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*A.A. Shuneyko, O.V. Chibisova***MASONRY IN THE CONTEXT OF SASHA CHORNY'S SATIRE**

Analytical comprehension of the heritage and creative path of the poet Sasha Chorny affects many topics. But even taken integrally, it is far from a full-fledged complex description. Outside of researchers' view remain the whole strata of ideological and ethical problems, which sharply disturbed the writer. An important place among them is occupied by the theme of masonry. This work addresses the problem of realizing ideologically marked units that are known to the author from the practice of his own life. With this end in view, a complete sample of the material was carried out, which was later analyzed using semantic and stylistic methods. The conclusion consists in pointing out that the works of S. Chorny contain a number of direct and significant indications of the perception and evaluation of objects related to masonry. Their inclusion in ironic contexts leads to the fact that they act as elements of achieving the comic effect.

*Keywords:* Sasha Chorny, satire, masonry, Hiram, masonic signs.

In the biographical dictionary "People and lodges. Russian Masons of the 20th Century", N.N. Berberova, referring to the Paris archive of Russian Freemasonry 1922–1971, reported that Glikberg Alexander Mikhailovich (1880–1932), a poet-humorist under the pen name Sasha Chorny, joined Masonic lodge "Free Russia" in 1932 [4]. This fact, as well as the obvious and well-known life and creative contacts of S. Chorny with Russian Masonry writers in emigration (for example, M. Aldanov and M. Osorgin), cause confusion as to why scientists who study his work in different aspects for many years, pass over in silence the presence of direct references to the masonic tradition in his literary texts. It seems that this topic is just as "closed" [23] as is the Masonic society itself.

The greatest number of publications about Sasha Chorny belongs to S.S. Zhdanov [6], who focused on the multidimensional study of the "German" poems of the poet. M.A. Zhirkova [7] makes an attempt to present the life of Sasha Chorny in emigration in Lithuania, Germany, Italy and France as a factor that significantly influences the thematic and style evolution of the poet and writer. E.A. Afanasyeva [3] establishes new lines of successive links of Sasha Chorny with Russian and world literature through the prism of analyzing the meta-genre "satire and lyricism", which has a number of individual characteristics. O.I. Rybalchenko [12] chooses to consider the lexical means of expressing the estimated values, their semantic and stylistic functions, the principle of their selection and organization in the poetic texts of Sasha Chorny. P.Yu. Krasilnikova [8] analyzes the embodiment of different types of lexical meanings of animal names in the works of Sasha Chorny, identifies and describes the levels that characterize the coincidence or inconsistency of the actual meaning with associations existing for a specific word outside the context. N.A. Tibotkina [13] studies the philosophical motif of "identity" and "facelessness" of a person in the artistic world of Sasha Chorny, considering it the most widespread and conceptual in the entire work of the poet.

As for foreign studies of Sasha Chorny's works, there are practically none. His name is mentioned only in connection with other authors and cultural events. It seems that he is not an independent creative unit, but an appendix to a broad cultural context, an additional stroke in the general picture, a short anecdote among multi-volume novels. It makes us recall his well-known lines: "*В литературном прейскуранте // я занесён на скорбный лист* [In the literary catalogue // I am registered on a bedroom chart]" [14]. They were written long ago, concerned a different problem, but now they are perceived as prophetic. According to V. Nabokov, Sasha Chorny left only a few books and a quiet, lovely shadow [9].

In the book "Conversations in Exile: Russian Writers Abroad" [22] the authors discuss the concept of "literature in exile", attributing to it the works of writers written outside of Russia (external exile) or within it (internal exile). Sasha Chorny's name is mentioned in the list of those émigré writers who gained fame before the revolution, namely Arkady Averchenko, Ivan Bunin, Aleksandr Kuprin, Igor Severianin, Nadezhda Teffi, etc. The next book (Gutthy, 2009) continues the same theme. A. Gutthy also writes about the writers of the first wave of emigration, listed above, but divides them into two groups. The first group is those who belonged to the aristocracy and considered the revolutionary principles alien and potentially lethal. The second group, which includes Sasha Chorny, at first were members of revolutionary circles, but their hopes that the revolution would help bring the country out of stagnation were destroyed by the terror of the Bolsheviks. R. Taruskin [25] discusses the prospects for classical music at the end of the second millennium. He insists that

art is not a utopian escape; that is why artists live in the same world as the whole society. Speaking of this, he cites Sasha Chorny, whose poem “Descendants” he considers wonderfully anti-utopian and implicitly anti-Soviet: “Я хочу немножко света // Для себя, пока я жив... [I want a little light / For myself, while I am alive...]” [14].

