

SOME EFFECTS OF PRISHVIN'S STYLE IN HIS EARLY WORKS

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by

Darina Vašek

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AUTHOR: Darina Vašek

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: A study of the artistic devices used by M. M. Prishvin for his early works in view of the main effects he achieves.

The thesis contains a preface and six chapters. Chapter I summarizes the works that have been published about Prishvin's style so far; it offers a few biographical comments about the writer and a brief outline of the contents of the analysed works. Chapters II - V deal with the main effects of his early prose: Chapter II looks at the homogeneity of the narrator and the material, Chapter III discusses the vividness of Prishvin's images, Chapter IV is concerned with the effect of mystery and Chapter V with humor. Chapter VI sums up our findings.

P R E F A C E

The writings of M. M. Prishvin are almost unknown to the western reader, although they enjoy wide popularity with the Russian public, primarily for their extraordinary vividness and immediacy of expression. The early works in particular demonstrate some remarkable results of Prishvin's bold experimentation with the Russian language. This unusual use of language attracts lovers of the Russian language to his books, while on the other hand, it makes the translation of his works almost impossible.

The aim of this thesis is to point out the peculiarities of Prishvin's artistic expression and to evaluate the degree of success he achieves. As regards the works by M. M. Prishvin, I refer to the Sobraniye Sochineniy published in 1956-1957, unless it is otherwise indicated.

* * * * *

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

M. M. Prishvin is very popular among Russian readers for his numerous "ocherki" that convey his inexhaustible admiration for Russian nature. He has been much admired and praised for his mastery of expression in a language of Russian which is vivid and rich. For Prishvin, language is not only an integral part of a work of art, but a piece of art in itself and as such he considers it a peculiar manifestation of the beauty of human nature.

люблю я не человека, а язык,
держусь близости речи, а кто
близок к речи, тот близок и
душе человека.¹

Already in his early literary works it is quite evident that the spoken language and Russian folk literature are his prime models and the strongest influence on his work. Throughout his writings the desire to imitate folklore is apparent -- either implicitly in his manner of writing, or explicitly, as in the preface to his cycle of stories "Lisichkin khleb":

¹M. M. Prishvin, *Glaza Zemli*, (Soch.), Vol. V, p. 279.

мне хотелось бы рано или поздно
 достигнуть в своих рассказах
прелести фольклора, задача не
 очень скромная, но верю,
 возможная в своем решении.

. 2

What is it in the aesthetics of folklore that attracts Prishvin?

How does he attempt to achieve the charm of folklore in his writing?

Does he succeed in achieving his aim?

These are the main questions, which will guide us through the analysis of Prishvin's style. His fascination by folklore is predominant in his early works (1909-1912). With respect to stylistic experimentation, this period of Prishvin's writing is the richest. An analysis of his works from this period is also essential for understanding his development as a writer.

Out of the relatively many works that have been written about Prishvin, surprisingly few deal with the style of his early writings. L. Borovoy in the essay dealing with Prishvin in his book Yazyk Pisatelya gives a very superficial image of Prishvin's use of language in general. He has chosen at random a few words from Prishvin's books and from those he deduces some general statements about Prishvin's value for society. Despite the attractive title of her article ("Iz Istoriyi Izucheniya Yazyka i Stilya M. M. Prishvina") T. Stepanova offers a subjective survey of all kinds of works about the writer, emphasizing the ideologically

²M. M. Prishvin, Nezabudki, (Moskva, Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennoy Literaturny, 1969), p. 114.

more concerned critics and dismissing others, without making the least attempt at critical analysis of their work (e.g. the work of S. B. Zarkhin). Her criticism of T. Khmel'nitskaya's list of Prishvin's neologisms may perhaps be correct, but it remains pointless, since she does not identify either the vocabulary, nor the sources of her information. A. I. Khaylov, G. Yershov, I. Motyashov and a number of other works discuss Prishvin's approach to writing in general; much attention is paid in them to autobiography. In a similar way the work of M. Pakhomova, Prishvin i Kareliya is concerned mainly with the ideological aspect of Prishvin's early works, although she makes some valuable observations about Prishvin's imagery, in her statements about style she is very vague. G. A. Shabel'skaya in her essay about the sketch Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom aptly points to similarities and differences between Remizov's and Prishvin's style and the influence of folklore on Prishvin's imagery. Her later article in Vestnik Leningradskogo Universiteta is much less analytical and limited to an explanation of Prishvin's interest in the world of illusions as an escape from the contradictions of life into fairy-land.

Of the works with relevant treatment of style we should like to mention Lozovoy's accurate study of Prishvin's animating metaphors. T. Yu. Khmel'nitskaya in her Tvorchestvo M. Prishvina notes the influences of folklore and of the symbolist writings on his style and makes many interesting observations about the language of his works. However, she concentrates on the language of Prishvin's later works and deals with

the early writings only marginally. H. Lampl in his book Das Fröhwerk M. Prishvins critically analyses the narrative technique of the writer and mentions some linguistic features where relevant to the subject of his study. Although significant, his comments in this respect are far from exhaustive.³

Prishvin's linguistic experimentation as well as other structural aspects of his works deserve much more scholarly attention than they have received so far. Although the scope of our study does not allow an exhaustive treatment of Prishvin's early works, we would like to provide at least a selective analysis of this important period in Prishvin's literary career.

In the following study, we intend to analyse seven representative works of this period. They show Prishvin's experiments in structure as well as language. They present the two main genres "ocherk" and "rasskaz" and are also chronologically representative: the "ocherki" V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits and Za Volshebnykh Kolobkom introduce his first works (1907-1908), the story "U Gorelogo Pnya" marks the transition to the "rasskazy" (1910), "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" and "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" are two different, mature stories (1911). "Ivan Oslyanichek" with "Bab'ya Luzha" (1912) document the artistic crisis of this early period of Prishvin's literary development.

³Unfortunately we were unable to obtain in time the work of S. Zarkhin, who, according to H. Lampl, has some important comments to make about the role of the free indirect discourse in Prishvin's works.

Our analysis deals with four aesthetic effects that appear to be predominant for the style of his early works. Theoretically and methodologically we have followed the functional approach to stylistic analysis as it has been formulated by the Russian and Prague School of functional stylistics and in the West worked out by e.g. Stephen Ullmann and M. A. K. Halliday. The functionalist definition of a stylistic fact is a "linguistic element considered in its utilization for literary purposes in a given work."⁴ This definition refers to the basic functionalist concern with the aesthetic function of a language as professed by R. Jakobson, J. Muĥarovsky' and their followers.

We study the linguistic techniques employed for these effects within the structure and content of the seven selected works. We do not attempt an exhaustive analysis of the above named works, either regarding their structure or language.

In an introduction to our own analysis we would like to make a few biographical comments essential for Prishvin's growth as a writer and to survey briefly the contents of the chosen works.

Born into the upheavals of the seventies, M. M. Prishvin was to live through more stormy times still. His imaginative and adventurous mind manifested itself already in his childhood; he was ready to realize any beautiful idea regardless of practical difficulties. Thus as a "gimmazist" he set off to rediscover Asia, but the disappointment of this unsuccessful escape from school was followed by further disillusioning

⁴A definition of P. Delbouille as quoted by Stephen Ullmann, *Language and Style*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1964), p. 126.

encounters with raw reality. Thus he was faced with the conflicting relationship between dream and reality in life. His fascination with fairy tales, however, is exchanged during his school days for an excited interest in science. He finally graduates as an agronomist but does not feel entirely satisfied in his profession. Therefore in 1905 he gladly accepts Shakhmatov's invitation to collect folklore for the new dictionaries about the North of Russia which were to be published by Onchukov.

On his trips to Karelia and to the extreme north of the Russian territory he collects rich material not only for Onchukov but also for his early sketches and spends a lot of time hunting. Thus, as an ethnographer, he finds an opportunity for a suitable combination of his adventurous and scientific inclinations.

In 1907, after publishing V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits and having written Za Volshebnykh Kolobkom which establishes his name as a writer, he becomes acquainted with Remizov who is to have the strongest influence on him in the near future, with Merezhkovsky and Hippius, who introduce him to other modernists.

As a result of his subsequent journies he writes in 1908-1910 some new sketches -- U Sten Grada Nevidimogo (Svetloye Ozero) about the Old Believers on the Volga and Chornyy Arab about his impressions from his Asian tour. In 1910 he visits his native Khrushchevo and the wilderness of Bryn' (near Kaluga). His material from this region is more or less implicit in his next stories: "U Gorelogo Pnya", first published in 1910 in Apollon, "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" published in 1911 in the almanac

Shipovnik, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" published in 1911 in Russkaya Mysl', "Ivan Oslyanichek" published in Zavety of 1912 and "Bab'ya Luzha" also in 1912 in Znaniye. The stories "Nikon Starokolenyy" and "Samorok" of 1912 close the period of Prishvin's liveliest stylistic experimentation and of the influence of the modernism on him.

After a few stories dealing with the contemporary class struggle he suffers an artistic crisis. Horrified by the atrocities of the Revolution he pauses for a while and in the twenties resumes writing in the form of larger autobiographical works (Kashcheyeva Tsep') and new sketches of a much more descriptive nature. He belongs to the group of the "fellow travellers" and becomes a good friend of Gorky. Of the realistic sketches of the twenties and thirties perhaps best known are Rodniki Berendeya (Kalendar' Prirody, 1926) and Koren' Zhizni (Zhen'-Shen', 1933.).

Reconciled with the contradictions which the Revolution has brought out, he then inclines towards socialist realism, but continues writing apolitically. His main theme remains nature, not industry or the Revolution.

The phænological sketches as well as numerous stories for children have made him most popular with Soviet readers. His works have been published in several collections and especially his works for children are published over and over almost every year. His death in 1954 was followed by the publication of his Collected Works in six volumes (in 1956-1957), which we use in our analysis.

Our analysis required an examination of the original texts published in journals in the case of "U Gorelogo Pnya" and "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", since the author has made some changes for his further publications. The story "Ivan Oslyanichek" has been studied from its publication in Zavety, because this story as well as "Samorok" have been omitted from the Collected Works.

* * * * *

The sketch V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits (1907) depicts Prishvin's journey from Petersburg to Karelia. He is excited about his crossing the Vyg-zero in a small boat and offers a description of the landscape around. Then he depicts the life of people of the Karelian island: the work, art, beliefs and customs of the "voplenitsy", the fishermen, the "burlaki", the hunters, the folk magicians, narrates the history and legends about the Danilovskiy monastery and describes one of the hermits -- "skrytnik" Mukha. He closes the sketch with his return to Petersburg.

Za Volshebnykh Kolobkom (1908) opens with the motif of "kolobok" as Prishvin's magic guide on his journey from the Dvina estuary on the "Svyatyye ostrova" -- to the Solovetskiy monastery. He draws an image of the pilgrims' journey over the White Sea. Then he continues on to meet the Lapps on lake Imandra and draws his impressions of the northern "white nights". In the second part of the sketch he deals with his passage from Arkhangel on the open White Sea on a fishing trawler and pictures the harsh, even inhuman conditions of life of the Pomors, from whom he crosses to the contrasting civilization of Norway. He closes

with an image of a night full of stars back in Central Russia.

The story "U Gorelogo Pnya" (1910) introduces the figure of a peasant-hunter Gusyok, who, as Kashcheyeva Tsep' shows, was his friend during childhood. The story depicts a hunt after a fictitious white quail. The quail is for Gusyok a symbol of happier life, since after selling the bird to a wealthy merchant he could buy a samovar and entertain the whole village. The attempt fails and Gusyok, accompanied by the author, catches a grey quail as usual. In its transition into Kashcheyeva Tsep' the sequence of narration had been rearranged and the image of the anonymous narrator changed into one of Prishvin as a child. There are minor changes in punctuation and the general remarks about merchants have been ascribed with some changes to Gusyok as direct speech.

The hero of "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" (1911), Pavlik Krutoyarskiy, is a peculiar specimen of a degenerated aristocrat who lives in the neighborhood of the lake Krutoyaroye and the town Bezversk. He is fond of hunting, pursues the town girls and spends his entire life in leisure. Once he loses the excellent hunting dog that he liked beyond measure and in his desperate search for it he begins to be surrounded by hallucinatory images of animals that finally hunt him down. The people of the town see in it a fulfilment of the local legend about the downfall of anyone who happens to hear the voice of a mysterious animal supposedly living on the lake Krutoyaroye.

The story "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" (1911) is almost plotless. Amidst the magic night of the wild geese flight many strange things happen.

An upstart named Prints sets off to shoot the wild geese on the Krutoyaroye lake. At the same time the village people sing and dance at the wedding of his former mistress. Besides Prints, there are several other episodic characters: a vagrant youth Aleksey and an orphan girl Pronya, the hunter Stepan and others, whose role is episodic and who are in some way affected by the magic of the night -- e.g. Pronya seems to become all blue and Aleksey has a heavenly vision. The kernel of the story lies in the escape of a domestic goose belonging to a local priest, which follows the wild geese in their flight. The priest is seen to pursue the geese and begins to fly too. On the following morning, however, the magic bonds disappear and everything is returned to normal life. The vision of Aleksey was omitted from the publication of the Collected Works.

"Ivan Oslyanichek" (1912) is based on a legend Prishvin heard in Bryn'. Ivan Oslyanichek is a name for an icon of a saint who, resigning himself to the Lord, begged him to give him an animal head. The people pray to him to take the wrong from them. The story follows the degeneration of the aristocratic family Yur'yevy, as the rule over the estate is transferred from the hands of the feeble-minded princes to their wives. The story is full of individual grotesque episodes. The last prince of the clan marries a simple girl and is saved from the downfall which threatens if he is the last off-spring of the clan, by a secret adoption of her chamber-maid's child.

"Bab'ya Luzha" (1912) is the story of a priest's downfall through alcoholism. Father Peter was "advised" to cure himself from alcoholism by picking mushrooms. Once he is attracted out of the house by a strange dog into the forest where the dog seems to detect an enormous amount of mushrooms. Father Peter feverishly runs after them, until he drowns in the treacherous moorland.

CHAPTER II

THE VERNACULAR NARRATOR

Бывало не раз, устанешь на охоте
и заночуешь в лесу, и вот к твоему
огоньку придет какой-нибудь местный
человек, и тут, у костра, этот
Местный человек что-нибудь расскажет.
Только через эти слова в лесу кажется,
будто это сама природа о себе что-то
сказала посвоему. А после вспомнится
и то дерево, под которым развел
теплинку, и тот ручей, который пел
тебе всю ночь.

1

This comment from "Moi Tetradi" shows what immense evocative powers Prishvin perceived in the Russian vernacular. As is clear already from the introductory chapter of V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits, the author was very impressed and moved by the severe beauty of the northern landscape and the traditional, simple and essentially happy life of its people. That, on one hand, tempts him to give the reader his subjective evaluation of what he has seen, on the other hand, there are indications in the structure of the sketch that he would like the image of the whole so colourful and figurative to him, to appeal to the reader directly.

¹M. Prishvin, "Moi Tetradi", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 525.

Among the many manifestations of the natural creativity of the people, which he admired ever since his career as an agriculturist, Prishvin was struck by the beauty of their language. He started recording folk conversations and fragments of speech, even if he had to write on a box of matches.²

In his search for an appropriate stylistic approach which would give the reader a maximum immediacy of the country setting and events which are the focus of Prishvin's attention, he decides already in V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits to use the colloquial-popular language as his chief medium of communication.

This decision, however, confronted him with the problem of finding a suitable way of bringing the narrator's plane with his use of the complex literary style closer to simple, but emotionally rich popular speech, which would be used by his characters. He does not want the narrator to be perceived as a foreign element in the popular setting.

Thus the early works of the writer acknowledge his search for a type of narrator who would be able, by his attitude and manner of speech, to evoke the atmosphere of the country setting and the natural environment.

After his first story for children, "Sashok", Prishvin starts writing a more extensive prose in the form of "ocherki", a form familiar to Russian readers from the writings of S. T. Aksakov, Leskov, Korolenko and other writers. The genre of "ocherk" with its semi-fictional and semi-informative character attracts Prishvin, together with the possibility of using the "skaz" technique in his narrative to report his personal experiences.

²Ibid., 523.

But in spite of the seemingly ideal characteristics of the "ocherk" genre, already V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits poses some problems essential to Prishvin's stylistic development and displays a wide variety of styles. The subject of this sketch is a representation of the life of the Karelians and the face of their landscape.

