

# Mythopoetical concepts in Pushkin's novel "The Captain's Daughter": Masha Mironova's destiny

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**Abstract**— The article considers with the mythopoetic and Christian motives that influenced the plot and the main female character of the novel "The Captain's Daughter" by A. S. Pushkin. The comparative analysis makes on the structure of general novel storyline with Russian folk fairy tale traditions. Going through fire, water and copper pipes Masha Mironova performs a heroic deed equal to the achievements of Peter Grinyev, the protagonist hero of the novel. Such equality between the heroes accords to the Christian view of the "new man" nature. The character of Masha Mironova seems to be closely connected with national Orthodox ideals. The object of attention in the article are folk songs, proverbs, sayings found in the novel "The Captain's Daughter", in particular, made by the writer as an epigraph to the individual chapters of the work. Their detailed consideration gives a better understanding of nature, content, plot, imaginative system of Pushkin's novel.

**Keywords**— A. S. Pushkin, novel "The Captain's Daughter", mythopoetics, Russian national culture, folklore traditions, Christian traditions.

## I. INTRODUCTION

"The Captain's Daughter" can be named as historical novel but it is written in a form of family historical notes. "Really, what is "The Captain's Daughter"? It is Peter Andreevich Grinyev's notes were written by him in an old age for edification of his own grandson Petrusha" [1, p. 90]. The given genre specification is not casual. In 1830 Pushkin wrote: "the main charm of novels of Walter Scott is that we get acquainted with past time ... in the domestic image" [2, XI, p. 142], also in "The Captain's Daughter" the reader gets acquainted with the page of Russian history exactly in the "domestic image". Being the son of his parents Grinyev as we can see became subsequently a father and a grandfather, have fastened thus parts of the past, the present and the future.

Most likely, at the beginning Pushkin was going to premise to the novel the introduction from "author": "I begin for you my notes, or it is better a sincere confession, with a full assurance that my recognitions will serve to your benefit" [2, VIII (II), p. 927]. "The sincere confession" is "The Captain's Daughter". "Instead of writing he searched in the literature the truth on ways of a confession and frank recognitions" [1, p. 90]. "You will see that enticed by ardency of my passions in many errors, being some times in the most inconvenient circumstances, I have come up at last and, thanks to God, have lived till an old age, having deserved and respect my near and kind familiar ... the same I predict to you, kind Petrusha, if you will keep in your heart two fine qualities, which I noticed: kindness and nobleness" [2, VIII (II), p. 927]. Kindness, nobleness and mercy define the moral maintenance of literature product, help the main heroes of the novel to keep their honest "I" in any circumstances.

However, "The Captain's Daughter" is not the biography of separately taken private persons, but is a full-scale narration, in which the "human destiny" is the reflection of "the national destiny", and that destiny is entered in a context of national history and culture. The most traditional part of culture is, as is known, the folklore. The novel opens to readers with an epigraph – a proverb.

The words born in an epigraph of the novel, "keep honour from the youth", certainly, first of all concern to an image of Peter Grinyev. But only whether just to him? The work is titled "The Captain's Daughter" that forces to consider closely and Masha Mironova's destiny. What role is allocated to the girl with "an angelic voice" during an epoch of historical cataclysms? Just only a role of a rescuer beloved and facilitating sufferings?

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS (MODEL)

Answers to these questions in the certain measure are given with the reference to the fairy tale tradition. It is

obviously possible to draw a parallel between initial subject parts of the novel and a magic fairy tale. Usually fantastic character leaves the house in searches of the share; he should deserve his wife stood three tests. “The idea is often stated: the hero of a fairy tale ... must himself create his own life and destiny, in accordance with the predestined from above. ... The heroes challenge the forces of evil and thus are tested on the heroic essence. Only true heroes withstand such tests, defeating fatal circumstances with their courage, fearlessness and resourcefulness” [3, p. 65].

