

SELF-IDENTIFICATION AS THE LEITMOTIF OF LEV RUBINSTEIN'S MATURE POEMS

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the analysis of the poems by Lev Rubinstein, a representative of the so-called "Moscow conceptualism". Based on the material of the poems "The Appearance of a Hero" (1986), "Mama washed the Frame" (1987), "It's Me" (1995), it is shown that despite the declarative statements of conceptualist theorists about the lack of ideas of modern poetry, Rubinstein tends to the semantic component of creativity, in particular, strives to find and consolidate the place of the lyrical hero of his poems (the alter ego of the author) in the world and in poetry. The motive of self-determination permeates Rubinstein's mature texts of the 1980s — early 1990s and leads him to appeal to non-lyrical genres, in particular to the genre of essays.

Keywords: Keywords: Rubinstein; conceptualism; "The Appearance of a Hero"; "Mama washed the Frame"; "It's Me"; the problem of self-determination.

1 Introduction

The practice of conceptual art of the 1970s and 1980s is complex, ambiguous, and, according to the declarations of the artists of "Moscow romantic conceptualism" (B. Groys), is intentionally purposeless, unfounded, supra-individual. The ways of finding the organizing principles of life, time, space, their cause-and-effect relationships, a person's place in the surrounding world, it seems, do not and should not become the object of creative reflection of conceptualists. Style and form should come to the fore, allowing us to live the discredited norms of socialist realist art and look at the process of artistic creation from a different and unexpected side. Representatives of "Moscow conceptualism", who implemented their own projects mainly in the field of literature (D. Prigov, L. Rubinstein, T. Kibirov, V. Sorokin, etc.), mostly found themselves on this path, playing with form and rising above their own individuality in a "foreign style". Thus, a feature of Vladimir Sorokin's "individual style" became "nobody's style", the artist's willingness to reproduce in each new work any manner and recognizable features of the poetics of the writer-predecessor or contemporary (see about this: Bogdanova 2004).

It seems that Lev Rubinstein, who found himself at the very origins of the conceptualist practices of the 1970s, who became one of the founders and theorists of the conceptualist "Trips out of Town", also moved in this direction. However, as with a number of other conceptualists (and postmodernists in general), the lack of a semantic component in his work turned out to be insurmountable for Rubinstein — the content plan of his poems intensified as the artist gained maturity. Therefore, the relevance of the research is explained by the fact that the creative potential of Rubinstein's poetry has been growing over the years and requires its own thinking.

2 Literature Review

About conceptual verses in Rubinstein's work there is a detailed research of M. Lipovetsky (Lipovetsky 1996, 1997), M. Eisenberg (Aizenberg, 1997), O Bogdanova (Bogdanova 2004, 2023). These and other studies (Groys 1993, Epshtein 2019, Bobrinskaya 1998, Kazarina 2005) formed the basis of our research. Works on

poetology (Trostnikov 1997, Novikov 2001), the peculiarities of inter-genre neoplasms, in particular, on the intersection of prose and poetry (Zhirmunsky 1979, 2001, Lotman 1972, 1973), on the history of the "Moscow romantic conceptualism" were involved in the analysis.

3 The practical significance

The practical significance of the study is that its intermediate and final conclusions, individual observations and judgments can be used in further study of the work of Lev Rubinstein.

4 Rubinstein's Mature Work

If at the early stage of conceptual practices (actions, gestures), the most important component for Rubinstein was to overcome the existing Soviet literary tradition, and mainly at the level of form (creation of objects, generation of the genre of cards, "collective actions" as part of group A. Monastyrsky, etc.) — as overcoming the inertia of social realism, then gradually the poet's own voice began to break through the "total text", to rise above the "planar version" of a copy or reproduction (in the broadest sense of these genre formations), revealing its own logic and its own laws of world modeling (see about this: Rubinstein 1996, 6-7). It is no coincidence that V. Lettsev, defining the difference between Prigov's and Rubinstein's conceptualism, respectively designated them as "aesthetic" and "gnostic" variants (Lettsev 1989, 111), emphasizing the latter's attraction to the deep components of creative intentionality.