Foreign publications, in contrast to Russian ones, emphasize such important aspect of S. Chorny’s creative life as publishing activity. Thus, S. Marten-Finnis and I. Dukhan [21. P. 228] mention about S. Chorny as an editor responsible for the literary section, while comparing the two Berlin journals Zhar Ptitsa (Firebird) and Milgroym (Pomegranate), most representative publishing outputs in terms of the basic ideas of the time, style and cultural identity that they represented. In addition, S. Goldman (Goldman, 2005), describing the minyan of Vladimir Nabokov in Berlin, reports that A.M. Glikberg (Sasha Chorny) founded a Russian press to publish the work of émigré writers. Another connection between Nabokov and Chorny through the Zhar Ptitsa magazine is reflected in the book by B. Boyd [15. P. 187], in which the author narrates how the literary editor of Zhar Ptitsa and the compiler of two literary miscellanies, Raduga (Rainbow) and Grani (Facets), Chorny brought out Sirin poetry, prose and drama.

Z. Folejewski [17] writes about Russian futurism the representatives of which turned against “aestheticism” of any kind. As the sign of the same attitude in particular, he characterizes Mayakovsky who could not stand Rachmaninoff’s music and admired the “anti-aestheticism” of Sasha Chorny. K. Evans-Romaine (Evans-Romaine, 2005: 266) in an article devoted to B. Pasternak, quotes E. Sokol that “the children’s verse that appeared in the post-revolutionary period was a breath of fresh air after the paucity of children’s verses written in the early twentieth century, when few writers, including Sasha Chorny, devoted themselves to young readers”. N. Šroma [24], arguing about the symbolic significance of cats and their exceptional position in the poetic system of Nikolai Zabolotsky, cites the cultural connotation of Zabolotsky’s cats with the image of “March cats”, depicted in S. Chorny’s poem “Wakening of Spring”.

It is not surprising that the tradition of selective perception of the creative heritage, the circumstances of life and the influence on the literary process led to the fact that the whole semantic strata of Sasha Chorny’s work remain out of the field of view of analysts and readers.

Meanwhile, S. Chorny’s works contain a number of direct, significant and rather interesting indications of the perception and evaluation of objects related to Freemasonry, both by the author himself and by the language community. Let us turn to these instructions, which are all the more interesting because they are located in the texts that consistently represent the creative manner of the humorist.

In 1910, S. Chorny wrote a poem “Song of Songs” [14], the title and a number of other meaningful components of which refer the reader to the biblical text. In this poem, the effect of the comic at the event level is constructed as follows. Sulamith asks Solomon: “Прикажи, чтоб медник твой Хирам // Вылил статую мою из меди вечной, – // Красоты моей нетленный храм!.. [Order your copper-smith Hiram // To pour out my statue from eternal copper, – // The imperishable temple of my beauty!..]”. Solomon, deciding that “У Хирама уж слишком красивая рожка – // Попозировать хочет моя Суламифь [Hiram’s mug is too beautiful – // My Sulamith wants to pose]”, sends Hiram a description of his beloved which repeats the biblical text. The sculptor creates “Медный, в шесть локтей болван [Copper, six cubit idol]”, and then explains his behavior by the fact that he literally read Solomon’s metaphorical description. In the context of the problem under consideration, it is the transformation of the biblical legend that is significant, based on the fact that here appears the character missing in the canonical “Song of Songs” – copper Hiram of Tyre: “Царь тихонько от шалуньи // Шлет к Хираму в Тир гонца [The king behind the minx’s back // Sends a messenger to Hiram in Tyre]” [14].