While the narrator's "I" is genuinely personal, the subjective report takes turns with journalistic and entirely objective scientific reporting, where the person of the narrator is suppressed. But the Russian vernacular and some aspects of the northern dialects are also a significant feature of the style of this "ocherk".

In the northern dialects Prishvin finds numerous local words with peculiar figurative quality, which are suggestive of the northerners' attitude towards nature.

But the figurative, specific words are not easily decipherable for a central Russian and Prishvin feels it necessary to explain them to the reader. The result is a rather dry, informative report of various activities of the Karelians, interwoven with several peculiar northern words, which are either explained or merely strike the reader with their exotic sound or form (e.g. "On okruzhon podvodnymi kamnyami - LUDA'II").³

Dialogues using popular colloquial speech with a few dialectal terms are more evocative, but they also have to be somehow interrelated with the author's plane -- and the sharp dividing line between the two stylistically contrasting planes weakens the immediate appeal of the dialogue. The narrative with its high literary flavour distances the

³M. M. Prishvin, "V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits", (Soch.), Vol. II p. 32

author from the local situations, inspite of his subjective "I". Prishvin feels that, in order to use the evocative power of the popular language effectively, he has to bring the author's and the dialectal plane closer by some compromise. He can choose between two methods: either to lend part of his narrative to his characters to participate in it, or to absorb the typical features of their speech, i.e. to stylize himself into a folk type of narrator.

In V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits, he experiments in both. In the chapter entitled "Voplenitsa" there is a passage about folk gossips⁴, where he lends the report for a while to "vedlejší vypravěč" (an "accessory narrator")⁵ (or rather narrators), i.e. the situation is expressed as the people from the village see it. The commentators are not identified, neither separated from the plane of the narrator. But they can be recognized by their manner of speech using the typically colloquial-popular, colourful but comprehensible vocabulary, syntax and intonation, unveiling folk speakers. There are colloquial verbs ("zagulival", "posluzhila", "peredalas") or nouns ("baby", "kumushki"), particles ("vot", "i") a tendency for asyndetic connections, the emotional imperative to substitute for the past tense ("Lodochnik i skazhi pri narode" i "Otkuda ni voz'mis' u baby kol"), ellipses of pronouns ("Stali rugat'sya krepche") and of verbs ("kolom ona yego po lbu"), etc. Characteristic are references to the common acceptance of the ex-

⁴Ibid., p, 42.

⁵L. Doležel, Knížka o jazyce a stylu soudobé české literatury, (Prague, Orbis, 1962), p. 30.

pressed opinion ("vse znayut", "u vsekh na pamyati"). Prishvin successfully joins this subjectivized passage to his own narrative by using the generalizing second person for the verb ("i mnogo vsego uvidish' i uznayosh'").

In contrast with dialogues and with the words that are specially marked out, this is the first time that Prishvin uses a passage of colloquial-popular language without specific dialectal features and fully comprehensible. At the same time the popular-colloquial form seems as though intrinsic of the gossips -- the border line between the theme and the expression is erased and the whole becomes one representative image.

In the same vein, he creates a relief of the magic fisherman Timoshka.⁶ The frequent use of the generalizing second person together with an imperative substitution for subjunctive ("i kak ni beysya, a bol'she polozhennogo ne poymyosh'") provides a lively contact with the reader and creates a mood of a distant conversation between the reader and the villagers who give out their opinion about Timoshka.

Also the "koldun" Maksimka joins the author's narrative as an accessory narrator.⁷

Stepanida Maksimovna, the "voplenitsa" and Filipp, the hunter, have a special place in this experiment in stylization. By means of a "free indirect discourse"⁸ ("nevlastní přímá řeč")⁹, Prishvin gives Stepanida's

⁶M. M. Prishvin, "V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits", Soch. Vol. II, p. 63.

⁷Ibid., p. 119.

⁸S. Ullmann, Language and Style, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1964), p. 134.

⁹L. Doležel, Knížka o jazyce a stylu soudobé české literatury, (Prague, Orbis, 1962), p. 42.

"autobiography".

Раз был такой случай, рассказывает
Максимовна. Теткины девочки уехали
на Медвежий остров за ягодами...
Вот тетка и скажи: -- Черт вас
унесет, ягодницы!

10

From "nevlastní přímá řeč" Prishvin shifts the implied first person of Stepanida into the third person, her voice joins the voice of the author, which creates again an "accessory narrator":

Много случаев помнит Максимовна,
когда и ее пугал Шишко, но всего
не перескажешь.

В детском кругу Степку
с десяти лет стали все называть
"краснопевкой". .. Бывало, как
соберутся к празднику на погост...
Парочка подбиралась в величайшей
тайне от всех. Но где тут
укрыться!

11

In "Stepanida's" utterance, the common colloquial-popular features which link her with the other villagers are used, together with some poetic conventions taken over from the poetry she sings -- such as etymological figures ("vol'nu volyushku"), constant epithets ("stolam belodubovym"), frequent dactylic ending of syntagmata or at the end of sentences

¹⁰ М. М. Prishvin, "V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits", (Soch.), Vol. II, p. 49.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 50.

("s etogo Vyg-ozera Strakhovitogo") etc. to depict her as a folk artist. The occasional nature of her "prichitaniya" helps the author maintain the chronological progress of her "autobiography". Daily life, traditional art and manner of speaking are fused together in the person of Stepanida Maksimovna to form a harmonious whole and Prishvin found an appropriate means to express it, giving it out in the frame of his own personal experience.

In his account of Filipp, the hunter,¹² the objective distance of the author is again partially erased. Lively popular expressions and idioms enter Prishvin's narrative (the hunters eat "po dve vyti" -- two meals each, before going hunting; they hunt "na zvir'ya"), then he maintains the tone by using rather concise sentences and characteristic hunting expressions for the whole account of the hunting expeditions; but he does not give to Filipp as much freedom in participation in the narrative as he gave to Stepanida Maksimovna, so that we can speak here of the use of a "co-narrator", ("spoluvypravěč")¹³.

From the preceding discussion, we see that Prishvin attempted to introduce the colloquial popular language into the plane of the narrator by letting some characters and a popular community participate in the narrative. This brings a new subjectivizing element into his narrative, for it conveys the situation from the point of view of the characters. This device of "subjectivized narration",¹⁴ is a typical feature of modern prose, where it is often used to allow a deeper look into the heroes'

¹²Ibid., pp. 96-109.

¹³L. Doležel, Knížka o jazyce a stylu soudobé české literatury, (Prague, Orbis, 1962), p. 28.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 27.

thoughts and feelings.

Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom demonstrates Prishvin's attempt to absorb certain features of the colloquial-popular language into his narrative rather than to give a word to subjective narrators. He decides for the fairy tale "skaz" technique of narrative as a form, which permits him to use general folk stylization, but keeps the genre of "oчерk". In the folk tale, individual features of the narrator come to be smoothed out by traditional demands of style and genre. But, Prishvin in Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom continues to be the personal hero of his narrative, although the narrator's-author's plane picks up many common colloquialisms and shifts the author's plane closer to the language of dialogues. The main stylistic experimentation in Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom takes place in the first of the two sections of the work, because Prishvin runs into fresh difficulties, which prevent him from continuing in the folklore-like vein till the end of the "oчерk".

Prishvin opens the sketch with conventional fairy tale formulae ("V nekotorem tsarstve, v nekotorem gosudarstve") and many other features of tales (e.g. "realized metaphors"¹⁵, i. e. application of the names of fairy tale personages to real characters -- e.g. "Mar'ya Morevna", "Ivanushka Durachok", "Kashchey Bessmertnyy"), which evoke an expectation of a fantastic tale, while interfering with the realistic nature of a travel sketch. The genre of a travel sketch demands a concrete geographical location and a notion of passing time. The tale, on the other hand, uses "closed time",¹⁶ which is typically a

¹⁵"realisierte Metapher", Lampl, p. 158.

¹⁶D. S. Lixačev, "Time in Russian Folklore", International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics, (1962), No. 5, p. 87.

distant non-historic time. The tale can not bear a static landscape description, common in "ocherk".

Prishvin manages to maintain the artificial atmosphere only for one chapter. Especially in the passage called "More" his expression is figurative and concise in the extreme; with the use of repeated statements, representative word order¹⁷ and tendency for regular rhythm of the sentences he creates almost a timeless atmosphere for the episode. Because of the representative nature of this chapter, the personal narrator somewhat retreats and is caught in the general atmosphere.

But as the journey to the Solovetskiy monastery and to the Lapp region begins to progress, the conventions of the fairy tale unwind. However, the miraculous scenery of the White Sea, which overwhelms both the simple pilgrims and Prishvin, allows an atmosphere similar to that of fairy tales to reign through effective imagery. The narrator-author's view of the unusual natural phenomena here is close to the naivety of the pilgrims, so that although he is not linguistically identical with them, he is psychologically close to them. His manner of expression is less complex here than in the second section of Za Volshebnym Kolobkom and the imagery is close to the popular view of nature.

The simple and peaceful life of the Lapps together with the unspoiled beauty of the nature lets the mysterious atmosphere continue for some time. But the harsh reality of life of the Pomors and the contrasting civilization of Norway in the second section of Za Volshebnym Kolobkom definitely end the fairy-tale, and Prishvin's style is strict and factual here, with ironical overtones. He has again resumed an objective distance from the reality reported about.

¹⁷To be discussed in the following chapter.

However, the orientation towards folklore and colloquial-popular language has been set and in his later works we find Prishvin looking for such a genre and style as would allow his narrator to integrate with his material much more effectively than before.

The most significant change with respect to genre and the narrator occurs in the years 1910-1911. In 1910 Prishvin writes a short story entitled "U Gorelogo Pnya", an evocative picture of the search for human happiness.

Once more we meet here the "I" of a personal narrator. However, he is no longer identified specifically -- as a journalist -- ethnographer, as was the case in V Kravu Nepuganykh, Ptits and Za Volshebnykh Kolobkom, which equated the planes of the author and the narrator. Here, in "U Gorelogo Pnya", there is only a vague reference to the narrator's superior social position in contrast to the "muzhik" -- hunter Gusyok; only on the special occasion of the exciting hunt after a white quail does Gusyok address him with the familiar singular "molchi" instead of "molchite".¹⁸ Nor is the narrator identified as one of the merchants (Prishvin's actual class origin), because we hear the narrator using a slightly ironical, condescending tone about them: "Nashi kuptsy -- bol'shiye lyubiteli perepelinogo krika";¹⁹ "i dvinutsya pochtyonnyye lyudi v polya".²⁰ This tone is very much in line with the astute tone Gusyok

¹⁸M. M. Prishvin, "U Gorelogo Pnya", Apollon, (1910), No. 7, p. 34.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 32.

²⁰Ibid., p. 33.

is using in his approach to an imaginary merchant: "Vashe stepenstvo, izvol'te slushat'"; "neizvol'te bespokoit'sya".²¹ The affectedly polite use of archaic expressions "stepenstvo", "izvol'te" was typical of the muzhiks' popular addressing of anyone whom they considered "barin". These, as well as many other linguistic features of the narrator's speech link the narrator with the plane of the character. In the narrative there are frequent popular particles -- "vot", "to", "i"; sentences are short in the extreme and often abruptly divided by colons and dashes. These and many other features linguistically identify the narrator as a folk narrator, and this identification interferes with the demand for the "molchite" form, the distancing reference to Gusyok as "odin okhotnik"²² and other signs of making Gusyok an object of observation.

Typical aspects of Gusyok's speech are ellipses of modified nouns, leaving the attribute isolated: "Vot to-to i gore, moy milyy, chto seryy, nastoyashchiy-to kupecheskiy -- belyy".²³ As he always speaks about the object of his passionate hunt -- the quail -- it is plain what the attributes refer to and he can thus exercise some polite, suggestive distance from the magic "perepyol". Similar isolation of adjectives we find in the narrator's plane: "slushayet kupets svoeyego golosistogo" ; moy perekrichit sosedskogo! A glyadish', sosedskiy-to... perekrichal".²⁴

²¹Ibid., p. 36.

²²Ibid., p. 32.

²³Ibid., p. 33.

²⁴Ibid., p. 32.

It is evident that in "U Gorelogo Pnya" Prishvin wants to subjectivize the narration into Gusyok's point of view and at the same time give an objective view of him. The image of the narrator is linguistically identical with Gusyok. The implicit generalizations of the author about the merchants along with the folk type of comment by the use of a proverb ("Khotel vyryt' yamu blizhnemy, a i sam v neyo popal")²⁵ or the description of Gusyok's appearance through parallel with a "perepyol" fits in line with Gusyok's way of thinking. If it were not for the above mentioned interfering references to the personal narrator, this story would be a masterpiece of subjectivization.

Not only is Gusyok's language basically identical with the narrator's, sometimes his utterances (e.g. the abbreviated expression of bewilderment "vo-na" for "vot te na") follow animal sounds with the same ephemeral shortness. Therefore it is quite with the tone of the story that near the climactic capturing of the quail the narrator joins the "thoughts" of the "perepyol" through the "semi-direct speech" of the latter ("polopřímá řeč").²⁶

А она в ответ тихо:
 -- Трюк -- трюк!
 Но ему ли отвечает она? Ведь
 теперь по всему полю кричат
 перепела.
 Она отвечает ему. Конечно, ему.
 Он егозит на рубеже. Поднимается
 на цыпочки, нет -- не видно. Он

²⁵ Ibid., p. 32.

²⁶ L. Doležel, Knížka o jazyce a stylu soudobé české literatury, (Prague, Orbis, 1962), p. 43.

мечется и ЛОТОШИТ... Пробует
взобраться на сухой татарник --
колко! На прошлогоднюю полынь --
гнется! ²⁷Хочет крикнуть -- голос
пропал...

The expression here is distinctly folk, as a result of the popular expressive words "yegozit" and "lotoshit" as well as the characteristic paratactic sentences with a marked pause between the clauses. They juxtapose the action of the bird with the resulting adversative perception ("kolko", "gnyotsya"), so that the action observed and the action felt -- the plane of the object and that of the narrator -- mingle in them.

The mutual penetration of voices of various originators is continued by the words of the winter crop (in the original story not marked out graphically as direct speech), as though sympathising with the female quail (n.b. the word "temnitsu"): "Gustyye ozimi pakhnut, prizyvayut: razbey, golosisty y belyy perepyol lubyanuyu temnitsu, dumat' tut nechego."²⁸

Thus, by using the colloquial-popular language through several structural planes of the story, Prishvin for the first time achieves unity both in the structure and in the atmosphere of the work.

When the story appeared in 1923 as one episode of Kurymushka's childhood in the autobiographical novel Kashcheyeva Tsep', under the title of "Gusyok" the most prominent change it displayed was the change of the personal "co-narrator" into Kurymushka, who coincides with the author's

²⁷M. M. Prishvin, "U Gorelogo Pnya", Apollon, (1910), No. 7, pp. 35-36.

²⁸Ibid., p. 37.

person only implicitly. The child's figure is more suited to the subordinate position with respect to Gusyok and psychologically erases the "co-narrator's" distance from the main narrator (the "molchite" type).

While "U Gorelogo Pnya" is linked with the "ocherki" by its realistic subject, it joins the following works by its genre and at the same time stands on the borderline between them by its experimentation with the type of narrator.

In "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", a story about a degenerate off-spring of an aristocratic family, the personal "skaz" narrator disappears entirely. While the person of the narrator is distant and formally objective, the language of the narrator is uncomplicated and maintains an easy colloquial tone, which in several places inconspicuously picks up more features of the popular language and his voice is for a while joined with the characters' voices.

Although the stylistic plane of the narrator is not colloquial-popular as it was in "U Gorelogo Pnya", the writer basically adheres to syntactic simplicity, preferring conciseness and parataxis over complexity and hypotaxis. This vocabulary is basically concrete and simple, also common colloquial particles "to", "da", "i" contribute to the easy flow of his narrative. There is a tendency to use diminutives which have condescending ("domik", "telezhka", "den'ki") or pejorative overtones. Colloquial words often convey a slightly ironical or condescending attitude towards the figures of the story: the district police officer "lezyot naverkh"; "plyukhnyotsya v kreslo"; he is a "tolstyak", he

"zagogochet"²⁹ etc. Also idiomatic and proverbial phrases are ironically used: the merchants "dostavali so dna dushi", they know about the hero Pavlik that he "ne seyet, ne zhnyot, a tsel"³⁰, the whole legend of the "zver'", which is the leitmotif of the story, is remembered only "pod p'yanuyu ruku"³¹ etc. Especially the attitude towards the hero is full of pejorative tones: he loves to use his "derevyanuyu lopatochku", there is a reference to his "bryushko" and "slyunki", he jumps "kak ogurchik svezhen'kiy" and "podvypivshiy.. raschuvstvu[etsya]."

