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Realism–4.0: Israeli Russophone Literature Today

Realizm–4.0: literatura rosyjsko-izraelska dzisiaj

Streszczenie: W najnowszej literaturze rosyjsko-izraelskiej obserwowany jest zwrot do realizmu ery postinformatycznej — „realizmu–4.0”, związanego z procesami społeczno-kulturowymi i ekonomicznymi, określanymi jako „Industrie 4.0” (tzw. czwarta rewolucja przemysłowa). Zakłada on istnienie wspólnej sieci ludzi, maszyn, przedmiotów i znaków, tworzących nową kulturę. Artykuł poświęcony jest pisarzom — emigrantom z lat 90., którym kultura ta pozwala między innymi na odejście od stereotypu emigranta i przedstawiciela literatury minorowej. Twórczość przywoływanych w artykule pisarzy odzwierciedla co najmniej trzy właściwości realizmu–4.0: demarginalizację, magię sieci i rzeczywistość rozszerzoną. Cechy te są opisane na materiale utworów Alexandra Goldsteina, Diny Rubiny, Denisa Sobolewa, Michaiła Yudsona, Elizabeth Mikhailichenko i Yuri Nesisa oraz Nekoda Singera.

Słowa kluczowe: literatura rosyjsko-izraelska, realizm, czwarta rewolucja przemysłowa, demarginalizacja

Реализм–4.0: Русско-израильская литература сегодня

Резюме: В новейшей русско-израильской литературе прослеживается поворот к реализму постинформационной эры — „реализму–4.0”, связанному с социокультурными и экономическими процессами, известными как „индустрия–4.0”. Для нее характерна единая сеть людей, машин, знаков и объектов, порождающая новую культуру. В статье обсуждаются авторы, иммигрировавшие в Израиль в 1990х годах и принимающие участие в конструировании этой культуры, которая среди прочего позволяет им избежать эмигрантских, маргинальных и минорных стереотипов. Их письмо отражает по крайней мере три свойства реализма–4.0: демаргинализация, сетевая магия и дополненная реальность. Эти свойства рассматриваются здесь на материале романов Александра Гольдштейна, Дины Рубиной, Дениса Соболева, Михаила Юдсона, Елизаветы Михайличенко и Юрия Несиса, Некоды Зингера.

Ключевые слова: русско-израильская литература, реализм, индустрия–4.0, демаргинализация

Introduction

This article is dedicated to Russophone literature created in Israel, particularly to the literature of the emigrants of the 1990-2000's. It exists in a multidimensional and ambiguous cultural space. This

literature is neither simply bicultural nor transcultural, rather it finds itself simultaneously in several cultural states, each of which is perceived at various points as other and thus always new. I will dub it *neocultural*: after all, in this instance neither movement into another culture (trans-) nor equal acceptance of two cultures (bi-) can apply. On the other hand, the prefix “neo” signals two simultaneous process: the challenge and experiment of a new culture’s adoption and the conservation of the old. Putting aside for now a comparative analysis of the literature of the 1970’s and of the 1990–2000’s, I will attempt to evaluate the current state of Israeli Russophone literature. It can be described in terms of neocultural *realism* tied to science and information technologies’ current stage of development, known as the fourth industrial revolution, or “Industry–4.0”. By analogy, I will call this literary situation and its artistic paradigm “realism–4.0”, where both the term realism and the number 4 have a relative meaning and yet reflect the concept of *reality as an internet of everything* and the concept of *culture as recognized and augmented reality*.

In the early 2000’s the conception of literary realism gained a new life in the form of the movement of “new realism”, particularly in Russian literature and criticism. Sergey Shargunov proclaimed the coming of new realism as literature’s natural return to serious representation of the evident and typical¹. Valeria Pustovaya distinguished between two types of realisms: reflection of the reality and its truth, and the symbolic realism as the search for the mystery of the reality and interpretation of its hidden signs². After the declaration of this new realism, recognized by on the one hand the “extremal sincerity”³ and, on the other “the myth”⁴, the wave died out. In the 2010’s, “the second wave” began, it included nationalistic tendencies⁵ and the search for “the positive, in the spiritual sense, hero”⁶, until it “went to the history”⁷. This short but

¹ С. Шаргунов, *Отрицание траура*, “Новый Мир” 2001, no. 12, http://magazines.russ.ru/novyi_mi/2001/12/shargunov.html [17.04.2019].

² В. Пустовая, *Поражены и преображены*, “Октябрь” 2005, no. 5, <http://magazines.russ.ru/october/2005/5/pust18.html> [17.04.2019].

³ Д. Новиков, *Поморские сказы имени Шотмана, или Мифы нового реализма*, “Вопросы литературы” 2007, no. 4, <http://magazines.russ.ru/voplit/2007/4/no14.html> [17.04.2019].

⁴ С. Беляков, *Новые Белинские и Гоголи на час*, “Вопросы литературы” 2007, no. 4, <http://magazines.russ.ru/voplit/2007/4/be13.html> [17.04.2019].

⁵ А. Рудалев, *Катехизис нового реализма*, in: *XXI ВЕК. Итоги литературного десятилетия: язык – культура – общество*, А. Ю. Большакова, А. А. Дырдин (eds.), УлГТУ, Ульяновск 2011, pp. 170–181. See the same article also here: <http://www.rospisatel.ru/konferenzija/rudaljev.htm> [17.04.2019].

