

**A IMAGEM DO JORNALISTA RUSSO M.O. MENSHIKOV EVOLUINDO EM
A.T. CURTAS HISTÓRIAS DE AVERCHENKO**

**LA IMAGEN DEL PERIODISTA RUSO M.O. MENSHIKOV EVOLUCIONANDO
EN A.T. BREVES HISTORIAS DE AVERCHENKO**

**THE IMAGE OF THE RUSSIAN JOURNALIST M.O. MENSHIKOV EVOLVING
IN A.T. AVERCHENKO'S SHORT STORIES**

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RESUMO: O artigo examina a incorporação artística e a evolução da imagem artística do jornalista russo M.O. Menshikov em A.T. Os contos de Averchenko. Os autores selecionam e analisam A.T. Os textos de Averchenko, incluindo a imagem de seu contemporâneo - o jornalista e escritor russo M.O. Menshikov. Os autores revelam a atitude dos publicitários do final do século 19 e início do século 20 em relação à personalidade e ao trabalho profissional de Menshikov, bem como discorrem sobre as visões específicas de Averchenko. Eles também compreendem uma atitude geral em relação a Menshikov e sua contribuição para a revista semanal "Satyricon". Além disso, eles enfatizam técnicas artísticas específicas para criar a imagem de Menshikov, consideram a posição do autor e traçam suas mudanças. Essas mudanças na atitude de Averchenko para com Menshikov no final dos anos 1910 estão associadas à evolução da visão de mundo do ex-editor do "Satyricon" devido a eventos históricos e mudanças revolucionárias na sociedade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: A.T. Averchenko. M.O. Menshikov. Conservadorismo. "Satyricon". História curta. Tipo linguocultural.

RESUMEN: El artículo examina la encarnación artística y la evolución de la imagen artística del periodista ruso M.O. Menshikov en A.T. Los cuentos de Averchenko. Los autores seleccionan y analizan A.T. Los textos de Averchenko, incluida la imagen de su contemporáneo, el periodista y escritor ruso M.O. Menshikov. Los autores revelan la actitud de los publicistas de finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX hacia la personalidad y el trabajo profesional de Menshikov, además de insistir en las opiniones específicas de Averchenko. También comprenden una actitud general hacia Menshikov y su contribución a la revista semanal "Satyricon". Además, enfatizan técnicas artísticas específicas para crear la imagen de Menshikov, consideran la posición del autor y trazan sus cambios. Estos cambios en la actitud de Averchenko hacia Menshikov a fines de la década de 1910 están asociados con la evolución de la

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cosmovisión del ex editor de "Satyricon" debido a eventos históricos y cambios revolucionarios en la sociedad.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *A.T. Averchenko. MES. Menshikov. Conservatismo. "Satyricon". Cuento. Tipo linguocultural.*

ABSTRACT: *The article examines the artistic embodiment and evolution of the artistic image of the Russian journalist M.O. Menshikov in A.T. Averchenko's short stories. The authors select and analyze A.T. Averchenko's texts, including the image of his contemporary – the Russian journalist and writer M.O. Menshikov. The authors reveal the attitude of publicists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to the personality and professional work of Menshikov, as well as dwell on the specific views of Averchenko. They also comprehend a general attitude towards Menshikov and his contribution to the weekly "Satyricon" magazine. In addition, they emphasize specific artistic techniques for creating the image of Menshikov, consider the author's position, and trace its changes. These changes in Averchenko's attitude to Menshikov in the late 1910s are associated with the worldview evolution of the former editor of "Satyricon" due to historical events and revolutionary shifts in society.*

KEYWORDS: *A.T. Averchenko. M.O. Menshikov. Conservatism. "Satyricon". Short story. Linguocultural type.*

Introduction

The research topic **is relevant** due to the increased attention of modern scholars to the personality and heritage of M.O. Menshikov as one of the leading figures in the pre-revolutionary journalism of the Russian Empire. It also stipulates the need to analyze changes in the artistic perception of this figure by a renowned satirist of the early 20th century A.T. Averchenko and follow the representation of the personality of M.O. Menshikov in the writer's works.

By analyzing the literary works of Averchenko about Menshikov, we can determine the artistic techniques used to create the publicist's image, recreate the evolution of artistic perception, and comprehend the influence of a life-changing era on the position of Averchenko.

Thus, this article **aims at** tracing the evolution of the artistic perception of the Russian journalist M.O. Menshikov in A.T. Averchenko's short stories, focusing on the general perception of Menshikov by his contemporaries, as well as linguistic techniques and means of creating the publicist's image in literature.

To attain this objective, we need to solve the following **tasks**: firstly, to review the publications of contemporaries about Menshikov revealing his personality; secondly, to conduct a philological analysis of the humorous stories written by Averchenko, where the prototype was Menshikov; thirdly, to characterize the system of

linguistic means inherent in the individual style of the writer and creating the linguocultural type of the publicist; fourthly, to reveal the evolution of Menshikov by the writer.

Methods

To fulfill the above-mentioned objective and the designated tasks, we used historical-genetic, culturological, and philological approaches. With the help of the culturological approach, we analyzed how the linguocultural type in question was created in the humorous stories of A.T. Averchenko. Within the philological approach, we conducted a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic means used by the writer for creating artistic images in the genre of a humorous story. The historical-genetic approach allowed us to trace the qualitative changes in the understanding of M.O. Menshikov's personality.

While working on the article, we also applied the following methods:

- The biographical method to appeal to the memoirs of contemporaries about Menshikov, describing his personality, and to the notes of Menshikov which reflect the publicist's realities and his attitude towards them;
- The empirical method to observe the language material of Averchenko as the core of this research and reveal some features of the writer's style;
- The comparative analysis to create a holistic idea of Menshikov's work and his bright personality which was the subject of different assessments;
- The qualitative analysis to consider the humorous stories of Averchenko mentioning the image of Menshikov from the philological perspective;
- The linguistic analysis to study the creative style of Averchenko, including the comprehensive analysis of vocabulary, syntax, and other artistic and expressive means used in his works.

