CONSCIOUSLY CREATED SUBTEXT IN WORKS BY VALERIY SHEVCHUK
AS A MEDIATOR OF THE IMPLICIT MEANINGS INTERPRETATION PROBLEM
IN THE ARTISTIC TEXTS

Subtext generation as well as its interpretation has been widely discussed by literary critics, philologists and translators. The phenomenon is so subtle and sophisticated that it seems hardly possible to comprehend its nature. The insights into the literary works with intentionally created hidden meanings appear to cast the light onto this literary riddle, thus improving the quality of text perception as well as its translation. Valery Shevchuk, an acknowledged expert on the consciously created subtext, has been known to build implicit meanings of his works on several artistic principles. First, he creates a realistic plane of his work, which introduces an indicative element, i.e. another plane of the described, an image or a detail. This indicative element has the features of the surreal, the illusive, and it is this element which creates the subtext in a literary work. At times a character of the literary work performs the function of the indicative element, it can also be some artistic detail, a characteristic feature or even the name of the character. Secondly, Valery Shevchuk sharpens, exaggerates a certain moment in the story and means this as the way to draw the reader's attention to a particular phenomenon, to encourage them to think, to delve into the text. Not unfrequently, this moment is an episode of the complicated relations of the characters in the text or a social trend that reveals the vast and dramatic depth of the narration. In sum and substance, Shevchuk's works have a special kind of subtext: being totally aware of the hidden meaning he is creating, the author does not give comprehensive answers to the questions he directs to the reader in his works, even in the hidden planes of the text. It forces us to find answers on our own, through reflections based on thorough and careful immersion into the text. So, we can talk about open subtexts of Shevchuk's works, which allow many individual readers' interpretations, but none of them will be final. Careful studies into the mechanisms of conscious subtext creation can considerably improve methodology of literary text analysis, in the first place, enabling the researchers as well as the readers to reveal the hidden meanings of the literary works for their further interpretation.

Key words: subtext, implicit meaning, suggestion, semantic vector, intertextuality, open subtext.
Problem under consideration. Valery Shevchuk is one of the writers who consider subtext to be the most important artistic principle of creating literary texts and quite consciously work on the construction of hidden meanings in their works. In the process of analysing Shevchuk's literary texts, we are dealing with "consciously created subtexts" that arise as a result of the writer's purposeful work on the work (Tarnavska, 2020: 623-627).

The latest research analysis. The problem of subtext interpretation in a literary text was studied by a bunch of scholars who held the traditional view on subtext interpretation (Haleeva N. L., Halynska I. L., Hirntser P. A., Zorivchak R.P., Kukharenko V.A., and others), whereas there has been a number of more recent studies into the matter of subtext where the concepts of subtext, intertext and metatext are closely connected and interact with each other in a literary work (Fateeva N A., Kondratenko N. V., Pryhodko V. B., Hrek L. V. And others). Yet the phenomenon of subtext hasn’t lost its attraction in the eyes of the scholars as it gave rise to the development of out-of-linear literary text connections and is the essential element of any text of a high quality.

The article is aimed at deeper researching into the mechanism of consciously created subtext in Shevchuk’s works, as it could provide literary critics with more or less objective theory of implicit meaning creation, especially if we take into consideration the fact that it is not a frequent case when we can confirm the literary subtext to be intentionally created by the author as there is no evidence supporting it. Thus, the given study might supply the theory of literary text interpretation with new practical information on how literary subtext is generated and what are the ways we could possibly trace and interpret it.

