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**SACRAL AND PROFANE TIME
IN SHOLOHOV'S NOVEL 'QUIET FLOWS THE DON'**

SUMMARY. In this article sacral time and profane time and their portrayal in M. Sholohov's novel 'Quiet Flows the Don' are examined, based on analysis of the dichotomies workdays — holidays, fast — myasoyed (when meat-eating is allowed). The article comes to the conclusion that the Church calendar has become the basis of the practical experience of Cossacks, using relative chronology.

KEY WORDS. Sacral time, profane time, temporal dichotomy, workdays, Orthodox holidays.

A new approach to studying the linguistics of the category of time has emerged with the attempts to understand time as the confluence of language and culture, anthropological and cognitive linguistics. The necessity to compare aspects of language with aspects of culture and world-outlook is stressed in the works of E.L. Berezovich, D.A. Katunin, M.M. Makovsky, L.N. Mikheyev, V.M. Mokiyyenko, S.Y. Nikitiny, L.N. Plakhotnyuk, Y.A. Suprun, N.I. Tolstoy, S.M. Tolstoy, P.P. Chervinsky, T.V. Tsiy'yan and others. There is no doubt that time conforms to the astronomical and physical laws of earth, however, every historical culture also has its own interpretation of time, which is linked to the peculiarities of life in that specific society. For example, the conceptual opposition 'sacral — profane' actually applies to the temporal organisation of life. Any religious conception of the world is formed through contrasting the sacral with the profane. These two spheres, through which the life of a religious person passes by, mutually exclude and mutually complement each other. According to V.I. Garadzhi, 'these two things — the sacral and the profane — cannot converge: contact with the profane causes the sacral to lose its particular qualities. The profane and the sacral should be separate, isolated from one another, but at the same time they are both essential for life: the first as an environment in which life unfolds, the second as something which creates life, as a force on which a person depends but yet which they can decide to take and use to their own interests' [1; 103]. In his research on the sacral and the profane R. Kayua writes that these two worlds can only be defined through one another, they mutually exclude and mutually complement each other. Sacrality is a characteristic of certain things (objects of worship), certain people (saints), certain places (churches), certain moments in time (Easter, Christmas etc.) [2]. It is for this reason that in culture ritual (ceremonial, sacral) and ordinary time (profane) are separated out. Sacral time is usually defined with the use of a calendar and takes the form of general festivals. It is connected with collective, ritual, higher

values, whilst profane time is associated with individual ambitions and the sphere of everyday life and work. The Orthodox calendar is effectively the sacral calendar as it defines the relationship between astronomical occurrences and sacred events. This is why the time in between holidays, as well as the holidays themselves, holds particular significance and gains symbolic meaning. It is in this respect that sacral and profane time in M. Sholokhov's novel 'Quiet Flows the Don', represented by the temporal oppositions *праздники — будни* (*holidays — workdays*), *пост — мясоед* (*fast — meat-eating*), is in the focus of interest.

It should be noted that all notions connected with the category 'workdays' cannot be separated and thus they can only be called weekdays. Lexemes connected with this category do not appear very frequently in the text: *будни* (*weekdays*) — 6, *будничный* (*everyday*) — 3, *будний* (*daily*) — 2, *буднишний* (*mundane*) — 1, *буднично* (*on work days*) — 1. On workdays the adults engage in active, everyday activities: work, carrying out vital business and duties (caring for the family, training children, curing the sick, helping the old, socializing with neighbours, cleaning etc.) Profane time is defined by accurate segments of time and space and the activities which take place within them, alternation between work and rest and moderation in life (food, clothing, communication etc.) The working plan for the day was decided the previous evening. The grown-ups — the heads of the family — the men and women — gave morning tasks (up to lunchtime) to the remaining members: men to men, women to women. Thus Lukinichna, the mistress of Melekhov's household distributed the duties among her daughters-in-law: *Поспи, поспи, моя чадунюшка! Чего вскочила? — ласково бубнила она, переставляя по кухне дородные ноги. — Иди, позорюй, без тебя управимся. Наталья, вставшая с зарей, чтоб помочь в стряпне, уходила в горницу досыпать* («*Sleep on, sleep on, little one! What are you out so early for?*») *she would protest kindly, bustling about the kitchen on her stout legs. «Go back to bed, we'll manage without you.» And Natalya who had got up at dawn to help in the kitchen would go back to the best room to complete her rest*) [3; T.1; 97].

