

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.60797/RULB.2025.63.10>

THE THEME OF LENINGRAD IN YURI VORONOV'S POEMS

Research article

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Abstract

The article attempts to explore the theme of Leningrad in the works of Yuri Voronov, in other words, his personal local text – as a place of unfolding meanings significant for this poet of the Soviet period of the development of Russian literature. Voronov's "nominal local text" belongs to the St. Petersburg *supertext*. The presence of a local aspect is an important characteristic of many writers and poets in the world literature, and Voronov is no exception in this sense. Leningrad is forever in the poet's heart. Therefore, love for his hometown is easily read and perceived in many of his poems. In Voronov's poetics, there is a large number of poems related thematically, and by other criteria, specifically to Leningrad (St. Petersburg). In this study, we have examined some of them, emphasizing the presence of a local aspect in the works of Yuri Voronov.

Keywords: Leningrad, hometown, the theme of war, the St. Petersburg text, the local aspect, spatiality, topological *supertext*.

ТЕМА ЛЕНИНГРАДА В СТИХОТВОРЕНИЯХ ЮРИЯ ВОРОНОВА

Научная статья

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Аннотация

В статье предпринята попытка исследования темы Ленинграда в творчестве Юрия Воронова, иначе говоря, его персонального локального текста – как места разворачивания смыслов, значимых для данного поэта советского периода развития русской литературы. «Именной локальный текст» Воронова принадлежит к Петербургскому *сверхтексту*. Присутствие локального аспекта характерно для многих писателей и поэтов в мировой литературе, и Воронов в этом смысле – не исключение. Ленинград навсегда – в сердце поэта. Поэтому любовь к родному городу легко прочитывается и воспринимается во многих его стихотворениях. В поэтике Воронова существует большой ряд стихотворений, связанных тематически, и по иным критериям, именно с Ленинградом (Петербургом). В данном исследовании мы рассмотрели некоторые из них, акцентируя присутствие локального аспекта в произведениях Юрия Воронова.

Ключевые слова: Ленинград, родной город, тема войны, Петербургский текст, локальный аспект, пространственность, топологический *сверхтекст*.

Introduction

The world-famous philosopher F. Nietzsche wrote: «Everyone has a natural talent, but only a few are born or instilled with education that measure of perseverance, endurance, energy, by virtue of which he really becomes a talent, i.e. he becomes what he is, – this means: he reveals himself in works and actions» [1, P. 192]. We suppose, poet Yuri Voronov has really become such a talent. The works and personality of Yuri Voronov were the objectives of our research articles earlier [2], [3]. This article is a natural extension of the researches previously undertaken.

The methods of literary hermeneutics and receptive aesthetics, as well as phenomenological and cultural-historical approaches were used and applied in the course of the work. It should also be noted that the translation of the poems (quotes) was done by me personally.

Main results

It is advisable to begin the study of the theme of Leningrad in the works of Yuri Voronov with the poem "There is no more Blockade". These two motives, two themes go in tandem in his work, in an inextricable connection, implicitly or explicitly stated. The poem "There is no more Blockade", starting from the mood of the title itself, is perceived as saturated with joy, even delight. The poet describes the festive fireworks over Leningrad, which sound "like May thunder in winter" (NB!)

Ракеты, рассыпаясь,

Ввысь летят.

Над Невским, над Невой, над Летним садом

Ликующие возгласы

Гремят.

Rockets are crumbling,

They're flying high.
Over the Nevsky, over the Neva, over the Summer Garden
There are cheers,
They're rattling [4, P. 284].

There is no limit to jubilation and this is clearly manifested in the poem, because a German shell will no longer explode on the "adamant Nevsky shore", and a glass will not break, and someone's blood will not spray after these explosions. "The enemy cannot reach Leningrad more!" [4, P. 284] – these lines sound quite relevant in accordance with the recent events of that time. The sky of Leningrad is defined by the author as "shining", the lights of rockets "soar endlessly".

*То город наш –
За снятие блокады
Шлет воинам
Восторженный привет.
That's our city –
For lifting the blockade
It sends to the warriors
Enthusiastic greetings [4, P. 284].*

The lines of this poem were written by the author in January 1944, when he was practically a teenage boy yet. We have already written about his difficult experience while growing up, about some poems and about the theme of memory in his works [2], [3]. This article is devoted to the theme of Leningrad, but here we take Voronov's poems of a later period of creativity (1970-80 years of the 20th century).