⁶ А. С. Салуцкий, *Очередной «новый» реализм*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 187–189.

⁷ Р. Сенчин, *Новые реалисты уходят в историю*, “Литературная Россия” 2014, no. 33–34, <http://reading-hall.ru/publication.php?id=11133> [30.04.2019].

stormy development, in which the definition of realism was mostly lost through tautological use, is a testimony that the core of realism should be sought out not through modes of expression, but rather in the conception of reality, object and life. In other words, it is a philosophical and scientific problem, addressing the formation of today's cultural reality.

The growing renewed interest in literary realism has been reflected in the work of Fredric Jameson *The Antinomies of Realism*, where he defines realism as an always emergent insolvable opposition between "the regime of the past-present-future and of personal identities and destinies" and "the impersonal consciousness of an eternal or existential present". The latter is expressed in the post-modern "perpetual present" or "reduction to the body," which is isolated and autotomized, and is thus a subject to unnamable "affects" that "somehow eludes language"⁸. "Affects are singularities and intensities, existences rather than essences, which usefully unsettle the more established psychological and physiological categories," and they "become the organ of perception of the world itself"⁹. It should be noted that what exactly is "the world itself" remains without answer, eluding signification and categorization. If Jameson is right then such a naïve and non-postmodern, yet so insistent today, question of what reality is, becomes even more acute.

The development of neocultural realism in literature is parallel with the "realistic turn" in the most recent continental philosophy, which formed (not in a void)¹⁰ the movement of "speculative realism" at the start of the 2000's¹¹. The movement, which emerged under the influence of Gilles Deleuze's philosophy, rejects anthropocentrism, places man on the same order as objects and machines, and thereby fits into the landscape of posthumanism. The question of the correlation between this movement and literature requires special investigation and does not fall within the goals of this article¹². However, it can be assumed that realism-4, whi-

⁸ F. Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism*, Verso, London and New York 2013, pp. 25–29.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 38, 43.

¹⁰ See L. Braver, *A Brief History of Continental Realism*, "Continental Philosophy Review" 2012, vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 261–289.

¹¹ For a review of the subject, see: P. Gratton, *Speculative Realism: Problems and Prospects*, Bloomsbury Academic, London and New York 2014. To mention the latest books: M. DeLanda and G. Harman, *The Rise of Realism*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2017; M. Ferraris, *Introduction to New Realism*, trans. S. De Sanctis, Bloomsbury Academic, London and New York 2015; M. Gabriel, *Fields of Sense: A New Realist Ontology*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2015. See also the journal of speculative realism "Speculations": <http://speculations.squarespace.com/>.

¹² See on this subject: R. Mackay, L. Pendrell, and J. Trafford (eds.), *Speculative Aesthetics*, Urbanomic, London 2014. See also the special issue *Object-Oriented Poetry* of the journal in Russian: "Translit" 2017, no. 19.

le staying within the context of the same problematic, is moving in the opposite direction, placing objects and machines on a par with people and thus approaching the mythological type of thinking combined with the most recent scientific paradigm and awareness of its technical embodiments. This realism can therefore be considered part of the “new humanism”¹³, or “hyperhumanism”¹⁴. For a Russian-Israeli author, cultural objects, meanings, and images emerge from ancient texts and come alive or, rather, become a part of the consciousness of the artists, allowing them in response to become a part of these objects and images. Culture acquires an ontological meaning, merges with the being, “is getting real”¹⁵, and the author’s writing creates an “invisible ontology of social objects”¹⁶, merges with the act of existence in a newfound culture as the sole reality. In a certain sense, the concept of realism acquires such a “materially discursive”, “onto-epistemological”¹⁷, or “actual-virtual”¹⁸ meaning in this context. The goal of neocultural realism as an artistic method is the cognition of cultural reality as a world of objects. Dennis Sobolev, through his method of “semiotic phenomenology”, has showed that the culture and the world of phenomena are experienced as one, while remaining “irreconcilable” with one another and irreducible to one another¹⁹. This conception of culture can also be recognized as a part of the realistic ontological turn.

Below I shall dwell on what I see as the main features of realism-4 in contemporary Israeli Russophone literature: *demarginalization (particularly, deminorization as its main manifestation)*, *internet magic or magical web*, and *augmented or recognized reality*. All three of them flow from the perception of culture as the objective reality. A Russophone author who lives today, for example, in Jerusalem, can barely see himself or herself as a marginal or minor writer, and, in general, as a part of the sociological order. The latter seems to him or to her as lacking any realness. The departure from

¹³ M. Lipovetsky, *Russian Postmodernist Fiction: Dialogue with Chaos*, Routledge, London–New York 1999, p. 247.

¹⁴ Е. Михайличенко, Ю. Несис, *В реальности дочерней. Стихи кома Аллергена (In the Daughterly Reality: Poems by Allergen the Cat)*, Геликон плюс, СПб 2001.

¹⁵ K. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC 2007, pp. 189–222.

¹⁶ M. Ferraris, *Where Are You?: An Ontology of the Cell Phone*, trans. S. de Sanctis, Fordham University Press, New York 2014, p. 36.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 132–187.

¹⁸ L. Bryant, *Onto-Cartography: An Ontology of Machines and Media*, University of Edinburgh Press, Edinburgh 2014, pp. 40–46.