The main body of the article. Valery Shevchuk's subtexts are carefully thought out, as that was noted by his fellow writers at the beginning of the writer's career. In fact, it is a logical explanation, because the idols of many of the Sixtiers, including Shevchuk, were such well-known masters of implicit meanings creation as Hemingway, Mann, Faulkner, Golding. It was undoubtedly their styles that the writer adopted psychology, attention to the inner world of man, to the detail from. In his autobiographical novel «On the Shore of Time» («Na Berezi Chasu») Valery Shevchuk quotes Leonid Novichenko, where, according to the author himself, his desire to instil the texts with implicit meanings is quite accurately reflected: «In his manner, the plot is of secondary importance. In fact, the ornament made with the ordinary flow of life without a clear beginning and end rules out, instead. The outline of everyday events (deliberately routine) serves the author only for psychological observations of the characters, which gives way for a broader subtext, and I must say that this way with Shevchuk is truly intense. In many ways it is reminiscent of Hemingway's method ...» (Шевчук В., 2002: 84). In 1962 Ivan Dzyuba wrote it in the preface to Shevchuk's short story «Boys Shouted Anxiously» («Kholpachiy Tryvozhno Krychaly»): «In fact, his stories are in the mood. And at the same time they are situational. However, this mood is not trivial. Not a word is said about sadness, grief, pain, boredom, joy, irritation - but you can hear that the characters are sad, grieving, bored or happy, dreaming, struck by remorse... This can be seen from their situations, from their words, from their intonations, right, but these situations are ordinary, elementary, primitive, restrained, the intonations are indifferent, the lines are reluctantly stingy or accidental. ... People meet each other or part, a purely human intimate web is woven or broken among them, but this is inaudible and invisible; they make some gestures and say some words, but not quite about «that» and not quite «those» ... Their behaviour is inadequate to their condition, the external is inadequate to the internal (it is poorer, rougher, more static against the latter)» (Шевчук В., 2002: 85). Shevchuk himself emphasizes the importance of implicit meanings in a work of art, but does not reveal the principles of their creation. Thus, when corresponding with his brother, he repeatedly mentions the importance of subtexts: «You see, you have come to the right idea that the subtext should be voiced. ... I could advise you to highlight some phrases with the font. To highlight those phrases that reflect the subtext most fully. ...
Here are some thoughts on the creation of the subtext. Actually, we are talking about the so-called mental core in a work of art ... mental generalization of the material presented» (Шевчук В., 2002: 55).

Thus, Shevchuk belongs to the writers for whom conscious construction of the implicit sphere is perhaps the most important creative principle. That is why anyone undertaking the interpretation of his works is obliged to remember that they have a strong subtextual semantic layer. Without adequate penetration into it, it is impossible to fully read the works of the writer.

In order to get acquainted with the «technology» of Shevchuk’s creation of hidden meanings, we will turn attention to his story «Chortytsya» («The Devil Girl»), first published in 1992, which has become a model of virtuoso subtextual writing of the master. The story has two planes of the description, that is, two lines along which the events unfold: realistic and imaginary. The realistic one depicts a tragic episode in the Soviet suburban life of the 80s. At the send-off-to-the-army party of his friend the main character Vasya Ravlyk, a young man who works in a printing house as a linotype writer, meets a girl named Raya («a grey creature in a grey dress») (Шевчук, 1992: 4). Vasya, who drank too much at the party, returns to his lonely house (because his mother died six months ago) all by himself. The next morning, however, waking up, he sees the girl lying next to him, and it is a mystery how she got there. Later, his explained to the boy that she had been brought in at night because she was crying and begging to be with him. Raya is the first woman in Ravlyk's life, so he allows her to stay. Yet, the girl behaves strangely: first, she does not seem to feel anything at all, because she remains cold even while making love, and secondly, the girl cannot and does not want to do any housework, spending time in bed, or sunbathing naked in the garden under an apple tree. Vasya having a good heart, strives to achieve Raya's love and tries to teach her to do housework. But the girl remains cold and indifferent, she looks more like an animal or an underdeveloped child who understands only swearing and beating. Ravlyk, in the end, loses patience when he learns that in his absence, all his friends living in the neighbourhood secretly come to the girl, as she does not refuse anyone. He gets the girl out of the house, brutally, like an animal, kicking her. The next morning, the young man wakes up with a sense of relief that he can start a new life, but when he goes out into the garden and sees an awful picture: Raya hung herself naked on the same apple tree, under which she used to get tanned.

