

ANDREJ PLATONOV'S "DEVIATING LANGUAGE": TOWARDS A TEXT-IMMANENT APPROACH

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“Только я одна буду жить и помнить
тебя в своей голове ...” – *Котлован*
("I alone shall live and remember you in
my head ..." – *The Foundation Pit*)

The main characteristics distinguishing the work of the Russian writer Andrej Platonovič Platonov (1899-1951) are an individualized worldview and a typical writing style and language.¹ Platonov's peculiar language has been the subject of many literary-critical studies as well as of research inspired by and oriented to linguistics. The author's language has been labeled in different ways, ranging from "unusual" and "strange"² to "highly incorrect" or "deviant." Platonov's "deviating use of language" implies that the author does not adhere to the strict (especially microsyntactic) norm of standard Russian.³ This does not mean, however, that Platonov simply could not write "normally," i.e. "normatively," a supposition that has long been discarded. Not only is this obvious from Platonov's letters and publicistic texts, which are entirely composed in normative Russian, but also from recollections of Platonov's friends and acquaintances that are published in ПЛАТОНОВ (1994: 6-136). These recollections indicate quite clearly that Platonov spoke perfectly normal Russian. Moreover, the evolution of Platonov's literary language clearly shows that the unusual use of language and strange narrative style which characterize his more mature work are the result of a long and conscious creative process (Hodel 2001: 14 ff). All of this indicates that Platonov's language is a consciously chosen mode of expression.⁴ Moreover, the conscious deviation

from the (grammatical) norm has long been considered to be not only an acceptable but also a very fruitful literary *procédé* (cf. J. Mukařovský's term "foregrounding"), although this would apply more to poetry than to prose. N. Chomsky (1964: 384) writes the following in this respect:

There are circumstances in which the use of grammatically deviant sentences is very much in place. Consider, e.g., such phrases as Dylan Thomas' "a grief ago" or Veblen's ironic "perform leisure." In such cases, and innumerable others, a striking effect is achieved precisely by means of a departure from a grammatical regularity.

In broad terms, we can say that Platonov constantly and consciously violates the (micro)syntactic rules of Russian in general and particularly the rules of syntax. He does this by expanding and, to a lesser extent, curtailing the actantial structure of words,⁵ as well as by disrespecting the so-called *collocation range*, the lexico-semantic or morpho-syntactic compatibility of words that is fixed in the linguistic norm.⁶ Platonov's (linguistic) deviation from the standard language takes on various forms. A striking example of this peculiarity can be found, for instance, in verbs and verbal constructions expressing mental processes like "thinking."⁷ These are quite often – although not always – combined with semantically redundant adjuncts, whose meanings are already, totally or partially, present in the semantics of the dominating word. These redundant adjuncts fulfill different actantial roles within the predicate, either the role of object (e.g., *думать свои мысли* 'to think one's thoughts' [Č, 201]⁸), of instrument (e.g., *сообразить своим умом* 'grasp with one's mind' [Č, 454])⁹ or of location (e.g., *думать в голову* 'to think into (my) head' [K, 37]).

The form of the aforementioned types of Platonovian word combinations is clearly reminiscent of combinations from the standard language. In the first place, *смысловые избыточности* (literally: 'redundancies on the level of meaning') are, as M. Ju. Micheev rightly notices, completely acceptable in Russian. Word combinations such as *испытывать чувство* 'to experience a feeling,' *рассматривать вид* 'to look at the view,' and *произнести речь* 'to deliver a speech' (literally, 'to pronounce a speech') are normative, even though the most

important content element is doubly present in each one of them: *feeling, view, speech* (Micheev 2000: 385). In the second place, one can think of one or more normative phrases for almost every "unusual" Platonovian turn of phrase, which is formally as well as semantically analogue. In this way, word combinations which carry a redundant object like *думать свои мысли* 'to think one's thoughts' are associated by Russian native speakers with normative connections, like *делать свои дела* 'to do one's thing, to mind one's own business,' *делать себе своё* 'to do one's own thing,' or *думать себе своё* 'to think one's own.' Combinations such as *думать / сообразить своим умом* 'to think with one's mind,' thus with a redundant instrument, remind the native speaker of 'correct' phrases in which the instrument of the action as such is also (doubly) present, as, for example, *думать своей головой* 'to think with one's head,' *делать своими руками* 'to do/make with one's own hands,' or even *плакать горькими слезами* 'to cry bitter tears.'¹⁰