The morning activity from waking up until lunch usually took place within the limits of the house and courtyard, depending on the season, and excluding the busy harvest time. During the autumn-winter period the women as a rule worked at home (and in the courtyard). The men, depending on the kind of local seasonal work and age (old men stayed at home) divided their work between the limits of the house and courtyard, and outside of it. Of course the division of duties didn't just emerge during the course of the day, however assessment of the actual situation and possible changes were decided along the way. As a rule, the grown-ups spent the time before and after dinner at home, carrying out less important household tasks, conversing with the family, summing up the day's work and preparing for the following day. It was during this time that they made visits as 'everyday' guests. After dinner the grown-up members of the family got ready to sleep: *В горенке сидел дед Гришака, читал затрепанное, закапанное воском, в кожаном переплете Евангелие. Мирон Григорьевич в кухне довязывал крыло к вентеру, слушал рассказ Михея о каком-то давнишнем убийстве. Мать Натальи, уложив детей спать, спала на печке, уставив в дверь черные подошвы ног* (*When she reached home she found Grishaka sitting in his little room reading an old, greasy leather-bound copy of the Gospels. Her father was*

in the kitchen mending a fishing-net and listening to a story Mikhei was telling him about a recent murder. Her mother had put the children to bed and was asleep over the ledge above stove, the blackened soles of her feet facing the door) [3; T.1; 153]. For men and women week-day leisure time activities differed according to sex and as a whole were of a reserved nature. The men, whenever and wherever they got together, discussed household and social matters, listened to the stories of the old men, soldiers and wandering craftsmen, told anecdotes, fairytales and bliny, read out loud, sang men's songs, drank and played cards. Here is Stepan's story about Aksin'ya:

- К Аникушке пойду, посижу трошки.

- И когда ты находишься? Искоренили карты: что ни ночь, то им игра.

До кочетов просиживают.

- Но, будя, слыхали.

- Опять в очко будешь играть?

- Отвяжись, Аксютка. Вон человек ждет, иди.

(«I'm going along to Anikushka's for a while.» «And when are you ever at home? You spend every night at cards. And all night, too.» «All right, I've heard that before.» «Are you going to play pontoon again?» «Oh, drop it, Aksinya. Look, there's someone coming to see you.») [3; T.1; 131].

For men playing card games, time passes by without them noticing (*посижу трошки*), for the women who are waiting at home time drags (*до кочетов просиживают*). The women themselves were never idle: they combined relaxation with some kind of work, they discussed family matters, listened to the stories of the devout, read religious texts, sang songs etc.: *Ожидая мужа, Пелагея горюнилась, скучала без людей, поэтому в пятницу созвала баб-соседок время разделить. Пришла Наталья с недовязанным крючковым чулком...* (*Pelageya fretted while waiting for her husband. She was bored with her own company, and so on the Friday she invited her women friends to come and spend the evening with her. Natalya came with an unfinished stocking she was knitting...*) [3; T.1; 152]. This time is characterized by working at maximum capacity and precise allocation of the roles of all of the adult members of the commune, organization of the higher structures of the traditional collective and concentration of all the year's efforts — ritual and non-ritual.

If workdays are viewed as the time when a person should be occupied with community duties, then a holiday is understood as a time for association with the divine and familiarization with sacred history. On a holiday people should achieve a particular psycho-physiological state of the fullness of life, a world-view and feeling of God and also a feeling of internal unity with one another. A holiday is a duty to God — a sacred (Godly) time, free from work. As V.N. Toporov observed, it is a state 'when time stops when there is no time' ('a break in profane activity') [4], indeed during workdays time is filled with events and important everyday concerns and passes quickly and unnoticeably (ср. *по будням серенькая работа неприметно сжирала время*). Thus, in subjective perception, there is only time when some kind of significant event is going on; when nothing significant happens there is no time. Thus sacral time contrasts with everyday life, i.e. times in life when there is an absence of important events. A holiday obliges people to dress smartly, to select pleasant, cheerful topics for conversation, to behave differently, to be cheerful, friendly

and hospitable, to prepare special dishes and food in abundance: *Сдержанную радость выказывали и работники, постоянно жившие у Коршуновых. Они ждали щедрого от хозяина угощения и надеялись на пару свободных во время гульбы дней (The farm-hands employed by Korshunov were also quite pleased. They expected a lavish treat from their master and several days off)* [3; T.1; 71]. *Ели, как всегда по праздникам, сытно и много (On holidays there was always plenty of nutritious food)* [3; T.1; 506].