Critics attribute the period of maturity of the conceptual poet Lev Rubinstein to the early-mid 1980s (Lipovetsky 1997; Bogdanova 2004; Epshtein 2019). According to the observations of researchers, it was at this time that the existential perspectives of Rubinstein's poetry were contoured, the poet's actualization of the search for "personal identity" and self-determination within the established creative paradigm belongs to this period (Lipovetsky 1996, 1997). The consistent problematization of the subjective component of Rubinstein's poetic texts of the 1980s caused radical changes in his poetics: in a series of deliberately faceless anonymous "card" voices, the image of a lyrical subject began to emerge, whose special world even received a nominative fixation in the poem "The Appearance of a Hero". From that moment on, in Rubinstein's poetic texts, intentions turned out to be aimed at constructing one's own personality, the "lyrical self" ceases to be a working function and is endowed with the features of the author himself. In the poems of this period — "The Appearance of a Hero" (1986), "Mama washed the Frame" (1987), "It's Me" (1995) — there are actually three versions or three stages of the embodiment of author personalization, reflected in the specifics of the plot development, where "the poet's torn self seeks reunion with by himself, persistently seeks self-identification" (Lipovetsky 1996, 213). The way to achieve this goal in each of the poems lies through the conflict of the hero with society, the choice of a particular behavior model turns out to be key in the variable resolution of collisions.

4.1 Problems of self-identification in the poem "The Appearance of a Hero"

For the representativeness of the analysis and identification of the dynamic structure of Rubinstein's "catalog poem" "The Appearance of a Hero" (Rubinstein 1996, 47-57), consisting of traditional cards, we pay attention to the allocation of four types of speech communication in it: polylogue — the voices of many (1-94 cards); narration — the speech of a third person (95-98 cards); dialogue — the speech of two (99-102 cards); monologue — speech (in this case internal speech) of one character (103-110 cards).

The collection of heterogeneous phrases of the conditionally first — polylogical — part of the poem resembles a live queue of strangers (like V. Sorokin's novel "Queue"), whose voices echo

without receiving an answer, or answer each other without hearing a question. The motley picture of conversational discourse demonstrates the inconsistency of communication as a whole, exposing the age-old problem of deafness and misunderstanding between people. Rubinstein skillfully annihilates the personality of each of the sounding phrases, framing it as neutral, recognizable. The variants of situations in which the use of this or that expression is possible are practically innumerable, but a statement that has lost its context, has lost its main communicative function, turns into a template speech formula with which you can start any kind of communication ("Well, what can I tell you?"), continue ("Let's try again") or end any conversation ("Thank you. I have to go"). The author places special emphasis on the fact that a communicative "hole" arises in the sphere of everyday communication, in an area where people are inevitably interconnected. The impersonality and fragmentarity of statements produced by Rubinstein devalues the habitually significant constants — who speaks, what he talks about, why he speaks, etc. Rubinstein creates the effect of a continuous flow of speech, the carrier of which is not a specific hero (there are no actors in the first part of the poem), but society itself, faceless mass.

1. Well, what can I tell you?
2. He knows something, but is silent.
3. I don't know, maybe you're right.
4. It is both healthier and tastier.
5. At the first car at seven.
6. There's more about the student.
7. Come on. I'm just there. <...> (Rubinstein 1996, 47).

Modeling a situation where everyone speaks as one is not only a structural, but also a sense-forming technique. According to M. Berg, "a distinct interest in mass consciousness characteristic of conceptualism and a predilection for the banal, vulgar, marginal and various forms of repressed consciousness were interpreted in such a way that this particular material needed deconstruction more than others, and deconstruction itself contributed to the appropriation of the positions of the field of ideology by the field of literature" (Berg 2000, 115). Indeed, the classical master of Russian poetry, which is used by Rubinstein in the poem, performs not only the function of concatenating heterogeneous isolated phrases, but also deconstructing the phrasal-poetic banality itself.

Deconstruction of the polylogue as a collective consciousness can also be considered another Rubinstein technique — the gradual withdrawal of the main character from the general flow of voices: "There's more about the student", "What's there about the student?", "And where about the student?" (Rubinstein 1996, 47, 49, 53). Impersonal replicas-questions that vary the subject of the student, cling to each other and receive continuation and development. The original narrative strategy is being scrapped, marked by the transition from polylogical communication to communication of not all, but individual hero (voices).