Not being the character of this biblical text, Hiram (other names: Hiram Abif / Giram / Giram Abif / Hiram Abiff / Adoniram, son of the widow) is also the main character of the central Masonic legend. Probably, the interest in Freemasonry existed in S. Chorny long before his formal admission to the Order. As a consequence of this interest, one can perceive the use of the name of a symbolic figure in a humorous text.

It is noteworthy that the “Song of Songs” reveals yet another curious connection with the Masonic tradition. The poem realizes a non-canonical assessment of the image of Solomon. Traditionally, the semantic field associated with this name assumes, as the main component, “the standard of wisdom”. This traditional use is present in the texts of Chorny: for example, in the story “Arbitration Court”: “Ей-богу же, Соломон вы не Соломон, а я и не подозревала, что вы до такой степени человек неглупый [By God, Solomon, you are not Solomon, and I did not even suspect that you are no fool to such an extent]”; in the story “Mosquito relics”: “Опять и царь Соломон, человек вкуса отборного [Again, King Solomon as well, a man of

the choicest taste]”; in the “Song of Songs”: “округление бедер твоих, как ожерелье, сделанное руками художника [the circularity of your hips is like a necklace made by the artist]”; in the story “Quarrel”: “«погладила обоих по встрепанным волосам и, как мудрый царь Соломон, рассудила [patted both on the dishevelled hair and, like wise King Solomon, judged]” [14].

In the text of the poem, this main component is not only disactualized, but replaced almost by its opposite. The same emphasis on the unconventional aspect of Solomon’s assessment is present in M. Osorgin’s story “The Freemason”: “*Всякий раз, как царь Соломон растерзывал очередную девушку из тысячи заготовленных для его наслаждений, он чувствовал временное пресыщение и искал дневного занятия, соответственного его званию.* [Every time King Solomon tore to pieces another girl out of a thousand prepared for his pleasures, he felt a temporary satiety and looked for a day’s work corresponding to his title]” [11. P. 93-94]; “*Не только сметлив, но и мудр был царь Соломон, особой ядовитой мудростью правителей, которую он передал и всем дальнейшим правительствам всех эпох и племен* [King Solomon was not only sharp, but also wise, a special poisonous wisdom of the rulers, which he passed on to all subsequent governments of all ages and tribes] [11. P. 94].” It is obvious that the visual means used in “Song of Songs” are subordinated to the task of creating the comic effect, but in solving this problem the author considers it possible to use a name meaningful for the Masons. In a similar function, the masonic symbol pentagram is used in B. Pilnyak’s novel “Naked Year.”

The poem “The Bazaar in Auteuil” written in 1927 contains the following lines: “*Почему? И сам не знаю. // После лет гражданской драки // Каждый мирный лист капусты // Шлет масонские мне знаки <...>* [Why? I myself do not know. // After years of civil fights // Each peaceful leaf of cabbage // Sends me masonic signs <...>]” [14]. The ironic transformation of calling the secret ways of Masons to identify each other in the environment of the uninitiated by means of visual signs, primarily gestures, is carried out here due to the contact combination of two diametrically opposite semantic plans: a mundane household plan, to which “cabbage” refers to, and a plan of sublime mystery, to which “masonic signs” refer to. Here the word combination “masonic signs” is used in a figurative sense which is a method of secret information transmission by means of visually perceptible signs that is intelligible only to a select and strictly restricted circle. This figurative meaning, which maintains a close connection with the main one through the presence of the semantic component “a secret information transmission”, arose on its basis by expanding the scope of using the word combination, or by increasing the volume of the sign. This expanded meaning in the XX–early XXI century has become common.

For example, T.N. Egorova recalls her communication with Yu. Semyonov: “*На следующий день Бахус <...> сообщил нам, в котором часу смотреть его интервью, и обещал нам делать ‘масонские’ знаки: по очереди хватать себя за мочки уха, дотронуться до кончика носа и, обращаясь к нам лично, сказать по телевидению то, что его в данный момент волнует.* [The next day Bacchus <...> told us the time to watch his interview, and he promised to do ‘masonic’ signs: to take turns grabbing his earlobes, touching the tip of his nose and to tell on TV what he currently cares about addressing us personally]” [5. P. 257]. S. Chorny was one of those, thanks to whom this meaning was included in the active speech turnover.

