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The Chukchi Text in the Cycle of Poems by Gennady Oyar “Ydvel Tulsavysh”: Other/Own in the Author’s Worldview

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Abstract. This research work was carried out within the framework of a relevant scientific field related to the study of local texts in national literatures. The article presents a study of the local text defined by the concept locus, namely, a philological analysis of the ‘Chukot text’ in modern Mari lyrics. The research material is the Chukot cycle of poems by Gennady Oyar ‘Northern Flashes’, created in the Mari language, with the involvement of authorized translations into Russian in some cases. The paper uses the techniques of contextual, conceptual, and structural-semantic analysis of local texts. The author of the article considers artistic techniques and means relevant to the formation of the ‘Chukot text’ (toponyms, specific natural phenomena and images, landscape, objects of vital activity and signs of national life, material and spiritual culture, folklore and mythological images and motifs, individual linguistic inclusions). Within the framework of the stated problem of ‘Other/Self’ in the author’s worldview, a set of consistently realized motives (expectation, fear, discovery, surprise, admiration, rapprochement, acceptance, recognition of kinship of souls) that make up the lyrical plot is studied; principles and techniques of inclusion in the ‘Chukot text’ of the Mari world, nostalgic notes and author’s reflections are studied. Chukotka through Mari. The author’s ‘myth’ about Chukotka as a cultural space of the northern people, characterized by extreme natural conditions, the ontological and at the same time heroic essence of people who preserve their mythology and traditions, is investigated; it is proved that the knowledge of the ‘Other’ allowed the Oyar to truly appreciate his ‘Self’ and establish himself in the Mari ethno-identity.

Key words: local text, conceptual locus, modern Mari poetry, Sabantsev-Oyar G., author’s ‘myth’, lyrical cycle, local subtext, motif complex

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Чукотский текст в цикле стихотворений Геннадия Ояра «Йүдвел тулсавыш»: чужое/свое в авторской картине мира

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Аннотация. Исследование выполнено в рамках актуального научного направления, связанного с изучением локальных текстов в национальных литературах. Представлено изучение локального текста, определяемого концептом-локусом, а именно дан филологический анализ чукотского текста в современной марийской лирике. Материалом исследования стал чукотский цикл стихотворений Геннадия Ояра «Йүдвел тулсавыш» («Северные сполохи»), созданный на марийском языке, с привлечением в отдельных случаях авторизованных переводов на русский язык. Используются приемы контекстуального, концептуального и структурно-семантического анализа локальных текстов. Рассмотрены актуальные для формирования чукотского текста художественные приемы и средства (топонимы, специфические природные явления и образы, пейзаж, объекты жизнедеятельности и приметы национального быта, материальной и духовной культуры, фольклорно-мифологические образы и мотивы, отдельные языковые вкрапления). В рамках заявленной проблемы «чужое/свое» в авторской картине мира исследован комплекс последовательно реализуемых мотивов (ожидание, страх, открытие, удивление, восхищение, сближение, принятие, признание родственности душ), составляющих лирический сюжет; изучены принципы и приемы включения в «чукотский текст» марийского мира, ностальгические ноты и авторские рефлексии чукотского через марийское. Исследован авторский «миф» о Чукотке как о пространстве культуры северного народа, отличающемся экстремальными природными условиями, онтологической и одновременно героической сущностью людей, сохраняющих свою мифологию и традиции; доказано, что познание «чужого» позволило Ояру по-настоящему оценить «свое» и утвердиться в марийской этноидентичности.

Ключевые слова: локальный текст, концепт-локус, современная марийская поэзия, Сабанцев Ояр Г., авторский «миф», лирический цикл, локальный субтекст, мотивный комплекс

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Introduction

Gennady Oyar (Gennady Leonidovich Sabantsev, born in 1958) is a National Poet of the Republic of Mari El (2015), widely known to both Mari and Russian-speaking readers for his poems of national-philosophical orientation. He is the author of a great variety of poetry books published in his native (Mari) language¹ and in translation into Russian made by himself and in translations made by his fellow poets.² The object of study in this article is his Chukot cycle, entitled in the original ‘Йўдвел тулсавыш’³ (Northern Flashes) and included in the collection ‘Шўмсавыш’ (Echoes of the heart, 2008). Translated into Russian with the title ‘Чукотский цикл’ (Chukot Cycle)⁴ it is presented in the author’s book ‘Всполохи сердца’ (Flashes of the Heart) (2014).

The Chukot theme in Oyar’s lyrics is the result of the ‘translation’ of extra-textual reality into a literary text; the poems of the Chukot cycle were created during his stay in Chukotka (2003–2008) and under the influence of Chukot events and experiences. The poet lived in Pevek, the administrative center of the Chaunsky District of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (he wrote the words for the anthem of this city), worked as a correspondent for the regional newspaper ‘Polyarnaya Zvezda’ (founded by the ‘Krainii Sever’ publishing house), and was also the director and editor-in-chief of the ‘Beringovskii Vestnik’ newspaper, published by the Beringovsky branch of the ‘Krainii Sever’ publishing house.