Following the erasure of the boundaries of the collectivity of the polylogue, the poetic dimension in Rubinstein's poem gradually strays into a prose narrative from the third person. Cliches and speech models, designed quasi-poetically, are replaced by the image of everyday micro-plots, which, from a stylistic point of view, are presented dryly, almost documentarily. Scrupulous observation of the emerging hero-student, a detailed description of his simple actions, the use of indirect speech instead of direct speech create a sense of a new genre style — a synopsis. Or, according to the representation of critic A. Zorin, excerpts from school textbooks or dictation (Zorin 1989, 91). An impersonal communicative function, subjected to deformation, undergoes transformation and rushes to zero.

The appearance of the hero-student in Rubinstein's poem is connected with the formation of a familiar everyday world around him, a familiar trajectory of the "school — street — house" movement. But the removal of the character from the mass, from the crowd does not happen immediately. Up to a certain time, the poem is dominated by an impersonal and

depersonalizing space, where each character is nominated and differentiated according to the function he performs: "mother", "classmates", "teacher", "student".

At the same time, in this part of the poem, starting with the 98th card, the circle of characters shows a tendency to narrow, to shrink more and more: from among the heroes "mother", "student", "classmates", "teacher", only two remain — a teacher and a student. Now the impersonal polylogue is replaced by a dialogue of two characters, moreover, in the course of dialogical communication, the interlocutors outgrow their everyday ("school") roles. To a certain extent, their primitive replicas rise to the heights of individualization, since they no longer turn out to be banal common phrases, but quotations from the seventeenth chapter of Confucius' book "Conversations and Judgments".

Addressing Bo-yu (the son of Confucius), the teacher asked: "Have you read the Songs of the Kingdom of Zhou and the Songs of the Kingdom of Shao? <...> Those who have not read them are like those who stand in silence with their faces turned to the wall" (Rubinstein 1996, 55). Or: The teacher said: "I don't want to talk anymore". Tzu-gong (a disciple of Confucius) said, "If the teacher doesn't talk anymore, what will we transmit?" The Teacher said, "Does heaven speak? And the four seasons go by, and things are born. Does the sky speak?" (Rubinstein 1996, 55).

It is noteworthy that Rubinstein almost did not change the original classical text, only omitted proper names. But the context of the original is not lost, because it is known that the name Confucius came from a combination of Kung-tzu, Kung Fu-Tzu (teacher Kun) or simply Tzu — Teacher. The motive of the teacher (and the student) is not only duplicated, but also subjectified. And although before this character also appeared in the stream of voices of the first conditional part of the poem (73rd card: "Is Confucius the fifth century?"), but before the dialogical part of the text, he was not noticeable, was not contoured.

In a conversation with the teacher, the conflict between the collective (mass) and the unit (personality) is concentrated and exposed in phrases-quotations. For example, "The student asked: To dissolve into being or to dissolve into non-being — does it matter? The teacher said, I do not know. And the student left and began to think" (Rubinstein 1996, 54).

At first glance, the mention of the categories "being — non-being" or "life — death" in the dialogue between a teacher and a young student is almost accidental. However, the detailed description of the student, which has already been discussed, depersonalized his any actions. Accordingly, "dissolution" in being, as "dissolution" in the flow of voices, led to the loss of individuality and was equated almost to death. Whereas now, in the atmosphere of dialogue with the teacher, the hero not only appeared, but also thought — in fact, he posed the question of self-identification.

In another episode, the teacher asked: "Have you read Songs of the Zhou Kingdom and Songs of the Shao Kingdom?" The student replied: "No." The teacher said: "He who has not read them is like one who stands silently with his face turned to the wall." The student did not answer. "He went his own way and began to think" (Rubinstein 1996, 55). The fragment is interesting in two circumstances. On the one hand, the image of the hero standing silently, facing the wall, directly refers to the figure of the punished student, that is, who has not yet comprehended the truth, who is mistaken. But, on the other hand, the motive of choosing the path begins to build up in the text: the student strives to stay alone and think. "The student was left alone in the classroom and began to think", "When the guests dispersed, the student was left alone and began to think", "The student left and began to think" (Rubinstein 1996, 54).