The same text contains a curious connection with the masonic symbolism of “The Lost Tram” by N. Gumilev: “*Смотришь влево, смотришь вправо, // Голова – кочан капусты <...>* [You look to the left, look to the right, // The head is a head of cabbage <...>]” [14]. Compare it with Gumilev’s: “*<...> Вместо капусты и вместо брюквы // Мертвые головы продают.* [Instead of cabbages and rutabagas // The heads of the dead are for sale” [19]. The presence of a direct reference to Freemasonry in the poem “Bazaar in Auteuil” suggests that this connection is not accidental.

The combination of two opposite semantic plans presented in the text is traditional for S. Chorny’s creativity and is actively used by him in various works. The poem “Ineptness”: “*Научилась: что угодно? // Со смешком иль со слезой, // По старинке или модно, // С гимном свету иль с козой? <...> Храма нет-с, и музы – глупость, // Пот и ловкость – весь багаж...* [I learned: What is your pleasure? // With a chuckle or a tear, // In the old fashion or fashionable, // With a hymn to the light or a goat? <...> There is no temple, and muse is nonsense, // Sweat and dexterity is all my luggage]” [14]. The poem “Without Vacancies”: “*Он, на сук повесив галстук, // Перед зеркалом овальным // Поправлял прорбор свой жидкий // Жестом сдержанно-астральным.* [He hung his tie on a bough, // In front of the oval mirror // Corrected his sparse parting // With a restrained-astral gesture]” [14].

In the story “Sausage Occultism”, the character of perception and fixation of words of the semantic field is modeled by the very name of the work, where the contrasting juxtaposition of the two spheres is represented in an extremely pointed form. From the newspaper advertisement of the occultist: “*Имеющим свою квартиру – льготные условия платежа. С оккультным приветом, Веранда Брахмапутра* [Those who have their own apartment have preferential terms of payment. With occult greetings, Veranda Brahmaputra]”; “*Нет, стало быть, во мне этого самого оккультного перца* [Therefore, there is no this very occult pepper in me]”; “*Ткнул я кнопку, дверь как дверь – ничего магнетического* [I poked the button, the door like a door – nothing magnetic]”; “*Щечки – земляничное желе, грудь на пульмановских корсетных ресорах, глаза – две коринки, – ничего мистического* [The cheeks are like strawberry jelly, the bosom is on Pullman’s corset springs, the eyes are two currants, – nothing mystical]” [14]. This story contains a word combination, synonymous with the word combination “masonic signs”: “*Снимает она с полочки над головой пузастенькую книжечку. Жест франкмасонский сделала, открыла её где попало и спрашивает: Правая страница или левая?* [She takes a paunchy little book from the shelf above her head, makes a masonic gesture, opens it at random and asks: The right or left page?]” [14]. The synonymous phrase is also placed in an ironic context.

The story “Pushkin in Paris” reproduces an imaginary situation in which Pushkin (his materialized spirit) finds himself in the Paris of 1926, where he encounters various representatives of Russian emigration; the latter seek to involve him in the sphere of their political interests. The dialogue with them ends with the following dialogue with the servant: “*От крайних правых дожидаются и от пражских эсеров... // Поэт покачался на каблуках. // – Масоны, верно, какие-нибудь... Скажите, что я уехал, – строго сказал он слуге.* [Some from the extreme right are awaiting and from the Prague socialist revolutionaries... // The poet rocked on his heels. // – Some Masons, surely... Tell them I have left, – he strictly told the servant]” [14]. We should note that in the described period of time, S. Chorny was familiar with the Masons, and it is difficult to assume that he did not know about Pushkin’s belonging to Masonry.