Oyar’s poems from his Chukot cycle have never been the subject of special study, although, in general, quite a lot has been written about the features of his work, such as philosophical nature, ethnic orientation and figurative symbolism [1; 2; 3; 4; 5]. An attempt was made to examine Oyar’s lyrics in the context of the ‘philological problem of the national text in translations into Russian,’ and using his work as an example, a ‘circle of poetic techniques and means that allow us to reconstruct the national text’ was defined [6. P. 287]. As for the local texts of Oyar, organized around geographical objects and characterized by concepts-loci, they are

¹ Sabantsev G. 1987. *Chytamsyr kurym: pochelamut-vlak*. Yoshkar-Ola: Mari book publishing house; Oyar G. 1993. *Numaltysh: pochelamut-vlak, poem*. Yoshkar-Ola: Mari kniga Savyktysh; Oyar G. 2008. *Shumsavysh: pochelamut-vlak, poeme*. Yoshkar-Ola: Mari kniga Savyktysh; Oyar G. 2018. *Ilyshpordem: poehzii oypogo*. Yoshkar-Ola: “Mari Book kniga izdatel’sve” savyktysh port.

² Sabantsev-Oyar G. 2003. *By Light Alone: Poems*. Translated by G. Smirnov. Yoshkar-Ola: Mari Book Publishing House; Oyar G. (Sabantsev G.L.). 2014. *Flashes of the Heart: Poems*. Yoshkar-Ola: State Unitary Enterprise of the Republic of Mari El ‘Mariy Journal’; Oyar G. 2023. *Crouching to the Sources: Book of Poetry*. Translated from Mari. Yoshkar-Ola: Mari Book Publishing House.

³ Oyar G. Yodvel tulsavysh. In Oyar G. *Shumsavysh: pochelamut-vlak, poeme*. Yoshkar-Ola: Mari book Savyktysh, 2008, pp. 127–150. This edition is cited everywhere below, pages of quotations are indicated in the text in square brackets.

⁴ Oyar G. *Chukot cycle* (Translations by the author). In Oyar G. (Sabantsev G.L.). 2014. *Flashes of the heart: poems*. Yoshkar-Ola: State Unitary Enterprise of the Republic of Mari El ‘Mariy Journal’: String, pp. 154–185.

becoming the subject of special scientific study for the first time. But we note that, in general, in Mari literary science there are several works on such local texts (see articles on the ‘Morki’ [7], ‘Sernur’ [8], ‘Sheklyanur’ [9] texts).

Oyarov’s ‘Chukot text’ can be considered part of the ‘Chukot supertext’ of Russian multinational literature (Chukot stories, short stories, essays and the novel ‘The Resurrected Tribe’ by V. Tan-Bogoraz, the story ‘Chukotka’ and the novel ‘Alitet Goes to the Mountains’ by T. Semushkin, ‘Territory’ by O. Kuvaev, the essay book ‘On the Chukotka Land’, the story ‘In the Far North’ and the novels ‘The Swift-Footed Deer’, ‘The White Shaman’ and ‘The Ancient Sign’ by N. Shundik, unfinished book by V. Bogomolov ‘My Life, or Did You Dream of Me...’, a collection of stories about Chukotka ‘The Law of Polar Travels’ by A. Miftakhutdinov, etc.), which, like any local supertext, represents ‘a complex system of integrated texts that have a common extra-textual orientation, forming an open unity, marked by semantic and linguistic integrity’ [10. P. 13]. Accordingly, this article is intended to supplement the scientific knowledge about the ‘Chukot text/supertext’ available in modern literary studies [11; 12; 13; etc.].

The author of this article focuses not only on identifying the semantic center (the author’s ‘myth’) of the ‘Chukot text’ in the ‘Northern Flashes’ cycle, but also on understanding the interpenetration of the ‘Other’ and the ‘Self’ at the level of the author’s picture of the world and the poetics of the text.

Results and Discussion

The basis of the supertext, as well as of the local text, is, as N.E. Mednis notes, is ‘a figuratively and thematically designated center, a focusing object, which in the system of extra-textual realities-text appears as a single concept of the supertext. The role of such a center for topological supertexts is played by one or another specific locus, taken in the unity of its historical-cultural-geographical characteristics’ [10. P. 9–10]; as textual elements of the local subtext (‘local coordinates, systematized’ and transformed on the way from factual reality to artistic reality’ [10. P. 10]), there is a ‘system of natural and cultural images (signs) plus predicates, ways of expressing limitation, space and time, surnames, names, numbers, elements of meta-description (theatre, scenery, role, actor, etc.), a single lexical-conceptual dictionary, motives and more’ [10. P. 11].