Phrases and expressions of the third type, in which a redundant actant of place direction, or origin is concerned, such as in *думать в голову* 'to think into the head,' are, to a lesser extent, associated by native speakers with analogue normative constructions such as *ему пришло в голову* 'it occurred to him, it struck him' (literally, 'it entered/arrived in his head'), or *ему лезли в голову мысли* 'thoughts shot through his mind, flashed across his mind' (literally, 'thoughts crawled into his head'). We can nevertheless speak of clear reminiscences, albeit with a certain qualification: the normative constructions can only be called *analogue* on the level of semantics. As far as the form is concerned, they display remarkable differences: constructions like *держат в голове* 'to remember' (literally, 'to keep in one's head') or *прийти в голову* 'to occur to one, to strike one' (literally, 'to enter/arrive in one's head') can only belong to the lexico-semantic field of "intellectual actions" through combination with an additional localization pertaining to that lexico-semantic field, such as "head": *в голове* 'in the head' or *в голову* 'into the head.'

Compared to the total number of verbs in the lexico-semantic group of "thought processes" and even compared to the other types of constructions

with redundant adjuncts expressing “thought processes” (object and instrument), the cases with redundant spatial adjuncts are certainly not in the majority in Platonov’s oeuvre. However, they are most obtrusive because of their deviant, highly non-normative form. In other words, of the three types of constructions with redundant actants for verbs expressing thought processes, constructions containing redundant locative or spatial adjuncts yield the most intriguing and, at the same time, the most peculiar cases where literary form is concerned.

According to Ju. I. Levin:

[...] сама избыточность этих [необычных платоновских – B.D.] оборотов создает такой шокирующий эффект, что перед ним отступают (в восприятии) на третий план вопросы синтаксической правильности.” (Левин 1998: 393)

([...] the redundant character of these [unusual Platonovian – B.D.] phrases creates such a shocking effect that questions concerning their syntactical correctness recede into the background.)

In other words, the meanings of these deviating word combinations are far more important than their formal characteristics.

Whereas determining the meaning for constructions with redundant objects and instruments does not pose any mentionable problem, it is not at all clear what meaning we should assign to constructions with redundant locative or spatial adjuncts or how they should be interpreted. This has been the focus of attention in much research that has sought an acceptable solution to this problem. The present article focuses more deeply on this question, and, unlike previous research, it proposes to seek the meaning of the aforementioned constructions within the text itself instead of locating it extra-textually. In other words, this article examines the deviant constructions with redundant spatial adjuncts in relation to other linguistic elements in the text which possess analogue characteristics.

Analyzing the syntactical deviations in Platonov’s prose, one could presume that they hold no additional, deeper significance. The author carefully chose the

complicated and confusing word combinations only to let the reader *stumble* constantly over the unusual and strange turns of phrase and thus force a more attentive reading of the text. Indeed, Platonov's texts do not allow themselves to be read rapidly, the reader *stumbles* constantly over Platonov's strange style of writing (cf. also Гладков 1963: 227).¹¹ E. Tolstaja-Segal, for instance, even speaks of an 'anti-automatic narrative' (*анти-автоматическое повествование*):

Платоновское повествование не допускает автоматического прочтения: это лишь по видимости традиционная проза, построенная на деавтоматизации языковых структур при минимальном нарушении привычной графической и звуковой формы текста и тем самым требующая большого внимания и усилия. (Толстая-Сегал 1979: 232)

(The Platonovian narrative does not allow for an automatic reading: it only appears to be traditional prose, but is actually based on the de-automatization of language structures through minimal violation of the usual graphic and auditory form of the text so that the text demands much attention and effort.)