¹⁹ D. Sobolev, *The Split World of Gerard Manley Hopkins: An Essay in Semiotic Phenomenology*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C. 2011, p. 4.

the minority-majority hierarchy towards net thinking is perceived as turning to reality. However, this new reality appears as chaotic, incomprehensible and mysterious. Therefore, the core of the relationship with it consists of its recognition and augmentation in the visible picture of the world. In this recognition, objects and signs, reality and culture are unified. And at last, such unification serves for an author as a way to feel in a new reality/culture at home and not to feel as minority or emigrant. This case study will focus on the novels of authors belonging to the Aliya of the 1990's, whose writing reflects to the greatest extent the tendencies of realism—4.

Demarginalization

Few today are still in doubt that it is difficult to speak of marginality in contemporary culture, but various causes can be named. One of them is political correctness; a second is the self-definition of any subculture as its own independent ecological niche, having its own center and marginalia; a third is the decentralization of global culture and world literature, the multipolarity of the world, post-colonial and post-imperial tendencies. The cause of the demarginalization of Israeli Russophone literature lies in its historical and cultural circumstances: it ceased to be a minor (in Deleuze's sense of the word)²⁰ Russian-Jewish literature in Russia and in the post-Soviet space, but it has not become a peripheral émigré literature in Israel.

The concept of demarginalization reflects transformation processes in all of literary geography, turning it from a two-dimensional map that conforms with the political or geographical map of the world into a multidimensional cognitive map of multiple cultural worlds. The demarginalization of contemporary Israeli Russophone literature follows various paths, but here I will focus on only one of them: deminorization. In Israel, Russian-Jewish literature, if this term is still relevant, stops being minor and becomes "bi-major." This unusual term signifies a transition from the dichotomy of majority-minority to a multidimensional post-geographical and perhaps post-political world in which literature no longer measures itself by the writing's degree of political engagement. So, for example, if we turn our attention to two novels by Alexander Goldshtein, we shall find a significant difference between them even though they were published shortly one af-

²⁰ G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. D. Polan, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1986, pp. 16–27.

ter the other: *Помни о Фамагусте* (*Remember Famagusta*, 2004), with all its thematic complexity, is ancillary to questions of power and violence and is, moreover, concentrated on regional historical contexts (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Israel); the second novel, *Спокойные поля* (*Peaceful Fields*, 2006), no less complex than the previous one, is universalist, lyrical and metaphysical. The indicated difference symbolically embodies the deminorization that Israeli Rusophone literature is experiencing in the twenty-first century. It is accompanied by a departure from a socio-centrist reading of history — although sociology is never fully absent from the work of Goldshtein, who was reared on the cultural criticism of the 1960's–1980's — but is transformed into microsociology. Those spaces that were previously read as already formed heterotopias (for example, émigré ones) begin to be perceived as symbolic “neural” networks having a complex architecture built not on a binary differentiation of signs' linear series but on a self-teaching recognizing and auto-recognizing communication. So, for example, in *Remember Famagusta* one of the central themes was that of the juxtaposition of Jewish and Armenian victimhood, which included a socially constructed physicality²¹. In contrast to this, in *Peaceful Fields* the gestures of victimization turns out to be “aborted”, violence is deferred, and executioners and victims are located on the generative scene of culture²². On this scene the roles of the participants are not yet determined but are recognized at the given moment; at this stage, objective, real body has not yet turned into a discursive formation.

Another vivid example of the same process taking place in the work of a single writer is the novel by Mikhail Yudson *Лестница на шкаф* (*The Ladder to the Cabinet*). Following the author's biography, the novel developed in two stages. The first version came out in 2003. It included two parts about the adventures of the hero, a Russian Jew searching for his place in an anti-utopian Russia and Germany. The second version came out in 2013, and it also included a third part, in which the hero finds himself in Israel, and it is here that he once again attempts to discover himself. The genre difference between the first two parts and the third part should first be noted: Russia and Germany appear as dystopias²³,

²¹ H. Mondry, *Exemplary Bodies. Constructing the Jew in Russian Culture Since the 1880s*, Academic Studies Press, Boston 2009, chap. 9.

²² E. Gans, *A New Way of Thinking: Generative Anthropology in Religion, Philosophy, Art*, The Davies Group, Aurora 2011, pp. X–XIV.

²³ See: K. Smola, *Archaische Sprache der Diktatur: Hybride Texturen der neuenrussischen Dystopien*, “Wiener Slavistischer Almanach” 2014, no. 74, pp. 303–328.

a prophetic nightmare, whereas Israel is depicted through a fantasy philosophical parable that is critical but not anti-utopian. The first two parts express the hero's profound alienation from the political-social here-and-now and the only thing concerning him is surviving in an impossible reality and fleeing from it. In the third part the hero goes sequentially through an initiation of becoming part of various spheres of Israeli society, presented as a Gogolian grotesque, that is, with bewilderment but without alienation. This is how yet another feature of deminorization is manifested: the ideological, theoretical-visionary grasp of reality is replaced by a cultural-cognitive one. It is based on an algorithm in which the hero goes through many points of bifurcation embodied in various dissipative micro-communities, as, for example, the community of "returnees"—Israelis dreaming of returning to the Diaspora²⁴.