Each subsequent (conditional) part of Rubinstein's poem narrows the circle of characters, bringing the main character out

of the mass more and more clearly: set → some quantity → two → one. The movement of the student along this road is carried out, on the one hand, involuntarily, because if you “stop, you will not collect bones” (Rubinstein 1996, 55). On the other hand, it is a movement “to the cherished line”, “to the irrefutable limit”, “to the described boundary”, that is, to the outcome and choice. The hero cannot formulate a conclusion for a long time, because “other voices persistently remind you that you are not alone here” (Rubinstein 1996, 55). But the final phrase of the first conditional part — “Then he thought for a long time” (Rubinstein 1996, 55) — marks the beginning of the hero’s going beyond society, even when he is inside it.

The hierarchy of the characters in the poem (albeit not strict) entails the emergence of other hierarchical levels. Thus, when dividing the text into types of speech communication, the gradation of the stylistic sphere of the language is noticeable. As D. Prigov wrote, “conceptualism — both literary and in the field of art — is characterized by the use of unusual, unconventional languages, such as the language of socio-political and scientific texts, catalogs and quasi-scientific research, and not as quotations, but as the structural basis of works” (Prigov 1989, 419). Rubinstein’s entire text was originally built on a bizarre interweaving of languages framing this or that (hypothetical) situation. But the language level of the poem turns out to be subject to hierarchy: from template speech formulas to the language of scientific and educational publications to philosophical formulas of speech and, finally, to the synthesis of these styles, semantically mediating and filling the meaning of the student’s monologue. The heterogeneity of speech reflects different sides of the surrounding reality, and, as Rubinstein said, now “when comparing different plans, not reality and language collide, but different languages, one of which is designed to replace reality” (Eisenberg 1997, 130).

Rubinstein’s polylogue is a closed structure organized by a four-stop iambic with masculine endings, which will not be broken even if you start reading from any card of the poem. That is, Rubinstein does not care about the content of phrases, but their very combination, their internal logic. At the same time, the absence of the addressee deprives the replicas of directional movement, and the replicas deprived of a vector form chaos that accommodates an empty impersonal space. According to A. Zorin, “Lev Rubinstein’s poetic world turns out to be populated by voices echoing as if in a void devoid of bodies” (Zorin 1989, 91).

However, the silence of the student becomes a contextual synonym for the thought process. As a result, not only the finale, but also the entire text of the poem “The Appearance of the Hero” turns out to be permeated by the thought of one passing through the speech of many. Accordingly, by the end of the poem, Rubinstein’s character is no longer perceived as a schoolboy, not as a listener and student, but as a character who is approaching (or trying to approach) the solution of the mysteries of existence. The motive of self-identification is concentrated around the hero who is gaining maturity.

4.2 The motif of childhood memories in the poem “Mama washed the Frame”

Lev Rubinstein also refers to the figure of the maturing hero in the poem “Mama washed the Frame”. But unlike the “Appearance of the Hero”, the narrative strategy of this poem is a first-person statement addressing moments of the past, childhood memories or old photographs.

The artistic world of the poem “Mama washed the Frame” is organized by a set of the most familiar everyday moments of various plot and emotional saturation.

7. It started to rain.
8. Brother teased brother.
9. The milk ran away.
17. The disabled person burned down in the car.
18. We went to the forest.
19. Grandma had cancer (Rubinstein 1996, 68-69).

Short, simple syntactic sentences and the immediacy of the presentation of events recreate the “telegraphic style of memory” (Eisenberg 1997, 151).

They record either the action (“We went to the forest”, “Dad quit smoking”), or the subject and his distinctive features (“Yulia Mikhailovna was strict”, “Igor Dudkin was like a Georgian”). The childishness of the manner of speech is manifested in the very construction of the phrase, for example, in the deliberately incorrect use of the opposite conjunction: “The Sorokins had plums, but there was also Jack” (Rubinstein 1996, 69). A special tuning fork role is also played by the title phrase — “Mom washed the Frame”, borrowed from the context of school reading exercises and placed in the epic field of the poem.

At first glance, the phrase “Mom washed the Frame” as an introductory sentence reduces the drama of life’s vicissitudes that arise as the plot develops, and unifies all subsequent statements (so, almost every phrase acquires a distinctly quasi-literal sound: “The guys played volleyball in the clearing”). That is, the composition of the text creates a situation of impersonality and mass character comparable to the “Appearance of the Hero”. But if in the 1986 poem the lyrical hero outgrew his conventional role of a student from a collection of problems, then in this text the author explicates the character’s connection with the world of the primer. The world of ABC truths seems to the subject of the narrative more comfortable and safe than the external environment.