People's behaviour on holidays is based on existing traditions in society, which is why it is impossible not to agree with G.V. Kalitkinoy, who in investigating profane and sacral cycles in the dialects of the Sredneye Priob'ye region, comes to the conclusion that the profane is dependent on human will while the sacral is independent. Thus the human being is the initiator of everyday activities, whereas on holidays traditions exist which prescribe that certain activities should take place (dancing, singing, going for walks and dressing smartly etc) [5].

The dominant member of the workday — holiday opposition is the holiday, which has a specific meaning. Holidays are represented in the novel by the holiday lexemes *праздник* (16), *праздничный* (6) and *празднично* (1), as well as specific names, the most important of which is *Пасха* (Lent) (15), which the Cossacks believed to possess the greatest sacral power. *Рождество Христово* (Christmas) (11) and *Успенье* (Uspenye) (1), from the Twelve Great Feasts appear in the novel, as well as the following festivals: *Покров Пресвятой Богородицы* (Intercession) (8) и *День святых апостолов Петра и Павла* (St. Peter and Paul's Day) (1), а также *Троица* (Trinity) (6), *Масленица* (Maslenitsa) (8), *Спас* (Spas) (5), *Михайлов день* (St. Michael's Day) (2), *Вербное воскресенье* (Palm Sunday) (2), *Святки* (Christmastide) (1).

In Cossack culture Maslenitsa holds particular importance. It possesses all the attributes of holiday time — revelry and overindulgence in everything. *К масляной блины с каймаком будем есть (We are going to eat pancakes on Maslenitsa)* [3; T.1; 501]. *Отступать — так отступать, а не по родне ездить, это тебе не Масленица! (To retreat is to retreat, it's not like visiting relatives, it's not Maslenitsa, you know!)* [3; T.1; 495]. Here the name of the holiday serves not as a title for a certain period in time, but as its characteristic, which actually has a negative connotation: a time of idleness and inactivity.

In the Orthodox Church calendar the whole year is planned according to the names of Orthodox Saints. Having taken root in Ancient Rus', and in particular among the Cossacks, the Church calendar was widely adopted in national life. Church festivals acted as reference points to which the Cossacks related all the most significant events in their lives including **agricultural work**: *С Троицы начался луговой покос (The haymaking began immediately after Trinity)* [3; T.1; 36]. *Выехал пахать за три дня до Покрова (Three days before Intercession Grigory and his wife drove out to the steppe to plough)* [3; T.1; 103]; **animal farming**: *Он до Покрова матку сосет* [3; T.2; 595]. *К Михайлову дню овцы окотили по двойне* [3; T.1; 342]; **natural occurrences**: *Перед Рождеством внезапно наступила оттепель (It suddenly started to thaw before Christmas)* [3; T.1; 351]. *На четвертой неделе поста сдала зима (The winter broke up during the fourth week of Lent)* [3; T.1; 140]. *На второй день Рождества взломало Дон (Two days after Christmas the ice*

on the Don was broken) [3; T.1; 352]. *Ростепель держалась до Михайлова дня* (*The thaw lasted until St. Michael's Day*) [3; T.1; 109]; **family events: birthdays** *На Рождество исполнилось ей 17 лет* (*She turned 17 at Christmas*) [3; T.1; 521], **weddings** *Отложить свадьбу до крайнего Спаса* (*to put off the wedding till Spas*) [3; T.1; 61]. *Сводить жениха с невестой порешили на первый Спас* (*It was decided to bring the bride and bridegroom together on the first of August*) [3; T.1; 68]. *На осенний мясоед назначили свадьбу* (*...the wedding was fixed for the autumn*) [3; T.1; 31] and even **historical events**: *До Пасхи о войне не было ни слуху ни духу, а в страстную неделю прискакал нарочный* (*There he was given a hundred rubles to buy a horse, and was instructed to report two days after Christmas at the village of Mankovo for the army draft*) [3; T.1; 556].

The second temporal dichotomy *пост — мясоед* (*fast — myasoyed*) contrasts time of purification with time of 'pollution'. The analysis of the vocabulary indicates that the given opposition is most often described by substantive lexemes *пост, мясоед* and more rarely by procedural lexemes *говеть, разговеться*. The phrases *страстная неделя, страстная суббота, страстной четверг* are also included in this group because they relate to the concept of Holy Week, the final week of lent. The most frequent lexeme — *мясоед* (6) — is the name given to the period during which meat-eating is forbidden according to the rules of the Orthodox Church. In M. Sholokhov's novel 'myasoyed' is mainly mentioned as a time when weddings take place, as is traditional in Russian Orthodox culture. In Russia marriages took place during a certain time of the year. The most popular times were autumn and winter 'myasoyed'. Autumn started with Uspenya (28th August/15th according to the old calendar) and continued up to the Advent (Filippova) fast (28th/15th November), lasting approximately 13 weeks. Peasants celebrated weddings from Pokrov onwards (14th/1st October), as long as all of the main work in the fields had been completed by this time. Winter 'myasoyed' began with Christmas (7th January/25th December) and lasted until Maslenitsa. Due to the fact that Maslenitsa changed in length depending on when Easter was celebrated, winter 'myasoyed' could last from five to eight weeks. This period was known as 'svadebnik' (the time for weddings) and began on the second or third day after Epiphany (19th/6th January) so long as no wedding ceremonies took place in the Church during the Great Feasts as this was against Church legislation: *В нынешний мясоед выдавать (distribute)* [3; T. 1; 54]. *На осенний мясоед назначили (fixed) свадьбу* [3; T. 1; 31].