Averchenko as a master of language game

In 2021, we celebrate the 130th anniversary of the birth of A.T. Averchenko. As a rule, anniversaries condition a more detailed study of the writer's creative world. Today, we should consider his works written about a century ago, reflecting his worldview and artistic style. The secret of Averchenko's success is explained by the pragmatic basis for creating a linguocultural type represented in literary characters, as well as the structural and semantic implementation of his communicative behavior. The

basic semantic component of Averchenko's texts is a language game that determines the specifics and originality of their creative means, whose use is due to the creative attitudes of the author (KUCHERYAVYKH, 2019, p. 7-8).

Skillfully using a wide range of relational evaluation techniques, Averchenko created many satirical characters and linguocultural types. A distinctive feature of this 'portraitist' is his appeal to certain appearance traits or the inner world of his characters. As a result, the author created a gallery of stock portraits (based on one or two typical traits), assessment portraits (containing the author's assessment of the character's traits), and situational portraits (including a minimum set of character traits) (BESPALOV, 2001).

Averchenko always feels and conveys the connection between characters and their inner world, i.e. a persona is a direct projection of the external image of any character. An important role in the creation of literary images is played by psychological features of their appearance: eye expression, smile, gait, and manner of speaking. The description of one's external appearance is always correlated with the inner world of a character. A literary portrait describes not only one's appearance but also the content of an image, its properties, and the essence of a human soul. The psychological specifics of a literary portrait are revealed in the work of Averchenko. It manifests itself through depicting characters who were political, public, and creative figures and journalists, as well as displaying processes and phenomena of political and public life.

Such a literary portrait can be exemplified by the image of Ivanov from "The Story of Ivanov's Illness". The usual attributes of a physical illness ("bleary, sore eyes", "trembling lips", "haggard, thin", "pale, confused") are ironically projected onto the change in his political views or adoption of left-wing beliefs (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 38-41). Another interesting example is the transformation of the newspapermen's image in the story "Spermine": from "hungry, tattered", exhausted by need, thrashing around in "blind dying grief" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 69) into cheerful and well-fed in the process of an artificially heated public scandal (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 71). Based on the antithesis, this story reveals the mechanism of creating a sensation.

In "The Impossible", realistic and fictional planes of the image are intertwined by preserving similar characteristics of antipodes according to their role-playing prescriptions. At the beginning, a character "ominously leafed through" and "laughed" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 74-75) (about the teacher Maksim Ivanovich Tachkin)

when noticing the student's confusion and his "convulsively twisted mouth" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 75), then an "ominous moment" came for the "teachers who were sitting with pale frightened faces at student desks" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 75) (about the student Nikolai Sinyukhin who took the place of the teacher).

The writer often created "fictional, grotesque images" (LEVITSKII, 1999, p. 330) of political figures (mostly Duma deputies), journalists, and representatives of social movements. At the same time, he was attracted by major figures in the Russian socio-political sphere: "In the pre-revolutionary feuilletons, A.T. Averchenko's characters are often the Duma leaders, administrators, and, in general, persons known in the official circles of Saint Petersburg. These feuilletons depict prominent persons, for example: Purishkevich and Markov the Second ("Arms", "Hard Labor", "Dark Spot"), Deputy Khomyakov ("Sychevsky Poshekonets", "Enthusiastic Khomyakov"), Guchkov ("The Life of Wonderful People"), Suvorin ("Gaudy", "Deputation"), Menshikov ("The Great Scoundrel of the Russian Land", "M.O. Menshikov's First Spring Exit") (LEVITSKII, 1999, p. 330).

Among the images that had a real prototype and were recreated by Averchenko, especially significant and frequent was the image of the famous Russian journalist M.O. Menshikov. A feature of relational evaluation manifested in stories about the publicist is his direct name. The author did not try to hide or distort the character's name, which indicates a direct desire to express modality and personal attitude towards this character.

D.A. Levitskii wrote a monograph on the work of Averchenko and highlighted two satirical feuilletons dedicated to Menshikov: "The Great Scoundrel of the Russian Land" and "Menshikov's First Spring Exit". The second feuilleton can be found both on the pages of "Satyricon" (MEDUSA-GORGO, 1909) and in the author's collected works (AVERCHENKO, 2012b, p. 290-293). However, we failed to identify the source and the text of the first work ("The Great Scoundrel of the Russian Land") regardless of D.A. Levitskii's instruction: "Satyricon" magazine, No. 21, 1908. There is no such a story either in the indicated issue entirely devoted to L.N. Tolstoy or in the other issues. The 13th volume of the author's collected works also does not contain it. Perhaps this phrase was published in "Satyricon" magazine addressed to Menshikov, for example, as a caption to an illustration, an apt remark, and a catchphrase but its source was not determined. The researcher had not fully verified the sources used in his monograph. This is confirmed by the fact that D.A. Levitskii made an inaccuracy when specifying feuilletons dedicated to Suvorin: Issue 9 of 1909 had no feuilleton entitled "Deputation"

but there was a short note-announcement "Deputation" containing a list of deputies who attended Suvorin's anniversary. Nevertheless, this "juicy" nickname accidentally introduced by D.A. Levitskii "The Great Scoundrel of the Russian Land" was repeated in the works of A.S. Orlov (ORLOV, 2012a, p. 110) and S.M. Sankova (SANKOVA, 2017, p. 8).