This shows that Prishvin's use of colloquial and occasionally popular vocabulary in "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" is functional³² and moderate, and that it reveals the subjective attitude of the narrator towards his essentially objectively presented material. Prishvin leaves the distinctly popular speech for the dialogues, which, as Lamp1 points out,³³ in this story carry the action.

As has already been mentioned, Prishvin sometimes introduces the characteristic features of popular speech into his narrative as a point of view of the personages: e.g. in the case of Timofey -- the hunter,

²⁹M. M. Prishvin, "Krutoyarskiy Zver'"(Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 72.

³⁰Ibid., p. 67.

³¹Ibid., p. 63.

³²Another type of use, for the purposes of imagery, is going to be dealt with in the following chapter.

³³H. Lamp1, Das Fröhwerk M. Prišvins, (Wien, Verlag Notring, 1967), p. 222.

the accumulation of verbs with emotionally charged prefixes "raz" and "pri" which express intensified attention, comically contrasts with the final unveiling of Timofey's real intentions ("spit li"), which is successfully brought as a surprise by a marked pause and colon. The emotional imperative, reasoning presented in a coordinative sentence (instead of a causal clause) with the generalizing second person of the verb and the dynamic use of verbal interjection "shark" serve to reveal the folk cunning of Timofey:

А старуха все, бывало, ворчит на полесовщика. И хоть в лес не ходи после этого. Бабья журьба вредная: ничего не убьешь. Оттого-то перед охотой и ложился спать Тимофей поближе к своей старухе, разуважит, разутешит, приласкает и прислушается: спит ли... Опять прислушается, опять отодвинется, да потихоньку шарк вон.

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Similarly the narrator picks up features of Pavlik's expression (4, 72; 4, 74 etc.) which is not as distinctly popular as Timofey's, but also simple and colloquial (e.g. using verbal interjections, particles, imperative for subjective), moreover with words characteristic of popular hunters' speech ("legavoy sobaki", "ublyudki", "polukrovki", vzovyotsya petukh").

³⁴М. М. Prishvin, "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", (Soch.), Vol, IV, p. 70.

As in "U Gorelogo Pnya", Prishvin refrains from descriptive characteristics of his personages -- the main presentation of them is through dialogue; the subjectivized narrative brings a new angle of viewing them by mixing their personal view with the narrator's and thus getting the narrator involved in the fates of his personages. Gusyok and Timofey with Pavlik are quite individual characters in their own right, largely due to their manner of speech, which approximately reveals their way of thinking. Therefore the insertion of their speech into the narrative, helps their portrait (which in "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" is the main subject) come through tangibly by giving a new dimension to their picture.

In contrast with "U Gorelogo Pnya" as well as "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", although full of small figures, does not present any distinctive character. Although there is some attempt to bring Aleksey's view into the narrative (4,100), his outlook is not the main concern of the narrator who is in this story experimenting with qualities of narrative other than confrontation of the narrator with the characters -- with the representative and evocative possibilities for imagery in language.³⁵ He is foregrounding the setting and atmosphere rather than the narrator.

Similarly a tendency for strengthening the representative aspect of the narrative is characteristic of the story entitled "Ivan Oslyanichek", where Prishvin is struggling to repeat his successful experiment with

³⁵To be discussed in the following chapter.

"Ptich'ye Kladbishche" and to give an evocative representation of the setting of the Semibratskiy monastery and the atmosphere of legends. At the same time, though, he strives to bring a dramatic element to the story as in "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", but in vain, because he becomes imprisoned within the artificial frame of his folkloristic models, which he refers to as "skazaniya".³⁶ While in "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" he has enough realistic resources to draw from -- because of his own passion for hunting, in "Ivan Oslyanichek" he does not seem to be able to fill in the contour lines offered by the legends of the "Semibratskiy kurgan." As a narrator Prishvin maintains the distance of a folk narrator in "Ivan Oslyanichek". He explores many different linguistic and poetic elements in his narrative, ranging from archaic and folk-poetic expressions to popular words and syntax. The work displays a tendency to use all possible devices of folk-poetic speech (cf. constant epithets not previously used, extensive use of repetition, parallelic syntax and the instrumental of comparison) rather than conscious and functional utilization of the available devices. The representative narrative in "Ivan Oslyanichek" is again more extensive than the dialogue and no figure receives the face of a live character.

"Bab'ya Luzha", a story about the disintegration of personality through alcoholism is an echo of "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" in its concentration on the chief character, in its progress through hallucinations to the tragic ending, in its narrator's ironical attitude to the main figure and its social environment. The author is here using the same

³⁶M. M. Prishvin, "Ivan Oslyanichek", Zavety, (1912), No. 2, p. 5.

linguistic means of irony as in "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", drawing from the sources of disapproval as expressed in the popular language ("skvernyy popishka", "shlyashchiy chelovek", "sheromyzhnik", "zapit' gor'kuyu").³⁷ However, the priest Peter is not as well rounded a character as Pavlik from "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", where the hero is well depicted by dialogue and confrontation with nature and people. Neither is Prishvin able to find the subtle linguistic characteristics, which in "U Gorelogo Pnya" and "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" so aptly distinguish the narrator from the characters. Here the tone is the general one of a folk narrator with a subjective ironical attitude towards the action. Also the dialogue is scarce and weak.

Some attempt is made at subjectivized narration (4, 122, 4, 124) when the author introduces the regional legend of the place. But it is an insertion of an anonymous folk narrator, who is using more popular devices than the main narrator (etymological figure -- "rad-radyoshenek", idiomatic phrases -- "dom ostalsya v levom pleche", "s tolku sbivayet", "leshiy pod vecher tut kak tut"),³⁸ it does not contribute to the portrayal of Father Peter but explains the title of the story. Since the plot is very banal, this is just a documentation of Prishvin's effort to make a story fit various ethnographical material. Lampl is right when he notes "Ivan Oslyanichek" and "Bab'ya Luzha" as the products of a creative crisis.³⁹

³⁷M. M. Prishvin, "Bab'ya Luzha", (Soch.), Vol. IV, pp. 116-117.

³⁸Ibid., p. 122.

³⁹H. Lampl, Das Frühwerk M. Prishvins, (Wien, Verlag Notring, 1967), p. 255.

Summary

In this chapter, we have examined Prishvin's attempt to achieve a homogenous image of the reality he portrays. The representative works analysed cover the years from 1907 to 1912 and display a lively experimentation with the type of narrator who desires to come close to the depicted material, through his use of language.

The main subject of the writer is country life with a concomitant natural setting. This environment involves figures who will use the colloquial-popular (and dialectal) language in their speech. Therefore colloquial and popular linguistic features will be characteristic of this milieu. Since the author-narrator's plane is basically distant in style from the stylistic level of the country people, Prishvin looks for a type of narrator who would not be a distant observer of these social surroundings, but involved in them.

In the sketches and the stories analysed, we have seen that each of the works introduces a different image of narrator, with various degrees of subjectivization.

Already in V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits he invites the popular view into the narrator's plane, but remains basically openly subjective. In Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom his aim is to create a fairy tale "skaz" with a formally objective narrator, but soon switches back to a personal report. The story "U Gorelogo Pnya" has a special position in the development of narration, because the narration is foregrounded entirely according to the point of view of the hero, while using a first person narrator. That places it between the "skaz" and subjectivized narration. In "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", on the contrary, he has an implicitly subjective

attitude, but without the use of a personal narrator. At the same time, he allows the characters to subjectivize his narrative into their point of view of situations. In "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" and in "Ivan Oslyanichek" however, he introduces an objective narrator and concentrates on the evocation of situations by folklore-like imagery. In "Bab'ya Luzha", he returns to the implicitly subjective narrator of "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", but makes him more distinctly a general folk type of narrator. In contrast with "U Gorelogo Pnya" he does not have any distinct folk narrator in mind and therefore the experiment leaves the impression of an artificial imitation of a folklore narrator rather than of artistic ingenuity.

Experimentation with the stylistic plane of the narrator led the author to explore both the methods of subjectivization and the speech resources rooted mainly in the vernacular language. However, the development from "U Gorelogo Pnya" to "Bab'ya Luzha" shows that Prishvin is most successful in presenting the mentality of a hunter (Gusyok, Timofey, Pavlik, Stepan Zhelud') and lacks psychological insight into other folk characters (vide the flat figures of "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" and "Ivan Oslyanichek"). Consequently, he is unable to work with subtle linguistic nuances for personal characteristics and resorts gradually to a general popular expression. In his later, more extensive works, we see him returning again to a personal account (Kalendar' Prirody, Zhen'-Shen' etc.), but the easiness of the narrator's manner of speech acknowledges the influence of this early experimentation. He also uses subjectivized narrative but without experimentation in various stylistic layers of speech.

Prishvin's early works show that the writer, under the influence of Remizov,⁴⁰ was confronted with some of the basic problems of modern prose structure. In his search for more implicit subjectivization Prishvin wavers between "skaz" and subjectivization of narration. But the subjectivized passages have a narrative character, as though a character would insert his personal view, and they do not reveal much of the inner thought of the characters, which is a characteristic feature of the most progressive modern prose. It demonstrates Prishvin's inclination to narration rather than revelation, which is entailed in his return to the personal report of the "ocherk" type in his later works.

⁴⁰H. Lampl, Das Frühwerk M. Prishvins, (Wien, Verlag Notring, 1967), p. 312.

CHAPTER III

The Tangible Image

In the preface to Prishvin's Collected Works of 1927,¹ M. Gorky refers to the effect of Prishvin's style as "pochti fizichesk[aya] oshchutimost' vse[go] , chto [on] izobrazhaye[t]". Gorky explains the effect as a result of Prishvin's vigilant observation of nature, which comes out in his work with detail. The Soviet critic T. Khmel'nitskaya also notices the extraordinary vividness of some of his images -- "on kakby pereselyayetsya v koldovskiye eti obrazy".² Most students of Prishvin's writings ascribe the corporeality and vividness of representation to the author's choice of vocabulary (Borovoy³ and Khmel'nitskaya⁴ make some analysis of his vocabulary, Khmel'nitskaya with a list of neologisms.^{5,6} Pakhomova⁷ and Shabel'skaya⁸ believe his figurative devices, particularly

¹A.M. Gorky, Sobraniye Sochineniy, (Moscow, Gosudarstvennoye Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennoy Literatury, 1953), p. 265.

²T. Yu. Khmel'nitskaya, Tvorchestvo M. Prishvina, (Leningrad, Sovetskiy Pisatel', 1959), p. 95.

³L. Borovoy, "Taynaya Sovremennost' Yazyka", Yazyk Pisatelya, (Moscow, Sovetskiy Pisatel', 1966).

⁴T. Yu. Khmel'nitskaya, Tvorchestvo M. Prishvina, (Leningrad, Sovetskiy Pisatel', 1959), pp. 177-181.

⁵Khmel'nitskaya's list of Prishvin's hunting neologisms and folk-like words is criticized by T. A. Stepanova⁶, who finds these words in dialects and hunter's slang.

⁶T. A. Stepanova, "Iz Istorii Izucheniya Yazyka i Stilya M. M. Prishvina", Uchonyye Zapiski Kareli'skogo Ped. Instituta, XVI, (1964), p. 122.

⁷M. Pakhomova, Prishvin i Kareliya, (Petrozavodsk, Gosudarstvennoye Izdatel'stvo Kareli'skoy ASSR, (1960), pp. 63-64.

⁸G. A. Shabel'skaya, "O Knige M. Prishvina "Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom" Uchonyye Zapiski Leningradskogo Gos. Ped. Instituta, XXXII (1958) No. 2, p. 231.

simile and metaphorical animation, to be the chief source of what Shabel'skaya calls "zritel'naya oshchutimost'... opisaniy".

In this chapter, in order to find the source of this effect, we shall make a closer stylistic analysis of Prishvin's imagery.

It has been mentioned in the introductory chapter that Prishvin decided to cultivate his style to achieve the charming easiness of folklore. Therefore spoken Russian vernacular, the natural source of traditional folk art, becomes the decisive factor in his linguistic orientation early in his literary career.

The sketches V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits and Za Volshebnykh Kolobkom show that at the time of his first "ocherki" the writer was very concerned with the vocabulary of the northern language. In both works, to give a picture of various aspects of life of the Karelians, he uses a factual report with some specific local words marked out in his narrative. The words in which he shows most interest are such terms of daily life and slang, that display some relationship to the literary language. As is usual in dialects, the northern language contains many words which have their cognates in the literary language. Although the etymological root of these words is identical, the meaning of the two differs now because of their divergent semantic development.

Thus, for instance, in "burlaki" slang it is said about the collection of tree trunks: "na ozerakh... sobirayut v KOSHELI" -- the word "kosheli" means here enclosures, formed by logs of wood, whereas in the standard language it would mean bags. A mass of logs, stopped and prevented from movement down the stream is called "kosa", which can

bring to mind the standard word for a scythe, or a pit, or even braided hair. The trees may get caught into a backwater "zagubka", which a central Russian may associate with the word "zagubit" -- "pogubit", while here it is obviously related to the northern "guba", meaning a bay.

Other words, though not confusing lexically, will surprise by an unusual semantic function -- e.g. "on khotel i ruzh'yo POMYT' u kolduna, a to ono stalo nedostrelivat'."⁹

Everywhere in the daily life of the Karelians Prishvin finds expressive words, new to his ear by their morphology, but quite understandable because of their grammatical kinship with familiar Russian words. In the dialects they gain also a metaphorical quality, because of their unusual context. Thus "kipun" ("kipet") is used about a river whirl, "krasovaniye" ("krasovat'sya") relates to a bride's preparation for the wedding, two types of winds are "vzvoden" ("vzvodit") and "podsechka" ("podsech"), the peasants "ne pashut, a pereshevelivayut kamni". Prishvin's favourite wild bird, the wood grouse ("glukhar") has in the dialect a metaphorical name, capturing his physical appearance -- "moshnik". This may further bring associations with the expression "obrasti mokhom", "opustit'sya", "odichat". Thus the northern fishermen find the word "moshnik" to be a fitting name for old Grigoriy.

⁹M. M. Prishvin, Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom, (Soch.), Vol. II, p. 115.

Some words, which would be perceived as archaic, in the standard language, are used in the dialects with a fresh expressive power -- seals greet each other -- *likuyutsya* (in the literary language used about monks), a log during rafting may "ul'nut'sya", ("nezametno ubezhat") and then "mochalit'sya" -- break into parts.

The expressive quality of these words is poignant because of the reader's (or listener's) unfamiliarity with their specific meaning in the dialects. He associates them with words familiar to him from the standard language and with their semantic qualities. Such association makes him penetrate the words to the roots and appreciate their often figurative or dynamic aspects. ("vzoden", "v'yun").

The type of words discussed above is brought into attention in Prishvin's factual narrative and dialogue of the first two sketches by italics. Those of them, whose etymology is different from the standard language, are introduced to their actual meaning by their context or by open explanation. Besides, Prishvin uses specific dialectal words without italics and without explanation, usually in the dialogue, probably for their exotic sound and form (e.g. "veter loseyet", "devyatka kak khoroma velikaya"). However, the factual explanation which these isolated words often require deprives them of much of their initial charm, aroused by the unfamiliarity of the reader with their meaning. The experience of V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits convinced Prishvin that not only isolated figurative words, but also other aspects of language have to be involved.

In Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom isolated words are less frequently used. Although some of them are still accompanied by lexical explanation, some are more successfully used to evoke atmosphere, as e.g. some Lapp words, whose lexical incomprehensibility provides for a perception of them as magic sounds of nature "pouch-pouch", "syog-syog".¹⁰

But on the whole it was not the conspicuous northern vocabulary which laid the ground for Prishvin's lively representations. As we have mentioned earlier, he was attracted by the "prelest' folklor'a" and the vernacular language as its basis long before his trips to the north of Russia. His "oчерki" V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits and Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom show by their long monologues of the characters (actually narrations) and subjectivized passages that the author was aware of other features of the northern popular speech than just the specific local words. Besides its expressiveness, Prishvin must have come to value the comprehensibility of the vernacular, because at a later date (vide the stories) he abandons dialecticisms almost entirely.

