 tomai* [Works In 3 Volumes]. 3th volume, Vilnius: Gimtasis žodis, 2008, p. 235.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 192.

20 Bernotienė G., *supra* note 1, p.115.

21 *Ibid.*

Second, apart from the translations, the "Russian text" includes three poems, which contain direct topical references to Vrubel's art (*Prie Vrubelio „Alyvy“ – In Front Of Vrubel's 'Lilac'*, 1957), Turgenev's prose (*Turgenevo tėviškėj – At Turgenev's Homeland*, 1960), Chekhov's drama (*Vyšnių sodas – Cherry Orchard*, 1976). *At Vrubel's 'Lilac'* was translated into Russian twice (by V. Toushnova and S. Andrushkevich)²², L. Soushkova translated *Cherry Orchard*²³. *Turgenevo tėviškėj* stays untranslated. Notwithstanding the quite considerable volume of the "Russian text", it cannot be stated that it was created by Vaičiūnaitė voluntarily. Why? To answer this question extra-literary aspects of her "author's" context must be considered.

In her interview of 1994, answering the question about the culture which had evolved in the Soviet times and put to doubt then – the doubt which concerned her own poetry too – she confessed: "People who were born and living in those times were not guilty of that; not all of them could actively oppose, and not all succeeded in doing it, and perhaps not every one of them was to do it. I would never call those times a 'golden age', but it is acutely painful, when I hear someone say that they were the 'ruins of culture', because I lived all my life in that period. Also, I suppose that pretty much depends on the man, because people used to write and create in jail, in exile, in emigration, in good conditions, in dreadful conditions"²⁴.

In relation to such considerations of the Lithuanian poet and critics about this side of her creative work, it is appropriate to recall A.K. Zholkovsky's argument for the need of a balanced approach to understanding an artist's involvement in the established ideological and cultural principles. The researcher bases on B. Groys's analysis of Bakhtin's polyphonism as "not a protest against the monologism of the Stalin's ideology, but its theoretical justification as a centuries-old ritual activity" and finds in it a "profound analogy" to the fates of A. Akhmatova, M. Zoschenko, B. Pasternak. "Aesthetic justification of the epoch (Stalin's one. – M.R.) was then one of the main topics of the Russian culture. The totalitarian style of thought of 1930-es was as well represented in their own way by those who did not share the Apollonian illusions about world domination, but were ready for a Dionysian sacrifice involving in itself the whole world"²⁵. According to Zholkovsky, the above mentioned writers "turned out to be the bearers of the Soviet atmosphere <...> in their deepest artistic and existential principles", and this was manifested in one or other stylistic or self-representational masking, which can be partially legitimated

22 Vaičiūnaitė, J. Vozle "Sireni" Vrubelja [In Front Of Vrubel's "Lilac"]. *Moskovskij Literator* [Moscow Man Of Letters], 1960, 13 May; Vaičiūnaitė, J. Stihi: perversod s litovskogo [Poems: Translation From Lithuanian]. Moskva: Molodaja gvardija, 1964, p. 67.

23 Vaičiūnaitė, J. *V mesiac nezabudok: stihi* / Perversod s litovskogo Larisy Sushkovej [In The Month Of Forget-Me-Nots: Poems / Translation From Lithuanian by Larisa Soushkova]. Moskva: Sovetskij pisatel, 1987, p.15.

