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**YURI SHEVCHUK AND DDT: A TIME EVENT**

Razilya Khusnulina (a)\*, Artur Khusnulin (b)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Lomonosov Moscow State University, 1, Leninskie Gory, Moscow, Russia  
razilya@yandex.ru, (8917)9011440

(b) Lomonosov Moscow State University, 1, Leninskie Gory, Moscow, Russia  
komrad.camensky@yandex.ru, (8919)6811005

***Abstract***

European celebrity, rock musician, poet and composer, talented poet Yuri Shevchuk appears and mysteriously disappears, in the spirit of his hero, “goes missing”, as if dissolved in the air of gloomy poetry, full of alarming symbolism. Maybe his disappearances are not so unbelievable, because even in his youth reality itself deprived of protection, having developed the habit of perceiving words and phenomena allegorically symbolically. The motherland became a “sleeping beauty”, from which he sighs: “Oh, my country, Motherland – mother,” bitterly regretting that it was established on the law of power, leaving the individual no illusions on the subject of freedom of self-determination. A person who reflects on this “God, how many years”, rhetorically asks: “Missing, you know everything – about how to go beyond the boundaries of meaning”. Shevchuk was not a political fighter, nor even any intelligible opponent of the regime; rather a “man of the side”. “Missing, I noticed your eyes, smile and gait somewhere: you disappeared, shouted something to me ...”, but total society did not spare not only their direct opponents, it gave no peace and to a person from the side. Hence, a deeply personal experience: “We are in captivity in our homeland”. The merciless mode of all the souls flashed merciless light. It also had its own logic of universal involvement, it was this blinding logic that was destined to try the young musician on himself. Shevchuk's songs with poetry served healthy “clarity”. He still wrote and wrote as he considered himself.

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## 1. Introduction

In the 1990s, self-directed censorship suppressed everything that is associated with “obsession with truth-seeking”, a new, emancipated manner of behavior, and everyone who was aware of the absurdity of the situation suffered from this purism built into the principle. As the audience grew interested in Shevchuk (2000), he became, by Soviet concepts, more and more “impassable”. This expressive word meant mainly his “obsession” if we use the shy euphemism invented by his critics.

Then, during the years of ideological confrontation, the approach to musical culture remained unchanged as a kind of system with clear "logic" (including a simple text about unrequited love, light music and a corresponding entourage). It was rejected for insubstantiality or simply everything that that does not correspond to such logic and system is not noticed. There was an undeclared, but by all, more or less guessable list of plots, motives, topics in relation to which the prohibitive ban was the most reasonable choice for those who want to live in peace. Let us suppose, a young man, described by Shevchuk (2000), distraught among the phantasmagoria of a useless war (“Don't Shoot”), is prohibited. Therefore, to prohibit that undesirable analogies may arise involuntarily. And also because the phenomenon of war is exhaustively explained by the authorized ideologues, and deep movement into can only sow confusion in the minds. Moreover, everyone understood that the poems are brilliant, that we are faced with the very typical characters that we bother about, and that the author, quoting the recent Soviet vocabulary, is not at all alien to “social criticism”.

And he remained the same, despite the prohibitions lowered from above. And it would hardly have changed even under the fantastic assumption that no prudently prevented bans would exist at all those years. Shevchuk (2000) still believes in the correctness of what he does, believes in good and reason. It is difficult to imagine him otherwise. However, even now the singer is rarely seen on TV, and our communication continues from disk to disk, from one rare tour to another. Therefore, in fact, his work today is a completely new artistic reality for us.

## 2. Problem Statement

Shevchuk (2000) wrote as he considered himself, and he was attributed to the opposition of a very specific literary sense – to the underground, the distinct opposition movement of Russian culture. But in the underground, he did not fit. In the depths, at the base, there was no significant convergence here: the underground protected, covered, saved something — a certain content of the individual. Shevchuk, protecting, sheltering, rescuing from a totalitarian searchlight something that nominally meant an individual, discovered that he was saving ... something unreal in his being.

However, when you know the key to the fate of “born in the USSR”, the apology of chaos is already beginning to reveal the structure and meaning in itself. And if you listen to the intonation, then the key to the song is given in one of the initial phrases: “We did not get anything, but we have something to convey”. And what, in fact, should have happened? Why does a person who “did not get anything”, calmly says that he knows “what to bring” to his descendants? The intonation of such delight suggests that the norm is just that there is “something to convey”. This is the key to all thirty-year creative work of “DDT”— this is about the amazement of a person who has preserved and is ready to convey his experience of understanding life.