In Nekoda Singer's first novel, *Билеты в кассе* (*Tickets at the Box Office*, 2006), are reproduced in a fantasy-playful manner episodes from the childhood and youth of the narrator in Novosibirsk in the 1970's, some elements of minority can be discerned, primarily a Russian-Jewish thematic and a marginalization of language (largely through diglossia). But in his second novel, *Черновики Иерусалима* (*Drafts of Jerusalem*, 2013), they disappear almost completely. The novel consists of imagined stories of well-known people's travels to Jerusalem, as well as supposedly unpublished manuscripts of well-known writers dedicated to the same theme. The nature of a multicultural, universalist literary game that is characteristic of this novel allows one to perceive the first novel differently, that is, to take it out of the sphere of the collective-political, and that means — out of the minor. Both novels are a kind of heterogeneous solution of world culture: in the first, it is dissolved in the Russian-Jewish Soviet mentality, and in the second — in the cultural continuum of Jerusalem. As a consequence, a reversal of minority and majority takes place in *Drafts of Jerusalem*: the various cultures and literatures of the world turn out to be minority components of the metaphysical Jewish-Jerusalem majority. As the author explains the main message of his book, all the cities of the world turn out to be nothing but drafts of Jerusalem²⁵. In this concept, it is impossible not to notice in Singer not only an accompanying but also an intentional demarginalization of the Jewish discourse within the Jerusalem text. Jerusalem turns out to be more real (or realized) than the other cities, and its text turns out

²⁴ М. Юдсон, *Лестница на шкаф* [*The Ladder to the Cabinet*], Зебра-Е, Москва 2013, pp. 486–487.

²⁵ Н. Сингер, *Черновики Иерусалима* [*Drafts of Jerusalem*], Русский Гулливер, Москва 2013.

to be the recognized image that the cultural neural network gives out at the exit after it learns from the drafts how to filter out noise and select (or create) meanings²⁶.

Singer's thought, like that of Yudson and the authors who will be discussed below, is based on neomodern eclecticism and on magical realism²⁷. The latter merges with network thinking and historical realism, that is, with the attempt to actualize anew and embody historical personalities. This attempt consists in reliving the historical events as though they were sites in some universal neocultural web, which is fully accessible to communication and yet magically undefined and opaque, unpredictable, and fragmentary.

Internet Magic and the Magical Web

Elizaveta Mikhailichenko and Yury Nesis's *И/е_рус.олим* (*I/e_rus.olim*, 2004) is a vivid example of realism-4, it being expressed already in the very title of the novel. It combines the name of the city (in which the Russian root is recognized: *le-rus-alim*), the name of the community (Rus[sian] *olim*, that is, repatriates, in Hebrew), and the website's form of address²⁸. The title points to the transformation of existence in space and time into existence in the web or even into "web-existence"²⁹. In the center of the novel is a group of friends, emigrants from the former Soviet Union currently living in Jerusalem. They write novels and poems, are active in social media, paint, play role-playing games, chase after monsters or attempt to hide from them, fall in love, and perish. Unlike many heroes of émigré literature, such as, for example, the heroes of Leonid Levinzon's book *Дети Пушкина* (*Pushkin's Children*, 2015), they are troubled not by everyday or social émigré concerns but by communication with the culture they inhabit. However, émigré discourse does not disappear altogether; it simply becomes a part of the virtual environment. This environment consists of five types of elements: (1) flesh and blood people and animals; (2) elements of cyberspace, including cyber-characters (people acting on the internet under their own or invented names or avatars), cyber-ma-

²⁶ After this article was written, a new novel by Singer came out, *Mandragory* (P.V.V., Salamandra 2017), steeped in the cultural reality of Jerusalem at the end of the nineteenth century, in part, as the annotation mentions, thanks to the use of "passages from Palestinian Jewish newspapers of the time".

²⁷ See also: R. Katsman, *Nekod Singer in Russian and Hebrew: Neoelecticism and Beyond*, "Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literatures" 2016, vol. 70, no. 2, pp. 66–79.

²⁸ E. Михайличенко, Ю. Несис, *И/е_rus.olim*, www.lib.ru/RUSS_DETEKTIW/NESIS/je_rus_olim.txt [17.04.2019].

²⁹ M. Ferraris, *Where Are You?: An Ontology of the Cell Phone...*, pp. 25–28.

chines, and cyber-institutions (sites, servers, computer programs); (3) empirical elements of the Jerusalem landscape and architecture (houses, streets, cars, caves, temples); (4) elements of Jerusalem's historical, social, symbolic, and mythological landscapes (historical events and people, current political people and institutions, fairytales, legends, myths); and (5) written literary, folkloristic, philosophical, and historical sources. All these elements are included in a single internet of everything; they intercommunicate, replace each other, flow into each other, or serve as each other's sources of symbolic exchanges and conflicts. They constitute thus a single neocultural reality⁴ in which all spheres of the lifeworld are united. This reality is a hyper-humanistic one, since in it, as in myth, everything comes to life and becomes a personality that is simultaneously both empirical and transcendental³⁰.