24 Vaičiūnaitė, J., *supra* note 17, p. 290–291.

25 Grojs, B. *Mezhdū Stalinym I Dionisom* [Between Stalin And Dionysus]. *Sintaksis* [Syntax], 1989, № 25, p. 96–97.

by the general laws of art, but mostly by Aesopian strategies of self-preservation²⁶. The position of the role of the victim, which implicitly and passively confronts the threatening outer forces, was adopted by Vaičiūnaitė through communication with the part of the “Russian text” which was deeply appreciated by her and in which the “zeitgeist” could be felt. An aesthetized rite of “voluntary sacrifice” was re-enacted in associated topics and ideas and resulted in a relevant kind of the worldview. This quite explains her preference in the Russian literature: Akhmatova and Pasternak, Vaičiūnaitė’s senior contemporaries, were her model poets with a special charisma. Quite often, Vaičiūnaitė spoke and wrote about Akhmatova; it should be noted, though, that the Lithuanian poet’s vision of the monumentality of Akhmatova’s personality was established by the canons of the Soviet aesthetics: “(Akhmatova. – M.R.) is like a muse, a statue, she is so magnificent on her numerous portraits, and what an avalanche of torment she had to go through! <...> I admire the power and aesthetics of this woman”²⁷. Furthermore, in the Lithuanian poet’s memoirs, a lot of circumstances of her life are, perhaps unconsciously, presented retrospectively from the point of view of a “ritual” offering. Here are two quotes to affirm that Vaičiūnaitė was employing her strategies for lifestyle creation: “Back then at (Vilnius. – M.R.) University, there was a quite dismal atmosphere of fear, the political situation was not advantageous, as those were the years of the Stalin’s regime”²⁸. “June, 1959... I was a member of the young writers’ section but at the same time, since I had discarded my Komsomol membership card, I was deprived of the right to publish my poems, get a job and, perhaps, take state examinations at university”²⁹. Getting back to the above quoted Vaičiūnaitė’s words about her own creative work: “Pretty much depends on the man, because people used to write and create <...> **in dreadful conditions**. People who were born and living in those times were not guilty of that; **not all of them could actively oppose**, and not all succeeded in doing it, and **perhaps not every one of them was to do it** (outlined by me. – M. R.)”³⁰. Thus perspectives are opened up for various kinds of comparison of poetic worlds of Akhmatova and Vaičiūnaitė. Such features of Akhmatova’s lyrical character, as a “strong element of stoicism” and an “impractical”, fundamentally beau geste and symbolical confrontation to the superior forces of the fate³¹, have been discovered in Vaičiūnaitė’s lyrical character by the researchers.

26 Zholkovskij, A.K. Sovetskie klassiki-nonkonformisty v post-sovetskoj perspektive [Soviet Non-Conformist Classics In Post-Soviet Perspective]. *Izbrannye Stat'iy O Russkoj Poezii. Invarianty, Struktury, Strategii, Interteksty* [Selected Articles On Russian Poetry: Invariants, Structures, Strategies, Intertexts]. Moskva: RGGU, 2005, p. 367.

27 Vaičiūnaitė, J. *Supra* note 17, p. 286.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 267.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 192.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 290–291.

31 Shheglov, Yu.K. Cherty Poeticheskogo Mira Akhmatovoj [Peculiarities Of Akhmatova’s Poetic World]. *Raboty Po Poetike Vyrayzitelnosti: Invarianty – Tema – Prijomy - Tekst* [Essays On

The features should be ascribed not to mere influences or adoptions, but rather to these poets' common worldview in which the existentialist flavor of the 20th-century culture is quite strong. Vaičiūnaitė (and her character) did not live the life in Akhmatova's way, but her worldview was in accord with Akhmatova's worldview (as well as of the other Russian poets appreciated by the Lithuanian one), which served a powerful impulse for her own unique creative development. Of course, in the Soviet situation existential thought could not be expressed so radically, as in the European philosophy and existentialist literature (in the literature of the Silver Age, for example). It was reduced and fit within the space dedicated to an individual in the Soviet society. What concerns Vaičiūnaitė's poetry of 1950–70-es and especially her works on the "Russian" topics, this mode may be called existential tremor and it is present in the main topics of her lyrics: time, memory, art, manipulating the masks, especially women's ones.