### 3. Research Questions

The work of Shevchuk (2000) is close to our audience: both in terms of problematics, and in sound, and in characters typical of hers. The atmosphere of his lines is filled with the memory of Petersburg, about Russia in general, as deeply perceived by the Russian consciousness: with its own alienation and trauma, which, however, do not weaken the sense of their own involvement in the destinies of this country. It determines the research questions of this article.

The talent of Shevchuk (2009) is schooled and, perhaps, even awakened by Russian literature. He explains in his poetry a lot, even the most important — a circle of ideas that are most typical for him. His poetic world is the world of ordinary people with their sorrows, worries, joys.

Everything that happens with a hero is perceived as episodes of the history of our contemporaries, when the national background is not so crucial. The saga of modernity presented in “The Missing” tells a lot about the specifically Russian understanding of reality, and even more about various versions of adapting to it (“And could have ...”). And about it, about the shattered moral principles, about the shaken values, about the spiritual deformations, which became her omen, but did not destroy the desire to counteract the processes of disintegration of human ties.

If you find a leitmotif in a complex musical score of a very rich narrative, they probably should call everything related to memory. For those who, like his heroes, have fully experienced how little the subjective will of a person in the face of the forces of reality beyond her control, memory is in fact the only thing that allows one to recognize in his own life a certain law, and not just a jumble of events which the man himself means little (“Russian rock”). “Having got involved in a fight,” the hero believes that his efforts are morally justified: he needs lively contact with his past, so that the threads that make up the prehistory unite into some meaningful whole and do not look like a tangled ball with no beginnings and no natural continuations. And in this, he is like to the author himself, who is looking for the full truth of our era, probably defeated in something, forgiven for his own illusions, but always finding the strength to go on. Giving us the strength.

The sadness and hope that underlie the name of the album and the concert “The Missing Person”, is not only a metaphor of this existence, but rather a poetic credo.

### 4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to show the diversity of the characters of the poet Shevchuk and the related problems of life. With pain in his heart, he reasons: “And what is Russia for us? War? Hatred? Thieves? Liars? Pops..? ...“, those who shamelessly “hungry for bread and circuses”? Yes, that's how people compose themselves. But all this fervor of life is sheer naivety, “the destruction of the soul”. He said abruptly, as if he had shrunk all over, and said: “unemployment is roaming the streets,” “and it makes me sick of erotica.” The audience shuddered at his words. And again he sealed this world with another label - vulgarity.

Shevchuk makes you think and feel non-stereotyped, in a new way explaining reality. For him, it is not at all a canvas of life that faithfully displayed characteristic social phenomena, but mainly “play” – with both reality and the word. However, it's not an intrinsic game that the avant-garde canonized nowadays

is keen on, but rather an attempt to build a world filled with echoes of very significant events - the war in Chechnya, which inflicted heavy trauma on the heroic actions of special forces in Afghanistan that were involved in it (hence the shrill “Don't shoot!” ). This chain of episodes is interrupted by memories from meetings with people who disappear in this life, without finding their place in it (“... millions of you plow between us”). In a situation that would have been snatched from an everyday chronicle at random, the author discovers the meaning that overlaps any household routine and argues about how people who see life in very different ways are necessary for each other (“... break through, brother”. The author writes about us and for us, realizing how difficult this understanding of mutual necessity is embodied in action, deed, not pusher counter step.

## 5. Research Methods

Research methods: comparative-typological, comparative-historical.

## 6. Findings

Shevchuk is most attracted by his variegated, unpredictable, even heterogeneous, conscious resistance to any schematization (Nelson, 2004). And this is understandable: too many streams united in the culture of “DDT”, too different seeds gave shoots on this soil. And from constant crossing, which continues today (at a concert, and rock, and jazz, and rock and roll, and even something like a chanson), hybrids, of course, turned out to be extremely unusual and bizarre. They are the result of a limited symbiosis created by continuous communication of dissimilar spiritual traditions, cultural paradigms, images of the world, bearing the traces of ethnic genealogy.

That is how a genius could have appeared, anticipating the highest revelations of the newest European art. Become a serious value (Guryanov, 2017). Therefore, his poems, including the early ones, are still being read and listened to. Moreover, they themselves have become modern classics. And not because they satisfied the ready-made expectation, answered formulas, stereotypes — quite the opposite — they became classics, forcing them to think and feel non-stereotypical, re-explaining reality (“... how to go beyond the limits of meaning”) (Khusnulina, 2007).