Rubinstein reproduces a child’s vision of the world, which is expressed not only in the representation of objects of reality, but also in the very choice of “plot” episodes. More than half of the poem consists of listing the names of those people who were previously part of the character’s social circle, and now pop up in the memory of the lyrical subject. This layer has a function similar to the polylogue of the preceding poem: the text of the memoirs outlines the environment of the hero, recreating his character context, but in addition it also becomes a sign of his “pedigree”, the path to his self-identification.

It is significant that for the first time the voice of the lyrical hero appears in the poem “Mama washed the Frame” on the twenty-first card and is introduced into the narrative indirectly, through the figure of the grandmother: “20. The grandmother died in her sleep. 21. I often saw my grandmother in a dream. 22. I was very afraid to die in my sleep” (Rubinstein 1996, 69). It is curious that the “birth” of the subject in the text occurs as if in the atmosphere of the news of the death of a relative, as if illustrating the act of continuing life and changing generations.

The next appearance of the hero will take place fifteen fragments later and will again be tied to a story about another: “35. Sasha Smirnov was jealous of what brands I had. 36. He could move his ears. 37. Then I learned” (Rubinstein 1996, 70). A passing mention of himself illustrates the specifics of the consciousness of the hero-child, the identification of himself through the environment. The hero feels like a part of society, but the relationship in which he is with him turns out to be a relationship of subordination and dependence. Germination of the hero from the environment does not give him (contrary to expectations) a sense of confidence and security. The content of the cards in which the lyrical subject appears is inextricably linked with the motives of weakness and fear: “I was very afraid to die in my sleep”, “I was afraid of Tanya Beletskaya’s doll”, “One day I almost burned out”, “I was shy about my name”, etc.

Contrasting with the feeling of “inferiority” of the hero are fragments with the actions of others: “Yura Stepanov made a hut”, “Vova Avdeev fought”, “Sergei Alexandrovich joked with dad”, “Gleb Vyshinsky brought a mouse” (etc.), among which episodes stand out where the actions of the characters are directed at the lyrical hero: “Sasha Smirnov was jealous of what brands I had”, “My brother hit me because I was laughing and making faces”, “I was not allowed to cross the road”. As in the cards characterizing the hero, here again the situations of pressure on the character vary in one way or another.

Gradually, the text of Rubinstein is filled with disturbing notes, intensifying towards the finale and resolved by a terrible thunderstorm. The motive of the storm, only outlined in the "Appearance of the Hero", becomes a leitmotif in this text. If the third card only represents — "The wind was blowing", if the seventh states — "It started raining", and then both phenomena seem to subside, then after forty-three fragments, the wind and rain return, but in an amplified sound. The premonition of a frightening coming thunderstorm is complemented by household troubles that are forcing the atmosphere: runaway milk, falling tension every now and then, a loud cry from dad, finally, the echo of a thunderclap (card 34) and the rumble of a heavy chain of a yard dog.

By the end, the fusion of complementary storylines is marked by the highest point of emotional tension, which blocks the ability to logically construct thoughts, breaks the syntactic structure of phrases, leaving them unsaid, cut off in mid-sentence.

70. One day, entering Gali Fomina's room without knocking, I saw for the first time.

71. One day, possessed by terrible premonitions, I rushed in.

Emotional shock serves as a barrier to the verbal expression of the feelings of the hero, who, trying to find the most appropriate form of presentation, again strays into a childish incorrect manner of speech organization: "73. The wind raged all night, there was also a thunderstorm" (Rubinstein 1996, 73).

The process of growing up of a hero, more or less successfully passing life tests, in the poem "Mama washed the Frame" is actualized not by plot (as in "The Appearance of the Hero"), but at the level of rhythm. In an attempt to express himself, the lyrical subject imperceptibly proceeds to the rhythmization of each individual phrase (cards 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, etc.).