This way of thinking is oriented to the truth of the ontological value of an individual. In the real everyday life situations the lyrical character realizes her own existence and being as deadly: the death is inevitable and omnipresent. This is related to the motifs of threat to life, loss, destruction, deficiency, vanity, the short length of life, the value of the moment. Sometimes even the salvatory potential of the values of love, art, nature is doubted. It was this way of thinking which can be called a common ground, no man's land of such different texts of two cultures. This space was where translation of the Russian texts into Lithuanian took place along with the translation of the values of Russian culture into the value system of a different culture – Lithuanian. The analysis of the existential way of thinking was suggested by V.V. Zamanskaya. It is based on the general constructive elements – the flow, the situation, the paragraph and the existential word³². Functionality of these elements in the lyrical poems is presumably rooted in the very texture of poetry. The principle of the flow in poems is to imitate non-hierarchical character of phenomena in the integral and immense flow of life. The flow is captured in a situation, a moment of being when the existential tremor permeates the brightest states of the lyrical character. There is a dedicated paragraph in prosaic and dramatic works, the smallest structurally explicit element of existential poetics. It is in the structure of a paragraph where the writers calibrate their existential focus which helps them reflect the world. In poetry, a line often combines the functions of the situation and the paragraph thus achieving the effect of the utmost concentration of being, time and space. The most important here is a so called existential word. It is not nominative, it overcomes the inertia of semantics and thrives to express the truth of being and soul by fusing unexpected images and contexts. This word is a source of a vivid image.

Poetics Of Expressionism: Invariants – Topic – Devices – Text]. Moskva: Izdatelskaja Gruppy Progress, 1996, p. 265.

32 Zamanskaya, V.V. *Ekzistencialnyj tip khudozhestvennogo soznaniya v XX veke* [Existential Type Of Artistic Conscience In 20th Century]. *Nauka o literature v XX veke (istorija, metodologija, literaturnyj process)* [Literary Criticism In 20th Century (History, Methodology, Literary Process)], Moskva: INION RAN, 2001, p. 204–206.

How the elements of such structure function is shown in the analysis of three poems with Russian cultural signs.

In the poem *Prie Vrubelio "Alyvų"* (In Front of Vrubel's "Lilac") the non-hierarchical character of being is expressed in overcoming the temporal and spatial borders: the space of Vrubel's painting appears to be permeable for the lyrical character who experiences the moment of recognition of a woman like her own self in the image of the vision woman in the painting. The text of poem *Prie Vrubelio „Alyvų“* (In Front Of Vrubel's "Lilac")³³ is given with a word-for-word translation.

<i>Alyvos tik...</i>	Only the lilac...
<i>Žiūrėsi ir žiūrėsi.</i>	You will look and look at it.
<i>Didžiuliai violetiniai žiedai.</i>	Huge violet flowers.
<i>Ir moteris tyliam šakų pavėsy,</i>	And a woman in the silent shade of branches,
<i>trapius pečius apgaubusi juodai...</i>	draped in the black her delicate shoulders...
<i>Alyvos tik...</i>	Only the lilac...
<i>Prasiskleidė alyvos,</i>	The flowers are in blossom,
<i>žydra šviesa ištryško pro šakas...</i>	blue light has struggled through the branches...
<i>Pavasario vaiduoklis tartum gyvas</i>	The specter of the spring is life-like
<i>nuo drobės ištiesė blyškias rankas.</i>	reaching out her pale hands from the canvas.
<i>Ir pažinau – didžiulės, tamsios akys,</i>	And I recognized – her huge dark eyes,
<i>kazkas be galo artima jose.</i>	there is something infinitely close in them.
<i>Alyvos tik...</i>	Only the lilac...
<i>Pavasarinės kekės.</i>	The spring clusters.
<i>Ir gedulas, sutirpęs žieduose...</i>	And the mourning dissolved in the flowers...

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The poem disposes the reader to wait for a special effect from a poetical (verbal) description of the famous but enigmatic painting, and so as to realize its meaning, he has to focus on the character of relations between different artistic devices of literature and painting, owing to which it becomes possible to identify extra shades of the