The linguistic characteristics of Prishvin's factual reporting and representative descriptions of the two sketches indicate some artistic inclinations of the author, which give ground for kinship with the means of expression of folklore and the colloquial-popular speech:

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 251.

1) In the first place, a tendency to use words with concrete meaning. As T. Khmel'nitskaya notes,¹¹ the words particularly characteristic of him are nouns and verbs -- i.e. the emphasis is on the embodiment of objects and expression of action. These parts of speech, while favoured in the informative passages of the sketches, abound in nature descriptions and progressive narration (vide e.g. the chapters "Na Ugore" and "Les, voda i kamen'" in V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits). Prishvin's love for concrete objects of daily life is evident (cf. "bytovaya leksika" of traditional folk literature):

Старушка, как принято на Севере,
сначала напоила меня чаем, потом
угостила обедом: сварила уху из
сигов, поставила на стол
простоквашу, тарелочку с морошкой,
с сухими красными пряниками; тут
был и рыбник из ряпушки, и рыбник
из окуней, и пирог из черники,
шанежки, мякушечка хлеба.

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2) Another trait, comparable to folk art techniques, is his figurative use of vocabulary. The basic imagery of the author is made

¹¹T. Yu. Khmel'nitskaya, Tvorchestvo M. Prishvina, (Leningrad, Sovetskiy Pisatel', 1959), p. 176.

¹²M. M. Prishvin, V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits, (Soch.), Vol. II, p. 78.

up of similes and metaphors based on incidents of Russian life and nature. Hence, even the figurative vocabulary of Prishvin is concrete and earthy. That, as well as the use of contrasting colour epithets -- initially mainly white and black -- stands in line with the aesthetics of folklore.

3) But, while concreteness, similarity and contrast are the basic methods of representation in folklore, there is one factor typical of spoken colloquial-popular language (partly preserved in folklore) which attracted the writer in particular: it is the unprepared liveliness, immediacy of the narration, brought about by some features of syntax, word order and rhythm-melody which characteristically distinguish the spoken language from the written. For illustration, let us compare two passages from Prishvin's sketches:

Помню, как в ожидании песни
 просыпались болота, сосны, и
как потом, в низине, на маленьком
 чахломе деревце птица веером
 раскинула хвост, будто боролась
 за темную ночь в ожидании
 восходящего солнца. Я подошел к
 ней близко, почти по грудь в
 холодной весенней воде. Что-то
 помешало и птица улетела.

13

¹³ М. М. Prishvin, Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom, (Soch.) Vol. II, p. 248.

Ходил я полесовать, день проходил --
хоть бы что. Настала ночь. И
 такая-то светлая, хоть баба шей!
 Озеро стоит тихое - тихое.
 Смотрю, посередине у камня
 бзестерок (струйка) играет.
 Думаю -- это не рыба быструет.
 Пригляделся и вижу : на камне
 среди озера выдра сидит, хвост
 свесила, оттого и вода колышется.
 Стал прилаживаться. Фырсь! носом
 в воду.

14

It is not difficult to notice the basic difference between these two passages. While both of them are accounts of an unsuccessful hunting expedition, the first one gives an unexcited image of the event, while the other is perceived as a lively, emotionally imbued account. What are the devices that make the vividness and emotional involvement come through?

Although both passages are about the same length, the first one consists of only three sentences loaded with long phrases, whereas the second is cut into nine (10?) short sentence units -- i.e. three times as many self-contained intonational units. The folk narrator uses four simple sentences, and his five complex sentences contain paratactically joined clauses whose relationship is in fact hypotactic. This conciseness and syntactic simplicity allow a faster sequence of events; images and incidents follow each other progressively. The literary narrator, on

¹⁴М. М. Prishvin, V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits, (Soch.), Vol. II, p. 33.

the other hand, distributes his thought (cf. "Kak" -- i kak -- "budto") into a width within a compound sentence, which slows down the pace and spreads the image into a space.

In the folk narration, the emphasis is on action by double the number of finite verbs (fifteen against seven), use of two complementary infinitives ("polesovat'" and "prilazivat'sya") and verbal interjection "fyrs'". Moreover, verbal tenses and aspects are here dynamically exchanged several times, with a stress on the present tense and the imperfective aspect. The literary narrator, on the other hand, introduces the narration by the present tense ("pomnyu") and keeps the whole account which follows in the past tense, basically using the perfective aspect. Consequently, the events are removed to a distance from the reader. The "starik's" passage, on the contrary, succeeds in alternately shifting the account from the remote past to the immediate present. Not only the verbal forms, but also the paratactic connection between the clauses strengthen this effect, the imperative form "shey" and the interjection "fyrs'", both carrying with them a notion of a present situation. The inversion of the personal pronoun "ya" and the ellipses of other pronouns -- (subjects) -- together with the omission of the subordinating conjunction, (which normally connects the verb with the following clause) -- entails a certain isolation of the verb and stresses the active element in it. At the same time, the paratactic connection assures an increased semantic independence for both clauses, underlined by a marked pause between them.¹⁵

¹⁵ A. B. Shapiro, Osnovy Russkoy Puntuatsiyi, (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo A. N., 1955), p. 154ff.

A mood of tranquility is evoked briefly, by three short sentences ("nastala noch'" and the following two), in which mainly the metaphor "ozero stoit" and the lexical intensification by repetition of "tikhoye", contained in one sentence, build up a notion of motionlessness and time duration. In the following sentences, on the contrary, we find parts of their rhemes marked out by inversion:

"U kamnya bysterok igrayet", "sredi ozera vydra sidit", "khvost svesila".

That underlines the logical stress on these words and disrupts the quietude created by the previous section. The interjection substituted for the verb, which by its inflexibility is freed from obligation to express usual grammatical relations of a verb, pin-points the suddenness of the action and is the peak of the whole situation. The overall effect of these devices is liveliness.

Immediacy of the situation is interwoven with references to the personal involvement of the narrator. His subjective evaluation of the development of the situation is indicated by expression of a wish ("khot' by chto'"), by a consecutive clause containing a popular comparison ("Khot' baba shey"), by a negation resulting from his reflexion ("eto ne ryba bystruyet"), by a hint at the cautiousness of his movements ("stal prilazhivat'sya" rather than "prilozhilsya").

While in chapter II we have discussed Prishvin's concern with the emotional involvement of the narrator, here we would like to deal with his work on the linguistic resources of vividness.

Already, after his first journey to the north, Prishvin speaks about the wholesome beauty of some of the northerners, about their genuine creativity. He discovers that the charm of their personalities

was rooted in their deep belief in what they were doing (whether it was the magic formulae of the sorcerers, or the religious convictions of the Old Believers, or the recitation of the "byliny" as the most veritable happenings, or, as in Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom, the sincerity and courage of the pilgrims heading for the extremes of the territory "po obeshchaniyu"). Prishvin realizes that it was the frankness in carrying out their commitments that made the activity of these people so appealing. He is impressed -- and strives to express himself with the same integrity.

He believes that his manner of writing should correspond to the feelings of contemporary man; as such it has to be concise and suggestive rather than exhaustive. In his comments we read:

Нам предстоит эпоха коротких
слов, подобных редким
вскрикам летящих на юг
журавлей.

16

The word "slovo" must here synecdochically mean the whole of the expression, as it is clear from reference to "vskriki zhuravley". Elsewhere the author is more explicit about his concern with the shape of the sentence, and with the environment of words:

упростить фразу, сжать слова,

¹⁶М. М. Prishvin in Khmel'nitskaya's book, p. 200, without exact reference.

чтобы они стали сухими, но
взрывались как порох...

17

Prishvin saw the folk language as a rich material for powerful representation.

Already in the sketches we observe a tendency towards conciseness, even abruptness of expression, similar to that of the spoken language. This further develops in his short stories. Simple, even very simple sentences are frequent, especially in descriptions. The writer favours syntactic simplicity even in complex and compound sentences. Complex sentences are often used with asyndeta. Frequently, the form of a complex sentence is used, where the relationship between the clauses is in fact subordinating (e.g. "Beryot opaska: tryuknet ne vo vremya", "Sytaya ona teper' i dovol'naya: pered lovom Gusyok napoil yeyo...").¹⁸ The omission of subordinating conjunction and the insertion of a colon in such cases divides the sentence into two distinct sections by a marked pause. Whereas normally the rheme of the sentence would fall into the subordinate clause, now the clause receives much more independence, which results in the balanced weight of both the clauses. Their intonation is also similar to that of two separate sentences. Thus, by getting rid of the conjunctions which would determine the relationship of control between the clauses, equal attention is achieved for both the clauses. Since the conjunctions which denote the type of relationship between the two thoughts are omitted, more attention has to be given

¹⁷ M. M. Prishvin, Zhuravlinaya Rodina, (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 323.

¹⁸ M. M. Prishvin, "U Gorelogo Pnya", Apollon, (1910), No. 7, p. 35.

to the autosemantic words of the clauses. As the adhesion between the sentences is now less tight, the relationship may often receive various interpretations -- for instance, a sentence with uncomplicated reasoning may be taken as a separate sentence with additional information: "na gusey smotryu, zhalko: ne vidat' uzh im svozey rodiny",¹⁹ "Vsyo bylo naprasno: gusi ne shli",²⁰ "i ni odin pastukh ne dast tut napit'sya skotine: voda myortvaya".²¹ Of particular significance are sentences with explanatory clauses-to-be if conjunction "chto" were used, after verbs of seeing, thinking or perceiving. Asyndeton and a pause in place of the conjunction make the situation appear as though unfolding immediately in front of the speaker's eyes: "Prikhozhu, vizhu: par valit iz zemli"²², or ears: "Prislushalsya: yasno zvenyat kolokolchiki."²³

Especially effective instances of such foregrounding of situation occur after verbs in the past tense, where the shift to the present intensifies the immediacy of the image, often carrying with it an element of surprise. The process of seeing may be expressed indirectly and the tenses of the verbs form a parallel:

¹⁹M. M. Prishvin, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 115.

²⁰Ibid., p. 101.

²¹Ibid., p. 98.

²²Ibid., p. 112.

²³M. M. Prishvin, "Bab'ya Luzha", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 123.

Утром открыл Алексей глаза:
краснозобый снегирь, птица
радости, песню поет...²⁴

Sometimes the word order is also changed, so that the object of seeing emphatically comes forth, sometimes quite unexpectedly in the situation:

Когда повиднело, старцы
заметили под старой лозинкой:
бабушка сидит и разливается
горючими слезами.²⁵

The rise of tone required after the colon for the word "babushka" certainly underlines its unexpectedness. Just compare what little surprise a sentence with the conjunction and a common word order would contain: "Kogda povidnelo, startsy zametili, chto pod staroy lozinkoy sidit babushka irazlivayetsya goryuchimi slyozami." Such emphasized words are frequently emotionally underlined by colloquial particles.

Similar sentences are frequent in oral speech and in the narrative

²⁴M. M. Prishvin, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", (Soch.), Vol. IV,
p. 100

²⁵Ibid., p. 115.

genres of folklore. Shapiro²⁶ says that they are always spoken without a pause and in punctuation are marked by comma. Prishvin uses these too, in V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits ("Smotryat, dedushka staryy stoit")²⁷, but inserts a colon when he wants the image to come through more emphatically. Most of our examples also document omission of pronouns, which the author employs particularly when the verb is in sentence initial position; the effect of this is a semantic underlining of the verb similar to that achieved by the omission of conjunctions.

Besides the emphasis caused by the rhythm-melody of the sentence, these paratactic sentences are significant for cutting down auxiliary words and compressing the sentence by foregrounding the autosemantic words which appear closer to each other on the junction between clauses. The increased independence of the clauses makes it often uncertain, whether the relationship is subordinating or coordinating. Frequently, Prishvin employs sentences which arouse a notion of some subjectivization up to the point of direct speech:

Что подумала одна серая, то и
все подумали: ВОЛК ВЫШЕЛ ИЗ ЛЕСА.
28

²⁶ A. B. Shapiro, *Osnovy Russkoy Puntuatsii* (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo A. N., 1955), p. 164.

²⁷ M. M. Prishvin, V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits, (Soch.), Vol. II, p. 50.

²⁸ M. M. Prishvin, "Bab'ya Luzha", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 124.

Хочет быть как перепел -- тесно.
29

Едет купец, не глядит, что
топчет чужие поля: у него-ли
не хватает денег!
30

Although the reader is left to decide for himself the logical connection of the thoughts, he is presented with them juxtaposing each other, which suggests that there is some relationship between them. The approximation of contact may be suggested only by punctuation -- from colon and semicolon down to the closest connection with comma: "Zver' podoydyot, sobaka uslyshit, prosnyomsya."³¹ Although coordination often consists of a number of short sentences, it makes the expression less abrupt than a series of bare sentences would. At the same time it prevents well ordered syntactic complexity.

The omission of conjunctions can semantically underline not only clauses, but also single parts of a sentence which would usually use a conjunction. They may become a significant factor in imagery, where the concern is with the foregrounding of the image.

²⁹M. M. Prishvin, "U Gorelogo Pnya", Apollon, (1910), No. 7,
p. 36.

³⁰Ibid., p. 36.

³¹M. M. Prishvin, V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits, (Soch.), Vol. II,
p. 8.

Prishvin finds in the folk-poetic language of folklore two devices that meet his demand for figurative technique which would pinpoint the image. One of them is the use of the instrumental of transformation and of comparison. We occasionally find the use of the instrumental of transformation (especially in the stylization of Stepanida Maksimovna's biography in V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits), but, for his own imagery, the author more often employs the instrumental of comparison. This type of comparison is an old folkloristic device³² and it juxtaposes two objects on the basis of similar actions ascribed to both of them: "Tropinka k Tyomnoy Pyatnitse veryovkoy v'yotsya",³³ "Zvonar' ptichkoy zalivayetsya Y malye kolokola",³⁴ "Ogonyok... dolgo noch'yu zholtoy zvezdoy svetit v tyomnom sadu."³⁵

Besides comparing nouns on the basis of verbal functions, a characteristic may be given by the direct comparison of two nouns: "seryy muzhik v shlyape cherepel'nikom",³⁶ "golova tolkachikom"³⁷ etc.

³²K. I. Khodova, "Tvoritel'nyy Prevrashcheniya i Sravneniya" in S. B. Bernshteyn, ed., Tvoritel'nyy Padezh v Slavyanskikh Yazykakh, (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo A. N. SSSR, 1958), p. 182.

³³M. M. Prishvin, "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 93.

³⁴M. M. Prishvin, "Ivan Oslyanichek", Zavety, (1912), No. 3, p. 19.

³⁵M. M. Prishvin, "Ivan Oslyanichek", Zavety, (1912), No. 2, p. 13.

³⁶M. M. Prishvin, "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 82.

Both types of comparison are used most extensively in the story "Ivan Oslyanichek". This device is more effective than comparison with conjunction, because it offers a direct confrontation of the objects while the notion of similitude is pushed into the background. For this metaphorical quality this instrumental is a frequent device in poetry.

A similar device, again common in folklore is apposition. Even more than in the case of the instrumental, apposition relies on the juxtaposition of two phenomena rather than on their comparison. It represents a doubling or reflection by which it clings to the same part of speech in both sections of it. Instead of limiting one object by a modifier as would happen with an attribute, the noun in apposition extends the object into an image: "otdykhali... v serykh mkhakh pod SEDUKHAMI -- sosnami",³⁸ "Usypiv muzha, gusynya -- gosudarynya i sama stala zasypat'" etc.³⁹

The modifier in apposition receives such semantic independence that it may become uncertain which of the two is the image and which the object compared.⁴⁰

когда свету не видно, случилось
Тимофею оглядеть занесенного
снегом старика - глухаря.

³⁸ M. M. Prishvin, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 95.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 107.

⁴⁰ S. Ullmann talks about this effect as of "reciprocal metaphor", Language in Style, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1964), p. 181

В полдерева под ветками, где спит старик, тихо падают снежинки на его голову, липнут к красным бровям и щекам и так у глухаря будто борода вырастает. Тимофеева борода от снега тоже белеет и оба -- как один перед зеркалом: Тимофеев похож на глухаря, глухарь на Тимофея.