"The doctor demands: You must be treated..." [4, P. 224] – one of Yuri Voronov's poems starts this way. It is dedicated to the topic of the article. However, the lyrical hero prefers a trip to his hometown – to the hospital prescribed for him:

*Сложу чемодан наугад.
Соседи решат,
Что в больницу,
А я –
На вокзал,
В Ленинград!
I'll pack my suitcase at random.
The neighbors will decide –
I'm going to hospital,
But I'll go
To the train station,
And from there – to Leningrad! [4, P. 224]*

Right from the train the hero goes for a walk, "along the streets of white nights" and along the Neva River, admiring the eternally beautiful panorama, remembering his youth. At such moments, doctors and medicines become unnecessary for him, his diseases recede, and everything becomes "fresh and easy" – "like a poplar after rain." And it is not surprising, because the city is beautiful, moreover, it is the hometown of Yuri Voronov, a former boy who survived the Great Patriotic War and the Leningrad blockade. "War, – Archpriest Andrei Tkachev writes, – is a vivid manifestation of human sinfulness, and the most vivid visual image of war is ... a baby on the ashes, crying, looking for his mother" [5, P. 114]. Yuri Voronov was a teenager during the war, but he saw the death of small children, with his father he buried his own younger brother and sister, and the pain of the events remained in him forever. However, the dearest city is able to heal the soul, and it is able to surprise and to cause delight.

The unique beauty of Leningrad is manifested by the poem "Tourist", where the main character says, going on a return flight:

*– Этот город
Подобен музею,
Я бы брал с иностранцев
За вход.
– This city,
It is like a museum,
I would charge the foreigners
For admission [4, P. 234].*

He would take money for visits, of course. In this way of thinking that foreigner is contrasted with the moral and axiological aspect of the perception of such visitors by Leningraders: "He wandered here / Alone and with people, / But the flower to Piskarevka / He didn't bring at all..." [4, P. 234]. Probably, the lyrical subject was inspired by the above-quoted statement of the foreigner. He didn't even spend a cent on flowers for the dead victims and heroes: "Either he saved his nerves, / Or his time, / Or his heart. / He hasn't grown up yet" [4, P. 234]. So, the conclusion is: he hasn't grown up yet. In any case, the Russian recipient will not be mistaken in this interpretation. The motive (or the theme, it's practically the same), which will be discussed below, is clearly indicated in the poem "Tourist".

In another one – "To become filled with this city..." – the lyrical subject proclaims:
*Ленинград
Начинается с первого взгляда,
Как любовь,
От которой уже не уйти.*

Leningrad,
It starts at the first glance,
Like does love,
From which there is no escape [4, P. 225].

Yes, this city is beautiful and capable of dazzling a guest with its splendor, but the hero (probably, he is the author – in one person) urges not to forget about the people who managed to save all this beauty during the difficult years of trials. The theme of the Great Patriotic War is implicitly present in many of the Voronov's poems, even if he does not mention the war. This is the poet's way of expressing himself. "We write and speak, of course, for ourselves," as one of the modern philosophers says. "If we are surrounded by culture – as an environment in which thoughts can dwell – then our words can be passed on to others, and sometimes they are understood" [6, P. 48]. Poetry, on the other hand, "provides the means" for expression, "and the means are almost exceptional. Poetry does not presuppose or conclude, it simply reports the facts of the inner life of the soul and therefore never lies. Often, the inner experience of the soul can only be conveyed poetically, without words and obscuring the meaning of interpretation, and is also perceived" [6, P. 43]. In this way, it is easy for the reader to understand and share with the poet Voronov his thoughts and feelings.

"My city, / Even in winter it is unique," – the lyrical subject of another poem proclaims. However, the winter beauty of Leningrad is not able to please him, because – "Winter in the war / Was my enemy" [4, P. 235]. And the protagonist cannot help but remember those winters for his whole life. "Spring has come / Like hope and a doctor. / But winter / Was a killer" [4, P. 235], – he says, and once again the theme of the Great War and the Leningrad blockade arises in the poem. The events of the past lifetime are not forgotten, although the nature should not be blamed for the past.

"White Nights" and spring could be seen as a separate theme (or motive). Lilacs are blooming on the Champ de Mars at this time – "with lilac and white" colors. The poet uses a technique of comparison: white nights are "Like bright dreams. / As an alloy of purity and dawn" [4, P. 227]. This phenomenon is short-lived, people are more accustomed to darkness at night, and yet

*Оставь себе
Облако белых ночей –
Дыши им
До новой сирени!*
Keep it for yourself –
A cloud of white nights,
Breathe it in
Until the blossom of the new lilac! [4, P. 227]

This is the lyrical hero's passionate call, because spring does not last long, and the "sedate summer" always comes after it. Sometimes the summer can be very hot. Yuri Voronov has written a poem dedicated to this topic – "The Heat in Leningrad". The poet paints a picture of scorching heat in the city in a concise but poetically expressive way:

*Жарищею
Ветра – и те спалило,
Над головой застыли облака.
И невозможно
Разобраться было,
Течет
В какую сторону
Река.
От зноя мост
Крутую спину выгнул.
И вздыбленные кони на мосту
Готовы от жары
В Фонтанку прыгнуть...*

The heat –
Even the winds were burned down with it,
Clouds remain motionless overhead.
And it was impossible –
Very difficult to figure it out,
Which way is the River
Flowing?
From the heat – the bridge,
It arched his curved back.
And the rearing horses on the bridge
Are ready – for the heat –
To jump into the Fountain... [4, P. 230]

The techniques of impersonation and comparison enhance the effect of perception, and the reader begins to feel almost physically the terrible heat that a person can hardly bear.