The second line of the events is imaginary, that is, the line of dreams and visions. Dreams, as such, play an important role in Shevchuk’s works and are a baroque feature (Шевчук 3., 2002: 14-17) inherent in the writer’s texts (Жулинский, 1989: 5-15), (Майданенко, 1988: 13-22), (Мовчан, 1999: 7-11). «The form of artistic dream allows the writer (...) to concentrate the most important topical blocks» (Жовновська, 2000: 7). «Dream depiction in the artist’s works does not have conventional conditional boundaries (especially, in historical fiction stories). This creates the effect of «real unreality» (Фенько, 1999: 11). The events of the visions take place mainly in the dreams or thoughts of the main character, only occasionally acquiring the features of the author's narration. Thus, in dreams, Vasya Ravlyk turns into a real snail, with a hut that he has to pull alone on his shoulders. Around him, women transform into cats, pigs and other animals and try to interfere in his «snail life». But every time he manages to hide either on a tall burdock leaf or shut himself up in his shell house.

The realistic and the visionary planes are closely interwoven, leaving the impression of understatement, secrecy. And this feeling is quite logical, because it is dreams that «create an atmosphere of uncertainty, unreality» (Шевчук 3., 2002: 16).

In the realistic plane, Valery Shevchuk paints the realities of the life of the suburbs in the 80’s with a few bright strokes: seeing off to the army, more like a youth party, with moonshine and mixed salad, tiny rooms in yet tinier houses, savings books with some money for a rainy day. It is due to the realia, the characters of the story become alive, as if «written off» from the life of those times. The image of Vasya Ravlyk is also quite realistic: being young and having just buried his mother, he remains completely alone, but does not despair, works hard, has friends, dreams of a future family, loves reading. However, this realistic portrait is complemented with the symbols which resonate with the content of visions, building up new meanings, not transmitted directly in realistic terms.

First of all, the very name of the main character «Ravlyk» (meaning «snail») is symbolic. This is just his nickname (the real name of the by is totally ordinary, colourless - Milyutenko). At first glance, there is nothing unusual in his nick, as it is one of those typical kids’ nicks given in the childhood and sticking in for good. The deeper, implicit meaning of Vasylyi's nickname is revealed only with the help of visions: «... Vasya went into the depths of the night, illuminated by the green moon, wandered along the ocean floor, where houses and fences, bushes and trees, sleeping cars and moss-covered stones, grass and electric poles stood in the thick water of darkness. Half an hour ago, lanterns were burning on those pillars, and now they are dead, have turned all...»
the light out of themselves and are cold, bathed in the mirage of green. Vasya felt like a little snail again - along the road and everything in this world seemed blurred, as if covered with a loose layer of silt, even himself, even his house on his back. He passed, exposing a pair of sensitive horns, and those horns trembled in the cold density of silence that enveloped the earth» (Шевчук, 1992: 8).

Having carefully analysing the content of the passage, we understand that Vasya Ravlyk is a real snail, lonely and confused in such a big world. With his «horns» he sensitively listens to the world around him, to the nature and its ways. The friendliness, calmness and cheerful soul of the boy are just external features of his character. In this world he lacks warmth, understanding, attention, kindness. It is not easy for him to find all this, because Vasya seeks to be locked in his shell house, to shut himself in, so that others cannot even accidentally offend him, shake his own quiet world. Indeed, only in his own house, albeit empty, yet his own, «Snail» feels calm and protected. So when Raya comes into his life, and it happens by accident, not of his own accord, he hesitates, he doesn't know how to behave now. On the one hand, she is his first woman, to whom he naturally has a passion. In addition, the presence of a girl makes his existence not so lonely. On the other hand, Raya suddenly intervened in his quiet world and was not at all like the image of the woman he had nurtured in his dreams.