The ‘unified concept’ of the ‘Chukot text’ in Oyar’s cycle ‘Northern Flashes’ is determined by the author’s ‘myth’ about the Chukot space, which is characterized by ‘established constant natural, landscape, climatic, architectural and everyday descriptive features’ [14. P. 16]; this myth ‘forms the image of the role and main idea of space in culture’ [14. P. 16–17] in the traditional and individual author’s understanding of it. Before Oyar, there were already myths in the ‘Chukot texts’ of his predecessors, for example, Russian writers, with their characteristic ways of describing the locus (themes, images, motifs, symbols, etc.). For example, O. Kuvaev

defines the myth of his ‘Chukot text’ in the novel ‘Territory’ as ‘the biblical creation of the world and man from the primordial chaos’, as a northern brotherhood, as a population of ‘strong people, passionaries, heroes’ [12] — both local and newcomers. In T. Semushkin’s novel ‘Alithet Goes to the Mountains’ the myth of the autonomy and autochthony of the Chukot world is presented.

Oyar’s ‘myth’ has a pantheistic nature. Chukotka is a space of all-powerful nature, testing man and highlighting the limits of human capabilities. And the indigenous inhabitants of the region, the Chukchi, in this semantic context are associated not so much with the ethnonym ‘чаучу’ (translated as ‘rich in deer’), but with the ethnonym ‘луораветланы’, which in the Chukchi language means ‘real people’.

The Chukotka (‘Other’ in factual reality) in Oyar’s artistic reality is constantly in contact with his ‘Self’ one — native, Mari. The cycle begins with ‘Self’ reality, and it also ends with it. In the first poem ‘Корныш лекме годым’ (Before setting off on a journey) the poet promises to remember what connects him with his small homeland, reminding the reader of the folk traditions of farewell and ‘throwing’ at him a few Mari *ойөрö*,⁵ for example, that one must not turn around when setting out on a journey — otherwise there will be no happiness, but evil (trouble):

*Мöнгеш савырнашат ок йөрö,
Лекмеке корнышко, вигак.*

*Тыге тый лüдыктет тилым,
Лач шики гай южым кормыжтет
Да сай олмеш этак осалы.
Ужат тый коштмо корныштет [P. 127–128]*

You can’t turn back,
To the road you came out on, right away.

That way you will scare away happiness.
You’ll grab [lit., squeeze into a fist. — R.A.] only air, similar to smoke,
And instead of good, you’ll always see evil
On the road you walk on.

The first poem ends with a promise to always keep the colors and voices of the native land in the heart:

⁵ *Oйөрö* (prohibition, taboo) is a short genre of Mari folklore that expresses the age-old wisdom of the Mari people, generalizing their life experience, containing a prohibition on performing any actions, on the use of certain words and objects. “The structure of *Oйөрö* is a unique formula and consists of two parts. The first part is the actual prohibition with the word *ок* /*о* *йөрö* ‘not suitable’. The second part is a laconic statement of the consequences of violating the prohibition, and less often the reasons for its existence” [15. P. 12].

*Да корно кургыла налам мый
Ик сӧрымемым шӱмышкем:
Тӱсдам ужам, йӱкдам колам мый
Эртакак*

коштмо корныштем. [P. 128]

And just like a travel food I will put [lit. take food. — R.K.]
In my heart one promise of mine:
I see your appearance, I hear your voice
All the time
on my way.

In the opposition ‘Other/Self’, Oyar gives preference to the ‘Self’ and demonstrates the poet’s high degree of ethnic self-identification:

*Мый кызыт раиш палем: кеч-куш ом кае,
Могай йылман коклаште мый ом лий, —
Кодам чонем ден ялт тунамсе гае —
Колумбын манмыла, шӱм-мокиш йотке марий!* [P. 150]

Today I clearly know: wherever I go,
Among those speaking whatever language I may be,
In my soul I remain the same as then, —
As Columbus would say, Mari to the heart-liver!

But ‘Other/Self’ in the meaning of ‘Chukot/Mari’ of the Mari poet is not given according to the principle of opposition, as in S. Yesenin’s cycle ‘Persian Motifs’ (beautiful and cold exoticism and native, real): ‘No matter how beautiful Shiraz is, / It is no better than the Ryazan wide spaces;⁶ The heart dreams of another country. / I will sing to you myself, my dear, / Something that Khayyam never sang before...’⁷). In Oyar’s version of this opposition, there are more complex relationships. The ‘Other’ for the poet is incredibly stronger, more powerful and very close. At the same time to the nostalgia for ‘Self’ are added grateful memory and nostalgia for the ‘Other’. Then this ‘Other’ has become his ‘Self’. It has happened in the process of Oyar’s and his lyrical subject’s active cognitive efforts in artistic reality.

The interpenetration of the ‘other’ and the ‘self’ in the cycle is largely explained by the closeness of the pagan culture of the Mari and the shamanism and animism of the Chukot. All of them are natural beliefs. For example, it is always noted about the animism of the Chukchi people that it is ‘the personification and deification of individual areas and phenomena of nature (masters of the forest, water, fire, sun,

⁶ Yesenin S. 1977. *Collected Works in Three Volumes*. Vol. 1. General editor and introduction by Yu.L. Prokusheva. Moscow: Pravda, p. 244.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

deer, etc.), many animals (bear, raven), stars, sun and moon; belief in evil spirits that cause all earthly disasters, including illness and death'.⁸ The same is characteristic of the traditional Mari religion, which G.E. Shkalina calls Mari shamanism [see: 16].