Menshikov's perception by authors of "satyricon" based on the attitude of his contemporaries

Several works dwell on the personality of Menshikov. The most significant were written by D.V. Zhavoronkov (2018), G.V. Zhirkov (2019), N.I. Krizhanovsky (2012), O.V. Dorofeeva (2020), A.S. Melkova (2005), A.S. Orlov (2015), S.M. Sankova (2017), V.D. Trofimova (2013), etc. Considering a general attitude towards the publicist, we can note that such great writers as N.S. Leskov, L.N. Tolstoy, A.P. Chekhov, and even M. Gorky found the publicist gifted. At the beginning of his career, the journalistic community also praised him. For instance, there is a diary entry of the journalist himself of June 27, 1892: "My articles "On Literature and Writers" and others were praised by Ge (exaltion), Shcheglov (exaltion), Skabichevsky (exaltion), Sipovsky, Velichko, Potapenko, Leskov, Strakhov, Suvorin, Yakovleva, Posse, Rappoport, Abramych, Nakrokhin, Gaideburov, "Saratovsky Listok", "Yuzhanin", "Odessky Listok", and some others. (The other day "The Odessa Listok" or "Vestnik" cited my article and called me "a respected publicist". It is flattering when it happens for the first time)" (MELKOVA, 2005, p. 360).

In the 1890s, Menshikov worked for the "Nedelya" newspaper and was negatively perceived (in contrast to Tolstoy, Leskov, and Chekhov) by some second-tier writers and social-democratic or populist publicists: V.G. Korolenko, A.I. Bogdanovich, A.L. Volynsky, and M.A. Protopopov. Being a supporter of the right-wing movements, V.V. Rozanov criticized Menshikov. However, there were few such critics since work in the liberal-populist newspaper was not an annoying factor for left-wingers.

When Menshikov joined the staff of A.S. Suvorin's newspaper "Novoe Vremya" known as a conservative periodical, the attitude of the journalistic community towards him worsened. The publicist gradually drifted to the right-wing movement from 1901 to 1906. This led to the growth of harsh criticism against him in the 1900s. It sounded, first of all, from left-wingers, populists, socialists, cadets, and liberal journalists, including K.I. Chukovsky, N.K. Mikhailovsky, P.M. Pilsky, P.B. Struve, and many authors of

central and regional left-liberal publications. For them, Menshikov was a supporter of the Black Hundred, a xenophobe, a watchdog of the autocracy, etc. A.M. Rennikov, an employee of "Novoe Vremya", recalled, "... Menshikov was scolded for the fact that he first wrote in Gaideburov's left-wing magazine "Nedelya" and then became an employee of the conservative newspaper "Novoe Vremya". For that, he was called a traitor and "renegade" (RENNIKOV, 1954, p. 147). The reason for this abuse was the fact that this journalist was of "great abilities" (RENNIKOV, 1954, p. 147). Rennikov noted that the right-wing press valued him, while the left-wing fiercely "scolded": "They called him Judas in politics, Plyushkin in life. Both of them saw M.O. Menshikov more gifted than all the publicists and feuilletonists who shined at that time, i.e. A.S. Suvorin's "The Stranger", Sergey Atava, Burenin, Amfiteatrov, Sigma-Syromyatnikov, and Doroshevich" (RENNIKOV, 1954, p. 146). Contrary to Rennikov's assertion, the right-wing publicists sometimes criticized Menshikov. Thus, the "Russkoe znamya" newspaper issued a lot of harsh publications. Typical examples are an article written by V. Drozd-Bonyachevsky (1906) and N. Kolodeznikova (1911).

Like any other journalist of the pre-revolutionary era, Menshikov realized that his transition to "Novoe Vremya" was a stigma that "would not allow him to enter any prominent magazine or publishing house, except for Suvorin's one" (RENNIKOV, 1954, p. 150). Namely, "the success or failure of a Russian writer" depends on the left-wing camp (RENNIKOV, 1954, p. 150).

A special role in left-wing journalism was played by "Satyricon" (1908-1914). This literary and art magazine of satire and humor was published in Saint Petersburg. It was a thin weekly magazine that "did not shy away from political satire, sarcastically ridiculed reactionary churchmen and ministers, bloody "pacifiers", the black-hundredists, leaders of the right-wing political parties, conservative journalists, renegade thinkers" (Literary Encyclopedic... 1971, entries 680-681). A.T. Averchenko was its editor from 1908 to 1913. He was not only the author of satirical works that ridiculed philistine life but also tried to address his political opponents: defenders of the monarchy, Christianity and government, right-wing politicians and journalists. The depiction of any conservative representative in "Satyricon" was reduced to a variety of speech and visual techniques, the image of a liar, a scoundrel, a xenophobe, a renegade, a hypocrite, a bigot, etc. Since the left-wing journalists considered Menshikov "above all the publicists who shined at that time" (RENNIKOV, 1954, p. 146), he was often mentioned on the pages of the magazine. For example, Averchenko made this journalist

the protagonist of four stories published in "Satyricon". In other works, the publicist also appears in several episodes.

With the help of "Satyricon", such poets as Sasha Chorny (A.M. Glikberg) (the poem "On the Ordeals", "Satyricon", 1909, No. 38), V.M. Nekrasov (the poem "Tear", "Satyricon", 1909, No. 47), K.M. Antipov who wrote under the pseudonym "Krasnyi" (the poem "Recipe for a Strong Man (according to M.O. Menshikov)", "Satyricon", 1911, No. 38), an unknown author (the poem "The Birth of Denunciation", "Satyricon", 1911, No. 45) tried to humiliate and denigrate Menshikov as a journalist.