However, it does not seem very probable that such a *difficult reading* should have been the author's main goal. This would surely be in contrast to the complicated, deeper, *многомерный* 'pluriform' (Толстая-Сегал 1978: 170) quality of Platonov's oeuvre.¹²

Ju. I. Levin develops this theme of *stumbling* or *difficult reading* in a specific way. According to him, Platonov's specific language (*речь*) – which he calls "[...] затрудненн[ая], негладк[ая], неинтеллигентн[ая], нелитературн[ая] и даже не очень грамотн[ая]" ("[...] complicated, rough, uncultured, non-literary, and not even very literate") (Левин 1998: 393) makes it possible for simple words and concepts to acquire a certain "[...] весомость и фундаментальность, экзистенциальный и/или метафизический статус" ("[...] weightiness and profundity, an existential and/or metaphysical status") (idem: 394). In other words, Platonov, according to Levin, uses unusual word combinations in order to focus the reader's attention on a certain *idea*: *stumbling* along, the reader understands that "[...] не о мелочах говорится, а о важном, и потому не просто, а торжественно" ("[...] not incidental, but important

issues are being discussed, and it is exactly because of this that they are being treated not normally, but solemnly”) (idem: 393). That the Platonovian constructions have such a function is beyond any doubt, but it is also highly improbable that the meaning of Platonov’s phrases should restrict themselves to this.

Levin, however, does not restrict himself solely to the (metaphysical or existential) meaning of Platonov’s strange turns of phrase in general. The verbs with redundant localizations that belong to the lexico-semantic field of “thought processes” are treated by Levin neither apart nor in total isolation, but as a group, with identical characteristics for form and content. In addition to an existential meaning, the redundant localizations, according to Levin, also have as their goal “[...] чтобы выразить укорененность духовных процессов в теле, в физиологии” (“[...] to express that mental processes are rooted in the body, in physiology”) (idem: 395). Moreover, the superfluous elements make the action of the verb “concrete” and make the phrases “grounded” and “reliable” (idem: 393, 395). *Помнить в своей голове* ‘to remember in one’s head’ (К, 52), for example, makes Levin think of a construction such as *сохранить в сундуке* ‘to keep in a chest’ (idem: 395).

Another approach to the Platonovian redundant phrases can be found in the work of М. Ю. Мичеев. The idea of *stumbling* is also clearly present in his research. In Мичеев’s opinion the Platonovian deviations from the norm “[...] как бы неизменно заводят читателей в тупик” (“[...] more or less unalterably lead the readers into a dead-end”) (Мичеев 2003: 304). Platonov uses non-normative turns of phrase in order for the reader to perceive the incorrect expression and add an extra or additional meaning, all the while “correcting” what was written by Platonov. In order to “correct” the Platonovian word combination, the reader relies on the norms of the Russian language (idem: 304).¹³ This process, which Мичеев calls “читательское угадывание” or “guessing by the reader” (ibidem) results in one or, more often, in different alternative variants or *Предположения* (sic!) (“Suppositions”)¹⁴ (Мичеев 1998: 15). Of course, such pluriformity of possible *побочные смыслы* (‘side or secondary

meanings) (Михеев 2003: 306) complicates the understanding of the Platonovian text; however:

[...] ни один из [них – В.Д.] [...], как возможный “мотив” в толковании [...] платоновской фразы нельзя отвести как несущественный. Автор **зачем-то** намеренно останавливает наше внимание на них, оставляя в подвешенном состоянии относительно окончательного смысла перед выбором любой из возможных интерпретаций. (idem: 309)

([...] not a single one can be discarded as a possible “motive” for the explanation of the Platonovian phrase as secondary or unimportant. **For some reason or another**, the author deliberately brings it to our attention, but when we choose one of the possible interpretations, he leaves us hanging as to the definitive meaning.)