There is a lot of folklore material for analogies. So, in a fairy tale “Sea tsar and Vasilisa the Wise” tsar has allowed Ivan-tsarevitch to marry his daughter only after that Ivan served him three services:

1) Has cleared away a heathland, has sowed it and has brought up rye for one night;

2) Has threshed three hundred stacks on three hundred shocks white and summer wheat;

3) Has made till a dawn the church from pure wax [4, p. 208-216].

And in a fairy tale “Ivan-tsarevitch and the grey wolf” to the hero was necessary to gain the Firebird, a gold mane horse and Yelena Prekrasnaja [4, p. 154-162].

For fairy tale heroines test is punishment for infringement of any interdiction (echoes of an ancient myth about Amur and Psiheya). Pushkin’s Masha not only breaks nothing but, on the contrary, appears as an ideal of chastity and fidelity. Her appearance is eloquent enough: “the girl of years of eighteen, full-faced, ruddy, with the light-brown hair smoothly combed for ears which burned at her” [2, VIII (I), p. 297]. For what her to put on trial and more to punish? It is possible to assume: that she is objectionable to parents of the groom. And if to take into account, that in fairy tales usually it happens on the contrary (is objectionable the groom) it is necessary to recognize, that Pushkin’s heroine incurs man’s functions, passes fire, water and copper pipes.

Fire – is because in folklore texts love associates with great feeling, drying up heart:

Не огонь горит, не смола кипит –  
Что кипит сердце молодецкое,  
Не по батюшке, не по матушке,  
Не по братце, не по родной сестре,  
Но по душечке красной девушке [5, p. 332].

Certainly, being fire, the love demands the big sincere pressure which Masha without effort maintains. However, she faces to a temptation to act how advises Grinyev: to resist to parental will and to get married without parental blessing: “...you love me; I am ready on everything. We will go, we will rush in legs to your parents; they are the simple people, not cruel en ... they will bless us; we will get married ... and there, in due course, I am confident, we will beg my father; the mother will be for us; he will forgive me ...” [2, VIII (I), p. 311]. “No, Peter Andreevich, - Masha answered, - I shall not get married for you without blessing your parents. Without their blessing you will not be happy. We will be subdued to will of god...” [2, VIII (I), p. 311].

Apparently, fire is burning in soul of Masha – is not all-consuming fire, but is clearing, sacrificial. The heroine knows that will not grow fond of anybody how she loves Grinyev, but she is ready to endow her happiness to not break sacred for people custom: to not allow wedding – self-rolled, having caused a pain both to the relatives, and relatives of the groom, and herself. Her refusal of willfulness is conformable with the national song born as an epigraph to the chapter:

Ах ты, девка, девка красная!  
Не ходи, девка молода замуж;  
Ты спроси, девка, отца, матери,  
Отца, матери, роду-племени...  
 (“Ах ты, Волга, Волга-матушка”) [2, VIII (I), p. 307].

Not having broken treasured feature, Pushkin’s heroine has proved cleanliness, unselfishness and selflessness of feeling. Her love is boundless, but is not destructive. So pass the first test by fire. It is symbolical that to Masha orthodox education helps to overcome folklore test. “In the semantic structure of “The Captain’s Daughter”, these, sometimes very dissimilar, traditions do not deny, but naturally complement each other” [6, p. 166]. We with confidence can approve that her love to Peter Grinyev meets to the feeling was described by Apostle Paul: “the Love long bears, is merciful, the love does not envy, the love is not praised to the skies, is not proud, is not pleased to a lie, and will be delighted to true; covers everything, trusts everything, hopes everything, suffers everything” [7, 1 Cor.: 13, 4-7].

The second test is a water – symbolizes inevitability and burdens of separation about what also it sing in national songs:

Друга милого путина далека,  
Разделила нас широкая река [8, p. 122].  
Не велят Маше за реченьку ходить,  
Не велят Маше молодчика любить... [8, p. 123].