*От зданий жаром пышет,
Как от печек,
Деревья бредят ветром и дождем...*
The buildings are emitting such intensive heat,

As if from ovens,

The trees are passionately dreaming of wind and rain... [4, P. 230]

The technique of personification, and also metaphors used by the poet in the last stanza help to recreate his own vivid poetic image – the image of the creator, forced to work in the very difficult conditions of living, when "the words with faded eyes flow down from a dry pen" into a notebook. The final chord – the last quatrain, reinforcing the main motif of the "heat in Leningrad", sounds as almost paradoxical – taking into account the northern location of the city:

...А Африка, наверно,

В эту пору

На небо смотрит с тягостным укором:

– Когда же

Долгожданная жара?...

... And Africa, probably,

At this time

Looks at the sky with painful reproach:

– When is

The long-awaited heat coming? ... [4, P. 231]

In general, the poet depicts his favorite city at different times of the year. For example, Yuri Voronov wrote a poem "Leningrad in October". There are notes of sadness in it, due to the same memory of the Great Patriotic War. The houses in autumn are barely visible, as if "blurred by fog", the traces of crevices and holes, although painted over after repairs, continue to hurt the heart of the lyrical hero. A cold wind lifts piles of leaves "almost to the roofs." And there is a rhetorical question at the end of the poem: "My city, what are you thinking about?..." The question, probably addressed to the author himself.

"Do not scold the visiting poets", if they do not praise or not perceive your city the way you feel it yourself. Do not scold them for "keeping their own cities in their hearts" [4, P. 236]. This is the main idea of the poem "I will remember for a long time...", which completes the collection of poems under the title "What are you thinking about, my city?" in the specified book of Yuri Voronov's works. The key idea of the poem is as follows: beloved and dear Leningrad is in the heart of the poet Voronov forever. Therefore, no other city in his poems "rings like that". Therefore, deep love for Leningrad is easily read and perceived in many of his works. So, the title of this article could be slightly different, for example, "The theme of love and devotion to Leningrad in Yuri Voronov's poems."

The presence of a local aspect is characteristic for the classics of the world literature. Most often, this is a real place to which literary works become "attached". Thus, a local text appears. V. Shchukin defines a local text of the highest level as a special kind of meta-text, collectively formed by actually written "works that contain essential information about the legendary, mythological properties of a given place, about its reputation" [7, P. 238]. Accordingly, we can talk about Voronov's "personal" local text. Yuri Voronov was a writer, whose poetics is advisable to consider (to read) "through the prism of spatiality", in the words of V.N. Toporov [8, P. 512]. In Voronov's poetics, there is a large number of poems related thematically, and by other criteria, to St. Petersburg specifically. In this study, we have considered some of them. It is possible to say that Leningrad (St. Petersburg) for poet Voronov is not only a unit of the artistic space of work (works), but a significant place for the **unfolding of meanings** (correlating with the well-known fragment of real space).

It is significant, Toporov argued, that – "through the category of space, through spatiality, the text goes beyond itself, involving the reader in a difficult complex too" [8, P. 514]. Going beyond the boundaries, the text as a statement (in a broad sense) acquires signs of a **supertext**. In Russian philology, there is the following definition of the supertext, which is quite acceptable in this case: "A supertext is a set of statements limited temporally and locally, united in content and situationally, characterized by a complete modal attitude and sufficiently defined positions of the sender and addressee, with special criteria of the normative/abnormal" [9, P. 215].

Conclusion

There are different types of "supertexts in Literature that philologists work with", N.E. Mednis wrote [10, P. 108]. Topological supertext is one of them. Considering this phenomenon, it can be argued that the so-called "urban texts" (they are also supertexts generated by certain topological structures) are the most scientifically developed at the present time – according to the observations of N. Mednis [10, P. 107]. The **St. Petersburg text** of the Russian literature is one of them. The "nominal local text" of Yuri Voronov belongs to the St. Petersburg supertext – as a place of unfolding meanings, significant for this poet of the Soviet period of the development of Russian literature.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that this article does not close the topic completely. The studies in this area can be continued.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Рецензия

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.60797/RULB.2025.63.10.1>

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Review

Voloskov I.V., Private Educational National Humanitarian Institute of Social Management, Moscow Russian Federation
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.60797/RULB.2025.63.10.1>

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