The dynamics of the lyrical plot, which is intended to unite all the poems of the cycle into a single artistic whole, along with the general Chukot theme, the author's concept and the opposition 'Other/Self' (compositional-semantic principle), is based on a system of consistently replacing each other (in some cases combined) motives: expectation, fear, discovery, surprise, overcoming fear, admiration, rapprochement, acceptance, a sense of kinship. In this context, the artistic techniques and means that form the 'Chukchi text', such as toponyms, figurative centers, landscape, portrait elements, signs of national life, material and spiritual culture, folklore and mythological images and motifs, linguistic inclusions, etc., acquire the greatest significance. Gradually, the reader gets an idea of the Chukotka region and the people who inhabit it; and the presence of the opposition 'Other/Self' allows him to see the Mari world, with which the author of the poems about Chukotka is connected by birth.

The 'Self / Chukot' theme is included in the cycle along with the author's idea of an immensely distant and unfamiliar land for the Mari, where the plane flies to all night at an incredible altitude, which makes the Lyrical subject's heart skip a beat (the poem 'Каваште' — In the Sky). In the third poem of the cycle 'Чукотка дене вашлиймаш' (Meeting with Chukotka) this idea is confirmed by a number of the author's definitions: *мланде тўрыш* 'to the edge of the Earth'; *Эше тенгече, мо тыгае Чаун, / Пален ыш керт мемнан марий чонна* [P. 129] 'Just yesterday, what is Chaun, / Our Mari hearts could not even know'. It is also a semantic center of the poem 'А мый тылат тышечын эрым...' (And I am from here to you the morning...): *...Пел мланде гоч эртен* [P. 131] '...Having walked a half of the Earth...'; *...палет, моткоч умбалне, / Кушан ок ыре вўд, / Кушан кия сандалык-мланде, — / Ила кум тылзе йўд* [P. 131] '...you know, very far away, / Where the water does not warm up, / Where the universe-earth lies, — / Night lives for three months'. This poem is already saturated with toponyms that directly form Oyar's 'Chukot text', the first of which are Chukotka and Chaun (a river flowing through the territory of the Chaunsky District of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug). At the same time, the ethnonym 'Mari' continues to be preserved, helping the author to artistically realize the motives of expectation and discovery of a new (other) world. Gradually, other toponymic images appear in the poem, as well as astronomical images, both generalized and specific, that are significant for the place depicted (names familiar to the author are given in the Mari version): *Йўдвел* (North), which is extremely clear and dear to the interlocutor of the lyrical subject, who has lived in Chukotka for half a century and has become attached to it with his soul, but for the lyrical subject himself, at the beginning of his acquaintance with the region, it is the wild North (*Ир Йўдвел*); *Певек* (Pevек) (*Российын тиде эн йўдвел олаже...*

⁸ Chukchi. 10 Oct. 2024, <https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Чукчи>

[P. 129] ‘This is the northernmost city of Russia’); *Иянше Океан* (Arctic Ocean); *Полярный шұдыр* (North Star); *Чолтан* (the Mari name for the planet Venus).

In the poem ‘Meeting with Chukotka’ we also draw attention to the landscape sketches. They contain traditional images of the nature of the Chukotka region (white seagulls, polar bear, wild cold, a hill) and are intended to convey the excitement and surprise of the lyrical subject from what he saw. They also introduce the reader to the essence of the Chukotka ‘myth’ (they present the Chukotka space as an extreme natural environment, an element that tests a person’s strength):

*Кум тылзе веле южшо тыште шокишо,
Индешыже — ош маскалан пайрем.
Кок сер воктен шуйна радамын сопка,
Тудат ок керт ир йўштым авырен.* [P. 129–130]

Here the air is warm only for three months,
And for nine months there is a holiday for the polar bear.
Between the two coasts the hill stretches in rows
And it cannot hide the wild cold.

As usual, Oyar adds his ‘Self’ (Mari) detail to this ‘Other’ (unusual) natural picture, associating a Chukchi seagull with a grey swan on the Какшан River (Kokshaga in Russian):

*...Чайка вуй ўмбалне
Ялт комбо йўк ден кычкырал колта.
Маннеже мо: ‘Йокрокым ида пале...’,
Какшан сер комбым койын кенета?* [P. 130]

...A seagull overhead
Cried out in exactly the same voice as a swan.
Perhaps it wants to say: ‘Don’t be sad...’,
Suddenly becoming a grey swan from Kokshaga?