Water is as a symbol of a trouble is beaten by Pushkin. So, Shvabrin holds Masha locked up, on bread and water, subjecting her to infinite humiliation, as a slave. But also on pain of death the captain’s daughter remains true to herself, preferring destruction to disgrace what would be a marriage with not lovely, moreover with the traitor. “I never shall be his wife! I have better dared to die, and I shall die if I will not relieve” [2, VIII (I), p. 355]. And here general P. considered wedding of Mashenka and Shvabrin is a reasonable exit from the created position: “It is not yet the trouble it is better to her now to be the wife of Shvabrin: now he can promote her and when him we shall shoot, then, the God will allow, will be found the grooms to her” [2, VIII (I), p. 343]. Masha has overcome and this temptation: the water barrier (separation), having separated in love physically, has not separated them spiritually. So the second test is gone.

At last, the third, the most difficult are – copper pipes as which we understand copper pipes of words (talking).

Rumour is a huge layer of fluid culture of human interaction. Explanatory dictionaries reflect this fluidity: “the Rumour goes, the talking roams”, “On a rumour there is no court”, “the Rumour in a window will get”, “the Sin is not a trouble, but the rumour is not good” [9, p. 81], etc. Omnipotence and destruction a rumour, its ability to break human destinies, basing on a collective (it is far from being always fair) opinion, – is a subject of bitter and ironical reflections of I.A. Krylov, A.S. Griboedov, N.V. Gogol and, certainly, Pushkin – since “Boris Godunov”.

И вот общественное мнение!

Пружина чести, наш кумир!

И вот на чем вертится мир! – seen in “Eugene Onegin”.

“The wordly rumour is a sea wave” – Pushkin has taken this proverb as an epigraph to the last chapter of “The Captain’s daughter” under the name “Court”. To defend “Yourself”, your beliefs, to operate contrary to senses, hearings, slanders, “public opinion” and etc. is not given to everyone.

It is given to Masha Mironova.

Having love Grinyev, our heroine remains true to him is disgraced, being exposed to risk to get in disgrace herself. At the same time we will not forget that to her is as a daughter of the hero injured for fidelity to tsar and fatherland, designated another fate. And even parents of Grinyev having heard that “she goes to search protection and help at strong people, is as the daughter of the person injured for the fidelity”, have misunderstood her as it would make the majority (according to logic of a rumour – everyone speaks): “Let’s go, the mother! We do not want to do a handicap to your happiness. Give the God to you in groom of the kind person, is not the public dishonor traitor” [2, VIII (I), p. 370].

Copper pipes of talking have forced the heroine to redden only from confusion, but have not upset mature plans of Mariya Ivanovna. So the third test is sustained and also with honor.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. A. Karpov wrote: “The apparent polygenetic nature of the text of “The Captain’s daughter” determines its polysemantic character” [6, p. 166]. Certainly, as a whole the image of the captain’s daughter is not reduced only to folklore sources. In Masha Mironova the Truth, the Kindness and the Beauty have found primordial trinity, resisting to their separation during New time. The True is not only knowledge, the Kindly is not only the abstract morals, the Beauty is not only an aesthetic category. “Divine beauty, under the statement of st. Grigoriy Nisskiy, it is shown not in any exterior and not in charm of an external image ... but it is seen in unspeakable pleasure in accordance with virtue” [10, p. 356]. One of displays Christian triune for the woman is, as is known, bashfulness which Masha Mironova is allocated quite.

Let’s pay attention to one moment: in the novel sound rather ambiguous song lines which, apparently, should have the direct attitude to the daughter of the captain.

Капитанская дочь,

Не ходи гулять в полночь [2, VIII (I), p. 303].

In the manuscript the text is expanded:

Заря утренняя взошла,

Ко мне Машенька пришла [2, VIII (I), p. 871].

However heroines of the song and the novel, both are the captain’s daughters carrying one evangelical name, are not reduced to each other. The song concerns to that Masha who Shvabrin would like to see her. Exactly he sings these words. The true captain’s daughter is the daughter of her father has saved up honor from the youth.

If to continue comparison Maria Ivanovna Mironova with female folklore images it is necessary to notice that as against the last Pushkin’s heroine not only with advantage leaves all tests but also makes a feat. And it is not a feat of the man (as test by fire, water and copper pipes) but a feat of Christian, is a prayful feat. In essence all her letter to Grinyev from captivity is a reflection of one pray to God. Moreover, Grinyev perceives her maiden room in the house of the commandant is as a restrained monastic cell. The bed was rummaged by robbers and broken wardrobe could guide the hero on the saddest ideas. However, glimmering before deserted icon-case a lamp spoke that the mistress is alive that her soul is similar to this lamp did not go out among general chaos and robbery.