Comical pictures of the publicist regularly appeared in various issues of the magazine. For instance, Menshikov devouring a Jew was depicted by an unknown cartoonist on the 11th page in No. 47, 1909 (the so-called Jewish issue). In Issue 38 (1911), the artist A. Radakov drew a comic strip under the heading "Bright Personality", where Menshikov was presented as the main instigator of the murders of Jews, Finns, Poles, hostility towards foreigners, a scammer, and a hypocrite. Issue 38 (1911) opened with a caricature entitled "Three Heroes" by the illustrator Re-Mi (N.V. Remizov). It depicts "Ilya Suvorets" (A.S. Suvorin), "Dobrynya Burenich" (V.P. Burenin) and "Alyosha Menshikovich" (M.O. Menshikov). They stand in front of a little Finn they are going to "hit". In a special issue about the Tsarist Secret Police (No. 45, 1911), Radakov's parody showed Menshikov as a woman in labor and Suvorin as an obstetrician performing the delivery. As a result, a denunciation was born in the form of a fresh issue of "Novoe Vremya" in Suvorin's hands. In 1913, the first page of Issue 4 started with A. Junger's illustration of Menshikov pushing a Russian bear across a bridge over an abyss in the form of the newspaper "Novoe Vremya". The bear should go across the bridge to attack the German eagle. The caption made clear that Menshikov was convincing the Russian bear that the newspaper bridge was stable enough.

The neo-modern Menshikov adhering to the right-wing convictions was a major influencer. The satirical poems and caricatures published in "Satyricon" were intended to create a negative image of a misanthropist, liar, informer, or renegade Judas, who was too bad even for Hell.

The above-mentioned facts testify to severe ideological confrontation in the Russian journalism of that turbulent period, which echoes even in modern ideological confrontation and results in ambiguous assessments of the polemics in the early 20th century.

The personality of Menshikov in the artistic perception of Averchenko

Averchenko is inseparable from the history of the most popular Russian comic magazine "Satyricon". In the very first issue, the author (under the pseudonym Ave) ridiculed the way the kid's theft of an apple was presented in different central newspapers. Thus, "Rech", "Slovo", "Peterburgskaya Gazeta", "Russkoe Znamya", and "Veche" discussed the theft but "Novoe Vremya" paid this accident the greatest attention. Its text clearly expressed the voice of Menshikov: "Foreign dominance is evident even in trifles: a boy steals an apple in broad daylight but our Kadet Government does not bat an eyelid. We are told that a Finn cabman ran by during the theft... We get it! Until Finland is curbed, there will be no sense. That is why we need a fleet" (AVERCHENKO, 1908). Averchenko used marker words that conveyed a "Menshikov-related subtext": "foreign dominance", "our Kadet Government", "until Finland is curbed", "we need a fleet" (AVERCHENKO, 1908).

The third issue of the journal (1908) ridiculed Menshikov's fear of revolution but acknowledged his world popularity. Readers saw three humorous comic strips on the perception of Menshikov's prophecy about upcoming revolutionary events in different parts of the world: in a tribe of cannibals, an Arab country, and Turkey (Feleton Menshikova... 1908).

Later Averchenko dedicated four stories to Menshikov: "Christmas Story" (1908), "Honors" (1909), "Menagerie of Constantinople" (1909), and "M.O. Menshikov's First Spring Exit" (1909). In several late works, the publicist's image significantly complemented the plot and played a major but not central role. The main ones are as follows: "Gaudy" (1909), "Handicraft and Machine Industry" (1912), "Journalists" (1912), "Hard Labor" (1914), and "The City of Wonders" (1919).

Averchenko's stories, with Menshikov as the main character, embody the humorous component in a special way: the attitude of consciousness to an object that combines an outwardly comic perception with inner seriousness. The author's imagery is characterized by subjective predetermination; therefore, a criterion is not so much the documentary nature of what is depicted but rather the author's attitude to reality.

While describing the character, Averchenko selected linguistic means to make him "visible". The writer not only conveyed all the personality traits, so the reader got an opportunity to "see" the character in specific and everyday situations through typical characteristics.

The artistic description of a historical person cannot be objective, it contains a certain assessment of what is described (characters, facts, events, phenomena, etc.), therefore the reader receives information in a transformed form, i.e. transformed in accordance with the author's position and subjective assessment. The evaluative units used by the author aim at creating the corresponding mood (meliorative or pejorative) and invoking either a positive or negative response of the addressee. The emotions deliberately evoked in the addressee are crucial for analyzing the linguistic units chosen by the writer to characterize a particular character/historical personality.

Being the author of a short literary form, Averchenko resorted to the so-called precise portraiture. This implies identifying and focusing on one or several features of the character's appearance, speech, and the surrounding interior. In terms of content, the main thing is objects and their specifics, therefore the main semantic meaning is expressed by nouns and adjectives:

"...When he walked around the rooms in a worse-for-wear robe" ("Christmas Story") (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 81);

"...He scooped a handful of oil from the icon lamp and generously greased his sparse, puffy hair" ("Honors") (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 53);

"I shuffled to A. Stolypin's office" ("Honors") (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 55);

"Who are you?", an angry voice of the old man came from inside". ("Menagerie of Constantinople") (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 77);

"...The frightened, angry face of Menshikov looked at me" ("Menagerie of Constantinople") (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 78);

"Then he got up, straightened the lamp and, wiping his oily hands on his hair, asked in a raspy voice" ("Menagerie of Constantinople") (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 79);

"Here is my menagerie", he said, curling his toothless mouth into a semblance of a friendly smile and opening the last door with a key" ("Menagerie of Constantinople") (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 79).

Although the writer did not use any lexical units that have a clear denotative meaning of pejoration causing a derogatory or insulting attitude towards the object of the statement, we can feel his disapproval of Menshikov from the very first lines.