This comparison is noticeably strengthened in the poem ‘And I am from here to you the morning...’, written as an appeal to a loved one from Mari El (in our opinion, such a genre-compositional solution can also be considered as a form of presence of ‘Self’ next to ‘Other’). The Lyrical subject continues to be nostalgic for his homeland. Although he seems to have already accepted the harsh Chukot world and sends as a gift to his addressee not just something, but a Chukot morning. The most pleasant activity (*тамле сомыл*) for him in this poem is a long and beautiful sleep, next to a loved one from his native world, when you are distracted from the terrible ‘howl’ of the wild northern wind. And in the next poem ‘Нигуш йокрок деч ом керт таче шылын...’ (I can’t hide from sadness anywhere today...) the pleasant thing is the song by Ivan Smirnov, sounding from the cassette and warming

with its familiar warmth. At the beginning of the poem, the poet declares a familiar and close ornithological imagery (*кукун куанжым* ‘the joy of the cuckoo’) and other natural imagery (*шошо пеледалттым* ‘the blossoming of spring’), associated with the Mari world. But it is very quickly replaced by an inspired, lyrical story about a snowy bay, the icebreaker ‘Flying Dutchman’, paving the way for the last ship, taking with it the sunlight until spring (*Мозай уверым кондыш гын ты мландыш? / Виса умбаке корным кушкыла?* [P. 132] ‘And what news did he bring to this land? / And where does he pave his way to further?’). The sunlight will be replaced for the poet by the Mari artist Iyvan Smirnov, who ‘arrived’ in the cold Chukotka region via the cassette.

The motive of interested studying and recognition of the Chukot world, as well as admiration for it, in the poem ‘Кү пеледыш’ (Stone Flower) enters through the image of a female artist, who replenishes the scarcity of northern vegetation in the art of stone, through the recreation of the creative process itself (the creation of a stone flower):

*Тудлан күлеш ал малахит,
Я канде сото лазуритын,
Ужар лышташ гай түс нефритын –
Шинча кумен чыла пала:
Йыга, пүчкеш да перкала...
Амалкала түс дене түсым.* [P. 132–133]

She needs scarlet malachite,
Or the blue of light lapis lazuli,
Like a green leaf, the color of jade –
With closed eyes she knows everything:
Sharpens, cuts and knocks...
Selects [lit. is occupied by, works cleverly. — R.K.] color to color.

It is no coincidence that the image of a woman artist is present in the ‘Chukot text’. For example, according to the principle of the ‘ethnic unconscious’, the author again turns to his own ‘Self’ text (the embroiderer, who among the Mari, as a rule, were women), claims the unity of creative souls, the creative spirit of different peoples. The motif of the kinship rapprochement of ‘Other’ and ‘Self’ in the author’s concept of the world enters the cycle:

*Ушем дене ужам мый тидым:
Ялт весе
шүртым шып кереш,
Түрла лыжган ош вынереш...*

Туштат пелед кая пеледыш!
Туштат моторлык — чон леведыш!..
Икгае улыт шўртō, кў, —
Кунам мастарлык шып ок кий... [P. 133]

In my mind I see the following:
 a completely different woman
 quietly pierces with a thread,
 smoothly embroiders on a white canvas...
 And there a flower will bloom!
 And there a beauty is a joy to the heart [lit. blanket over the heart. — R.K.]!
 The threads, the stone are the same, —
 When the craftsmanship does not sleep...

The most shining ways of realizing the author's 'myth' in Oyar's 'Chukot text' are the figurative centers, the main one of which is the mythopoetic image of the Yuzhak (*южак*). Yuzhak is the main feature of the city of Pevek. It is 'the strongest constant wind in the world', which 'blinds, literally cutting the eyes with blades of small ice floes, tears fur coats to pieces, breaks bones, bends metal'.⁹ It is an evil spirit in Chukchi mythology. According to Chukchi legend, the city of Pevek (the name, according to one version, is given for the neighboring mountain Peekinei (Пээкиней) — from the Chukchi *нэвэк*, *нэк* 'fat, swollen' [17. P. 324], according to another, widespread among the people, comes from two Chukchi words 'Пагыт-кэнай', which are translated as 'fragrant mountain') was built against the will of the northern gods and so evil spirits imposed a curse. This curse is still in effect: 'people for the Yuzhak are no heavier than chips', 'the Yuzhak, who can blow without weakening for weeks, as if he still strives to drive all people out of Pevek'.¹⁰ The poem also mentions the traditional collective name of evil spirits in Chukchi mythology — 'Келе', In the context of the poem it is directly related to the image of the Yuzhak.

Oyar reproduces in horrifying details the wild rampage of the evil spirit — the master of the world (*Ок ужыс нимома вийлан — / Оза лач тудо тўнялан!..* [P. 134] 'He doesn't see anything strong — / Only he is the master of the world!..'), making a person, it would seem, completely helpless. This poem is key in terms of the author's concept of the Chukot world. Creating the author's 'myth' in the Chukot cycle, Oyar relied on the traditional idea of the Chukchi way of life: 'This is unity and struggle with the harsh nature of the Arctic. Man is a part of nature, but it also subjects him to severe tests. To survive means to win'.¹¹ Yuzhak is a force majeure (an unpredictable circumstance, an irresistible force), a symbol of human suppression.