33 Vaičiūnaitė, J. *Raštai: 3 tomai* [Works In 3 Volumes]. 1th volume, Vilnius: Gimtasis žodis, 2005, p. 11.

meaning of the poem. Lithuanian researchers (A. Masionis, G. Bernotienė³⁴) in their study of Vaičiūnaitė's intermedial strategies have convincingly shown that in order to create the unique combination of laconism of depictions and refined poetism of images the discourse practices of architecture and art are utilized. What could Vaičiūnaitė be attracted to in the Vrubel's painting? According to N. Dmitrieva, it was in 1890-es when Vrubel's art started featuring existential topics of "the mystery of fate, the mystery of death <...> and the dominance of lilac color begins; lilac in color are daemons, lilacs, swans. It (the color. – M.R.) symbolizes the artist's worldview, his myths, the feelings of mystery and tremor dissipated in the world"³⁵. The color of Vrubel's lilac is seen by Vaičiūnaitė's character as violet – *violetiniai žiedai* (violet flowers), and the arising connotations are grounded in the cultural differences. In Russian art lilacs always are the pleasure for the eye, and the plant gave the color, it is associated with, its name (like in English where "lilac" stands for both the color and the plant). Therefore the lilac and the mourning are almost an impossible association for a Russian, because in the Russian cultural tradition neither lilac nor violet colors are related to the mourning. They are associated in the West-European (Catholic) tradition³⁶. But it is in the mentality of the lyrical character where the connotations of Vrubel's "lilac" worldview coincide with the mourning connotations of the violet color. The color duplication *the lilac darkness of the spring / hard lilac flowers* is elegantly enveloped by the words **Only the lilac**, and together they generate an existential focus of the lyrical character's perception resulting in a special effect in the last line: **And the mourning dissolved in the flowers** (outlined by me. – M. R.). Vaičiūnaitė captures the ecstatic moment of fusion of the lyrical character and Vrubel's lilac. She can see the sign of death in the flowers. Thus by referring to Vrubel's painting Vaičiūnaitė makes her own semantics dominant and expresses the thought about the helplessness in face of death and about the inevitability of vanishing

The text of poem *Turgenevo teviškėj (At Turgenev's Motherland)*³⁷ is given with a word-for-word translation.

*Pajusi tą liepų kvėpėjimą, vėsią vasaros kūdrą,
You will feel this smell of lindens, the coolness of summer foliage over the pond,
Kur sraigės geldelė gelmėj atspindi dangaus perlamutrą...
Where snails in deep reflect the nacre of the sky...*

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- 34 Masionis, A. Poezijos ir dailės sankryžos [Crossroads Of Poetry and Art]. *Poezija. Kritika: rinktinė* [Poetry. Criticism: Selected Works]. Vilnius: Vaga, 1980. Bernotienė, G. *Menų sąveikos ieškojimai. Judita Vaičiūnaitė ir Leonardas Gutauskas* [The Search For Interaction Of Arts. Judita Vaičiūnaitė And Leonardas Gutauskas]. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo Universiteto leidykla, 2005.
- 35 Dmitrieva, N.A., *Mikhail Alexandrovich Vrubel* [Mikhail Alexandrovich Vrubel]. Leningrad: Khudozhnik RFSSR, 1984, p. 88.
- 36 Pokhjobkin, V., *Simvolika cveta: Slovar mezhdunarodnoj simvoliki i emblematici* [Color Symbolism: Dictionary Of International Symbolism And Emblematicism]. URL: http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/Culture/pohl/index.php [Acquired on 2015/08/20].
- 37 Vaičiūnaitė, J., *supra* note 32, p. 42.

Nuo paukščių giesmės spindulis neliaus drevėje drebėti,
 The ray does not cease to flicker because of the bird hymns,
Sutirps žydromo vilny regėjimai baudžiatvos niūrūs...
 The sad traces of serfdom will wane in the blue wave...
Alėjos ruščioj tolumoje tu išvysi liekną figurą –
 You will fancy you saw a slender figure in the deep of the deserted alley –
Saulės blyksniu tarp šešėlių sužibs jos mažytis skėtis...
 Her small umbrella will shimmer with a patch of sunlight...
Tu vysies iliuziją – vėjo šlamesį – rožinę sviesą –
 You will be haunted by the illusion – a gust of wind – the rosy color –
Ji staigiai pradinga tankmėje šimtametės parko alėjos...
 It will suddenly disappear in the darkness of the century-old park alley...
Ir tu nesuprasi, kodėl sustojai, rankas ištiesęs,
 And you will not understand why you stopped with you arms stretched out,
Tarytum ne kartą sapne visa tai jau būtum regėjęs...
 As if in your night dreams you have seen it more than once...