The appeal to the four-stop iambic and high topic transforms the text space of the poem: the angle of view of the hero changes dramatically, the narrative departs from trivial plots, the picture of a well-coordinated life is opposed by a raging element. It is indistinguishable who is the addressee of rhythmically organized replicas — the adult instance of the lyrical subject or the language itself, which has come into its own. But the statement of bad weather, the landscape plan, embodied in the style of neutral vocabulary, is consistently poetized. Thus, the card 75 ("Thunder struck, boredom arose, confusion foamed in the chest") has a romantic character, anticipating the appearance of a whole quatrain rhyming *abab* (in Russian) with alternating female and male rhymes.

Initially seemingly "childish", the poetic lines acquire a classic Pushkin sound, which also appeared in the first part of the "Appearance of the Hero". It is noteworthy that in both poems, those passages that represent the dynamics of rapprochement with the area of chaos are subjected to rhythmization. The rhythm and poetic structure seem to stand in the way of overcoming the confusion and fear of the lyrical hero, in this text forming a psychological landscape permeated with the sounds of hail and raging wind, but "pacified" by the rhythmic structure of the narrative.

The question arises: how does the poem "Mama washed the Frame" reflect the process of self-identification of the hero? The idea sounded above that the hero is "born" by the collective (family) and the child subconsciously feels like a part of it, although being in a position of dependence on the majority. However, as the poem is read, it becomes clear that the events and names filling in more than fifty cards do not really have independence, but come back to life only thanks to the memory and memories of the lyrical subject. In Rubinstein, he becomes a connecting link, a core from which all — essentially independent — characters grow and appear. Thus, a specific understanding of the self is explicated ("everything is in me, and I am in everything"), subsequently developed and strengthened in the next poem — "It's Me".

In the text "Mama washed the Frame", the lyrical subject acquires a biography, or rather even an autobiography, a historical context and a system of real relations with the environment. At the same time, the world of childhood, described on behalf of the child hero, is reflected by the consciousness of an adult: "One day I saw such a huge caterpillar that I can't forget it until now" (Rubinstein 1995, 72). The phrase "until now" implies finding the subject of speech outside of the described situation of the past (once, sometime). And if the micro-plots of the poem unfold in the past tense, then the conflict of the poem is produced by the dialogue of two consciousnesses: a child, flawed due to its smallness and insignificance, and an adult, gravitating towards a world that really no longer exists, but whose reflection it carries within itself. A thunderstorm that takes with it naivety and simplicity of perception becomes a metaphor for the relentless passage of time and a direct indication that one person is unable to resist the twists of fate.

Realizing the frightening spontaneity of this world, Rubinstein's hero seeks support in the collective (generic, family) beginning, without identifying himself as an adult with himself as a child and with others. Thus, in the poem "Mama washed the Frame" Rubinstein takes another step towards epistemology, leaving behind the conceptual practices of abstraction and formalism.

4.3 The lyrical subject in the poem "It's Me"

The poem "It's Me" is the last catalog work by Lev Rubinstein, outwardly reminiscent of his conceptualist practices of the 1970s and 80s. According to M. Lipovetsky, this poem carries a "distinct shade of programmacity" (Lipovetsky 1996, 213), since the issue of self-identification is revealed here most fully, absorbing the development of the topic within the framework of previous poem texts.

The compositional structure of the poem, even in comparison with "Mama washed the Frame", acquires features of even greater life-likeness. The plot side of the narrative reproduces the process of viewing, turning over a stack of old photos from a family photo album.

It may seem that Rubinstein inherits the well-known technique of flipping through the "album", once carried out by conceptual artists I. Kabakov or V. Pivovarov. However, in the poem "It's Me", as in "Mama washed the Frame", and unlike Kabakov and Pivovarov, the level of autobiography is quite high: the hero (close to the author's alter ego) mentions parents, brother, grandmother and other relatives. Unlike the previous poems in "It's Me" Rubinstein attempts to accurately indicate the historical epoch (names the dates: 1952, 1940, 1954). Meanwhile, the pictures themselves, the photos of the family archive are invisible in the text, there is no visual component. Instead of photos that "themselves turn out to be a record (of a place, time, state of things, characters), a text-for-reading" (Aronson 1999), the author offers to consider their reverse side — the white basis of the photo with a comment: who or what the frame recorded.