'Myasoyed' contrasts with fast and Holy Week, which are characterised by voluntary self-restraint in terms of food, entertainment and communication with the village community. This opposition is also represented by the paronymous verbs *говеть* (to eat scantily, to fast, to abstain from eating) and *разговеться* (to eat forbidden food for the first time after the end of the fast): *Вы бы, батя, на страстной неделе говели* [3; T. 1; 140]. ... *разговевшись, выехали казаки из хутора* [3; T. 1; 557]. The indentifying element in all the above examples is the verb itself (*отложить, выехать, видеть, проснуться и т.д.*), while time is defined by verb-predicate constructions with prepositions. From these the following can be highlighted:

1. The time of a predicate-verb in relation to a certain moment in time:

«К» + dative case (a time period with a finite limit) *К (by) Пасхе Наталье не шили обновы* [3; T.1; 154]; «С» + instrumental case (a point in time representing a starting limit): *С (with) Троицы начался луговой покос* [3; T.1; 36]; «На» + prepositional case: *На (for) Масленую зарезал зверь трех овец* [3; T.1; 175]; «В» + accusative case: *Еще в (in) прошлый мясоед наезжали сваты издалека* [3; T.1; 64].

It is essential to note the grammatical synonymy of constructions with the time prepositions *на, в*, the basis of which lies in the fact that prepositions have a specific meaning which comes across quite clearly when they are combined with a noun in a particular case. Thus the preposition *на* denotes the time of the activity and *в* the point in time. The main criterion for claiming synonymy in this instance lies in the fact that it is possible to interchange the syntactical models.

2. The time of an action of a given predicate-verb, compared in time with another action or bordering with other time periods:

A preceding action

«До» + genitive case: *Отложить свадьбу до (till) крайнего Спаса* [3; T. 1; 61]; «Перед» + instrumental case: *Перед (before) Пасхой он в письме прямо поставил вопрос...* [3; T. 1; 176].

An action performed after a named period

«После» + genitive case: *Вскоре после (after) Рождества Пантелею П. на станичном сходе сообщил писарь* [3; T. 1; 352].

Due to the fact that some festivals last several days, ordinal numbers or adjectives with a similar meaning are used to specify time: *На первый день Покрова Пантелей Прокофьевич. проснулся раньше всех (In the Melekhov house Pantelei Prokofyevich was the first to awake)* [3; T. 1; 344]. *Сноха Астаховых божила, будто на второй день Троицы, перед светом, видела, как Прокофьева жена, простоволося и босая, доила на их базу корову (Astakhov's daughter-in-law swore that on the second day of Trinity, before dawn, she had seen Prokofy's wife, barefoot, her hair uncovered, milking the Astakhovs' cow)* [3; T. 1; 558].

Thus the Orthodox Calendar became the main basis of systemization of the traditional Cossack village community and the practical experience of the Cossacks, which is why it is possible to discuss sacral time in M. Sholokhov's 'Quiet Flows the Don'. Sacral temporality mainly develops in the structures of everyday life. It is connected with a fixed routine which is the embodiment of cyclic time. The Cossacks, as a rule used relative chronology which is demonstrated by the fact that the time frame of any kind of event is defined not by a specific date but in relation to a religious festival, fast or 'myasoyed'. Nevertheless, in combination with numerals they define time frames with sufficient accuracy. Analysis of the vocabulary with the temporal meaning of sacral time makes it possible mark out the lexical-semantic group of units of the yearly cycle (names of Orthodox festivals, religious fasts) and the lexical-semantic group of names of units of the weekly cycle (Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday). They are most often represented by substantive lexemes (the proper names of the festivals) and more rarely by procedural

and attributive lexemes. The prepositional case form of words (substantive names) with temporal semantics is the most efficient way of expressing time relations.

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