Not a single one of the residents of this reality can be fully physical or absolutely metaphysical, and for that reason communication among them takes on the character of magic. So, for example, in the spirit of classical magical realism, one of the heroes of the novel is occupied with searching for a certain mythical lion that is threatening the peace of the city and its very existence. At the same time, the other heroes are attempting to conceive and give birth to the Messiah. In the spirit of the new, internet magical realism, one of the main heroes of the novel, a cat called Allergen, turns into an internet avatar and becomes a participant in the creative internet-community. With regards for the understanding of contemporary culture, the novel is close to Victor Pelevin's books. However, it is fundamentally different in that it does not cross the boundary of the fantastic, although sometimes it is intersected by the consciousness of one or another of the characters in their visions or in the myths created by them³¹. Genuine magicality appears here rather in the very nature of communication in the neocultural web. The heroes interact with the cultural objects of all five above-enumerated elements, they speak with them in common languages, living among them as in their own neonative environment³². The essence of this cultural communication, however, always remains partially in the shadows, just as the work of a computer is in many ways concealed from its user. So, for

³⁰ For definition of myth and mythic personality see: A. Losev, *The Dialectics of Myth*, trans. V. Marchenkov, Routledge, New York 2003, p. 185.

³¹ See also: R. Katsman, *Nostalgia for a Foreign Land: Studies in Russian-Language Literature in Israel*, Series: Jews of Russia and Eastern Europe and Their Legacy, Academic Studies Press, Brighton 2016, pp. 178–222.

³² For further discussion of this concept, see: *ibidem*, pp. 33–38, pp. 241–261. See also: J. Clifford, *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2013.

example, magical are the path whereby the cat finds himself in the computer, the effect that the Jerusalem lion has on the residents of the city, the way the historical figures are embodied in the heroes during their role-playing game of “historical extreme”, and how the cat turns into a lion, the lion into a sphinx, and the sphinx into Jerusalem.

The literary fairytale also serves the goals of realism—4. The fairytales of Dennis Sobolev, collected in the fragmentary novels *Иерусалим* (*Jerusalem*, 2005) and *Легенды горы Кармель* (*Legends of Mt. Carmel*, 2016), function as dissipative microcommunities and magical communicative structures. Many of his heroes are emigrants, but émigré themes serve as no more than the background for developing a broad cultural web. In Sobolev, unlike in Mikhailichenko and Nesis, this web barely includes the internet proper. It is all the more important that his world possesses the features of cyberspace organized as a dissipative structure in a chaotic system. For Sobolev, the neocultural web is not a mannerism, a literary superfluity, or a pretty idea; it is not simply a reservoir of intertext, citations, poetical techniques, and exotic images but the ontological foundation of existence itself³³.

In the novel *Legends of Mt. Carmel*, the problem of communication in the neocultural web becomes particularly acute and sometimes acquires a thematic and narrative expression. So, for example, one of the legends is devoted to the secret correspondence between two lovers, who cannot be together, and a certain mysterious old cave in the depths of Mt. Carmel becomes the channel of this correspondence. This storyline can serve as a model of internet magic, using its communication channels to entangle the geographical and cultural space of Haifa and its surroundings. Unlike the novel *Jerusalem*, a very important role is here played by motifs of transportation, that is, once again communication. Such a shift is connected with the fact that Haifa, unlike Jerusalem, is a port and, as in any port-city literature, here ships, sailing, smugglers, sailors, and pirates acquire a particular significance, along with the allied themes of travel, conquest, transgression, and heterotopy. An example for this is the story of the European girl who lives among baboons or the legend of the pirate treasure. In one legend, even the image of a house acquires the aspect of a ship on which a man and a girl, emigrants of different generations, meet and find, contrary to expectations, a common language and

³³ See also: Р. Кацман, *Иерусалим: диссипативный роман Дениса Соболева*, НЛО, Москва [*Jerusalem: A Dissipative Novel by Dennis Sobolev*], Новое Литературное Обозрение 143 (1/2017), pp. 291–312.

temporary peace among the storms of chaos³⁴. This absolutely realistic story, appearing as if accidentally among fairytales and legends, nonetheless contains a very expressive although minimalist model of a dissipative community both of heroes and of authors of Israeli Russophone literature, while also expressing the inexplicable cultural-internet magic that serves as the foundation of its existence and survival. The mechanisms of the action of this magic are not clear to the girl, but thanks to it, in a house unknown to her, a supplemental dimension is mysteriously revealed to her that brings unexpected knowledge, harmony, and the quiet joy of enlightenment into her life, even if it is not fully recognized. In realism-4, as in industry-4, this dimension is what is known as augmented reality.

Augmented Reality

Neocultural realism, together with the mechanism of augmented reality built into it, differs from multiculturalism in two basic features: (1) the turning on of augmented reality is not a normative or axiological act; and (2) it does not reverse the hierarchy of cultures-realities, nor does it erase the boundary between reality and its augmentation. Therein lies its difference from the deceptive hyperrealism of simulacra, as well as from the conception of myth as a hidden replacement of one meaning of a sign with another³⁵. It is also these aspects that underlie the fact that augmented reality does not fully serve the purposes of émigré and transcultural literatures since the latter are treated as socially determined, that is, compelled by circumstances, while augmented reality is turned on and controlled by the free desire of the “user” of the culture, who is focused on the learning or recognition of its images and symbols. Augmented reality is not essential, or at least should not be if the user has a basic competence at least in one culture. At the same time, augmented reality cannot be an alternative or parallel reality inasmuch as the latter is perceived in the framework of epistemological and ethical relativism³⁶. In any event, it remains deeply tied to the philosophy of realism. It should be added, however, that it is aligned with the principle of alternativeness in the philosophy of history and in literature, first, by an interest in the

³⁴ Д. Соболев, *Легенды горы Кармель: Четырнадцать историй о любви и времени* [*Legends of Mount Carmel: Fourteen Stories on Love and Time*, in Russian], Геликон плюс, СПб 2016, pp. 230–231.