The metatextuality inherent in many of Rubinstein's works is coming into its own. The restrained enumeration of the people in the group photo, with a division into those who are standing and those who are sitting, is unexpectedly colored by the stylistics of a lyrical digression.

15. Lazutin Felix.
16. (And someone's hand writing something on a piece of paper.)
17. Golubovsky Arkady Lvovich.
18. (And a drop of rain running down the glass of the car.)
21. Kosheleva Alevtina Nikitichna, a cleaner.
22. (And the TV announcer's lips moving soundlessly.) (Rubinstein 1996, 142).

Thirty fragments of text turn out to be an explication of what the camera is not able to fix. Memories become objects of contemplation and careful storage in the memory of the hero. It

is obvious that in fact they are not correlated in any way with the reproduced names: the comments are literally put out of brackets. However, it is the different timing of the fragments that gives the invisible visual series a subjective poetic shade, makes the perception of an essentially quite trivial moment of viewing photographs lyrical.

It is noteworthy that Rubinstein offers an album of photographs in which, along with images of places and people, there are a dried leaf, a flower or a cut strand of hair — those insignificant objects from the point of view of an outsider that evoke in the lyrical hero not only memories, but also feelings. Rubinstein's card file turns out to be a register of memory, but with a caveat: the poet collects not images or views, but feelings, the personal attitude of the perceiving subject to the contemplated.

To convey the subjectivity of the perception of the lyrical hero, the author uses rhythmic and graphic design of phrases. According to M. Lipovetsky's observations, "all odd cards are given to names, and all even cards of the fragment are given to meditations. In addition, meditative phrases are correlated with each other not only by anaphora (which is generally common with Rubinstein), but also by a distinct syntactic parallelism" (Lipovetsky 1996, 213).

The text of the poem is filled with symphonic intonation, the development of the plot is accompanied by the consistent entry of new possibilities into the game — for example, Rubinstein attracts a rhythmic drawing of classical size, Pushkin's iambic tetrameter, which is almost familiar to him (cards 36-38, 51, 53, etc.).

In the melody of the text (as in "Mama washed the Frame"), one note begins to appear — a note of anxiety. The prose and metrized fragments "somehow vary the motif of pain, abomination, weakness" (Lipovetsky 1996, 214), already touched upon by the material of the preceding poem. Premonition of trouble and anxiety are motives that not only unite poems of different years, but also become the background for the maturation of the leitmotif. The search for auto-identity in the hero of Rubinstein is obviously accompanied by trials and difficulties: with their help, the central character of the poem undergoes a certain rite of initiation, after which he will be able to get an answer to the main question of life: "Who am I?"

However, the initiation of the layman into the knowledgeable presupposes the abandonment by the applicant of the habitual way of life and worldly claims, the rejection of his past, the liberation of consciousness from stereotypes and clichés. Therefore, the image of a storm shaking the ground under the hero's feet — "Everything was above me as before, but the firmament was shaking under me" (Rubinstein 1996, 93) — can also be interpreted as the rebirth of a lyrical subject. A thunderstorm in this case appears as a ritual of ablation, and the final phrase-the card "I got up, dressed..." — is an illustration of the ritual of secret societies to dress a neophyte in new clothes.

Meanwhile, the readiness of the lyrical hero for change is not obvious. Rubinstein's character tries to realize the deforming reality, to reach its "limit", "milestone", but at the same time does not take a single step, being shackled by doubts. The student's uncertainty — "suddenly there won't be enough for the last effort" — contributes to the growing sense of anxiety in the poem of 1987 and its accumulation in the texts of subsequent years: "71. Or imagine that you are in constant anticipation of some unknown catastrophe. 72. And, obviously, that's why you instinctively resist any life changes" (Rubinstein 1996, 127).

Anxiety fills the poem "It's Me", reaching an emotional peak in cards 56-62 and transforming into the theme of "mental and bodily trembling" (Kazarina 2005, 427). It is noteworthy that this tremor for the first time covers a child character: "And we see six or even seven bright orange pills on a trembling child's palm", the main object of identification of all the analyzed poems. And only later resonates in the intertextual Pushkin images of classical literature.