Spasskoye-Loutovinovo, 1960.

The lyrical subject (in Lithuanian he is masculine, in the second person singular!) is describing the space of Spasskoye-Loutovinovo and its environs and includes a visualization of an *illusion* associated with the life and literature of Turgenev into this description; the intonation stays emotionally neutral throughout the description.

The situation of contact with a shadow gotten to life is presented in a 10-line stanza with the lines of 16–17 syllables and a caesura in each line at the 9–10th syllable. The stanza may seem syntactically overloaded which effect could be somehow produced by the contrast between the “obvious objectivity of the description reminding us of a catalog”³⁸, and a special function of light allowing to enrich the image with flickering, ephemerality that help depict a moment³⁹: *Will shimmer with a patch of sunlight / the illusion (...) / will suddenly disappear*. The flow character of the description of the impression made by Turgenev’s manor allows Vaičiūnaitė to engage her favorite device: experiencing the past in the present. Thus she generates and enforces the creative focus on the realization of the loss of something important and intimate.

According to Bernotienė, “the park in Vaičiūnaitė’s lyrical poetry is the space in which one can observe and experience the changes of states (of the nature and the man)”⁴⁰. The synthesis of the metaphorical and actual topographical space of

38 Bernotiene, G., *supra* note 33, p. 49.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 97.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

Spasskoye-Loutovinovo is realized in the images: *the darkness of the century–old park alley* and *the night dream*. They accentuate the situation of the real/surreal, dark/light and stress the same thought of the transience of everything and everybody and that the nature and art outlive the man and his individual world. The instance of the existential tremor of the lyrical character is also included into the same even intonation of recitation, but the preteritions hint at her psychological state. Just like in poem *In Front Of Vrubel's "Lilac"*, an impressive psychological detail – the stretched out arms – manifest the desire for the beautiful and the futility of the effort to save the existential moment.

The text of poem [*The orchard has already been long chopped off, but the cherry jam still smells,*]⁴¹ – arba *Vyšnių sodas* ("Cherry Orchard", 1976) is given with a word-for-word translation.

The orchard has **already** been long cut down,
but the cherry jam **still** smells –
 its taste is saved on the lips –
 half-open, wet, young,
 the cherry tree split by a bolt of lightning is **still** in blossom –
 In its shade I am reading "Eugene Onegin",
 I am reading, the white mist is flowing by,
 and Tatyana's heart starts trembling in me,
 at the table which is all strewn with petals,
 I am writing to you nowhere-bound letters;
 every time a hotter daybreak
 melts the copper of the grating,
 but the lock of the gate is lost –
 They are flickering as if through the tears –
 the trees and the years and the cities in blossom,
 a starched bow is drifting in the gloom,
 my hair is wet because of the rain,
 I have dark-red berries in my hands,
 but they are not wanted
 by the birds...
 And **this autumn** small yellowing leafs are falling
 onto my mother's hanging in the wardrobe and faded,
 cherry-color dress.

This poem is about woman's destiny in the context of the general flow of life. So as to cover the topic an existential situation of witnessing losses is modeled at the background of time passing. This poem features a very refined paraphrase of

41 Vaičiūnaitė, J., *supra* note 32, p. 242.

Chekhov's "Cherry Orchard" and "The Summer Garden" by Akhmatova, as well as Vaičiūnaitė's own essays "The Age of Juliet" (noticed by V. Balsevičiūtė) and from the book *Vaikystės veidrody* (In the Mirror Of Childhood), published in 1996.

The existential focus is created by skillful use of adverbs of time: *already/but still/still* and it is enhanced by the temporal meanings of the phrases *every time/this autumn* and the metaphor *flickering as if through the tears*. The futility in face of the swiftness of time corresponds in the lyrical character's perception with certain events of her personal life, with loss and death as their main motif. Although, owing to the adverbs, her instinctive love for life manifests itself notwithstanding the fate. The context of interpretations of this poems can be extended due to the essay. It must be noted that almost every essay from this book ends with a message about death of either some relative, or a friend, or even a stranger and of a loss of something valuable. An essay entitled *Žaliakalnio sodai* (Žaliakalnis's Gardens) is especially important. In this essay it is retrospectively told about a childhood friend who had already died. Her name was Violetta, but once she "confessed that she had a different name – Tatyana" and that her father had been a white emigrant. "And just like Pushkin's character, we together wrote our first love letters at a wooden table underneath a cherry tree in blossom. I thank my destiny for giving me this childhood friend"⁴².