41

Although these imagery devices are typical for folklore, the colloquial language in its background possesses wider resources for parallels on various levels. It is in the nature of the colloquial language to present thoughts as they come to mind, without having the whole idea logically organized. That provides for adding details and thoughts which, if juxtaposed by mere coordination, require equal consideration and which may be logically quite distant from the initial phrase. This may be used to introduce a logically unexpected image:

Княгиня протянула руку и тронула ребенка за ножку: она была холодная и муравей бежал по ней, как по корню.

42

Such an opportunity for piling up various items is offered by coordinative sentences. But

⁴¹М. М. Prishvin, "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 70.

⁴²М. М. Prishvin, "Ivan Oslyanichek", Zavety, (1912) No. 2, p. 26.

parataxis does not prepare the ground for visual associations alone. When the word order of a clause is preserved in the second one, it may rhythmically evoke an expectation of other phrases of the same structure. Thus, by acoustic association (often in connection with the visual element) a number of them may come as often happens both in folk lyric and representative epic. Because the chain is continued by association without rational intervention, dislocations and logical incongruity, incredibility occurs. Thus, in one sentence a transformation to the plane of the unreal may quite easily take place.

Even more often than clause parallels, Prishvin uses the rhythmical expansion in homogenous parts of sentences. As in folklore, he can then develop images and situations in cascades. Sometimes they give vivid, realistic characterisation: "Zadumalsya kupets v karete, zabyl svoi schota, kuli, meshki, traktiry i melnitsy",⁴³ but more often the regular rhythm gives an opportunity to cross the border between the real and the unreal without warning:

Из лесных трушоб, с моховых
болот, с гор и низин, со
стороны Верхнего Брода, от
Темной Пятницы и от Сухого сота,
и от той стороны, где еще
никто не бывал, съезжаются на
базар крещенные люди.

44

⁴³ M. M. Prishvin, "U Gorelogo Pnya", *Apollon*, (1910), No. 7, p. 36.

⁴⁴ M. M. Prishvin, "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", (*Soch.*), Vol. IV, p. 82.

Elsewhere, spreading of an image is intensified by lexical repetition:

"Sinyaya reka, sineye nebo, siniye makovki tserkvey na kholmakh."⁴⁵

Homogenous parts of sentences by their loose logical connections and regular rhythm give a possibility of certain transience, reflection of images. Similarly, two clauses without a conjunction may be balanced by their parallel structure. As the form of one reflects the form of the other, it suggests a certain relationship in content between the two by rhythm rather than by syntax: "Net kupecheskogo peregela, net u Gus'ka tul'skogo samovara."⁴⁶ Although sometimes the simple sentences are not symmetrical, they are related by the balance awarded to them by a marked pause between them. Various relationships may be suggested by this type of connection -- e.g. implicit condition: "Poymayem -- budet u Gus'ka samovar net -- tak pozabavimsya".⁴⁷ While parallel sentences are employed by Prishvin very often for exploiting their rise of rhythmical expectations of development, even more frequent are the juxtapositions of assymetric sentences because they allow more liberal expression and yet keep a certain rhythmical unity by their two-bar division, as in poetry. In them, one action may evoke another. In the next example such arrangement gives not only a picture, but captures the rhythm of the dance:

Топнет писарь -- половины ходуном
заходят; дыхнет -- свечи тухнут;
мотнет рукой, заводя хвост -- и

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 65.

⁴⁶M. M. Prishvin, "U Gorelogo Pnya", Apollon, (1910), No. 7, p. 38.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 38.

посыплются пьяные, как орехи,
а трезвые, глядя на них,
посмеются, выпьют и снова
начнут гусака.

48

While parallelic juxtapositions take care of interrelationships of visual images and reflective connections of phenomena, Prishvin often concentrates also on sounds to evoke immediate acoustic images. Such taking over of one sound by another is in "U Gorelogo Pnya" raised to a notion of a hierarchy of sounds. The basis of the parallelic sound chain is a brevity of expression and the onomatopoeic quality of some words, mainly interjections.

Но лягушки-квакушки отчего-то
вдруг проснулись, взгомонились
и заглушили лягушек-турлушек.
-- Куа - куа!, передразнивает
недовольный старик.
Квакушки замолчали. Заголосили
девки в деревне.
-- Эк вас!
Собаки залаяли.
-- Пропадите вы пропадом!

49

While the sounds are explicit in Gusyok's imitations and swearing, they are implicitly present in the rest of the sentences. Thus, already in "U Gorelogo Pnya", we see that a juxtaposition of semantically independent phenomena, regardless of their logical connections becomes a significant factor not only for Prishvin's linguistic expression, but also for his composition.

⁴⁸М. М. Prishvin, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 109.

⁴⁹М. М. Prishvin, "U Gorelogo Pnya", Apollon, (1910) No. 7, p. 34.

As we have seen from the material discussed, Prishvin was well aware of the basic procedure in a composition of folklore. In his search for a folklore-like vividness of images he has learned that the lightness and immediacy of folklore relies on the continual addition of items which are fairly independent. By the time he writes "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" he has learned to work with both the visual and the acoustic image well enough to attempt to compose a story entirely from them. In his diary from 1941⁵⁰ he talks about distributing the words, sayings and beliefs on paper rolls on the floor of his apartment in an effort to put them together in the form of a story. Although A. N. Tolstoy who unexpectedly visited him did not believe that a story could be created that way -- Prishvin on the basis of visual and acoustic parallelism composed a story of reflective images.

What we have said about the sounds in "U Gorelogo Pnya" applies to "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" on both the acoustic and the visual level: the variety of phenomena comes to be transformed to other entities after having obtained a fleeting quality under the magic night of the wild geese migration.

In the story, images are constantly composed while others are broken down. Some, for instance, appear first as similes with a striking originality of content and later appear again, but the author refers only to the imaginative object, not to the one originally compared:

⁵⁰Prishvin, a diary of 1941, (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 705.

Внизу у черных безлесных скал,
 будто одна из великих серых
 рыб, на которых стоит земля,
 сбоку на бок перевертывалось ---
 океан качался у берега.

and later the image comes back as a wave:

и скоро затихло назади их
 внизу то, что будто великая
 серая рыба, на которой стоит
 земля, сбоку набок перевертывалось.
 51

Elsewhere, clouds are compared to the crests of ploughed autumn earth and later are mentioned in a metaphorical apposition as "tuchi-borozdy."⁵² The wild geese are compared to sea argosies because of their cries and later mentioned in the metaphorical condensed form: "pri pervykh signalakh gusinykh korabley"⁵³ "sovetovalis' i uplyvali korabl' za korablyom kuda-to po Ptich'yemu puti"⁵⁴, which combines the initially acoustic metaphor with a visual one. Analogically, a metaphor standing for leaves glittering in the sun -- "zolotyye monety" -- is transformed into an acoustic image: "i kazhetsya, yesli by tronut' yeyo, to zazveneli

⁵¹М. М. Prishvin, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 94.

⁵²Ibid.,

⁵³Ibid., p. 107.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 110.

by vse yeyo list'ya zolotymi kolokol'chikami."⁵⁵

While Prishvin composes his own images, he etymologizes popular metaphorical names or appositions denoting plants and animates the story with magic action: "pozvonochki-govoruny bez kontsa govoryat"... "a griby pykhalki tak pykhnut, chto svetu ne vidno".⁵⁶ The popular apposition for old rods at the side of a road -- "babushki-lozinki"⁵⁷ -- becomes magically divided into two separate entities: "Kogda povidnelo, startsy zametili pod staroy lozinkoy: babushka sidit i razlivayetsya goryuchimi slyozami".⁵⁸

The use of colours in this story is conspicuous. The darkness of night turns a rider and his horse black, which towards morning changes into a white horse. More white colour is spread with a flock of geese, which is followed by two white men. One of the episodic figures, Pronya, becomes (by metonymy) blue as a reflection of the blue stains caused by her work with blue paint. The face and beard of Stepan Muraveynik are red. The leaves on the trees or whole trees are gold. These colours -- black, white, blue, red and gold run throughout the story and reflect the colours of autumn:

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 102.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 100.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 114.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 115.

По белой тропинке шел Алексей...
Кровавая трепетала осина, но
 береза белая, как обмерзла
 холодной зарей, так и осталась и
 кажется, если бы тронуть ее, то
 зазвенели бы все ее листья ЗОЛОТЫМИ
 колокольчиками...
 Отсюда сверху было все будто после
 пожара: до самого синего озера
горело жаркое золото, и пламень
сверкал, и виднелись черные стволы
 и ветви, опаленные здания.

59

At a closer analysis we can see that not only images come in parallels -- the whole construction of the story relies on them. One metaphor produces another one, one action creates another one, the mood of one creature affects others. The wild geese are the unifying and penetrating element of all the inner episodes of the story, although not explicitly. It is not clear any more which is the image and which the object compared. The geese are referred to by another metaphor "khorovoda gusey" (4, 104; 4, 107) and, as a reflection, on the ground girls "vodyat khorovod" (4, 109). The amorous adventure of one of the geese ends tragically; Prints, guilty of a similar sin, undergoes the same fate as the wild "gusak" -- he is pecked by the geese. While a foe is stealing hens, a cunning "strannik, uchonnyy chelovek" deludes the

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 102.

wife of a local priest. The climax of the story, of course, is a transition of the wild geese flight not only on the domestic goose which belongs to the local priest, but even on the priest himself.

Thus, it is correct to say that parallelism is the essential method in the build-up of this story. The sentences rely on multiplicity of homogenous parts. Coordination and syntactic parallelism, associative parallels impinge on the imagery as well as the composition of the story. The connection between the individual elements is loose and relies on the associative powers of the reader. There are several places which are acoustically or rhythmically appealing, though their content is suppressed (cf. e.g. 4, 114). Some passages reach the extremes of comprehensibility:

-- Замуж я не пойду. Черничка
 обмирала, поднялась и все мне
 передала. Страшно замуж выходить,
 страшен ответ. Кто болтал -- за
 язык подвешен, кто подслушивал --
 огонь из ушей. Горячие сковороды
 ногами топчут. В смоле кипят.
Замуж я не пойду, я в монастыре
 постригусь.

60

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 113.

In this speech, Pronya draws an image of suffering which she enframes in a marriage motif. The connection between the two is left dubious.

Lampl in his study⁶¹ stresses Prishvin's use of "Leitmotive" and repeated images. Although he does not seem to notice the key role of parallelism, he makes a very apt observation that the repeated images strike the mind (e.g. the use of colour characteristics) like musical sequences. Lampl believes that it is difficult to determine the genre of the work. While we agree with this statement, we would like to stress Prishvin's concern with the suggestive and associative resources of language, imagery and composition. Prishvin here strives to work entirely in the manner of folklore -- i.e. not by an artificial imitation of the conventional devices of folklore as he attempted in Za Volshebnyh Kolobkom, but in the spirit of folklore, with its great emphasis on the semantic independence of all elements.⁶² That results in motivational progress through addition, without a compositional notion of the whole. Thus the genre it resembles most is a modern poem in prose.

Summary

In this chapter we have attempted to concentrate on the main devices of Prishvin's representative expression with its peak in

⁶¹H. Lampl, Das Frühwerk M. Prishvins, (Wien, Verlag Notring, 1967), p. 238.

⁶²cf. conclusions of J. Mukarovsky in his essay "Detail jako základní sémantická jednotka v lidovém umění", Studie z Estetiky, (Prague, Odeon, 1966).

"Ptich'ye Kladbishche". We have seen that the center of his interest in the early period of his literary activity shifts from dialectal vocabulary to the colloquial-popular and folk-poetic language -- for vocabulary, syntax as well as some poetic figures. His aim is to find an intense, suggestive manner of expression. Therefore he attempts to free the sentence from auxiliary words, concentrating on the autosemantic nucleus of it. By various types of juxtapositions and parallels he puts in the foreground the image -- whether visual or acoustic. Because he prefers additive progress over logical interrelationships of his structural elements, he reaches mostly for a liberating, loose adhesion between the single units of expression. He concentrates on the visual, acoustic and rhythmical expressiveness of language and often makes it appeal to the reader directly, without attempting logical communication.

Thus, he is concerned with the "sign aspect" ("znakovou stránku")⁶³ of language rather than the communicative to a larger extent than is common in prose. His concern with the intensity of imagery, and the rhythm and melody of the sentence as well as the tendency towards the semantic independence of the individual components of his expression brings his type of experimentation close to the development of modern poetry (cf. e.g. Blok's concern with punctuation, the imagery of poetism etc.)

⁶³A term of J. Mukarovsky, "Strukturalismus v Estetice a vědě o literatuře", Kapitoly z české poetiky, (Praha, Nakladatelství Svoboda, 1948).

His model is the colloquial-popular and the folk poetic language. By the time he writes "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" he shows an ingenious ability to synthesize them together with his own contribution into a delightful piece of literature. However, he does not limit himself to several devices and develops those into an intrinsic feature of his further writings. It seems that this exuberant style did not suit his basically realistically oriented nature and therefore in his later works he did not proceed with this imbalance in favour of the form.

CHAPTER IV

"Nebyvaloye"

K. Paustovsky in his preface to the Collected Works of M. M. Prishvin from 1956¹ summarizes the opinions of Russian readers of Prishvin's books as "Eto nastoyashcheye koldovstvo". Prishvin's literary critics, who rightly point out many faults against the compositional unity of his works (H. Lampl, T. Khmel'nitskaya), also mark out his success in creating a peculiar atmosphere of mystery in them. This aesthetic effect of most of Prishvin's writings has been hitherto spoken of only in vague terms. We believe that it is related to Prishvin's basic view of reality and that it is consequently an intrinsic feature of his manner of writing. As such, we intend to analyze it more closely in this chapter.

Prishvin's preoccupation with mysterious subject matter and his striving to achieve a magic effect by his artistic style have their roots in Prishvin's fascination for the mysterious beauty of nature. Prishvin's imagination and curiosity since childhood, his ethnographic and hunting trips reveal the imaginative counterpart of the scientific inclinations in him.

Nature is his main and beloved theme. His clear preference for nature over the city can be spoken of as a Rousseauist trait. G. Shabel'skaya² explains it as a demonstrative secession from the world of bourgeois

¹M. M. Prishvin, *Sobraniye Sochineniy*, (Moscow, Gosudarstvennoye Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennoy Literatury, 1956), I, p. 8.

²G. A. Shabel'skaya, "Illyuzii i Deystvitel'nost' v Dorevolutsionnykh Ocherkakh M. M. Prishvina", *Vestnik*, (1963), No. 2, pp. 71-81, passim.

civilisation, although in that case she leaves out the reason for Prishvin's further preoccupation with themes from nature after the October Revolution. Although Prishvin's literary development takes place during the domain of the symbolists and later the futurists, Prishvin gives us a sincere profession in most of his writings (almost any of his later diaries can be quoted) of his genuine love of nature as the reason for his main thematic orientation, with a marginal, if any, link with the contemporary fashionable and to a large extent artificial trend towards the antiurbanistic.

Prishvin favours harmonious coexistence of man and nature. Man should appreciate, not destroy nature. To Prishvin, man and the surrounding environment are one integral whole.

Природа для меня, огонь, вода, ветер,
камни, растения, животные -- все это
части разбитого единого существа. А
человек в природе -- это разум
великого существа, накапливающий силу,
чтобы, собрать всю природу в единство. ³

This passage illustrates Prishvin's understanding of nature as one large, living organism. Man as a mere part of the whole can never achieve full knowledge of the whole and therefore nature has always something new, unknown, in store for him. This element of the new and fantastic in nature Prishvin calls "nebyvaloye", a word which we find very often in his sketches and diaries. As an integral element of nature, man is responsible for contributing to the "nebyvaloye".

³M. M. Prishvin, *Nezabudki* (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo "Khudozhestvennaya Literatura", 1969), p. 24.

Человек живет и рождает новое, и от него остается навсегда то небывалое, что он рождает словом, делом, помышлением, поклоном, или пожатием руки, или только улыбкой посылаемой. Человек -- это источник небывалого в природе.