57. And the dueling pistol *trembles* in the hand of the lame officer.

58. And a French novel, opened in the middle, *trembles* in the hand of a young lady.

59. And the silver snuffbox *trembles* in the pale young man's hand.

60. And the tin cross *trembles* in the hand of a drunken soldier.

61. And a large silver samovar *trembles* in the hands of a drunken military doctor.

Verbal design receives a unique Rubinstein understanding of the self as a set of what the lyrical hero heard, read, saw, experienced. The personality of the hero is finally recreated at the intersection of his own and someone else's: other people's names and the names of parents, literary quotations and character statements — the subject is understood as a chaosmos in which the whole world experience is concentrated. Therefore, "literary samples of the destinies, mostly suffering, unhappy" (Lipovetsky 1996, 215) from independent texts turn into variations of the drama of a through lyrical hero. At the same time, Rubinstein's attention is focused not only on quasi-literary narratives, but also axiologically significant allusions to the classics: the initial fragment of the poem evokes an association with the second stanza of the first chapter of Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin". In card 60, an episode of Dostoevsky is guessed: a meeting of prince Myshkin with a drunken soldier who sells his "silver" to the prince, but in fact a tin cross. And the text ends with a reference to the famous "Raven" by Edgar Poe. Probably guided by the belief that personal identity turns into a collage of borrowings and reflections of someone else, Rubinstein uses quotation marks in the title of the poem — his lyrical subject also turns out to be a quote.

Meanwhile, in the fact of the hero's mimicry in the surrounding world, one should not see the surrender of the individual to the collective, its adaptability. On the contrary, this position is an expression of a new understanding of subjectivity in the conditions of conceptual art. Subjectivity as a fluid, but always unique combination of various elements of the repeatable or "alien": words, things, quotes, gestures, images, etc. Finding oneself in Another saves not only from a "storm" or "life catastrophe", fusion with Another (Others) is equivalent, according to Rubinstein of the 1980s – 1990s, immortality. "When you get tired of waiting for trouble in your native corner, remember the wet footprints on the freshly washed floor", where the footprints turn out to be a metonymic substitute for society.

The representation of captions to photographs contributes least of all to the disclosure of the plot of the picture, but intensifies the associative mechanism of memory — impersonal details and fragmentary thoughts pull a string of images from which the image of the lyrical subject emerges.

113. And this is me.

114. And this is me in shorts and a T-shirt.

115. And this is me in my underpants and a T-shirt under a blanket with my head.

116. And this is me in underpants and a T-shirt under a blanket running headlong on a sunny lawn.

117. And this is me in my underpants and a T-shirt under a blanket running headlong on a sunny lawn, and my groundhog is with me.

118. And my groundhog is with me.

119. (Leaves.)

The past grows in the present, a change in the place and time of action does not imply a change in the subject of perception, which is directly indicated by the verse line: "Many years have passed since then, and you are still the same as you were" (Rubinstein 1996, 141). Being in the dimension of childhood, and the hero of the three named texts is a child (student), gives the author the opportunity to return to the start of life again and again and to comprehend the plot of "self-writing" and "self-reflection".

5 Conclusion

Summing up, the following should be recalled. In an interview, Lev Rubinstein noted that the poem “It’s Me” drew a line at a certain period of his work and approved in the decision to complete his filing in a meaningful way. Later, Rubinstein will move on to a new form of utterance — the genre of essays. But it was the poems about the student that led Rubinstein to such a choice. According to him, the idea of non-fiction has been developed by him since the late 1980s by introducing “direct autobiographical memories” (Rubinstein 1997, 185) into the text of poems. Turning to external realities, events of personal and public life, singling out one “student” voice from the hum of voices, Rubinstein managed to construct the character of subjectivity that made his transition from poetry to memoir prose organic. The problem of self-identification turned out to be closely intertwined with the immanent development of Lev Rubinstein’s poetics as a whole.

6. Prospects for further research

Concluding the analysis of Rubinstein’s conceptual texts, we can say that his practices contained the foundations of the theoretical base of the “Moscow conceptualism”. But against the background of the “unprincipled” creativity of conceptualists, Rubinstein began to detect trends in the search for meaning quite early — the search for meaning in literature and in life. His texts gained more and more semantic content from year to year, turned out to be focused on the most important issues of human existence. Further study of Lev Rubinstein’s lyric and epic texts will allow us to discover new components of his ambiguous creativity.

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