Rethinking Chekhov's situation: the loss of the existential personal space (*The orchard has already been long chopped off*) is associated in Lithuanian cultural conscience with some different values (unlike the classical: *All Russia is our orchard*). Vaičiūnaitė's cherry orchard is the space of the childhood (Balsevičiūtė), family, first love, maturing and loss.

In this case, the existential words does not have any direct relation to Chekhov. Combining the contexts of the play and her own biography, Vaičiūnaitė suddenly finishes the poem by cultivating the image of mother: *leaves are falling onto my mother's hanging in the wardrobe and faded, cherry-color dress*. The image of mother is marginal in Chekhov's play. (Lyubov Andreevna. *Have a look, my deceased mother is walking in the orchard... in a white dress! (Laughing of gladness). It's her. / Gaev. Where? / Lyubov Andreevna. Nobody's here. It seemed to me. On the right, at the turn to the arbour, a small tree has bent, and it seems like a woman...*)⁴³.

In this case an actualization of the topic of regeneration is obvious: moral regeneration and, perhaps, social. This topic is usually expressed in literature "through archetypes and metaphors with any kind of participation of the images of parents as the bearers of the past and transitory"⁴⁴. Mother's dress plays an

42 Vaičiūnaitė, V., *supra* note 17, p. 401.

43 Chehov, A. Vishnjovyj sad [Cherry Orchard]. In Chekhov, A. *Sobranie sochinenij v 10 t.* [Collected Works in 10 Volumes]. th volume. Moskva: Khudozhestvennaja literatura, 1990, p. 319.

44 See: Shheglov, Yu. Iz poetiki Chekhova ("Anna na shee") [From Chekhov's Poethics ("Anna On The Neck")], Primechanija [Notes]. *Raboty Po Poetike Vyratzitelnosti: Invarianty – Tema –*

important role of self-identifying with the mother. The process of likening involves several images: Tatyana Larina, Akhmatova’s lyrical character from “The Summer Garden”, the mother. The fact that the dress has lost its color – it is faded – means the fate. On the other hand, this images reinforces and supports the character, motivates the character to live or suggests her the importance of living. There appears an existential perspective in which all main topics – of life and death, of overcoming time and space, of oblivion, of moral and aesthetic confrontation to superior forces of fate – are manifested again.

Conclusion

Returning to Yu.M. Lotman’s question about the need to refer to an other’s text, all that was said about the “Russian text” of J. Vaičiūnaitė can serve an answer to this Lotman’s question: “When and on what conditions is a contact with another ‘I’ an inevitable condition for creative development of ‘my’ conscience”⁴⁵. Russian culture acquired its own function in the lyrical poetry of the Lithuanian poet. High authority of the texts, with which Vaičiūnaitė engaged into a poetic dialog, was constituted mostly by the features of which Kavolis and Lotman wrote: authenticity or sincerity, high semiotic level. Those texts engaging in the cultural exchange or dialog, as Lotman put it, have a tendency to be the texts in a different language and therefore the “text being translated must anticipate the answer and hold in itself the elements needed for transition to a different language”⁴⁶. Such elements are the methods and devices of expression of the existential conscience. In the situation of the Soviet regime, translation of the values of the classical “Russian text” compensated for inability to openly, sincerely, authentically manifest the details of the existential worldview which was so natural for the unique individuality of J. Vaičiūnaitė’s, and it seemed to have helped her generate her own inimitable poetic world.

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45 Lotman, Ju.M., *supra* note 12, p. 605.

46 Lotman, Ju. M. *Kultūros semiotika* [Semiotics Of Culture]. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2004, p. 14.

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