4

Prishvin gladly realizes his forever incomplete knowledge of nature, because it allows him to make his own hypotheses and images of the unknown, in a manner individual to himself. Thus, daydreams and personal interpretation of natural phenomena are recognized as man's unrepeatable contribution to the "nebyvaloye" of nature and as such have a legitimate place in Prishvin's work ever since his first story for children "Sashok". The encounter with reality, which necessarily follows, usually brings disillusion, but the richness of nature and Prishvin's optimism offer new sources of hope. As in the fairy tales, good and evil are the dynamic counterparts of life also for Prishvin. Therefore man's imagination is not always a pleasing contribution to the "nebyvaloye". And so we may say that in the early works we encounter three planes of Prishvin's "nebyvaloye": 1) magic in the personal interpretation of natural phenomena; 2) daydreaming of a positive character; 3) fantasies of a negative character.

While these motives represent the thematic center of the works to be discussed, they also indicate the close relationship between Prishvin's view of nature and the subject matter of folklore. The nature of Prishvin's

⁴M. M. Prishvin, Nezabudki, (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennoy Literatury, 1969), p. 81.

personality allows him to see things always afresh, which leaves sufficient room for surprise and wonder at the beauty of nature as well as for unbounded imagination -- an attitude with which we are familiar from folklore. Therefore we are convinced that it is a psychological affinity in the first place that attracts Prishvin to explore the aesthetics of folklore, before the influence of the symbolists and Remizov.

In his first artistic work, V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits and in the following sketch Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom his subject matter is very heterogenous, indicative of the inner struggle of a scientist and an artist in him. Prishvin searches in a variety of functional stylistic planes of the Russian language to find his individual manner of writing : journalistic style, scientific style, the folk-poetic language of folklore and spoken Russian vernacular with dialectal Karelian expressions. By 1910, we see his individual artistic style emerge from this mixture, which has absorbed many poetic features of folklore. His style then until 1913 moves between complete, artificial stylization in the manner of folklore and an individual manner with some of the folk-poetic features of folklore contained in it.

We would like now to demonstrate what typical stylistic devices Prishvin chooses to convey the "nebyvaloye" in nature during the development of his style.

One of his most frequent devices used already in V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits is simile. Prishvin makes many comparisons between animals, people and inanimate objects interchangeably: "chayka kak posledniy kusocek

vcherashney okeanskoy peny"⁵; "grebyosh' da grebyosh' kak staryy tyulen"⁶. His frequent comparisons of man to animal in his early sketches are not used to degrade man -- which is an approach common in satirical literature. To Prishvin, the beauty of wild life makes it obvious to create a respectful comparison. Similes of this type are frequent in Russian vernacular. Prishvin's similes using human beings to compare with inanimate objects bring with them an atmosphere of serene beauty. "Kholodnoye severnoye more lezhit teper' tikhoye, prekrasnoye, kak obradovannaya pechal'naya devushka."⁷ Striking are comparisons of animals and man-made objects, because of the rather unusual recognition of beauty in the man-made world. At a later stage of his stylistic experimentation, especially in the stories, we can observe a development of the simile into a metaphor in a process perceived as a mysterious transformation. In the following example the simile and the resulting metaphor are bound together by an additional image which emerged in the middle of this transitive image-complex.

Вот тогда-то в этих тучах,
перекликаясь, как в море невидимые
друг другу корабли, издали слышные,
близясь и близясь к озеру, наконец-
то полетели и гуси.

⁵ M. M. Prishvin, Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom, (Soch.), Vol. II, p. 322.

⁶ Ibid., 2, p. 213

⁷ Ibid., 2, p. 205.

Так бывает в безлюдном краю,
 в степи-пустыне, где лежат чугунные
 рельсы. Далеко до прихода поезда
 загудят рельсы, и потом покажется
 огонь и свистки и сам поезд,
 бегущий из далекой и, кажется,
 прекрасной страны. И вот, как
 темною ночью в пустынной стране, так
 и на озере осенью при первых
 сигналах гусиных кораблей.

8

In Prishvin's view nature sometimes bears human characteristics ("Bolshiye pyshnyye oblaka glyadelis' v spokoynuyu chistuyu vodu"⁹, "gusi... v choknom"¹⁰, "naivnaya zelyonaya vetochka"¹¹); but more often than metaphorical adjectives Prishvin for the purpose of animation employs metaphorical verbs of human activity: "Solntse robko ostanovilos' u morya; boitsya kosnut'sya kholodnoy vody"¹², "sosny vytyagivalis', vypryamlyalis'"¹³, "beryozki podnimali zelyonyye golovki"¹⁴, "bol'nyye sosny lechatsya solntsem"¹⁵). The verbs employed are usually verbs of state or actions that only imply motion -- but that is sufficient to provide for a suggestion that the "whole organism" of nature could get into motion at any moment. Because of logical unfeasibility of such a suggestion, the aesthetic perception of this device is one of enchantment.

⁸ M. M. Prishvin, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 107. cf. also p. 110.

⁹ M. M. Prishvin, V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits, (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 18.

¹⁰ M. M. Prishvin, Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom, (Soch.), Vol. II, p. 177.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 172.

¹² Ibid., p. 183.

¹³ Ibid., p. 171.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 171.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 172.

While this suggestive animation is typical of the sketches, in the stories objects are set fully in motion and the image often leads into other hallucinatory images:

Вдруг самовар дрогнул от пристального взгляда и стал удаляться, а стены стали сходитья. И вот уж самовар далеко, бог знает где, на сером, как желудь, висит, а серая стена близко-близко.

16

The hallucinatory quality of these images is increased by the logical incompatibility of the grouping of illusionary objects.

Обоз, [a wagon] , представляется князю, идет обоз по накатанной дороге, а пролетка [open cab] скачет по камням и видно будет скакать и никогда не догонит обоза.

Князь вдруг начинает рукой крутить, будто вертит маслобойку [oil press] за руку.

17

Man's interpretation of nature often comes as an exaggerated imagery of fear, intensified by hyperbolic transformation of nouns into the plural and use of amplifying adjectives:

Мальчик поглядывает по сторонам, он боится: какие-то подозрительные огромные мохнатые существа выделяются

¹⁶ М. М. Prishvin, "Bab'ya Luzha", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 119.

¹⁷ М. М. Prishvin, "Ivan Oslyanichek", Zavety, (1912), No. 2, p. 21.

из деревьев, словно медведи со всех
сторон выходят из леса и поднимаются
на задние лапы. 18

The hyperbolic image is then openly or implicitly negated and followed by a realistic explanation with the effect of relief for having been released from anxiety. This figurative device is found in Prishvin's works very often and brings to mind the construction and effect of antithetic parallelism so common in folk poetry, especially in the "byliny", where an image is also negated, followed by another image, a contrasting one, which, however, has some features similar to the first one, which was the basis of the "mistake". Thus in a way the impact of the first image is still fresh with the new image.

The child's quoted vision of terrifying creatures¹⁹ is dismissed by the father's realistic explanation -- nevertheless the child was right after all and in a while "Mikhaylo Ivanovich" really heads toward them.

In the process of cultivating his style, Prishvin learned to use this device to express an encounter with a new experience. The effect of it is not always a relief -- more often it may be a surprise with a pleasing effect, but also a disillusion, if the mirage was more beautiful than reality. For convenience, we will refer to it as a device of "antithetic surprise".

In Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom it is quite frequent because of Prishvin's unfamiliarity with the nature of the extreme north of Russia, and because of the naive view of the pilgrims from inland, who travel to

¹⁸ M. M. Prishvin, V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits, (Soch.), Vol. II, p. 99.

¹⁹ cf. quote No. 18.

the Solovetskiy monastery and find themselves for the first time on the open sea.

In the illusory vision, it is not always an inanimate object that is mistaken for an animal or a supernatural spirit. An animal can be taken for a man, a man for an animal, an inanimate object for either of them or an animal for a man-made object:

И вдруг замечаю: недалеко от лодки отчего-то возникает маленький водоворот, и бегут круги во все стороны. Отчего это? Будто камень булькнул в воду. Но никто не бросал. Отчего это?

Гляжу на кружки и вижу, как в центре их показывается из моря большая черная человеческая голова. Струйки воды стекают с темносиневатого лба, золотые капли блестят на усах.

Не сразу я понимаю, что это тюлень, морской заяц.

20

-- А там парус, судно бежит!
Все смеются надо мной.

-- Не парус, это чайка уснула
на камне.

21

This interchangeability corresponds not only to Prishvin's love for "nebyvaloye", but also to his pantheistic view of all elements of nature as dynamic components of "yedinoye sushchestvo".

The device of "antithetic surprise" is more suitable for creation of a mysterious, unreal effect than simile, because it brings the illusory

²⁰ M. M. Prishvin, Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom, (Soch.), Vol. II, p. 209.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 176-177.

object (or the "vehicle"²²) on the first place. The "tenor" comes only later, so that the two phenomena are not really compared but transformed into each other in the process of motion (of either the object or the observer or both). The result is a kind of a moving image.

Roman Jakobson points out in his article about grammatical parallelism²³ that the figurative quality of antithesis relies upon placing two objects with certain similar features beside each other, without comparing them (a comparison would presuppose a separatedness of the things compared), so that the connection between the two images is looser, allowing for both parts to retain certain semantic independence. The result of the whole is not a condensed image as would be created by metaphor, where the tenor is semantically absorbed by the vehicle, but a twofold image, a plastic juxtaposition of the two elements. This produces what Jakobson in his article calls the "binocular vision".²⁴

Some of the images preserve in them the process of transformation, so that there are two or more illusory objects instead of one, that develop into one -- of reality.

²²Terminology "vehicle", "tenor", "ground" as used by Stephen Ullmann, Language and Style, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1964).

²³Roman Jakobson, "Grammatical Parallelism and Its Russian Facet", Language, (XLII, 1966) p. 424.

²⁴Term of P. Boodberg, Ibid., p. 402

Вдали на одном камне что-то шевелится.
 Я думаю, что это морской зверь,
 взвожу куртки-- и вдруг вижу, что весь
 этот серый большой камень поднимается
 и движется мне навстречу.

Это человек идет... 25

As we see from this example, it is not always just naivety or unfamiliarity with objects that cause the observer to form the wrong concept of the object. We know that in new situations and unknown environment people tend to get more agitated and in constant expectation of something unexpected they let their associative powers free rather than allow close and cool observation. So that they swiftly in their minds out of mere fragmentary features compose an image of an object which at the moment expresses more of their mood or psychological frame of mind rather than the real object.

Besides the swiftness of the agitated mind's work, which does not permit a proper observation, there may be other hindrances for objective examination of reality -- that is, the object may be to a certain extent concealed by shade, darkness, other objects of various nature, so that the observer simply has to draw his mental image of the whole out of features he has been offered. Also, an object may be subjected to unusually strong or colourful lighting, which prevents one from seeing the real colours, shapes, angles. Other factors are distance and motion.

²⁵ M. M. Prishvin, Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom, (Soch.), Vol. II, p. 106.

All these elements we find in Prishvin's imagery -- because this is what there is in the background of his images: agitation and expectation of something unusual ("nebyvaloye"), motion of the observer (and sometimes of objects), the phantasmic lighting of the aurora borealis. All these components, but most of all Prishvin's attitude, introduce us to his technique of impressionistic imagery.

Чудеса, чудеса, чудеса!

Я вижу, как из подводного леса движется живая точка, плывет к нам, показывается близко у лодки. Настоящий маленький морской кораблик с глубоко вырезанным парусом. Выплывает на поверхность, шевелит парусом со множеством тонких колеблющихся снастей.

Изумленные странники тоже замечают подводный кораблик.

Я хочу объяснить, что это медуза -- животное, живое.²⁶

Prishvin sometimes refrains from recognition of full reality.

He considers imagination enriching, although it may be more fearful. His ideas bring to mind an ancient respect of Indoeuropean peoples (which became the heritage of the Slavs) for taboo words, i.e. -- to avoid speaking of feared animals using their proper names; periphrastic expressions should be used (e.g. "the one who eats berries, honey"), because the feared animal could "hear" and cause harm to the speaker.

²⁶Ibid., p. 208.

Вместо радостного, знакомого мне, охотнику, солнечного бога, которого не нужно называть, который сам приходит и веселит, я чувствую -- другой какой-то черный бог требует своего названия, выражения.

Мгновение, -- и я назову то, что лежит где-то темным бременем, станет легко и свободно. Но в самый решительный момент мне становится ясно, что если я сделаю так, то отчего-то ценнейшего в мире нужно отказаться без остатка, бросить даже это ружье и идти черной тропой, опустив голову вниз.

черный бог остается без выражения. 27

Prishvin knows very well that reality often brings disillusion to a dreamer. Creative imagination, however, is a source of beauty for man (as he beautifully demonstrates in "U Gorelogo Pnya", where the central idea is a "hunt after happiness").

In the "antithetic surprise" Prishvin has successfully developed a device of his own imagery, based on the formal structure of folkloristic antithetic parallelism, but without copying the linguistic features characteristic of it in folklore (syntactic parallelism etc.). It is still used in "Ptich'ye Kladbichche", which is full of figurative devices, but in the other stories only rarely.

Не успели вымолвить эти слова, как вдруг и сам покойник, мертвец весь в белом, показался на выгоне. Все и рассыпались в стороны, как птицы от ястреба.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 195.

Но не покойник бежал по выгону
к девушкам, а Батюшкин белый гусак
отвязался и летел низко, перекликаясь
с дикими.

28

In the later sketches this device occurs occasionally, but its form is loosened; its figurative quality loses in strength.

The reason, why Prishvin does not use it more frequently in the early stories is because in them Prishvin deals mainly with fantasies of a negative character ("nebyvalove" 3), not with sound imagination as in works until 1911. While in the sketches the illusion vanished at closer observation of the objects, in the stories, where the illusions are a product of disease of the mind (as a result of alcoholism or mental derangement -- "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", "Ivan Oslyanichek", "Bab'ya Luzha"), they can not be extinguished by confrontation with reality. The characters are victims of their hallucinations.

The imagery in the stories is more concise and complex in nature. Metaphors become much more frequent. We have already mentioned the complex animating metaphors, in which we have stressed the logical incompatibility of the elements, so that their sequence results in a dream imagery. To magnify the delirious imagination of his personages, Prishvin often resorts to the use of hyperbole. He shifts nouns to the plural, heaps together homogegeous parts of sentences, uses amplifying adjectives,

²⁸ M. M. Prishvin, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 110.

improbable numerals ("tysyachi rogarykh popov"²⁹) or triple repetition.

А в ответ в сиреневом кусту
шевельнулись две маленькие Луны.
Он посмотрел туда пристально и
увидел множество маленьких
зеленых лун...
Против него пасть к пасти во
всю ширину сада стояла стена
-- во весь сад, до терновника. 30

In the short stories after "U Gorelogo Pnya" his heroes cease to be harmoniously balanced human beings. Nature takes over and overpowers them, in contrast with his previous works, where man was in happy interrelationship with nature. Therefore hyperbole is an appropriate means to convey this change in the man -- nature relationship.

To allow space for imagination, Prishvin sometimes gives us just the features of the illusory object -- a fragment of the image -- and leaves us to complete our own image.

Дверь одной комнатки приотворяется,
виден край бархатного дивана, и на
нем лежит чудесная дамская шляпа с
перьями.

31

Sometimes, in the stories, Prishvin plays with the feature alone: he isolates an adjective by an ellipsis or by hyperbaton of the noun which is supposed to be modified by it. That leaves space for ambiguity and

²⁹M. N. Prishvin, "Bab'ya Luzha", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 125.

³⁰M. M. Prishvin, "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 93.

³¹M. M. Prishvin, Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom, (Soch.), Vol. II, p. 236.

sometimes fantastic associations, because the adjective, which by its isolation acquired a considerable semantic freedom, may be associated with a wrong carrier.

И вдруг, как это бывает в
беспокойных сновидениях,
обернулось так о. Петру, что не
коровы гнались за ним по лесу, а
попы, тысячи рогатых попов... 32

(Here, at the same time we have the reverse of "antithetic surprise": reality is mistaken for an illusory vision).

И вот почудилось ей, что вышел из
леса кто-то двуногий, длинноволосый,
и возле него серый на четырех лапах.
... скоро опять увидела низенького
на четырех ногах, и показалось ей,
что низенький волк все ближе и ближе.

33

Prishvin is well familiar with such semantic transformation from folklore (cf. his contribution to Onchukov's collection of fairy tales³⁴).

In the northern fairy tales, the instrument of action ["gruzil voz kirpichom", "solomoy"] may be transferred into an adjective, which then modifies the subject of the action -- ["kirpichnyy kupets"].