Although the chosen lexemes (worse-for-wear – an amplifying or affectionate form from "previously used"; sparse – "consisting of parts located far from each other, not thick; not dense" (Ozhegov); to puff up – "to rise upright"; to shuffle – to do

something "common to old people, like that of old people"; raspy – "making a creak"; toothless – "having no teeth or having few teeth") have no negative connotation, they accurately create the image of an old, weak person living his last days in small dirty rooms.

The author used apt physical, cognitive and psychological characteristics of Menshikov as an old man (although the fifty-year-old publicist did not look like an old man and did not act like one): "senile" (voice), "toothless" (mouth), "sparse" (hair). The description of his face as "frightened" and "evil" in the context of the above-mentioned features increases a negative impact on the reader who perceives the image of Menshikov.

The "angry" attribute (i.e. inclined to get angry, become infuriated and irritated) to the "voice" noun enhances the feeling of the old man's helplessness, evokes acute disgust and repulsion.

According to the artist's intention, they were intended to outline the most prominent personality traits of Menshikov. The author covered both external attributes and generalized traits of character: morality, ethics, and social behavior.

Averchenko described Menshikov as a haughty person. In "Honors", the writer ridiculed his desire to make everyone rejoice at his thousandth feuilleton and widely celebrate this event. At the end of the story, the satirist let his character utter the words that create a comic effect, in which wishful thinking is presented as real and insignificant events are altered and become significant in the character's mind: "I am tired of this day filled with noise, congratulations, honors... Starting from a doorman and ending with Stolypin, they all do the same... The audience too... Even passengers in trams discuss my article" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 56). However, such a characteristic does not comply with the information we read in Menshikov's diary of 1914: "I am growing old. There are two kinds of signs: 1) I fall sick more often; 2) I become more and more popular but do not enjoy it" (Cited by: POSPELOV, 2003, p. 12). Indeed, popularity is the goal of any publicist. In "Honors", Averchenko sneered at an assumed desire of Menshikov for universal respect and acclaim.

One more drawback of the image of Menshikov was his greed. As pointed out by some contemporaries (A.S. Suvorin and I.I. Kolyshko), the publicist was not devoid of certain prudence, bordering on stinginess. His daughter Olga Mikhailovna Menshikova explained this personality trait in the following manner: "Having experienced extreme poverty in childhood and adolescence, my dad had modest needs.

In Tsarskoye Selo, we had a large and comfortable apartment but I do not remember any attributes of luxury life. It was clean, cozy, and well-furnished but by no means posh. The apartment in Valdai was even more modest..." (MENSHIKOVA, 1999, p. 48). Menshikov's opponents tried to exaggerate his modesty and a thrifty attitude to money in their critical pieces and memoirs: "...he is tight-fisted" (KOLYSHKO, 2009, p. 221). According to I.I. Kolyshko, the publicist A.S. Suvorin wrote, "Menshikov was a penny pincher. If he could have made more money in a revolutionary or extremely reactionary camp, Menshikov would have been writing for them" (KOLYSHKO, 2009, p. 224). In "Christmas Story", Averchenko was even more ironic when describing the critic's abduction by imps: "At first, he was gloomy but once he realized that he was being transported **free of charge**, he cheered up... On the way, he found a splinter and a rusty screw nut... He picked up these objects and put them in his bosom" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 182).

The writer's vision of Menshikov's personality involuntarily determines his choice of evaluative means and allows him to explicate both funny and absurd components in the depicted phenomenon. The author tried to reveal the inferiority of his prototype and disrupt real-life characteristics so that they show the unacceptability of the depicted. This stipulates an appeal to such a means of expressiveness as an oxymoron that projects a passive-aggressive attitude towards Menshikov in life and on the pages of Averchenko's stories.

At the same time, pragmatic beliefs of the speaking character, i.e. the Menshikov created by the author, have a contradiction in the text of "Christmas Story": the strategies of face-saving (keeping one's face and considering the interlocutor's reputation) and the interlocutor's interests come into conflict with the objective to undermine interpersonal harmony (BYSTRYKH, 2020, p. 28): "Hello, kids", Menshikov used to say affectionately as he approached. "Are you working? Well done, I will put in a good word for you. Wait a moment... What is that piece of paper hidden in your mouth? Come on, let me take a look at it... Do not be stubborn, little imp! Give it to me, right now! Oh, here it is. So that is what you are doing... I will report about it, I surely will" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 183).

The lexemes with evaluative suffixes deliberately used in the "Christmas Story" contradict the character's motivation to undermine the hierarchy developed in Hell. Moreover, such a speech strategy turns out to be effective: "The old gay life of Hell was long gone" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 183).

Such combinations as "wrinkling his face in a smile" also become text markers of the violation of real-life proportions (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 79), including "muttering psalms under his breath and scolding the cook" AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 181), "according to the rules of Christian humility, I forgive you so that you burst for the sake of Christ!" (Averchenko, 2012a, vol. 1, p. 181), "quarreled the most friendly demons through various gossips" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 183), "once, having become impudent, he got to the point where he began to teach imps about piousness" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 183).

Such links presuppose the correlation between this phenomenon and some kind of rule, whose inconsistency makes it unacceptable, ridiculous, absurd, and causing indignation in its most extreme form.

Averchenko was a master of describing his fictional characters. To create the image of Menshikov with the help of this technique, he used several well-known facts from his journalist activity negatively interpreted by the revolutionary-liberal community. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was widely believed that the publicist was a scammer who restricted social freedom. For example, there were two articles "Among Decadents" and "The Titan and Pygmies" published in "Novoe Vremya" in the spring of 1903. They criticized new art and its supporters praising Satan. After their emergence, the Religious and Philosophic Assemblies organized by D.S. Merezhkovsky and Z.N. Gippius were closed at the request of the Attorney General of the Holy Synod, K.N. Pobedonostsev.