The appraisal usage of the word “Masons” in this case assumes two different readings. The first is accessible to the reader who is not aware of the fact that Pushkin himself was a Freemason, quite serious about the fact of his belonging to the Order. In this reading, the nomination demonstrates an ironic speech use of the word with semantics, “a group of people engaged in something secret, incomprehensible and of little significance (frivolous).” That is, here, as in the cases with “masonic signs” and “a masonic gesture”, the author duplicates one of the meanings that are fixed behind the word in colloquial speech. Compare its usage with a similar assessment in modern texts: “*Какие там масоны, – досадливо сморщил гладкий лоб Фандорин. – Про них все знают. Тут же просматривается настоящий комплот, не опереточный* [What kind of Masons are there, – Fandorin wrinkled his sleek forehead. – Everybody knows about them. Here is a real conspiracy, not theatrical]” [1. P. 173]; “*Как иллюзорны происки масонов...* [How illusory are the machinations of masons...]” [2]. This reading suggests that the irony is directed at the Masons themselves. The second reading is accessible to the reader, who is quite familiar with Pushkin’s biography. And as part of this reading, the character of the story already sneers at himself.

S. Chorny’s texts contain a number of other mentions of concepts connected with the semantic field “masonry”. The poem “The Philistine’s Voice”: “*Тема была бескрайна, // Как теософическая тайна: // Что такое эмиграция?* [The theme was boundless, // As a theosophical mystery: // What is emigration?]” [14]. Poem “Meat”: “*Вкруг площадки, в модных штучках, // Крутобедрые Астарты, // Как в торговые ряды, // Зовывают кавалеров* [Around the site, in fashionable garments, // Astartes with steep curved hips, // As if into the trading rows, // Call the cavaliers]” [14]. The poem “No Vacancies”: “*Загорелые, как пряник, // Две курносые Астарты // С быковидными юнцами // Под сосной играют в карты* [Tanned as gingerbread, // Two snub-nosed Astartes // With bull-shaped youths // Play cards under the pine]” [14].

The story “Legalized Amateurishness” contains an ironic reference to the myth of the worldwide masonic conspiracy: “*В наши дни начинающие (литераторы) предприимчивее. Они пустили в обращение странную легенду, которой сами первые и поверили: о международной интриге против них старших собратьев, редакторов, издателей, метранпажей и едва ли не брошюровщиц.* [In our days, the beginners (writers) are more enterprising. They put into circulation a strange legend, in which they were the first to believe: about the international intrigue against them by their elder brethren, editors, publishers, compositors and almost bookbinders]” [14]. Here the idea of a conspiracy of powerful secret forces is transformed into a desire to ironically recreate the attempts of unsuccessful writers to justify their sad creative and publishing destiny.

S. Chorny, using the masonic terminology in an ironic context, continues the line of stylistic transformations begun by V.F. Odоеvsky. At this, in contrast to his older predecessor, he concentrates on only assessment plan. This situation, illustrated by the whole body of the facts presented here, also manifests itself in cases of very similar textual similarity.

The ironic reference to the myth of the masonic conspiracy, the power of a secret society is contained in the story of V.F. Odоеvsky "Princess Mimi": *"Открою великую тайну; слушайте: все, что ни делается в свете, делается для некоторого безымянного общества! Оно – партер; другие люди – сцена. Оно держит в руках и авторов, и музыкантов, и красавиц, и гениев, и героев. Они ничего не боятся – ни законов, ни правды, ни совести. <...> Члены сего общества везде тотчас узнают друг друга не по особенным знакам, но по какому-то инстинкту... [I will reveal a great secret; listen: everything that is done in the world is done for some nameless society! It is a parterre; other people are the scene. It keeps control of both authors and musicians, and beauties, and geniuses, and heroes. They are not afraid of anything – either laws, or truth, or conscience. <...> The members of this society immediately recognize each other not by special signs, but by some instinct... ]"* [10].

Excerpts from "Legalized Curiosity" and "Princes Mimi" contain similar semantic complexes. The relationship of similarity between them is determined by the fact that the ironically mentioned references to certain secret brotherhoods are supplied with similar attributes: anonymity of the society, its secrecy, omnipotence, destructive activity in relation to a certain group of persons.