The author writes about the drama of war, based on the personal destinies of specific people, and shows its typicality under the conditions of the “civilization of consumption”. He worried of tragedies can be repeated, and people enslaved by patterned everyday notions will continue to exist by inertia. This lack of will, this spiritual anemia is understood as the dominant feature of today's social psychology. Therefore, eschatology, cosmogony, Hamlet's “to be or not to be”, Karamazov's “ticket is most respectfully returning” — such questions are extremely interested in Shevchuk. Fortunately, his work, previously considered marginal, is of great interest to readers and listeners. Society is becoming more and more aware that historical destinies are connected with the way the private destinies of the people inhabiting the country are shaped; and now this interdependence is much closer than before. The lyrics of Shevchuk give answers to questions conforming to the moods and thoughts of individuals. His poetry forms the worldview and language of a whole generation, and even a few.

“I held his hand,” says a man in whom this weakness of this resistance to war in relatively “peaceful” times in Afghanistan or in Chechnya is so strong. The pain is personal: “They have long been gone”. And here Shevchuk bursts head-on with a question: “And who are we?” “To be, but who? “ — “New Russia, getting out of the fire?” (Hosking, 2001). Trying to break away from the roots, we easily succumb to the “American”, “European expansion”, maximally simplifying our language, manners, and ideals. What will outweigh — loss or gain?

That is why Shevchuk's (2000) leitmotifs are so varied: the river (“Agidel”), the city (“Leningrad”), the war, another Afghan (“Don't shoot”), the country (“Motherland”). Embodying his initial anxiety for a person (“You are not alone”) in the “fabric of reality”, Shevchuk shows the face of a modern skeptic with icy logic and bitter irony. Contrasting with the pitiful impersonalism of the modern mass society the “lost paradise” of the distant past, Shevchuk sees in this past some ontological reality; his heroes, dying in battle, are nevertheless a support for the spirit. Ash cools down after the fire is a symbol of this world. Hatred of the fire can be interpreted, of course, as “symbolic opposition” and nothing more. But under the guise of a mystifier hides a sensitive and compassionate realist. In the same song “Do not shoot,” there is not a hint about the Afghan war, but about a historical reality that is tearing the world (Cushman, 1995). In an environment of constant pressure from outside, in which he managed to survive, one can count even more miracles when he was saved. And then how not to appreciate happiness, when something can be overcome without shame for going to overcome: “Russia is love for us” (Khakimov, 2007).

The songs reflect the experience of deep and objective analyst. They are like a short feature film. It seems that you are not just participating in the action, but you see everything through the eyes of the heartfelt author. Such lines as “our frozen faces were white in the fog and waited”, “while the memorial candles are burning —long before dark”, “our hands are not trembling with fear, but with bare words” — they are convinced that the fragments are quite ready material for play scenes that are easily transformed into visual images (Taruskin, 2009). Time itself dictates the tasks: to understand the present, to rethink the past, to realize the prospects of the future: “What is time, what is its meaning? He shows a hero in action, keeping up with changing lives.

## **7. Conclusion**

Among contemporary poets, Shevchuk (2009) is distinguished by his very understanding of man. In the era of all kinds of clichés, offering fairly flat explanations to human thoughts and actions, his ability to grasp the genuine complexity of perceiving a person and his place in this world is astounding. For him, as for the Russian classics, man is truly a universal, containing in himself the infinite wealth of the most diverse possibilities. He is always unique and unpredictable, and therefore we do not reduce him to a single clichéd interpretation, to a single ready-made formula, even as popular as the “crowd of lonely” or “one-dimensional people”.

Even more consistently in his refusal, he didn't accept what he accepted, but to recognize the reasoned idea of a person's helplessness in a hostile and incomprehensible world. His hero has a thirst for opposing this world, an obstinate craving for self-realization, a naive but ineradicable desire for good. And because a situation that another poet would have looked hopeless, causing a sense of the absurdity of what

is happening, the deliberate doom of a character who is inevitably involved in the senseless circulation of such a being, Shevchuk (2009) every time is far from being unequivocal and not predicted.

For any disappointments of his hero, for falls, he always remains — and this is constantly felt — even “at least Something” that does not allow to sign his own surrender before the cruelty of life, not to cross the line, after which the moral death becomes inevitable. He, this hero, is invariably human. A different author and does not require. “An understanding heart,” he says of them. This rule is unshakable for the author. Before us is the old Shevchuk and at the same time a new one, which reflects much deeper the ideas and moods expressed in familiar verses written about a quarter of a century ago.

Over the years, he became tougher, more sarcastic. And the characters now are more and more often people, either too enslaved by this ordinariness, or have been wasted in pursuit of false values. At the same time, ideals have not yet been compromised enough to declare them no more than a phantom. And among such ideals, the most attractive is the feeling of kinship — high, metaphysical — kinship of people due to their human nature (“... you are not alone!”). Heading in his poems, this feeling turns out to be much stronger and more effective than his skepticism of the philosopher, wise by life.

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