In the "Christmas Story", Menshikov's speech marks him as an informer. Carried away by imps to Hell, the publicist finds the chief demon and share with him his observations: "I really do not understand you! The audience is spoiled to the point that it is disgusting to look at! The equipment is in disarray, valuable items are scattered along the way... Young people do not respect their elders and spend their time merry making. I advise you to take measures before it is too late!" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 182). The writer described the consequences of denunciations: "The cheerful imp waving his tail in front of Menshikov was whipped. The keeper of screw nuts was removed from office for negligence, the stoker was reprimanded for a splinter, and the expansive imps who brought Menshikov were still in pre-trial detention" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 182-183).

The character told about the fate of those snatched in the "Menagerie of Constantinople": "...I sneaked on him and he was locked up"; "Thief and embezzler! In

one article, I revealed such information about him that he was kicked out from the service"; "He seemed terribly suspicious to me! Now he is in the Yakutsk region" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 77). A common thought "To report, or what?" immediately arises in the mind of the character in "M.O. Menshikov's First Spring Exit" when he "peeped out of the window and saw a bright, joyful spring day outside", then he "overheard the cheerful chirping of birds through a keyhole" (AVERCHENKO, 2012b, p. 290).

Many critics of that time emphasized public contempt towards the publicist, his loneliness and social deprivation. V.M. Shulyatkov was the most objective and sympathetic about Menshikov's loneliness: "Feeling completely alien to interests of the new developing society, he refused to enter into any kind of deal with the "new society" and the "new public", turned away from the "crowd" of his day, joined the "lonely" camp and cursed modern civilization in the form of moral and philosophical treatises" (SHULYATIKOV, 1901). According to V.M. Shulyatkov, the "new society" and "new public" Menshikov refused to join meant the intelligentsia propagandizing the ideas of state destruction with its revolutionary ideals.

P.N. Pilsky, who considered Menshikov an embittered and "tragic figure of that time", venomously noted that the publicist "as if unforgivably deceived by someone or by something" lived "among people, in despair and the thoughts of revenge, seeking salvation and not finding it, dwelling on the nature of evil, dreaming of vengeance, cursing the world and life, freedom and the future, and absolutely not forgetting someone's huge offense, terrible in his lines but pitiful in his damned life" (PILSKY, 1910, p. 277).

Averchenko actively used these and similar thoughts about the publicist in his stories. In "Honors", "M.O. Menshikov's First Spring Exit", "Menagerie of Constantinople", "Christmas Story", and "Gaudy", the author highlighted the publicist's loneliness in society and a public contempt towards him. In "Honors", no one is happy about the release of Menshikov's thousandth feuilleton. During his "first spring exit", he pretends that the "jerk" word was not said to him (AVERCHENKO, 2012b, p. 290), angrily prophesies to the mother the sad fate of her baby ("And when he grows up, he will turn into a debauched frat! <...> He will drink" (AVERCHENKO, 2012b, p. 292)), burns through the ball taken from children. In the "Menagerie of Constantinople", "a frightened, angry face" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 78) of Menshikov looking at the narrator from behind a chain-locked door becomes a portrait of a lonely and suspicious

publicist who learns about society and draws inspiration not from real life but communication with the dissolute "Lady from Society", the thieving "Repentant Worker", or the bloodthirsty "Informed Person from the Caucasus". In this story, the author's method of exaggerating the publicist's position reached its climax: Menshikov who had a negative attitude towards foreigners but never called for the Jewish pogroms and massacres regarded the "Informed Person from the Caucasus" as "the righteous man" and asked him the following leading question: "What to do with the Jews?" As a result, he received a quite expected response: "Slaughter!" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 80).

The technique of Menshikov's unproductive (ineffective) dialogue with other characters is also designed to emotionally influence the reader and show the complete alienation of people from the main character, their disinterest in communication with him. In "Honors", Menshikov is an involved party of the dialogue with the other characters, wishing to hear congratulations on his thousandth feuilleton from everyone: A.S. Suvorin's doorman Nikita, A.S. Suvorin, Rozanov, A. Stolypin, and a tram passenger. Only the first meeting gives the character what wanted, i.e. congratulations that sound forced: "Well, what else can I say? My congratulations" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 53). All the other characters do not want to hear and understand him. Responding to the news about the thousandth feuilleton, Alexey Suvorin says, "Yes, make yourself clear: do you want a higher rate per line on this occasion?" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 54). Rozanov does not react to Menshikov's words and does not even shake his hand. Stolypin shakes his hand only after a trick (offering him a bet). The tram passenger answers what he thinks about the publicist's feuilleton in such a way that Menshikov, getting off the tram, mutters to himself, "The same to you, old fool" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 56). In "M.O. Menshikov's First Spring Exit", Pavel Ivanovich, an old acquaintance of Menshikov, does not want to recognize him and communicate with him (AVERCHENKO, 2012b, p. 290-291).

Averchenko used science fiction to increase the emotional impact of the text and endow the main character with supernatural powers. In the "Christmas Story", imps are unable to cope with Menshikov, who "begins to teach them how to be prayerful even in Hell" (AVERCHENKO, 2012a, p. 183), and send him back to earth. In the "Menagerie of Constantinople", the publicist turns out to be "the owner of a menagerie" that consists of people. His supernatural abilities are outlined in the story entitled "M.O. Menshikov's First Spring Exit". The affectionate and kind gaze of the main character is so poisonous

to all living things that even a stupidly joyful sparrow cannot stand it and falls dead on a sandy path (AVERCHENKO, 2012b, p. 292).

At first, trying to effectively influence the mind of the reader and creating the image of Menshikov, Averchenko actively used subjective assessments, precise portraiture (based on attention to objects and their features), speech characteristics, and pejoration, which caused a derogatory and insulting attitude towards the object and promoting the tone of disapproval. Connecting his stories with specific facts of life, Averchenko sought to discover the inner inferiority of Menshikov's prototype, showed him as an informer, tragically lonely in the surrounding world, and expressed a public contempt towards his personality.