⁹ Yuzhak: the wind that only the Chukchi can bear // Back to the past. 15 Sept. 2024, <https://vk.com/@old.history-uzhak-veter-kotoryi-mogut-vynesti-tolko-chukchi>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Chukchi // National policy: information portal. 22 Sept. 2024, <https://nationalpolitics.rf/nationalities/Chukchi>

However, the ending of the poem claims the author's idea about the ability of a northern man to live in a wild and unpredictable nature, to survive (win) and continue to live:

*Түтан олян-олян лушка — <...>
Йырвашын тымык авалта...
А ме уремьш лектына,
Адак пашашке вашкена.
Да кажне иктым лач шона:
Илен лекна гын — илена!.. [P. 134]*

The storm slowly, slowly dies down — <...>
Silence reigns all around...
And we go out into the street,
Again we hurry to work.
And everyone thinks about only one thing:
We survived — we live!..

Oyar completes the image of the northern man in his attitude towards Yuzhak in the poem 'Певекын шонгыенжылан' (To the Pevek old man), again pointing to his inner strength and nobility: 'Южак' мардежлан тун ден савырналын / Йүдвел айдеме ыш кошт нигунам... [P. 138] 'Having turned his back to the wind of the 'Yuzhak', / Never did the northern man walk'.

Oyar attaches great importance to recreating the state of a person experiencing a storm (in the poem 'Yuzhak' — from immense fear, confusion to calm). The Mari poet in his feelings and thoughts is united with everyone, shares a common state. We see the same emotional unity of the author with the Chukchi world in poems dedicated to spring ('Певекышке пөрткайык толын' 'Sparrows have flown to Pevek'; 'Шошо шўлыш тыштат шижалтеш...' 'The spring mood is felt here too...'):

*Түнө йўштө, но чонышто сай.
Кенета, өрын, иктым шоналтышым:
Нигдат тышеч чылт ынеж кай
Нимогае кечан шокишо мландышке... [P. 140]*

It's cold outside, but my soul feels good.
Suddenly, surprised, I thought of one thing:
Nobody wants to leave this place
Not to some sunny, warm land...

In the poem 'Кузе шочеш йүдвел тулсавыш' (How Northern Flashes Are Born) (the title of the poem echoes the title of the entire cycle), the key metaphorical image of the 'Chukchi text' is revealed for the first time — northern flashes. He expresses in it the manifestation (revelation) of the people's soul (Трук почылтешыс калык

чон [P. 134] ‘Suddenly the people’s heart opens up’) and realizes the motive of admiration for the ‘Other’ (Chukot) — the strength and talent of the people, living in an ‘organized’ manner with Mother Nature and preserving their culture:

...Кушта ансамбль ‘Эргырон’.
Кап модмо дене, йӱк вий дене,
Йонген-йонгалтше бубен ден
Каласкала — кучен от сене! —
Чыталше калыкше нерген [P. 134]

...The Ehrgyron ensemble dances.
With the play of the body, the power of the voice,
With a loudly ringing tambourine
It tells — I can’t help it! —
About its strong-willed people.

Oyar interprets the seven-colored northern flashes that adorned the sky after the concert of the national ensemble ‘Эргырон’¹² (Ehrgyron), as gratitude from nature (the ancestor) to the representatives of this ‘strong-willed people’.

We also see this natural phenomenon that is unusual for any ‘outsider’ on the Chukot land in the poem ‘Polar Night’:

*Пел кавам кумдан айлалын,
Тулора гай шонанпыл,
Ах, модеш, шыман лойгалын,
Тӱрлӱ тӱкын йыл-йыл-йыл* [P. 136]

Spread wide over the half of the sky,
A rainbow, like a bunch of lights,
Ah, it plays, gently swaying,
Lighting up in different colors.

In its epistolary form, the work is similar to the poem ‘And I am from here to you the morning...’, but the motifs of recognition and acceptance, already familiar from it, are supplemented here by admiration caused by the numerous flashes that suddenly decorated the endless polar night and instilled in people hope for a quick end to the night.

The image of unexpected and beautiful flashes of light in the polar night, created with the help of tropes, the interjection ‘Ah’, and the traditional Mari onomatopoeia йыл-йыл-йыл, gives the poem a philosophical subtext. The author reflects on the regularity of the life cycle (on the impermanence of darkness, on the

¹² ‘Ehrgyron’ is a state academic Chukchi-Eskimo ensemble (existed since May 12, 2020). The word ‘эргырон’ is translated from the Chukchi language as ‘dawn’.

inevitability of ‘dawn’, emphasized in the name of the Chukchi-Eskimo ensemble from the previous poem). The unique northern flashes in the poem are associated with the happiness that every person hopes for:

*Лач тыге коштеи тўняште
Кажнын шонымо пиал —
Толын лектын иканаите,
Авалта, волгалтыи ал... [P. 137]*

This is how the happiness is waited for
By everyone wandering in the world —
Appeared in an instant,
Captured, the power of light...

The people of Chukotka are accompanied in their joys and misfortunes by the supreme god (the same is true for the Mari, who are protected by the Great White God). He is called by name Пэликэн (Pehlikehn) and also forms the ‘Chukchi text’ (Шинчылтеш шкетак тораште, / Ягылге тулгўм йыген... [P. 136] ‘He sits alone in the distance, / Rubbing the polished flint’). In the poems ‘To the Pevek Old Man’ and ‘Певекешке пёрткайык толын’ (Sparrows Have Flown to Pevek), Oyar wishes the people under the protection of Pehlikehn, Pevek, the Chukchi seagulls and sparrows, and the ships a continuation of life, spring joy, and a happy fate.