Another symbol that is closely connected with the image of a snail is the image of a snail house, which is «pulled» by the character. The symbol of the house is extremely important for Shevchuk's works, in his writings «the house is an anchor of the soul, the beginning of everything, the refuge of joys and sorrows, a sacred shrine for a man ...» (Панченко, 1988: 180-181). The snail house is no exception. In the story, this symbol is further deepened by associative images: the house for Vasya «Snail» is his lonely, but the only refuge in the world, the house for a snail is his salvation but also his agony, because he cannot throw it off, as well as cannot another snail settle in it. Thus, the character is doomed to be lonely until he can take off the burden of the shell, stop being a snail, find a kindred soul which will understand and love him, to whom he will be able to reveal his true nature. That is why Vasya lets the girl stay and tries to love him, to whom he will be able to reveal his true nature. That is why Vasya lets the girl stay and tries to love him, to whom he will be able to reveal his true nature.

While the image of Vasya Ravlyk is quite real and organically interwoven into the realistic plane of events, the image of Raya, Chortytsya («the Devil Girl»), at first reading seems unreal, somewhat illusive. Raya is a cold and insensitive, primitive, as if undeveloped child. Thus, the image of Paradise stands out against the background of realistic events of the text for its being artificial as well as mysterious, not for nothing is she called «Chortytsya». The title of the story also draws the reader's attention to it. Obviously, it was in the image of the girl that Shevchuk put the hidden meaning of the story, which is not easy to reveal yet. This assumption is confirmed by the words of M. Pavlyshyn who researched Valery Shevchuk's works. He believes that in the writer's texts «phenomena of everyday life are endowed with a halo of sacredness and become symbols that seem to indicate some deep meaning, though are not easy to interpret» (Павлишин, 1997: 145).

To facilitate the process of interpretation we can start with the already familiar strategy of subtext building by Shevchuk, that is, the interpretation of the name. or in our case, it is better to say «names». The girl's name «Raya» is clearly associated with the word of the same root, that is «рай» (meaning «paradise»). Ironically, the nick states quite the opposite describing the «devilish» character of the girl. All in all, the reader’s conscience builds up the paradox image of the «paradise devil» creature. This paradox puzzles and confuses as well as induces the reader to seek deeper into the riddle finding strikingly different yet existing together planes of the girl’s character.