It is possible to say, that Maria Ivanovna, due to her long-suffering, obedience and also activity, has united features of two sisters evangelical Lazar – Maria and Marfa, which are usually opposed. The image of Maria personifies readiness for an intense spiritual life, image of Marfa is an absorption in terrestrial cares. “In continuation of their way He has come to one settlement; here the woman was Marfa has accepted him in her house. She had a sister, her name was Maria, who sat at foots of the Christ and listened to words of Him. Marfa cared the big entertainment and coming has told: My God! Or you don’t need that my sister has left me one to serve? Tell her, that she has helped me. Jesus has told her in the answer: Marfa! Marfa! You care and fuss about much, and one only is necessary; Maria has selected good honour, which will not be taken away from her” [7, Luke: 10, 38-42].

However, this opposition, to which quite often resort in vain, is not absolute. We will not forget: in fact Marfa strives not for satisfaction of the needs, but for the sake of the Visitor, the Jesus Christ’s Sirs. The real life demands from the loving woman display of both qualities. And in this respect the captain’s daughter (the daughter is not only the captain Mironov, but also the captain’s wife Vasilisa Yegorovna) is also on top, that is a direct merit of herself and is a family way of a parental house.

It is possible to say that a theme of a house is as a harmony, a microcosm with the established order, following from “idea of a family”, also concerns to the basic in the novel. The semantic parallel obviously arises: the house of Grinyevs – the house of Mironovs. Family habits and a way of life of parents are simultaneously a code of destiny of children, a basis of their outlook which incorporated moral experience of previous generations.

And though destinies of young characters of the novel manage “strange” circumstances, lines of their behaviour do not comprise anything unexpected is a result of family education in spirit of honour, fidelity of orthodox tradition and Fatherland.

Speaking about generality of family moral principles in the house of Grinyevs and Mironovs, we could lift a rod above, from a household on a metaphysical level. Pushkin has extremely important statement about a priority “eternal trues, on which the happiness and greatness human are based”. As L.V. Jaravina approves, this statement is formal approaches with representations of Kant about autonomy of ethics and a categorical imperative. “However, as a matter of fact, “eternal trues” of Pushkin are much closer to Christian doctrines, i.e. the indisputable and immutable belief which are not giving because of their godfrankness to individual and historical updating. They more primarily those moral-ethical codes of behavior, that are generated by circumstances and environment” [11, p. 100]. Certainly, parental orders both for Peter Grinyev and for Masha Mironova are conclusive. But, inherently, it more likely the precepts – doctrines, having superhistorical and over individual character. L.V. Jaravina considers that exactly therefore of Pushkin’s heroes (neither Grinyev, Masha, nor Tatyana Larina or characters of the “Belkin’s cycle”) it is impossible to relate to the category of the truth seekers. “They do not need to search for true, which is already given in the form aprioristic and transtsendental dogmatic knowledge. And dogma here is not fetters of idea and will, but the beginning of a person, supporting the person on a way of temptation” [11, p. 101]. The husband and the wife, who became eventually characters of the novel, have adequately overcome life barrier, have managed to subordinate the personal “I” to the supreme wisdom. And in it they are indivisible: not only indivisible flesh but also indivisible spirit.

At the same time, towering up to the supreme wisdom, these Pushkin’s heroes reserve freedom of a choice and actions. In a Christian context humility to the destiny, restrained humility (khenozis) and personal activity are not antipodes. The same who follows the road unlimited willfulness naturally come to spiritual crash. “Burying the God in the consciousness, the person is compelled to bury divine in the soul”, – S.N. Bulgakov has noticed [12, p. 112].