³²M. M. Prishvin, "Bab'ya Luzha", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 125.

³³Ibid., p. 124.

³⁴Ye. N. Onchukov, Severnyye Skazki, (St. Petersburg, 1909).

That creates an unusual collocation of a peculiar metonymical quality, because the new syntagma has playful semantic connotations, so that ["lykovyy ded"] is not necessarily "ded v lykovykh laptyakh"³⁵, but an old man made of bast; "kuptsy v zheleznykh ryadakh" become "zheleznyye kuptsy"³⁶, etc. analogically "ded s serebryannoy borodoy" -- "serebryanny ded"³⁷. Prishvin takes over this device for magic transformation of descriptive features.

This device with its tendency to apply material adjectives to persons creates a typical fairy tale mystery, since it is the favorite trend of fairy tales to "metalize"³⁸ or materialize the natural world because of the unreal in it.

What is interesting is that Prishvin does not use these as metaphorical adjectives in the first place but lets the reader see the shift of the feature, be involved in the process of the miraculous metamorphosis, of the penetration of one image into another one.

У ворот дед с ошипанной бородой
 давал своей лошади черную корку.
 -- Две недели не ел , господь
 кормил-- , говорил ошипанный дед
 другому деду в лыковых лаптях,

³⁵ M. M. Prishvin, "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 83.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 67.

³⁷ M. M. Prishvin, "Ivan Oslyanichek", Zavety, (1912), No. 2, pp. 8-9.

³⁸ Max Lüthi, Das Europäische Volksmärchen, (Bern and München, 1947), pp. 27-28.

--- под арестом сидела.
 --- А сам? --- спросил ЛЫКОВЫЙ.
 --- И сам сидел ---, усмехнулся
ОЩИПАННЫЙ.

39

Prishvin is captivated by the constant process of transition and transformation in nature. Folklore furnishes him with a rich source of poetic devices to express this transition and transformation. One of the most frequently and successfully used is apposition. Apposition because of its parallelic nature makes possible a direct transition from the real into the unreal. It juxtaposes two lexically distant phenomena as a metaphor does. But unlike in metaphor, although semantic transformation occurred, in apposition the "tenor" is not suppressed. Although the two nouns form a semantic unity, the resulting image preserves both lexical components with certain independence. It preserves "semanticheskuyu" dvuplanovost'⁴⁰; thus creates the "binocular vision" a plastic image which is common in poetic parallelism and which we have mentioned in discussing Prishvin's "antithetic surprise."

А лунною ночью, когда все новое
 спит и оживает каменное древнее,
 пугает керосиновый огонек в окошке
 мещанского домика,

³⁹ М.М. Prishvin, "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 83.

⁴⁰ А. И. Yefimov, Stilistika Russkogo Yazyka, (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo "Prosveshcheniye", 1969), p. 219.

ИЛИ ОДИНОКИЙ ГУЛЯКА-ФОНАРЬ.

41

Prishvin uses appositions with various degrees of success and to wider range of effects. Here let us mention only a few with some magic quality: "pozvonochki-govoruny",^{PK} "griby-pykhalki",^{PK} "molodukhi-beryozky",¹⁰ "sudno-lastochka",¹⁰ "tsvety-kuvshinki",^{BL} "yastrebn-starik",^{PK} or "porkhnula pervaya babochka-letuchiy tsvetok",^{KZ}; sometimes the appositions have an affiliate in names-- "Ivan Gorshok", "Stepan Zhelud", "Ivan Pyatak", "Stepan Muraveynik",^{PK} -- but here the comical seems to prevail over the mysterious.⁴²

Prishvin is very fond of the twofold character of images not only in appositions he is using it as a compositional device. In "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" there are two Stepans and two Ivans as a reflection, two white old men in addition; in "Ivan Oslyanichek", there are two truths etc. The double occurrence of a phenomenon arouses doubt as to whether what we see is real -- or whether we are dreaming.

Thus, the images are often so juxtaposed that they form very fluid connections, flowing into each other and acquiring an interchangeable and transformative character. This semantic independence of the image, may easily reach the limits of credibility and yet allow full freedom of contact between them, regardless of logic. If attributes float around their objects, objects can pick up their features from neighbouring phenomena. Thus, the overtaking of features becomes a chain reaction.

⁴¹ M. M. Prishvin, "Ivan Oslyanichek", Zavety, (1912), No. 3, p. 15.

⁴² Analysis of the comical -- cf. Chapter V.

From the structure of fairy tales we know that in a chain sequence anything can stand beside each element, regardless of physical laws, to the point of grammatical absurdity, in the manner of "nebylitsy", Russian folk tales, where the syntactic functions of subject and object of subject and adverbial modifier, object and adverbial modifier etc. are reversible.⁴³ Prishvin was well familiar with "nebylitsy" from Onchukov's collection. He refrains from "absurd grammar" which would violate basic syntactic functions, but he releases the logic of his episodes by violation of the logical sequence of statements. This also produces a comic effect. It is characteristic of the spoken language that the speaker moves on, the listener has no chance to look back and achieve an objective perspective -- he has to move forward with the speaker.

гнался и батюшка, но его в темноте никто не видал. Только уж когда гусь сравнялся с трактором и стал вверх забирать, увидели, что за белым гусем и батюшка летел, размахивая широкими рукавами подрясника, будто крыльями.

44

⁴³Шел я, стоит избушка; зашел, квашня женщину месит, я усмехнул, а квашне не понравилось, она хватит печь из лопаты, хотела ударить; я через штаны скочил, да и порог вырвал, да и убежал. N. Onchukov, Severnyye Skazki, (St. Petersburg, 1908), p. 74.

⁴⁴M. M. Prishvin, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", (Soch.), Vol. IV, pp. 110-11.

There is at least one more source of Prishvin's mysterious atmosphere to be discussed and that is a device learned from the symbolists -- the creation of a phantasmic atmosphere by preceding images, suggestive of the forthcoming disaster. These are frequent devices in the stories, especially in "Krutovarskiy Zver'", "Bab'ya Luzha" and "Ivan Oslyanichek." In the images we find animal elements with unpleasant aesthetic associations -- dogs, rats, bugs. Hyperbole is often present in these. These suggestive images are full of colours, as they are used by the symbolists, particularly black and red, suggestive of evil; yellow refers to unpleasant perceptions. In "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" the use of colours -- white and Prishvin's favourite blue -- creates a serene happy atmosphere. When white and black colours are used, they stand for good and evil as in folklore. Sometimes the colours possess a certain semantic freedom in their suggestive function, as they cover different objects within the range of their suggestiveness.

Although we find Prishvin using abstract adjectives typical of the symbolists "prizrachnyy", "volshhebnyy", "skazochnyy" it is the use of colours that reflects the influence of symbolism on him the most. Frequent are material epithets of a glittering quality, with a suggestion, rather than full tone of colour: "zlotaya shubeyka"^{IO}, "blestiki iz... serebryanykh zverey"^{VK}, "sverkayut zolotistymi, blestyashchimi odezhdani"^{VK} "vsya poserebryonnaya stoyala na solntse trava"^{BL}. The "metalizing" tendency links these epithets with the poetic conventions of folklore.

It is a typical feature of the spoken language to frequently leave statements incomplete -- "nevyskazyvat'",⁴⁷ because the speaker relies on immediacy of reaction from the listener. Therefore, ellipses, indefinite pronouns and adjectives, and brevity of utterance are commonly used also in the narrative genres of folklore. This tendency coincides to some extent with vagueness, which was characteristic of the symbolists, in whose works the plots were often rather vague and statements unfinished. This deliberate vagueness is employed by Prishvin in "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" and "Ivan Oslyanichek" more than in the other stories analysed. Sometimes, it concerns only imagery and does not effect the plot (*iz vody na kani, vyshli usatyye zveri s chelovech'imi golovami [seals]*). At times it happens that, in events of central importance, the subject of the action is not properly identified, which makes the progress of the plot vague and sometimes incomprehensible. In "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" the deliberate incompleteness has a more light-hearted character.

Поздней осенью, когда на землю
 легли белые кружева, а в воздухе
 перелетали белые мухи, к Желудю
 в избу вошел не человек, не
зверь, не рыба -- а так -- бог
знает кто.

48

⁴⁷ Feature analysed by A. V. Shapiro in Ocherki po Sintaksisu Russkikh Narodnykh Govorov, (Moscow, AN, 1953); A. N. Gvozdev in Ocherki po Stilistike Russkogo Yazyka, (Moscow, 1955).

⁴⁸ M. M. Prishvin, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 99.

Summary

In this chapter we have analysed those devices which create an atmosphere of mystery in Prishvin's works: similes, animating metaphors, antitheses, apposition, isolated and transitive adjectives, symbolic epithets, hyperboles and vagueness.

The nature of these devices is such that it brings close together the planes of the real and the unreal. Having absorbed the devices of the poetic language, both folk and symbolist, Prishvin employs such linguistic and poetic devices in the structure of his imagery that they enable him, by their transitive and transformative qualities, to convey the fleeting and mysterious nature of both the real and the unreal.

CHAPTER V

"Zhiznelyubivyy i Zverolyubivyy Yumor"

Без философии можно
обойтись в жизни. Но
без юмора живут
только глупые.

1

In the preceding three chapters we have often come across the fourth of the main effects of Prishvin's early writings -- the comic. The motto of this chapter indicates that humor as well as the reverence for nature discussed in the previous chapter are two essential traits in his outlook on life.

As H. Lampl comments,² it is surprising that no study of Prishvin's humor has hitherto been done in the Soviet Union. Lampl treats it as "ein Grundelement allen Erzählens" and analyses the role of it in the composition of the individual early works of the author. T. Khmel'nitskaya notes³ that the range of Prishvin's humor covers all three areas of the comic: the comic of a situation, of language and of a character. But

¹M. M. Prishvin, a diary of 1947, (Soch.), Vol. V, p. 446.

²H. Lampl. Das Frühwerk M. Prishvins, (Wien, Verlag Notring, 1967), pp. 79-80.

³T. Yu. Khmel'nitskaya, Tvorchestvo M. Prishvina, (Leningrad, Sovetskiy Pisatel', 1959), p. 206.

she touches the subject very briefly and deals only with the humor of his early works.

The present writer intends to analyse the aesthetic nuances of the comic in Prishvin's early works in more detail.

We have already touched upon Prishvin's liking for episodes of daily life and on the significance of the animal element in his themes and imagery. Both of these by their nature invite a comic treatment. As the critics Khmel'nitskaya and Lampl point out, Prishvin's humor is both in its theme and manner of expression close to life and liking for animals.^{4,5} Thus the primary inclination of Prishvin's humor is to produce hearty, loud laughter, as is the case in folklore. But during the literary development of his early writings, Prishvin widens this basic scope of humor and achieves a range from happy playfulness to absurdity, grotesque and irony.

The basic techniques of his situational comedy are similarity, parallel and contrast and are generously present already in the first sketch. Typically Prishvinian is ludicrousness which is brought about by the contrast between what one conventionally expects from certain people or situations and the development of the actual situation. Although the author is seemingly uninvolved, he introduces the situation

⁴H. Lampl, "ein echter, lebensnaher Humor," (Wien, Verlag Notring, 1967), p. 79.

⁵T. Yu. Khmel'nitskaya, "zhiznelyubivyy i zverolyubivyy yumor", Tvorchestvo M. Prishvina, (Leningrad, Sovetskiy Pisatel', 1959), p. 207.

with some indication of his initial expectations in the background:

Ругань и крик разбудили меня рано
утром. Я выглянул в окно.
По дорожке вдоль озера с громадным
колом в руке бежал вчерашний,
похожий на апостола Петра старик.

6a

The comic contrast is intensified by juxtaposing two identical phenomena:

А впереди него бежал без шапки
совершенно такой же старик,
только немножко помоложе.
Первый старик догнал второго
и ударил его колом.

6b

The twofoldness of a phenomenon carries with it a certain element of unexpectedness, surprise and is often employed both in the composition and imagery of fairy and folk tales. Such parallelism is comically amplified when human actions (or features) are juxtaposed with those of an animal (n.b. the metaphorical use of vocabulary describing the bear in human terms creates a sympathetic acceptance of the animal:

с другого конца путика идет
Михайло Иванович и тоже собирает
дичь... Встретились лицом
к лицу. Бежать назад нельзя,
потому что медведь, узнав

⁶М. М. Prishvin, V Krayu Nepuganykh Ptits, (Soch), Vol. II, p. 79.

о трусости полесника, сейчас же догонит и задерет. А медведь рассуждает совершенно так же: и рад бы бежать, но боится.

-- Будь ты проклят, нечистая сила, ты мне сейчас не надобен --, думает мужик...

-- Да и ты мне не надобен --, думает медведь...

7

Where the animal instinctively acts more agreeably than man in spite of his intellect, the outcome is on an ironical note: while people started living separately after a family argument, "Odni tol'ko loshadi, po privychke, dolgo khodili na staryu dvor".⁸

Elsewhere a reverse of this type of contrast occurs: in the sketches false expectations of something ideal or unusual are frequent, because of the novelty of the setting. Thus, a development of a situation in the most conventional manner, brings some disappointment. But the erroneous conduct is so irresistibly human and ordinary that the effect is humorously contrasting rather than ironical:

Отчего это северные моряки так не похожи на наших пахарей? Оттого-ли, что разделенная на мелкие кусочки земля так принижает человека, а неделимое море облагораживает душу, не дробит ее на мелочи?

9

⁷ Ibid., p. 99.

⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

⁹ М. М. Prishvin, Za Volshebnyu Kolobkom, (Soch.), Vol. II, p. 168.

Через минутку вместо старика
 пришел молодой человек с ружьем
 и котомкой. Он заговорил не ртом,
 казалось мне, а глазами -- такие
 они у него были ясные и простые.

-- Барин, раздели наше море! --
 были его первые слова.

10

The request of the northern fishermen for dividing the sea is reflected in an analogous disillusionment brought about by their discovery that Prishvin is not the powerful representative of the government for whom they have taken him. As has been mentioned in Chapter IV, Za Volshebnyim Kolobkom is full of miraculous metamorphoses of this type based on the peculiarity of the region. The Karelians themselves exploit the contrast between their region and the inland, as Prishvin notes in this anecdote:

-- Вот только говорят, будто
 подрядчик один нанял рабочих
 на юге от солнца до солнца. --

11

These few examples have demonstrated at least to some extent that Prishvin likes to loose the conventional bonds which have been formed both in the mind and in the language and faces the reader with a different interpretation of the situation or the expression.

The basic techniques of similarity, parallel and contrast are further exploited in the short stories, but they are worked through to a wider range of comic tones.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 170.

¹¹Ibid., p. 245.

We have mentioned in both Chapter III and IV how powerful a device is parallelism in the hands of Prishvin. "Ptich'ye kladbishche" is a prime example of it. Already at the beginning a happy mood is created when the creek and the path on one of the four hills are described in parallel to each other by metaphorical verbs as playing hide-and-seek:

Как ручей, так и тропинка: спрячется
тропинка в ракитовом кусту, -- и
ручья невидно в траве, только
осока шевелится да снегирь, птица
радости, насвистывает; ручей сверкнул
на солнце -- стрельнула тропинка
под соснами; дальше и тропинка и
ручей исчезли в большом лесу и
слышно только, что кипит большая
радость там.

12

In "U Gorelogo Pnya" Gusyok's passion for quails receives a humorous dimension in comparing the hero to a quail. "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" abounds with ironical tones accompanying Pavlik's fascination with his dog. On several places his exaggerated attention is ridiculed by description of the dog as a woman -- "Lady" -- and partly using characterization of fairy tale's Mar'ya Morevna:

и шерсть вышла у нее рыжая и во
лбу была звездочка, и на груди
брошка, и уши, как косыночки...

13

¹²М. М. Prishvin, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 96.

¹³М. М. Prishvin, "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 76.

In "Ptich'ye kladbishche" the reflection of the wild geese in migration is overwhelming. Many elements appear to have some relationship with the geese: there is a plant "gusinyye lapki", there is "Gusinyy ostrov", "gusinyye okhotniki", "gusinaya noch'". While some of the characters wait for the geese in order to shoot them, in the tavern at a wedding celebration people dance "gusaka". After the escape of the domestic "gusak", all the wedding guests rush out abandoning the dance -- "gusak" for pursuing the priest's "gusak".