The evolution of Menshikov's image in Averchenko's stories

The speech strategy of Averchenko's stories featuring Menshikov aims at discrediting his personality and work, displaying funny and ugly phenomena associated with him. In the works written between 1908 and 1909 ("Christmas Story", "Honors", "Menagerie of Constantinople", and "M.O. Menshikov's First Spring Exit"), the publicist becomes the main character and personifies the basic phenomena of human life: lies, meanness, hypocrisy, pettiness, vanity, denunciation and betrayal. In the early 1910s, the publicist's image is used as a significant part of artistic reality, complementing the negative attitude towards right-wing journalism. In "Handicraft and Machine Industry" (1912), the main emphasis of the writer's criticism was transferred to the "Novoe Vremya" newspaper. Therefore, the darkly outlined figure of Menshikov complements the general atmosphere of the editorial staff of "Novoe Vremya". The latter is compared with a brothel in the first story. In "Journalists" (1912), an editor of this newspaper, journalist St-n (A.A. Stolypin) is depicted as a desperate liar, constantly accusing his colleague Menshikov of stealing some documents and things. Thus, Averchenko did not change his opinion.

By 1914, Averchenko had slightly changed his depiction of Menshikov and the center-right community in general. This year he wrote the "Hard Labor" story and addressed extremely harsh words to the publicist: "Judas Menshikov will soon propose to apprehend and even slaughter all the Jews! At least, he seems to hint at this in the last feuilleton..." (AVERCHENKO, 2012b, p. 324). At the same time, the satirist introduced self-irony into his work, describing a paradoxical situation when all democratic journalists gathered together and decided to get rid of the hated right-wing politicians

and Octobrists, i.e. the Menshikovs, Purishkevichs, Guchkovs, and Markovs. "We should throw these unworthy people, into the river and then "breathe freely" (AVERCHENKO, 2012b, p. 325). But after the deed is done, questions suddenly arise: "What are we going to write about?" (AVERCHENKO, 2012b, p. 325). Once the Purishkevichs and Markovs were drowned, they were caught and sent home. On the one hand, the writer emphasized the strong rejection of their enemies by the left-wing activists. On the other hand, he showed the need for right-wing politics. Without them, the left-wing community has nothing to write about and no one to criticize. In this context, the title of the story acquires a special meaning: "hard labor" is a figurative name for hard, unpleasant, and routine work that the left-wing journalists do, reflecting the activities of the right-wing community and criticizing them.

Following "The City of Wonders", the "Hard Labor" story occasionally mentioned Menshikov. In the collected works, Averchenko noted that it was first published on October 4, 1919 in the Sevastopol newspaper Yug (No. 56) (AVERCHENKO, 2014, p. 412). The post-revolutionary Sevastopol period of Averchenko's life is characterized by the feeling of a lost happy life, terrible poverty, and at the same time an understanding of the previous amazing wealth. The "Russian Fairy Tale" (1920) (published in the "Yug Rossii" newspaper on August 30, 1920, No. 127) describes a conversation between a father and his son. The fairy tale turns out to be not a story about Baba Yaga or the Little Red Riding Hood but the father's memories of how their family had a six-room apartment, held balls, and lived a comfortable life before the revolution (AVERCHENKO, 2014, p. 123-124). In "The City of Wonders", a "fairy tale" for the Russian emigrants is organized by the American tycoons. This wonderful city void of merchants and hidden behind a high fence has everything like the Russia of 1908: doormen, the police patrolling the streets, and boys selling newspapers ("Novoe Vremya", "Russkoe Slovo", "Rech", and "Birzhevye Vedomosti"). "Novoe Vremya" features Menshikov's anti-revolutionary article and Burenin's feuilleton. The theater gives a performance by Chaliapin. In the evening, one can dine at the "Medved" restaurant. The common emigrants Ivan Nikolaevich Troshkin and Filimon Petrovich Grymzin end up in this artificial city of wonders. However, all this bright facade reminding the characters about their past becomes the cause of despair and bitter tears when sobering up after short-lived admiration: "A vulgar and heavy routine burst into a beautiful life full of magnificent and brilliant dreams. The American gold coating

immediately faded and the kneeling actor made up as Chaliapin became a pitiful comedian" (AVERCHENKO, 2014, p. 22).

Menshikov is mentioned in the story only once in connection with an excerpt of his article in "Novoe Vremya": "We have been constantly saying that Finland is ready to betray Russia at the earliest moment. The Jewish left-wing press dreams of starting a revolution in Russia..." (AVERCHENKO, 2014, p. 20). In the corresponding historical situation (the work was written in 1919), this mention sounded almost like a prophecy: on December 31, 1917, Finland separated from Russia, and the revolution was "blown up" with the active assistance of the left-wing press.

In the story, the revolution turns from a terrible newspaper warning into a terrifying reality that determines both the fate of characters and their spiritual longing for the lost feeling of a happy life. At the same time, we might partially compare the main characters of the "Russian Fairy Tale" with the author of the story since the post-revolutionary life forced Averchenko (as well as his characters Ivan Nikolaevich Troshkin and Filimon Petrovich Grymzin) to flee and recall the disappeared Russian fairy tale in a foreign land.

Thus, Menshikov in the artistic world of the writer transformed from an absolute embodiment of human vices and Judas into an integral part of a happy and full-fledged philistine life in the Russian Empire, as well as a predictor of terrible revolutionary events.