Let us now turn to the image of the girl as an image with a hidden meaning, which combines the features of animal primitivism as well as childish naivety, femininity and emotionlessness. It is clear that the conditions in which Raya grew up were not favourable for her mental and spiritual development. Instead, she acquired a primitive language, the habit of smoking a lot and angry stare. Vasya who is observant by nature, immediately noticed the resemblance of the girl to the «wandering cat who struggles along». The girl's way of life is also more of an animal. Apparently, the girl realized early on that men pay attention to her and that she can exist (that is, have food and a roof over her head), because she gives in to their desires, the essence of which she does not understand. Raya can definitely be called «underdeveloped» in social terms (she has no friends, cannot communicate, does not know and does not understand the basic rules in relationships with men). However, the most important thing is that she is totally primitive emotionally. The girl feels sadness, fear, joy, but is not capable of more subtle, complex human feelings: love, gratitude, shame. Instead, her actions are reminiscent of mechanical actions, primitive reflexes, which are the usual reactions to ordinary events. The girl's primitiveness, however, does not
leave a feeling of disgust towards the heroine, and this impression is due to the subtextual layers of her image. The concept of childishness is one of the most important ones for the characterization of the girl, because she, despite her inferiority, does not turn into an animal. From time to time her character clearly shows the features of a child, which are manifested primarily in the naivety of the girl deeply hidden in the image of a «mature, and perhaps shabby woman». And only through the girl's eyes does the author show the true essence of the heroine: she looks at Vasya Ravlyk «with innocent eyes». This feature of the heroine is best conveyed in the episode when Raya returns from the city where she had to buy clothes, with a large doll under her arm. When Raya appears on the doorstep, she looks like a big, scared child: this impression is enhanced by her widened eyes (like a child's or a doll's). The feeling of insecurity is intensified by her high, shaky heels, heavy huge earrings in her ears, the things from the world of adults. The concept of childishness, the insecurity of the image can be called a hidden concept, because it is expressed through details and descriptions that only create the impression of insecurity, childish naivety. Constant repetitions of details and motifs (for example, a doll motif) «suggest» this impression onto the reader, make them clearly feel the child in the image of the girl. Along with primitiveness and childish naivety, there is something in the heroine that attracts men like a magnet. Let us turn to the text of the story: «Here he (Vasya Ravlyk) saw her: she was lying naked on a blanket under the sun, tanned to dark, her face down, and he looked closely at her almost perfect shape, and as her body had an even suntan without white spots on her buttocks or white stripes on her back and neck, he thought that lying like that was not her first time» (Шевчук, 1992: 15). The girl is endowed with a beautiful female body. She has absolutely no sense of shame (again due to socio-emotional underdevelopment), she sunbathes naked, not paying attention to what is happening around. Such natural, original beauty can not but make her extremely sexy and attractive to men. In the complex image of the main character of the story we can find yet another feature that seems completely incompatible with her femininity and sexuality - it is absolute coldness in relationships with men. She is «scorchingly cold» throughout the story, and the author constantly draws the reader's attention to this feature of her behaviour. At the first acquaintance with the boy, she was «calm and cold, he even felt with the tips of his hot fingers that he was not touching a living body, but the crushed ice »...» (Шевчук, 1992: 5). And no matter how hard he tried to «melt this ice», to arouse love or tenderness in the girl, «she remained just as cold and just as still» (Шевчук, 1992: 22).

Artistic details also play an important role in constructing hidden meanings. They are few, but carefully outlined with repetitions, thus, forming associative networks which evoke certain emotions in the reader. One of the key details is based on the opposition. It is the description of the girl's body and face. The body of the heroine is «young, bronze, bathed in the sun», it evokes the impression of femininity, youth and sexuality, despite other contradictory features (primitiveness, coldness). However, whereas Raya's body is young, flawless and sexy, her face is always stale and vulgar, like a mask. At the same time, her face was stale, crumpled, sour, sleepy, and her body was young and hard (Шевчук, 1992: 46).

One more detail which draws the reader's attention: the girl wears too much makeup and tries to keep it on her face as long as possible, she doesn't wash it off even at night (!). And all Vasya's efforts to convince Raya that she looks vulgar, that the natural features of her face are much more attractive, meet severe resistance. Indeed, when the author shows the heroine without a trace of makeup on her face, she changes dramatically: «She washed and returned to the table. Vasya loved those minutes. Because it was the time, very short after washing, breakfast time, and Raya did not have a cosmetic mask on her face, when he sincerely admired her young, pretty, although quite a plain face, clean, natural colour of her lips - had she combed her hair properly, she would look like that slim housewife who he sometimes dreamed of in a neat snail's hut» (Шевчук, 1992: 46).

Such a detail, built on the principle of contrast, has a deep hidden meaning: in fact, the girl is trying to hide her naivety and insecurity behind the cosmetics layer on her face, «camouflage» her vulnerable nature with seemingly fashionable (in her understanding) makeup. Perhaps, she does so, guided by her own instincts, unconsciously, but it is obvious that in this way the girl is trying to protect herself from the world which is so hard on her to her. (Here it is appropriate to mention the character of Seymour, «a man without skin», in Salinger's story «A Perfect Day for Bananafish»). As we can see, the detail further enhances the impression of insecurity and naivety of the character, a girl and a woman at the same time who became an adult only physically, yet spiritually and emotionally she is insecure and unhappy.

Another striking detail that deepens the implicit meaning of the image of Raya is the comparison of the girl with Mavka, the main character of Lesya Ukrainka's «Forest Song» («Lisova Pisnya»). This detail unfolds in two semantic planes. The explicit
meaning of the detail is that Vasya Ravlyk, once again puzzled by Raya's ignorance and naivety, compares her to Mavka, that is, a forest girl. Raya is truly of that kind.