³⁵ R. Barthes, “Myth Today”, in: *Mythologies*, trans. A. Lavers, Hill and Wang, New York 2001, pp. 109ff.

³⁶ K. Hellekson, *The Alternate History: Refiguring Historical Time*, The Kent State University Press, Kent 2001.

problem of historical causality³⁷; second, by an interest in the philosophy of the possible³⁸ and the theory of possible worlds³⁹; and third, by an interest in the ethical problem of freedom of choice. Augmented reality is a possible element in the architecture of knowledge or the stock of knowledge⁴⁰, invoked when there is a desire to broaden, enrich, and rationalize communication in the system (in our case, in the system of culture). The objects of this reality constitute the freely created or chosen possible worlds, each of which a posteriori can possess factual reality in one or another context of belief⁴¹.

The appearance in Israeli Russophone literature of the architecture of knowledge in the guise of augmented reality serves as evidence of the overcoming of simplified émigré thinking, always filled with nostalgia and, in this sense, antirealistic. This is also evidence of the emergence of complex “high-technology” neocultural thinking aimed at a rational interiorization of the cultural environment accessible to a curious mind. One example of this type of literature is the work of Dina Rubina, the greatest and the most significant part of which is connected in one way or another with the creation or adoption of the neocultural reality⁴². Below I shall refer to her novels in order to illuminate this point.

Several versions of augmented reality can be distinguished, which differ both technically and in the level of their complexity. This complexity depends on the level of abstraction and the distance of the augmentation from reality itself. The first version can be viewed as the simplest and most widespread: doubling. It is easy to find in many of Rubina’s works, but it becomes particularly important in the novel *Синдром Петрушки* (*The Petrushka Syndrome*, 2010). The main mythologeme of the novel is the creation of the magical puppet and the puppet-double; the main

³⁷ See Max Weber’s counterfactual method of historical investigation: Max Weber, “Objective Possibility and Adequate Causation in Historical Explanation”, in: *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. E. Shils and H. Finch, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick 2011, pp. 164–188.

³⁸ See М. Эпштейн, *Философия возможного: модальности в мышлении и культуре* [*The Philosophy of the Possible: Modalities in Thinking and Culture*], Алетейя, СПб 2001.

³⁹ See: R. Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1994; L. Doležel, *Possible Worlds of Fiction and History: The Postmodern Age*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 2010.

⁴⁰ A. Schütz, T. Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World*, trans. R. M. Zaner and H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., Northwestern University Press, Evanston, IL 1973, pp. 243ff.

⁴¹ See: S. Kripke, *A Puzzle about Belief*, in: A. Margalit (ed.), *Meaning and Use*, Springer, Dordrecht 2007, pp. 239–283.

⁴² See: A. P. Ronell, *Some Thoughts on Russian-Language Israeli Fiction: Introducing Dina Rubina, “Prooftexts”*, no. 28:2, pp. 197–231; Э. Шафранская, *Синдром голубки. Мифопоэтика прозы Дины Рубиной*, Свое издательство, СПб 2012.

problem in this respect is replacing the person with the puppet. The hero, a brilliant puppeteer, creates a puppet-double of his beloved for their show, and this practically drives the woman insane. Their newborn child dies of Angelman syndrome, known as the Petrushka (happy puppet) syndrome, and the only thing that can save their family from childlessness is the old puppet Petrushka, passed on from generation to generation but currently lost⁴³. This theme is quite old, but still, its use in the novel is characteristic for realism-4: the puppet serves not only to double and imitate or oppose man and his reality but also serves as a method of coming to know reality and communicating with it, as well as a magical instrument of its harmonization and rationalization (in the novel this is the restoration of fertility and the maintenance of the viability of the family). Here the augmentation of reality, the double, is a kind of discovery, a key to the transition to a new level in the game, a recognized symbol. Living puppets, like smart things, constitute an important part of the cultural internet of things in which golems of the fourth generation stand in service to cultural communication. The heroine's personal Luddite revolt against this, when she attempts to destroy her double, is equated in the novel with insanity.

Another technique of augmented reality is identification or recognition. In the novel *Вот идет Мессия!* (*Here Comes the Messiah!*, 1996), the heroine, a recent immigrant from the former USSR, recognizes her deceased relatives as random passersby while walking along the streets of Jerusalem⁴⁴. The combination of one's own memory with visible reality, along with the signs and images of the city, aligning and synchronizing one with the other, is important for the recognition of a neocultural environment. It is crucial for converting this environment into a self-teaching and self-organizing living system in which cultural objects are embodied into physical objects. This mechanism sometimes acquires a deviant form, when, as in the case of the Jerusalem syndrome, people see messiahs on the streets of Jerusalem or recognize them in themselves. In this case augmented reality threatens to become madness. An example of transgressive augmented reality is also the novel *Последний кабан из лесов Понтеведра* (*Last Wild Boar from the Forests of Pontevendra*, 1998). In attempting to domesticate their own cultural existence and make it more intelligible, the heroes of the novel, workers in a culture club in a suburb of Jerusalem,

⁴³ Д. Рубина, *Синдром Петрушки*, Эксмо, Москва 2010.