Returning to conversation on folklore traditions in creation of an image of the main heroine it is impossible to ignore an epigraph to the chapter “Orphan”:

Как у нашей яблоньки  
Ни верхушки нет, ни отросточек;  
Как у нашей у княгинюшки  
Ни отца нету, ни матери.  
Снарядить-то ее некому,  
Благословить-то ее некому [2, VIII (I), p. 354].

It is considered that it is alteration wedding song was written down by Pushkin:

Много, много у сыра дуба,

Много ветвей и поветвей,  
Только нету у сыра дуба  
Золотья вершиночки;  
Много, много у княгини-души,  
Много роду, много племени,  
Только нету у княгини-души,  
Нету ее родной матушки:  
Благословить есть кому,  
Снарядить некому [13, p. 210].

It is important that the given song according to a wedding ceremony it is sung when the bride is an orphan and her marry the sponsor father and the sponsor mother. To be the sponsor father on Peter Grinyev and Maria Mironova’s wedding it is caused Pugachyev: “What, your nobleness? – has told being dared Pugachyev. – Have helped the bashful young girl! How do you think whether to send for the priest whether to force him to marry the niece? Perhaps, I shall be sponsor father” [2, VIII (I), p. 356].

The last phrase has one more semantic loading – it corresponds to the prophetic dream, Grinyev described in the chapter “Leader”. This episode deserves special attention. A.A. Karpov notes, that prophetic dream of Grinyev causes natural associations with prophetic dreams of folklore characters, and also specifies it “close connection with actual reflections for an epoch about boundary conditions of human mentality, about the nature of dream enlightenments – ideas, reflected, for example, in well-known “The Key to sacraments of a nature” (1794) (K. Ekkartsgauzen) or in poem Y.A. Baratynskiy “Last death” (1827)” [6, p. 166]. We think that it can be defined as *the thin dream*, similar to that, which description meets in the lives of the saints.

Here is how about the experience of *thin dream*, known already during antiquated times, it is told in Book of Jove: – The God speaks once and if that will not notice, another time: in dream, in night vision when dream finds on people, during a somnolence on a box. Then He opens an ear at the person and embodies the manual to allocate the person from any activities and to remove from him a pride, to allocate his soul from a precipice and his life from defeat by a sword” [7, Job: 33, 14-18]. The condition of such dream is known also to Russian fairy tale: it is *dream – oblomon*, where also borders are washed away between prophetic vision and reality.

Dream of Petrusha, as though we defined it, not only has slightly opened before the hero a door in unknown, but also has warned about an opportunity of a deceit: substitutions of the native father by the father-impostor. And this warning declared at a level of subconsciousness, helped the hero to defend his principles.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Summing up, it is necessary to note that the destiny of the heroine of Pushkin’s novel really becomes related with destinies of fairy tale characters. Masha Mironova according to a folklore canon stands all tests and comes to the happy

ending. But in the novel there is a main hero who also with honor overcomes tests dropped out on his share. Peter Grinyev and Masha Mironova on the importance are equal in rights and feats of them are equivalent. Really, three feats were accomplished by Masha past through “the fire, water and copper pipes” is not a female way.

It is necessary to draw also a conclusion that each of heroes does not foresee the destiny a lot but chooses. But in a basis of a choice is the preservation of own honour and honour of a family, a life under laws of morals that helps to deserve appropriate destiny and that glory, for which it will be rendered by kind and long memory. Thus bents of own soul are important also. So, Grinyev’s nobleness has woken high feelings in soul of Pugachyev, and Mashenka with her sincerity and ardency has caused trust of empress.

According to fairy tale tradition, the winner can be only one main hero-protagonist. And what about the heroine? We will state the point of view on this account. First, well-known that in days of wars and distemper the greatest spiritual burdens are carried by the woman. Her firmness, cleanliness, nobleness and internal beauty concern to the supreme values of terrestrial life. It is a basis of humanity, an embodiment of the “favour to the fallen”. Second (that it is much more important), equality of the hero and the heroine corresponds to a Christian sight at the nature of “the new person” [7, Eph.: 2, 15] where and between Jellin and Judas, and (especially) between the man and the woman differences are eliminated, because any person “is justified by belief” [7, Rom.: 3, 28].

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