One of the structural and semantic components of the ‘Chukot text’ in the ‘Northern Flashes’ cycle is gold. Oyar’s axiological solution to this topic is very reminiscent of O. Kuvaev’s view of Chukotka in the novel ‘Territory’: ‘Gold in this system of values is only a ‘vile metal’ for which, somewhere in another world, people sacrifice their lives and pay money. In the Territory, it is only a pretext, a reason for work’ [12]. The attention of the Mari poet is also drawn not to the gold itself (*Кызыт ынде — лач музей арвер* [P. 142] ‘And now — only a museum item’), but to those who mine it, to what a labor-intensive process gold mining is (*Рокым ен кандаи пўжвўд лекмешке / Курык наре кугытым шоктеи* [P. 143] ‘Until the eighth sweat a man sifts the earth / About the size of a mountain’). The value is not gold, but the sun of the white north: *Ош Йўдвелын шёртньō гае кече* [P. 143] ‘The sun of the white North is like gold’. Oyar introduces the Chukchi gold miner as a man of free soul: *...Шўмжым тудо четлыкеш ок пече — / Шёртньым лукио айдемак кодеи!..* [P. 143] ‘...He does not lock his soul in a cage [lit. does not enclose it in a cage. — R.A.] — / He remains a man who mines gold!..’.

The motifs of admiration and kinship (unity) with the Chukot world unite several poems, in which the author supplements the space of the ‘Chukot text’ with a whole series of loci and toponyms: in the poem ‘2004 й, 8 апрел’ (2004, 8 April) — an island and a village on the edge of the earth with the same name *Айон* (Aion) (translated from Chukchi ‘ейу-, ейо- ‘to revive’ — the island serves as a place of rest and fattening (‘revival’) of reindeer’ [18. P. 58]); in the poem ‘Поляр-

ный станцийыште’ (At the Polar Station) the station ‘Полярка’ (Polyarka); in the poem ‘Шижде йӱдрӱдын толын...’ (Suddenly Appearing in the Center of the Night...) — the Chaun Sea (in the author’s text *Чаун теңыз* — Oyar so designates Chaunskaya Bay or Chaunsky Gulf, Chaunskaya Guba – an Arctic bay in the East Siberian Sea, in the Chaunsky District of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug; he calls it a sea, obviously also focusing on the etymology of the word Chaun — translated from Chukchi it means sea); in the poem ‘Колыма’ — Kolyma (Kolyma region, including the rivers of the Bilibinsky district of Chukotka).

The author calls the hardy and principled people living and working in Ayon heroes: *Тышак илаш герой лийманак* [P. 144] ‘To live here, it is impossible not to be a hero’. He sings a hymn to the specialists of Polyarka, who live among the ice and work more professionally and accurately than near-Earth weather satellites. Under the guidance of his northern meteorologist friend, he learns to listen and hear the Chukchi nature, boldly goes to the shore of the Chaun Sea and talks to it like a human being, talks about the test of courage and loyalty that the bay arranges for people. At his own request and in search of himself, the poet goes to Kolyma. Oyar creates an image of a modern working Kolyma, based on reflections on its bad reputation in the history of the country (a place of exile and death of numerous ‘enemies of the people’) and on its traces in modern times, expressing his reflection on the deep human sadness (*Кӱан да кылме рок ӱмбалне, / Мардеж йымалне, кызытат / Айдеме чондымо барак-влак / Лӱлеге семын шын шогат* [P. 148] ‘On the stony and icy ground, / Under the winds, to this day / Barracks without a human soul / Stand quietly, like skeletons’; *Ойган, шомакдыме чапкӱла Пеле оралте-влак шинчат* [P. 148] ‘Like sad, silent monuments, / The semi-structures are arranged’. Author insists that Kolyma, amidst the cold and ice, has preserved a ‘hot heart inside’ (...*шокшо тудын кӱргӱ шӱм* [P. 148]).

The Chukot theme in the cycle of the Mari poet is completed by the image of a chamomile from the poem ‘Певекык висвисше’ (Pevek’s Chamomile). This is a bright flower that is familiar to the poet in his homeland and very much expected by everyone after the polar night in the northern land. Also this is the name of the only café in Pevek, named by the author in Mari (‘Висвис’), which quenches the sadness of the soul of the lyrical subject.

In the last poem, ‘Шӱм-чон ок шинче кужытын кужужым...’ (The Soul Does Not Know the Extent of Longness...), the lyrical subject, who understood and accepted the specifics of the Chukot world and merged with it in a kindred way, is entirely focused on Mari. The preceding poem, similar in semantics, is ‘Кызыт тыйын кундемыште...’ (Now in Your Land...). It is written as a memory of the homeland, spring (May), a beloved woman. Lyrical subject wishes to see with his own eyes his native places, where the bird cherry is blooming vigorously, where the dried and already green earth (*Ужар мланде — топланыше* [P. 141]), with a romantic request to his beloved woman to come out to meet him when the bird-cherry berries ripen (in his own translation, Oyar titled this poem as ‘Ожидание возвращения’ — Waiting for Return).