⁴⁴ D. Rubina, *Here Comes the Messiah!*, trans. D. M. Jaffe, Zephyr Press, Brookline, MA 2000; originally published as *Вот идет Мессия!* (Остожье, Москва 1996).

imagine themselves and others to be the heroes of historical and personal dramas unfolding at the medieval Spanish royal court. This augmentation of reality ends with an augmented, semi-gaming knightly duel, as a result of which one of the main heroes of the novel dies⁴⁵. The role of “smart things” of the generation 4.0 is played in this novel by medieval costumes, decorations and puppets that serve as part of an improvised ritual. The novel reveals the mechanism of the internet of things, embedded in the ritual as such and also in the magic connected with it, allowing things to be converted into components of a living hyper-humanistic memory and communication. Being recognized in the capacity of the bearers of cultural information, things are also recognized as real objects. At the end of the novel, the hero lies on the “field of battle” with a pierced chest, his body bleeding in reality, materially. A body is not a social or discursive construct, but still, thanks to its inclusion in a recognizing cultural web (games of medieval Spain), this body bears considerably more information and the hero is realized in his myth, deploys his magic name as the last wild boar from the forests of Pontevedra killed by a hunter.

One more technique of augmented reality that is partially similar to recognition is false (or foreign, or stolen) memory. Thus, the novel *Белая голубка Кордовы* (*White Dove of Cordoba*, 2009) tells of a brilliant appraiser and forger of paintings, an immigrant from the former USSR who now lives in Israel, the descendant of an ancient Spanish Jewish family, traveling the world, attempting to discover his roots and to avenge the death of his friend⁴⁶. As in Rubina’s other stories and novellas, historical memory of persecutions and exiles, particularly the Holocaust and the Spanish Inquisition, emerge in the consciousness of the heroes in the form of figural image-windows. They are recognized in the surrounding reality, supplementing visible reality with reports of its past and foretelling its possible future. This is how the architecture of knowledge, in which intense innovative communication is both possible and essential, is organized. For the hero of the novel, the paintings of famous or slated to be famous artists he has forged serve as an important element of this architecture. The smart augmented thingness of these paintings establishes a communication with the real past on the one hand and generates a new future on the other hand, creating a new memory. It is a false one but it already exists as an object in the form of forgeries. In this sense, the authentic

⁴⁵ Д. Рубина, *Последний кабан из лесов Понтеведра* [*The Last Wild Boar from the Forests of Pontevedra: A Spanish Suite*] Симпозиум, СПб 2000; first published: Pilies Studio Publishers, Jerusalem 1998.

⁴⁶ Д. Рубина, *Белая голубка Кордовы* [*White Dove of Cordova*], Эксмо, Москва 2012.

painting that was painted by the hero's ancestor or the ancient ritual cup that belonged to his family do not possess a privileged position compared to the forgeries. They establish a neither more nor less real, objectively expressed connection with recognized or appropriated cultural memory.

The technique of the installation, actively used by Rubina in the novel *Syndicate* (2004), may be considered to be a variation of the technique of false memory. The heroine is sent from Israel to Moscow on a mission regarding the affairs of a powerful but fully caricatured Syndicate⁴⁷. Many foreign elements, such as advertisements, letters, illustrations, and comics, are fragmentarily built into the reality and speech. This technique is not new; it is actively used in both the modernist and the postmodern aesthetic. Augmented reality in *Syndicate* does not construct but deconstructs an integrated image of reality, above all the cities and communities to which the novel is dedicated (Moscow and Jerusalem, Russians and Israelis). In general it refers to the image of reality as the possibility of a connected and meaningful architecture of experience and knowledge. The novel was written at the beginning of the 2000's, the years when Arab terrorism in Israel intensified, resulting in hundreds of innocent victims. The novel thus presents Israel as a painfully blinding reality, and Russia — as a dream. As though demonstrating possible limits within augmented reality, the whole Syndicate and all of Russia become only a supplement to reality, isolated outbreaks in the informational field. They are not capable of neither illuminating nor organizing a hopelessly inexplicable reality which is so "thingful", so palpably present. It is precisely the perception of this blinding reality and the overcoming of the blinding that moves the technique of fragmented false memory onto a different level: fragments and quotations, collages and pastiches are united within the framework of the paradigm of things and expressions' dissipative community. The text of the novel presents itself to the reader as a smart factory of realism-4, being both the evidence and the result of recognizing the images of the real.

