

Riccardo Mini – Abstract

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Title:

Жанр маленькой поэмы в произведениях Елены Шварц

Связь с традицией и элементы поэтических инноваций

The form of the *malen'kaya poëma* in the work of Elena Shvarts

Relationship to tradition and elements of poetic innovation

My dissertation aims to analyse the genre of the *malen'kaya poëma* (short *poëma*) within the poetic work of Elena Shvarts. The study develops in three main directions. Firstly, it follows the evolution of Elena Shvarts's career as a poet, with particular attention to the context of the Leningrad Underground and the main characteristics of Shvarts's poetics. Secondly, it revolves around a comprehensive examination of the genre of the *malen'kaya poëma*, including its historical antecedents within the Russian poetic tradition. Finally, ten out of the fourteen poems of the *Malen'kie poëmy* collection, published in the second volume of the poet's complete works, are analysed. As mentioned, the thesis unfolds across three principal dimensions, with the following specific aims: 1. To identify the main features of Elena Shvarts's poetics using examples from the *malen'kie poëmy*, the poems and the *poëmy*, as well as her prose and essays. 2. To retrace the sources of the genre of the *malen'kaya poëma* and explain Elena Shvarts's own interpretation of the genre. After identifying the characteristics of the genre with reference to theoretical and scientific literature, these characteristics are identified and analysed in comparison with selected works by the most influential poets for Shvarts, namely Marina Tsvetaeva, Mikhail Kuzmin and Velimir Khlebnikov. 3. To conduct an exhaustive analysis of a selection of *malen'kie poëmy* to demonstrate in which way the previously identified characteristics of the poetics and genre manifest within the poetic texts. This analysis accentuates Elena Shvarts's connections with the Silver Age while highlighting the distinctiveness of her contributions in terms of genre and thematical elements.

Therefore, the thesis is composed of three chapters dedicated to the study of the abovementioned questions. The first chapter, titled “Characteristics and specificity of Elena Shvarts’s poetics”, opens with an exploration of the poet’s biography and the context in which Shvarts matured and developed as a poet. Following this detailed introduction to the poet’s biography and the non-official milieu, the first chapter is also dedicated to a comprehensive exploration of the fundamental characteristics of Elena Shvarts’s poetics. Specifically, this section aims at understanding how Shvarts’s poetics is based on contrasts and contradictions, and therefore finds its main expression in the juxtaposition of divergent elements, realities and categories that create a vast poetic universe. Finally, this analysis demonstrates how the literary device of metamorphosis underpins the previously mentioned thematic and stylistic elements. The chapter concludes with two sections dedicated to poet’s relationship with the city of Leningrad-Petersburg, which functions as the setting for most of her works, and the poet’s characteristics use of authorial masks.

The second chapter, titled “The *Malen’kaya poëma* as a genre in the work of Elena Shvarts”, seeks to delineate the main features of Shvarts’s short *poëmas* and identifies its sources in the Russian poetic tradition. After scrutinising the characteristics elucidated by Shvarts, the research transitions towards a comprehensive investigation of the sources. The most significant theoretical foundations are rooted in Mikahil Bakhtin’s theories concerning genre memory and Boris Tomashevsky’s theories regarding genre signs. The genre of the early 20th-century lyric *poëma* is considered, with particular emphasis placed on the scientific work of Vladimir Markov and Leonid Dolgoplov devoted to this topic. Notably, these analyses discern three distinctive attributes of the *liricheskaya poëma*: the weakening of the *fabula* element, its inherent fragmentation and the lyrical development. Considering these analyses, a more in-depth investigation has been conducted on the structure of Elena Shvarts’s *malen’kie poëmy*, with a specific focus on rhythm and polymetric versification, to illustrate the connection of these poems with the works of the Silver Age. The second part of the second chapter is dedicated to the examination of selected works by three prominent figures of the Silver Age: Marina Tsvetaeva, Mikhail Kuzmin and Velimir Khlebnikov. These three poets are cited by Shvarts as models for her poetic style and for the *malen’kaya poëma*.

The third and final chapter, titled “The analysis of Elena Shvarts’s *Malen’kie poëmy*”, consists in the analysis of ten out of the fourteen poems included in the “*Malen’kie poëmy*” collection. The analysis has been conducted not chronologically, but following the order of

appearance in the collection, established by Shvarts. The analysis is oriented towards an exploration of both stylistic and thematic elements and aims at showing in detail how the characteristics and theoretical frameworks articulated in the previous two chapters find expression in the *malen'kie poëmy*. In particular, the poems selected point out the variety and multifaceted nature of the themes, such as the interplay between categories, the bond between the physical and the metaphysical, and the poet's relationship with both the divine and her surrounding environment.

The aim of the analysis is also to illustrate how Shvarts's poetics and the concept of "vision-adventure" reach their full potential in the genre of the *malen'kaya poëma*, through the characteristically rigorous structure and a recurring phonetic and metrical organisation that manipulates rhythm shifts.