To comprehend the hidden meaning of the comparison, it is essential to turn to the characteristics of Mavka's image from «The Forest Song» and remember, first of all, her childlike spontaneity, bordering on naivety, complicated relationships with people who do not understand her, and often behave rudely, insult her, taking advantage of her openness and vulnerability. Thus, the comparison of Raya with Mavka is a very important moment in creating the image of «Chortytsya». The author draws parallels with Mavka, emphasizing those features of the girl that are carefully hidden in the subtext: childish naivety, vulnerability and insecurity while facing the world of people. The author «suggests» a sympathetic attitude to the heroine onto the reader, inspires positive emotions in the process of perception of this contradictory image.

Another important comparison. Mavka from «The Forest Song» was as indifferent and cold to people as the heroine of Valery Shevchuk's story. However, this lasted only until she and Lukash fell in love with each other, their love melted the ice in Mavka's soul (Перрон, 2002: 153). Vasya Ravlyk, like Lukash, loved Raya, but could not warm up the heart of the girl frustrated and disappointed in people. Although only warmth, love and understanding could have saved the girl from suicide, and possibly changed her life. Unfortunately, the warmth and love which Vasya tried to give her was not enough, and once the inevitable happened. The truth, however, remains unchanged: only love, care and understanding can save a person, make them happy, and if that love and understanding is not enough the tragedy is unavoidable. That is where Shevchuk's humanism lies, embedded both in the subtext of this comparison and in the subtext of the whole story.

Like Salinger, Valery Shevchuk offers a sharply dramatic ending to the novel, which leaves the reader with a number of open questions to which they cannot (easily) find answers. This artistic technique encourages a more thorough and active reading of the text, thinking deeper, that is, forces to delve into the subtext.

According to the plot of the story, the next morning after Vasya kicks the girl out of the house, he wakes up and does not find Raya. This relieves the boy at first, he is finally done with the past, but all of a sudden everything is crashed against the terrifying reality. It seems a paradox, but this blood-curdling image of a dead girl seems to «scream» how beautiful, feminine, yet completely defenceless, «naked» she was during her life, and how much she lacked love and kindness. The ending impresses, shocks the reader being completely unexpected. However, the main question remains open: how could this primitive girl, who was used to being kicked out by men, dare to do the thing she did, and why did she do it?

One of the possible answers could be found in the subtext of the girl's image. Although she could not feel the world like most people around her, because of her own emotional immaturity, she was not a heartless, cold, made up doll. behind her coldness and callousness hid an unprotected, naive and vulnerable child. She might be able to realize the hopelessness and misery of her life and dare to commit suicide. However, even in the subtext, no clear evidence of this version can be found, as well as of any other's. Thus, the story has an open ending, which requires the reader to find their own answer. And this finale can be called an «open subtext», as it requires a careful reading of the story, «immersion» in its hidden meanings, though everyone will discover out their own meaning. After all, as researchers of the writer's works note, «Valery Shevchuk (...) used to tell parables in which there might be a lot of answers, but none of them is final» (Рябчук, 1988: 179).

Conclusions and further research prospects.

To sum up, we can undoubtedly confirm that literary subtext is an important phenomenon which imparts the literary text with the uniqueness, that is, filling it with precision, voluminosity and breathtaking depth opened up before the reader's eyes. Apparently, literature is not exact science complying with the rigid rules and formulas, consequently there is hardly a recipe for a genius subtext creation. Yet scrutinising the best artistic works embodied with the consciously created implicit meanings, one could contour the outlines which might be turned into the guidelines on how to comprehend the phenomenon better. It is not only a step towards deeper understanding of the text and subtext interaction as well as of the correlation between the text and supertextual elements, like intertext and metatext, but also a move to the understanding of the nature of genius writings.

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