Realism–4.0: Preliminary conclusions

The neocultural realism of the twenty-first century is a continuation of the paradigm of augmented or recognized reality inclu-

⁴⁷ Д. Рубина, *Синдикат*, Эксмо, Москва 2004.

ded in the process that presents itself today as a transition of the (third) information scientific-industrial revolution to a new stage known. With regards for Industry 4.0, the scientific-technological initiative of the German government states that:⁴⁸ “In the tradition of the steam engine, the production line, electronics and IT, smart factories are now determining the fourth industrial revolution”⁴⁹. Realism-4 is replacing the postindustrial “factory” of identities, symbols, and simulacra; it is a kind of smart factory of culture, plugging classical “reality-1” into the internet of things and people, the internet of everything, the self-organizing communication of people, artifacts, machines, and communities. At this connectionist smart factory, artificial neural networks imitate the human mind and are capable of more or less successful self-teaching and recognition of images and meanings. As a result, the idea of a phenomenological sociology about symbolic communication of everything with everything in the space of the socio-cultural lifeworld⁵⁰ is visibly being realized in science and everyday practice. Additionally, a number of new ideas are enhancing this development: the idea of the complex communication of “actor–network” in the sociology of things;⁵¹ the idea of the “vibrant matter” of living and nonliving, human and not human bodies;⁵² the concept of the “extended” or “embodied mind”⁵³; the ideas that are generated within the school of “speculative realism” or “Object-Oriented Philosophy”⁵⁴ regarding the fact that reality is an object and not a correlation between thought and being while it also is not dependent on cognizing reason⁵⁵.

While nineteenth century’s realism aimed at becoming reality’s reflection following the classical scientific method of “laboratory

⁴⁸ Website “Platform Industry 4.0”, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Germany: <http://www.plattform-i40.de/I40/Navigation/EN/Home/home.html> [17.04.2019].

⁴⁹ “What is Industrie 4.0?”, <http://www.plattform-i40.de/I40/Navigation/EN/Industrie40/WhatIsIndustrie40/what-is-industrie40.html> [17.04.2019].

⁵⁰ A. Schütz, T. Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World...*

⁵¹ B. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. C. Porter, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1993, pp. 142–45. See also: В. Вахштайн, *Социология вещей*, Территория будущего, Москва 2006.

⁵² J. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC 2010, pp. 2–19.

⁵³ A. Clark, *Supersizing the Mind: Embodiment, Action, and Cognitive Extension*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2008.

⁵⁴ See: L. Bryant, N. Srnicek, G. Harman (eds.), *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, re.press, Melbourne 2011. On “object-oriented” and “machine-oriented” ontology, see also: L. Bryant, *Onto-Cartography: An Ontology of Machines and Media...* For a discussion of object-oriented thought, see also: P. Wolfendale, *Object-Oriented Philosophy: The Noumenon’s New Clothes*, Urbanomic, London 2014.

⁵⁵ Q. Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on The Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier, Continuum, London and New York 2008; R. Brassier, *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2007.

experiment-witnessing-notation-confirmation"⁵⁶, the scientific model of realism-4 can be represented as a "living system-calculation-communication-augmented living system" or "chaos-order-chaos". Paul Ricoeur predicted the appearance of a new realism in his concept of triple mimesis⁵⁷: prefiguration as a network of conceptions of reality prior to its contact with a text; configuration as a network of events during the reading of a text; refiguration as a new (augmented, smart) reality. However, if prefiguration already represents itself as the internet of things and people, that is, the communication of everything with everything, then this means that the mimesis of realism-4 is not ternary but unary and monolithic, penetrating all the stages and spheres of time and narrative, of literature's reading. Neoculture, in which "representation is rehabilitated"⁵⁸, is just such an internet, and mimesis in it no longer appears as an imitation, a reflection, an embodiment of the idea or form in matter but becomes a communication of everything with everything, including cognitive, physical, and cybernetic subjects, increasingly merging into one another. In this situation, all cultural subjects strive toward exoterization, if not towards unification, towards a transition to common informational languages, which are the only ones capable of effecting the communication of everything with everything. If this leads to the end of the "age of suspicion"⁵⁹ of language and image, then this is because "the contemporary structure of representation is the product of an interlocking series of augmented conceptual and sensory frameworks that make the boundaries of our perception transitional and provisional rather than fixed and impermeable"⁶⁰. These processes touch upon ever more fields of world literature, but such complex dissipative communities as Israeli Russophone literature, by virtue of its structural and cultural features, serve as an avant-garde and as a kind of experimental training ground for realism-4.

I examined above certain substantive characteristics of this literature based on the works of individual authors, but it is important to emphasize that the development of realism-4 is only gaining strength. For that reason, this analysis formulates only a preliminary picture of its current, totally volatile, state. All the more so

⁵⁶ B. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*...

⁵⁷ P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, trans. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1984.

⁵⁸ R. Mackay, L. Pendrell, J. Trafford, "Introduction", in: idem, *Speculative Aesthetics*...

⁵⁹ N. Sarraute, *The Age of Suspicion: Essays on the Novel*, trans. Maria Jolas, G. Braziller, George Braziller, New York 1963.

⁶⁰ Ibidem.

since we are talking about a dissipative community whose composition is constantly changing.

One can conclude that realism-4 is formed in the artistic consciousness of today's Russophone writers of Israel as an answer to the geocultural situation that has formed during the past thirty years. The new conditions that have arisen in the informational era have had not only an indirect influence on literature (in the form, for example, of the development of super-short prose and Facebook and LiveJournal literature), but also, as one might have expected, a deeper and far-reaching influence. Among them are such features of realism-4 as demarginalization, internet magic and augmented reality. The analysis undertaken above has been concentrated only on several representatives of the contemporary Israeli Russophone literature, which, by force of the qualities of the community in which it arose, appears to be a paradigmatic example of neocultural realism. One can, however, expect that the phenomena described here are also characteristic of other literatures that are being formed in analogous social and cultural circumstances.