The hunter Stepan Zhelud' is so preoccupied with the expectation of the geese that he can not think of anything else. One of Prishvin's humorous instances of "antithetic surprise" shifts the progress of the situation to the priest:

Возле Попова луга камыши стоят
во весь человеческий рост. Степан
обернулся и завязил жердь. Когда
вытаскивал, вдруг в камышах зашумело.
»Гуси!«, обмер Степан. Обернулся,
а камышей уже нет и гусей нет, а
на Поповом лугу, на своем месте,
сидит батюшка, удит рыбку, и
повертывает косичкой во все стороны.

14

¹⁴ M. M. Prishvin, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", (Soch.), Vol. IV,
p. 103.

Besides the humorously surprising appearance of the priest, which is still underlined by the assertion that he was "na svojom meste, na Popovom lugu" it is necessary to pay attention to the use of verbs in this passage. While Stepan's action is sudden, dynamic (as suggested by the perfective aspect of the past tense, by the adverb "vdrug" and by the verb "obmer" which absorbs the actual "verbum dicendi" and gives out the immediate reaction of the person) the appearance of the "batyushka" brings with it the use of the present tense in three clauses with identical word order. At the same time the diminutives "rybka", "kosichka" as well as the word "batyushka" and the paratactic relationship of the clauses create a contrasting mood of calmness in the priest's conduct against Stepan's anxiousness. That is an apt introduction to the following delightful "conversation" between Stepan and the "batyushka", in which the hunter delivers two statements and the priest only one. The comic impact of the situation is built on the still slower pace of the priest's actions, brought about by a double emphasis on his silence and by parallelism, contrasting the purpose of his two pockets:

— Гусь пошел --, сказал Степан.
 Батюшка ничего не ответил, а молча,
 зачерпнул кружкой озерной воды, и
 плеснул себе в карман подрясника.

»Червячков подмочить«, догадался
 Степан, зная, что батюшка всегда
 держит червей для ужения у себя
 в кармане и они там у него
 подсыхают.

Из другого кармана батюшка,
тоже молча, вынул фляжку, и
 выпил стаканчик.

-- Червячка заморить--, сказал
 он весело Степану.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 103-104.

As often with Prishvin, the comic situation is here strengthened by the contribution of the humor of language -- by the contrasting meaning of the word "chervyachok" in the colloquial form and in the popular idiom "chervyachka zamorit".

The atmosphere of the story is generally happy with many humorous images. One of the most successful reflections of the mood of the "gusinaya noch" is the image of the moon which behaves in the manner of a goose: "tuchi raskhodilis', mesyats oglyadelsya chistyy, obiraya s sebya klochki tuch".¹⁶ Playful as well as magic is the frequent juxtaposition or even doubling of phenomena, modelled on techniques of fairy tales. Besides the two Ivans and two Stepans, Alyosha and Pronya can be both identified by "pereslezhinka, kak u medvedki". At the opening of the story, two geese are sent to reconnoitre the region; not only do they take on different colours as a result of their movement through the space -- they finally vanish and suddenly two white old men appear, who pass through the story without any specific role to play; the question mark is both humorous and enchanting. It is impossible to analyze the humor of "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" exhaustively without quoting the whole story: so condensed is its text.

In comparison with "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", is much more openly comical, although some of the poetic humor of "Ptich'ye Kladbishche" can be found in it too.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 110.

The emphasis on pacing, mentioned with the episode of the priest and characteristic also of Stepan Muraveynik of "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", in "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" appears several times in order to depict folk characters. It is one of the characteristic features of Timofey to pause significantly between two "profound" statements: "Vyskazav glubokuyu mysl', Timofey lyubil polozhit' v rot kusochek sakharu i vypit' bludechko chayu".¹⁷ Even more typical is an incident on a market place when after a long pause the "muzhik" only returns the question instead of giving an answer (n.b. the comic use of the instrumental of comparison, which is quite frequent in Prishvin's stories):

-- Дядя, не видал ли ты рыжую собаку с длинными ушами? --, спросил Павлик мужика.

Долго осматривал с головы до ног Павлика серый мужик в шляпе черепельником и, наконец, тоже спросил:

-- А ты чей, дядя? -- 18

The market both in "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" and in "Ivan Oslyanichek" gives to Prishvin a welcome opportunity to joke in the folk fashion. He can use all devices (previously discussed for bringing about other effects) in order to produce a humorous effect. Syntactic parallelism in statements of the "muzhiki" by its rhythm deludes the confused mind of Pavlik, while suppressing the logical incompatibility of the utterances. The

¹⁷ М. М. Prishvin, "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 77.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 82.

comic effect is underlined by the use of caricature-forming similes and "metonymical" adjectives:

-- Цела,цела, видели ! --,
заговорили кругом мужики.
-- В стеклянную дверь лапилась --,
сказал льняной дед на возу.
-- В мясном ряду видел --, сказал
желтый, как подсолнух, мужик.
-- Возле лавки купца Пыльного
грызет два коровьих рога --, сказал
прасол.

19

The lexicon of the humorous images is earthy and vivid. Prishvin follows the spirit of folk humor also in forming his own aphorisms:

Кипит люд на площади, будто
сельди в Белом море; воткнуть метлу,
и пойдет метла по базару сама.

20

Although he has a sense of humor in his own right, Pavlik because of his mental confusion is often unable to grasp the logical relationship between words and objects. Thus he misses the metaphorical quality of names and by a reverse association reveals the material origin of the metaphor -- i.e. when asked to look for "Volchonok", he

¹⁹Ibid., p. 83.

²⁰Ibid., p. 82.

asks in astonishment: "V gorode volk?"²¹ He can not make the proper grammatical adjustment and is sincerely surprised when he discovers that he has been looking for "Volkov" who is his old friend. It is then easy for Timofey to fool his master by his "nebylitsy" about the roundness of the Earth due to boars from Kiev and about eagles with bears' paws. Even the main theme of the story (which is based on the legend about an animal whom nobody has seen but who has calf's teeth) exploits a pun: the inhabitants of the city "Bezversk" claim that the name has originated from a legend recorded in old church books by the Old Russian aorist "be zver'", not from the concept of "bezver'ye". The comic of the language (cf. also the false etymology in folk fashion in "lis-gubernator" instead of "vits-gubernator")²² produces a pleasing humorous effect together with a folk tale-like enchantment brought about by the absurdity of the situation.

But besides this aesthetically pleasing type of humour, all stories after "U Gorelogo Pnya" contain a stream of the grotesque, which corresponds to the themes of evil, decay or degeneration. In "Kruŭoyarskiy Zver'" the agreeable adventures of Pavlik contrast with his often repellent behavior and sexual abnormality. The grotesque element penetrates the composition of the story (vide Pavlik's obsession with imitating animal sounds and behavior, his preoccupation with the dog

²¹Ibid., p. 84.

²²Ibid., p. 72.

and especially hints to his hallucinations of smell prepare the final scene of domination of the animal element over Pavlik). This line through composition has its subtle accompaniment in the grotesque note of secondary episodes and imagery. This instance of the device of "antithetic surprise" for example, plays with the motif of death:

Павлик прямо и пошел туда, где
виднелась красная туша, и остановился,
когда увидел и понял: не ободранная
Леди виднелась ему, а корова на
двери купца Пыльного, красная, без
ГОЛОВЫ.

23

The pleonastic piling up of bloody details is in a grotesque contrast with the homeliness of the butcher's behavior among the carcasses:

Тут же висела свинья, белая, как
живая, только с выпотрошенным
брюхом. У порога лавки валялись
два окровавленных коровьих рога.
Сам Пыльный, мясник, хороший
знакомый Павлика, сидел за столиком
между красными тушами и пил чай.

24

(n.b. Prishvin's assertion that if it were not for the disturbing detail of a disemboweled belly, the animal would look "alive").

²³ Ibid., p. 84,

²⁴ Ibid., p. 84.

In "Ivan Oslyanichek" this dream-like grotesque is still more prominent. Motifs of death, violence and sexual perversity take turns with scenes of natural beauty and peacefulness. The initial technique of contrast between conventional expectations of a situation and the actual situation is often conterminous with extremes of human behavior or rather with the subconscious stream in it. Although the influence of symbolism, and especially Remizov in this respect, is undeniable, even these episodes evolve primarily from the earthy folk type of grotesque. Thus a "muzhik" on his death bed is preoccupied with providing for an honourable "pomina" of his soul here on earth rather than for his salvation. Hence he deprives of life another living creature, while himself near death:

Гурьич, уже причастившись, лежа,
поймал рукой за ушко поросенка,
попросил ножик и зарезал.
-- Помяните меня!

25

Analogically the episode of Marfa's abnormal conception reminds one of the many erotic folk tales as they are recorded in Onchukov's collection e.g. "Pop telyonka rodil". The influence of the popular erotic note in humor certainly has to be mentioned together with the Remizovian element in Prishvin's stories.

²⁵M. M. Prishvin, "Ivan Oslyanichek", Zavety, (1912) No. 2,
p. 12.

The stories "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" and "Bab'ya Luzha" are most ironically tuned because they are chiefly focused on one hero. A derogatory attitude to the "popy" can be found besides in "Bab'ya Luzha" also in the account of flowers in "Ptich'ye Kladbishche": "Popy belyye, lysyye, s otvislymi usami, bog znayet zachem stoyat",²⁶ the "postnyy monashek" in "Krutoyarskiy Zver'" is treated more sympathetically. In "Bab'ya Luzha" the hero Father Peter is introduced in a pejorative tone by the narrator and further ridiculed by the whole account of his hallucinatory obsession with mushrooms. Moreover, the imagery of the story ironically treats monks by comparing them to stumps:

Пни стоят возле избушки черные,
как монахи, и между ними свой
игумен есть, тоже черный, но
плотный... На игумене - пне
почему-то всегда благушки растут...

27

Besides priests it is the degenerated aristocracy (cf. the folk pun in the use of the constant epithet "blagorodnyy" for the idiotic prince in "Ivan Oslyanichek") and the merchants that are almost always treated with irony. Hence Lamp²⁸ makes a correct observation, when he

²⁶M. M. Prishvin, "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 100.

²⁷M. M. Prishvin, "Bab'ya Luzha", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 120

²⁸H. Lamp, Das Frühwerk M. Prishvins, (Wien, Verlag Notring, 1967), pp. 201-202.

says that Prishvin mostly shares the peasant's attitude in dealing with the class structure of the society.

Summary

In this chapter we have shown that the devices typical of Prishvin's style (especially various forms of parallelism) are used also for comic effect. In its mode Prishvin's humor is "zhiznelyubivyy" and "zverolyubivyy".

In his critical attitude to social classes he is closest to Leskov, his treatment of figures with inclination towards caricatures recalls Gogol's works, while the grotesque episodes show the impact of Remizov. The mood of Prishvin's humor ranges from serene happiness to absurdity and grotesqueness. But his absurdities and grotesques are primarily related to the nonsense and controversy rooted in everyday life. After all, it is in reality, that one can see a butterfly being eaten by a spider and Prishvin has remarked after such an incident:

Не ясно ли, что природа никак
не гармонична, но в душе человека
рождается чувство гармонии, радости,
счастья.

29

²⁹M. M. Prishvin, Nezabudki, (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennoy Literatury, 1969), p. 22.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

We have analysed four aesthetic effects of Prishvin's prose, which we regard as prominent for his early writings: the attempt at achieving homogeneity of the narrator and his material, vividness of image, mystery and humor. Now we would like to summarize our findings and to consider Prishvin's place among his contemporaries.

Prishvin's early travel sketches, the early stories and a part of the novel Kashcheyeva Tsep' document the lively interest of the author in stylistic experimentation. His sensitivity to the aesthetic properties of the Russian language awakes in him an interest in colloquial-popular speech, in folklore and in the stylistic experiments of his contemporaries, in particular Remizov. The choice of genres and narrative techniques during this early period also pose some basic problems for Prishvin's prose.

Lamp1 rightly calls Prishvin one of the most subjective Russian writers,¹ but his explanation of the author's striving to hide his subjective "I" is not quite accurate. Very often in his comments on the art of writing Prishvin states that he would like his depiction of a situation to bear traces of his personal perception. The most obvious

¹H. Lamp1, Das Fröhwerk M. Prishvins, (Wien, Verlag Notring, 1967), p. 78.

way of conveying his attitude is the "skaz" technique. But Prishvin looks further for a method, which would capture his perception of a situation without making it his personal account. Thus he becomes involved in experiments with subjectivization of narrative (as we saw in Chapter II) and with emotional and representative properties of language (observed mainly in the story "Ptich'ye Kladbishche"). He attempts to evoke the mood of a situation indirectly.

The search for an indirect manner of expression, subjectivity and the exploration of the evocative and suggestive properties of language point to a kinship of Prishvin with the symbolists. As the author himself acknowledges, he was strongly interested in Remizov's experiments. Prishvin's early stories show some thematic tribute to Remizov (the themes of mental and sexual abnormality, sadism, religious themes, triviality of life). Also the art of crossing the plane of reality to irreality is similar to Remizov's manner. Like Remizov, Prishvin uses the figure of antihero (in "Krutoyarskiy Zver'", "Bab'ya Luzha", "Ivan Oslyanichek"), but his grotesque humor is more sympathetic to the main figure than Remizov's is. While Remizov's setting is chiefly the city, Prishvin favours the country and nature. Although Prishvin, as we see, was open to the modernist trend to some extent, his main interests are rooted in non-urban environment and thus the atmosphere of his writings is less gloomy. The appreciation of nature and man in it gives Prishvin an optimistic outlook on life. His racy humor is, after all, what distinguishes his work from Remizov's the most.

Remizov's chief influence on Prishvin is apparent in the composition and language of the latter's works. The subjectivization of the narrator is often used by Remizov. The genres and style of old chronicles, legends and fairy-tales as well as spoken vernacular expression are thoroughly explored by both writers. Although in the composition and thematic build-up of his works Prishvin does not match Remizov, in his playing with the Russian language he shows genuine talent.

In the composition of his works Prishvin appears to lack epic perspective. He attempts to work in a manner of folklore by endowing his episodes and smaller structural units a considerable semantic independence and applies to them the principle of additive composition, used in folklore. Thus, he is using a similar method to that of the poets of poetism and surrealism. Most successfully it is applied in "Ptich'ye Kladbishche", as discussed in Chapter III and V. But while following some of the methods of folklore, Prishvin does not follow others: e.g. he does not follow the line of a constant epic progress necessary in the tale and he deprives his work of simplicity and easy comprehensibility by overloading it with metaphors, metonymies, epithets, figurative appositions, suggestive rhythmical patterns etc. This makes his prose very figurative and rhythmical but often pushes the content into the background beyond comprehension.

Prishvin strove to imitate the lightness and charm of folklore as we have mentioned in the introductory chapter. But in his ex-

ploration of devices he does not limit himself to selecting sufficient to be decisive for his style and consequently fails to remain simple and light. Neither is he able to adjust his language to a psychologically more complex or more extensive prose. He does not succeed in giving such subtle speech-characteristics of personages as is "natural" to Chekhov.

Prishvin must have perceived a certain artificiality in his mode of writing. He does not return to the experiments of his early writings in his later prose. It is undeniable that his exploitation of the lively Russian vernacular is a great achievement. In that he follows Remizov's attempt to free Russian syntax from Latin and French influences and to return it to its natural quality.² Thus he achieves a liveliness and freshness of expression, which is appreciated and sought by progressive Soviet writers. His later works, although less inventive thematically and structurally, are valuable mainly because of his language. But even towards the end of his life he feels that the gap between the impact of oral poetry and literature is impossible to surpass. As he wrote in his diary of 1951, three years before his death:

Потому, видно, и называется устная поэзия сказкой, что не написана она, как теперь я пишу, а сказывалась. И потому, наверно, теперь мне кажется эта сказка крылатой и свободной, что я всю жизнь учился, очень трудился над тем, чтобы так легко, просто и свободно писать, как оно прежде сказывалось. Всю

² As noted by Mirsky, H. Lampl, Das Frühwerk M. Prishvins, (Wien, Verlag Notring, 1967), p. 314.

жизнь я стремился к тому и все-таки не мог обратить до конца родное это слово в ту музыку, какая мне слышится в речи простых людей на полях, и в лесах, и на улицах больших городов, и на берегах морей, и у простых деревенских колодцев.

3

³М. М. Prishvin, "Drug Cheloveka", (Soch.), Vol. IV, p. 619.

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