It is with these (among other things) attributes that opponents of Freemasonry empower it and actively contribute to their spread and rooting in the public consciousness. The root cause of their appearance is in the quest to find the external culprit of their own failures. The set of these characteristics is well known to authors familiar with Freemasonry, which allows it to be used with a dual target installation. This target setting is manifested in the fact that the author's irony in this case has two application points at the same time. On the one hand, direct objects of narration are directly exposed to it. On the other hand, in its field there are those who produce a paranoid view of Freemasonry. That is, the writers of myths about Freemasonry indirectly fall in the sphere of irony. This is due to the fact that literally, compactly and with an access to all realities, reproducing a well-known set of estimates, the authors demonstrate its absurdity. In other words, the reproduction of a stereotypical evaluation in a certain context itself becomes an assessment of those who produce this estimate in relation to a particular object. Such a complex indirect use of the evaluation plan becomes possible only in the language of fiction: the knowledgeable author fixes the perception of the view through the mention of it in relation to an extraneous object.

In their totality, both the words / word combinations of the opponents of the Order, and the contexts similar to those above, lead to the fact that at the beginning of the 20th century the conceptual field of the word "masonry", in its non-specialized, non-thermal or speech use, is blurred and expanded, loses its concreteness. It begins to be composed from the attributes which are often repeated in these or other spheres, and it takes the form of "a powerful secret power, with its almost unlimited possibilities influencing the society for one or another purpose". In a semantic sense, this word undergoes the same changes as the words "a freemason" or "a pharmlason" at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This link is not accidental, because the semantic transformations reflect the introduction of lexical units into the various contexts that are the result of their actualization.

"The Newest Self-tutor of Advertising" mentions one of the Masonic virtues – the love of death in its Latin version: *"Что касается лекций, что лучше выбрать для них такие темы, которые, с одной стороны, не требуют знаний, превышающих словарь иностранных слов ("Sic transit..." "Memento mori!"), с другой – дают неограниченный простор импрессионизму жеста и слова [As for lectures, it is better to choose such topics that, on the one hand, do not require knowledge exceeding the vocabulary of foreign words ("Sic transit ..." 'Memento mori!'), on the other, give unlimited space to the impressionism of gesture and word.]"* [14]. It is noteworthy that here again the ironical evaluation is directed not at the very concept mentioned, but at the recipient of the text and the nature of the reproduced phenomenon.

Summarizing this review of the use of components of the semantic field "masonry" by S. Chorny, one should pay attention to the following. In the language of Russian fiction, the components of the semantic field "masonry" are used in different ways: neutrally, accompanied by a positive or negative evaluation, or ironically. With regard to individual units, these appraisal plans can be implemented independently or jointly (neutral + ironic, positive + ironic, negative + ironic) and supplemented with concrete indicators of the speaker's relationship to the object (negative + ironic + fear, positive + ironic + astonishment) etc. In this

variety of assessments, the place of word usage by S. Chorny is defined quite clearly. The concepts associated with masonry he uses in the neutral + ironical evaluative key. The writer uses units in ironic contexts, realizing one of the ways of their application in colloquial speech. Thus, he expands the scope of the wording and makes the words more familiar to the language community. It is important that this type of wording in the language of the Russian fiction of the twentieth century acquired more than one follower.

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### **МАСОНСТВО В КОНТЕКСТЕ САТИРЫ САШИ ЧЕРНОГО**

Аналитическое осмысление наследия и творческого пути поэта Саши Чёрного затрагивает большое количество тем, но в целом оно далеко от полноценного комплексного описания. Вне поля зрения исследователей остаются целые пласты идеологических и этических проблем, которые остро волновали литератора. Существенное место среди них занимает тема масонства. В данной работе рассматривается проблема реализации в литературном творчестве идеологически маркированных единиц, которые известны автору из практики собственной жизни. С этой целью была проведена сплошная выборка материала, который затем подвергся анализу с применением семантического и стилистического методов. Сделан вывод, что произведения С. Чёрного содержат ряд непосредственных и значимых указаний на восприятие и оценку объектов, связанных с масонством. Их включение в иронические контексты приводит к тому, что они выступают как элементы достижения эффекта комического.

*Ключевые слова:* Саша Чёрный, сатира, масонство, Хирам, масонские знаки.

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