From these two poems it is clear that the knowledge of ‘Other’ allowed the author to truly appreciate his ‘Self’. The cold in his homeland is ‘the price of life’ (*илышын ак*), but it is not at all intrusive or scary, it is not capable of freezing his ‘brave heart’ (*чон дене йыгытым*) (‘Now in Your Land...’). In the poems of Semyon Nikolaev translated into Russian and published in Moscow, author now clearly saw the Mari soul (*Пушла гычат йонча шўм-чон марийын — / Вўршерысе вўр семын коштеда* [P. 150] ‘And through Russian the Mari soul seeps — / pulsates’ [lit. walks, like blood in a pulse. — R.K.] (‘The Soul Does Not Know the Extent of Longness ...’)).

In the Russian-language version of Oyar’s Chukchi cycle, the final poem is ‘Прощание с Провиденья’ (Farewell from Providen’e) (it is not in the Mari version), introducing a new toponym (Providen’e is a bay in the Anadyr Gulf of the Bering Sea, off the southeastern coast of the Chukchi Peninsula, with a seaport) and generalizing the enormous significance of the northern (pagan) region in the life and fate of the Mari poet:

И значит небу так угодно,
 Чтоб я с тобой побыл ещё чуток,
 Чтобы с тобою о бок на сегодня
 Связался узел всех моих дорог¹³.
 Но будет день — средь суеты, обмана
 (В каком опять далёком далеке?)
 Твои дожди,
 и пурги,
 и туманы
 Вдруг вспомнятся — и не бывать тоске¹⁴.

So that I could stay with you a little longer,
 So that tightly with you
 The knot of all my roads would be tied today.
 But there will be a day, amidst the vanity, deception
 (In what distant faraway place again?)
 Your rains,
 and snowstorms,
 and fogs
 Suddenly will be remembered and there will be no place for melancholy.

Conclusion

Thus, the ‘local text’ of the Mari poet Gennady Oyar that we have examined, formed by him in the cycle ‘Northern Flashes’, is defined by the concept-locus ‘Chukotka’ (the cultural space of the northern people, distinguished by extreme

¹³ Oyar G. Chukotka Cycle (Translations by the author). Oyar G. (Sabantsev G. L.). 2014. Flashes of the Heart: Poems. Yoshkar-Ola: ‘Mariy Zhurnal’: String, p. 184.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 185.

natural conditions, the ontological and at the same time heroic essence of the people living in them and preserving their mythology and traditions). The ‘Chukchi text’ is artistically constructed: the basis of its lyrical plot is a complex of consistently realized motives (expectation, fear, discovery, surprise, admiration, rapprochement, acceptance, recognition of the kinship of souls). In the formation of the ‘local text’, toponyms (Chukotka, Pevek, Chaun, Ayon, Kolyma, etc.), specific natural phenomena and images (polar night, storm-yuzhak — the central image from the point of view of the author’s ‘myth’, seagulls, hills, etc.), landscape, objects of life (‘Polyarka’, cafe ‘Romashka’, icebreaker ‘Flying Dutchman’, etc.) are in demand as artistic devices and means. Also signs of national life, material and spiritual culture (a stone flower created by a female artist from northern gemstones; belief in nature gods, the ‘Эргырон’ ensemble, etc.), folklore and mythological images (Пэликэн, Южак, Келе) and motives, minor linguistic inclusions, mainly in the names of settlements (Чаун, Певек, Айон), cultural phenomena (эргырон) and Chukchi pagan gods are used in the same manner. The ‘Chukot text’ asserts the author’s idea about the ability of a northern man to live in a wild and unpredictable nature, to survive (win) and continue to live.

The compositional and semantic principle of Oyar’s cycle is the presence of the opposition ‘Other/Self’, which allows the author to actively include the Mari world in the ‘Chukchi text’, but not according to the principle of opposition, but rather conjugation (compare and connect, find points of contact, defuse, unite), which is largely connected with the natural conformity way of the existence and the natural-pagan culture of the peoples (Chukchi and Mari). The Mari theme is realized through special ‘Mari’ poems (‘Now in Your Land...’, ‘The Soul Does Not Know the Extent of Longness...’), as well as images of the Mari world, interspersed in ‘Chukchi’ poems (bird cherry, images of a loved one, a friend, anthroponyms that are not in the Chukchi line of lyrical narrative, but are in the Mari one, such as Ivan Smirnov, Columbus and Semyon Nikolaev in the frame text of the last poem), specific Mari vocabulary (onomatopoeia), presentation (translation and wordplay) of famous Russian words-names of the Chukchi space in the author’s native language (Йүдвел, Ияҥше Океан, ‘Чонештылше Голландец’, полярный йүд, ‘Висвис’). Important from the point of view of the opposition ‘Other/Self’ are the nostalgic notes for the native and the author’s reflections on the Chukot through the Mari. In return, the knowledge of the ‘Other’ allowed the author to truly appreciate ‘Self’ and to become more firmly established in his ethnic identity.

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