This does not mean that Averchenko accepted and shared the conservative ideological position stated in Menshikov's pre-revolutionary articles. However, his post-revolutionary feuilletons and stories accusing the revolution and its leaders, denouncing the disastrous consequences of this social experiment, including the collections "Evil Spirit" (1920), "A Dozen Knives in the Back of the Revolution" (1921), and "Twelve Portraits of Famous People in Russia" (1923) unexpectedly complied with the anti-revolutionary articles of Menshikov written in the 1900s-1910s.

D.A. Levitskii who studied the biography and creative work of Averchenko wrote about a similar, but even more visible and unexpected rapprochement between representatives of opposite political camps: in the early 1920s, a positive review of Averchenko's play in the Sevastopol newspaper "Vechernee slovo" (LEVITSKII, 1999, p. 72). It was published by A.A. Burnakin, a critic, journalist, and poet who had been working in "Novoe Vremya" since 1910 and adhered to conservative-patriotic views.

D.A. Levitskii noted that both writers "found themselves in the same camp combating Bolshevism when facing the communist danger" (LEVITSKII, 1999, p. 73).

This scholar also marked a change in Averchenko's attitude to the tsar and his overthrow: the initial jubilation over the fact that the "boring bourgeois couple" who had been ruling Russia was overthrown (LEVITSKII, 1999, p. 229) and the joyful support of the provisional government (LEVITSKII, 1999, p. 230) were replaced with a sense of guilt for "rude antics against the emperor" in 1920 (LEVITSKII, 1999, p. 230), as well as the pain caused by "the collapse of hopes for the rule of law" (LEVITSKII, 1999, p. 231) due to the establishment of the Kerensky government. D.A. Levitskii shrewdly remarked, "...The events that followed the fall of the old regime soon turned into a severe disappointment for the liberal intelligentsia. The course of events revealed that its aspirations and political dreams were based not so much on an understanding of political regularities and knowledge of the Russian reality but rather on the belief that good intentions and words are sufficient in the world of social phenomena for the triumph of reason and justice over absurdness and arbitrariness" (LEVITSKII, 1999, p. 230). Thus, Averchenko gradually "debunked the fetish of revolution and unlimited freedom" (p. 241) and came to the idea expressed by Menshikov in his article "Above Freedom" in 1906: no freedom can be higher than civilization and the life of people, especially the freedom obtained through "revolutionary psychosis" and "madness of the nation" (MENSHIKOV, 1906, p. 1229).

Conclusion

The personality of Menshikov plays a significant role in the artistic works of Averchenko.

The writer was one of the leading satirists of the early 20th century and created many satirical characters in his stories. According to scholars, Averchenko always felt and conveyed the connection between the character's portrait and his personality.

Among the images that had a real prototype and were recreated by Averchenko, the image of the famous Russian journalist Menshikov was especially significant and popular.

Contemporaries evaluated the activities of Menshikov in different ways. L.N. Tolstoy, N.S. Leskov, A.P. Chekhov, and even M. Gorky saw him as a great talent. The left-wing society disapproved of Menshikov. The right-wing critics and publicists supported him but still questioned some of his activities.

Averchenko held a special place in left-wing journalism and was the leading author and editor of weekly "Satyricon" magazine (1908-1914). He influenced the mood of readers with his satire and ridiculed not only philistine life but also tried to address his political opponents: defenders of the monarchy, Christianity and government, right-wing politicians and journalists.

Many left-wing journalists considered Menshikov "above all the publicists who were brilliant at that time" (Rennikov) and often mentioned him on the pages of the magazine. Their satirical poets, writers, and cartoonists sought to destroy, humiliate and denigrate Menshikov.

The image of Menshikov in the artistic perception of Averchenko underwent evolution. At first, trying to effectively influence the mind of the reader and creating the image of Menshikov, Averchenko actively used subjective assessments, precise portraiture (based on attention to objects and their features), speech characteristics, and pejoration, which caused a derogatory and insulting attitude towards the object and promoting the tone of disapproval. Connecting his stories with specific facts of life, Averchenko sought to discover the inner inferiority of Menshikov's prototype, showed him as an informer, tragically lonely in the surrounding world, and expressed a public contempt towards his personality.

The speech strategy of Averchenko's stories featuring the Russian publicist Menshikov aims at discrediting his personality and work, displaying funny and ugly phenomena associated with him.

In "Hard Labor" (1914), the writer expressed his awareness of the dialectical connection between the right-wing and left-wing directions in society, as well as emphasized an understanding of the need for political opponents. The "City of Wonders", written in Sevastopol in 1919, occasionally mentioned Menshikov, which reflected the evolution of the author's position.

The post-revolutionary Sevastopol period of Averchenko's life is characterized by the feeling of a lost happy life, terrible poverty, and at the same time an understanding of the previous amazing wealth.

In the artistic world, Menshikov and his work are not the absolute embodiment of human vices (he is not Judas) but an integral part of a happy and full-fledged philistine life in the Russian Empire and a predictor of terrible revolutionary events. At that time Averchenko reassessed his values and changed his attitude to the tsar and his overthrow. The initial jubilation over the fact that the "boring bourgeois couple" who

had been ruling Russia was overthrown and the joyful support of the provisional government were replaced with a sense of guilt for "rude antics against the emperor" in 1920, according to D.A. Levitskii.

Thus, the fiction displaying the personality of Menshikov and not associated with the publicist introduced a certain "adjustment", "the debunking of the fetish of revolution and unlimited freedom". Averchenko gradually came to the idea expressed by Menshikov in his article "Above Freedom" in 1906: no freedom can be higher than civilization and the life of people, especially the freedom obtained through "revolutionary psychosis" and "madness of the nation".

Today, there is no doubt that Menshikov was not just a single page but a chapter full of conflicts and passions in Russian journalism, literature, and history. Moreover, this chapter requires a comprehensive study. In this regard, the focus should be not only on the publicist's articles but also on his personality and work.

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