It is exactly in this *затруднение* (“complication”), in the “[...] ‘размывании’ смысла, с **приостановкой** стандартного, автоматического понимания” (“[...] the ‘fading’ of meaning with the temporary suspension of accepted, automatic understanding”) (idem: 306) and the necessity of guessing what the author meant exactly that the most important principle of Platonov’s poetics can be found (Михеев 2000: 388; 2003: 306).

According to Mischeev, the way a Platonovian word combination with a verb designating a “thought process” and a redundant localization such as *знать в уме* ‘to know in one's brain’ (Ї, 491) needs to be understood is as “[...] нечто среднее между *твердо знать*, с одной стороны, и *держат* (до времени) *в голове / в уме*, с другой стороны, или даже *бережно хранить в памяти*, с третьей” (“[...] something between, on the one hand, *to know firmly*, and, on the other hand, *to keep* (temporarily) *in one's mind* or even *to carefully store something in one's memory*”) (Михеев 2000: 385). On the one hand, such explanations do not essentially detract from the non-normative Platonovian phrases. *Corrections*, in which the phrases are simply designated as “wrong” and accordingly rewritten, are not the point here. The object, rather, is to show how certain unfamiliar turns of phrase “are,” “might possibly,” or “ought to be” interpreted, understood, or deciphered by the reader. On the other hand, this approach seems to reduce the “pluriform” meaning of the Platonovian turns of phrase to

the sum of a few normative phrases. Moreover, this kind of explanation also conveys the impression that Platonov merely wished to confuse the reader.

In the present article, we propose to go one step further. Instead of, on the one hand, dissecting the complex meaning of the Platonovian phrases in isolation and (entirely) out of the context of the text, or, on the other hand, seeking alternatives and explanations in standard Russian alone, we propose to treat the whole lexico-semantic field of “thought processes” as one, as Ju. I. Levin does with the verb constructions (cf. above) as well as to adopt a “text-immanent” approach to typical Platonovian word combinations. The latter does not mean to say that we will immediately fall back on the purport of Platonov’s texts. On the contrary, we will focus solely on the text at the surface level, that is, on the language of the text. Purely literary issues – ideas, motives, and themes – will not be considered. A similar approach was proposed by R. Hodel (1998: 150; 2001). When determining the meaning of certain typical Platonovian concepts, images, and turns of phrase, Hodel makes a distinction between *text-immanent* and *text-external* relations. In the first category Hodel groups all possible relations within one single text (contrasts between words, combinations of words, recurring sounds, etc.) while the second category comprises all relations which lie outside of a single text. The latter includes opus-immanent (between texts of the same author: prose, poetic, publicistic, etc.) and intertextual relations as well as the linguistic norm in the broadest sense of the word and even historical facts. In the present article, we understand the same under the term *text-immanent* as Hodel does under *opus-immanent*, and this because of the *единое сюжетное пространство* ‘single subject space’ of Platonov’s oeuvre. This means that Platonov’s oeuvre forms a single, coherent (con)text, in which the same subject, the same heroes, images, etc. keep recurring, albeit in a newer, evolved form, but which clearly refer to former archetypes (Костров 2000: 40).

M. A. Dmitrovskaja already pointed out that redundant localizations often occur in Platonov’s oeuvre. As such, the state of mind and the experiences of Platonov’s characters are always located within the body through the use of prepositions such as *в* ‘in’ and *внутри* ‘in(side)’ (*в теле* ‘in the body,’ *внутри тела*

‘inside the body’) or adjectives such as *внутренний* ‘internal.’ In any case, the localizations with prepositions are redundant and should be omitted in standard Russian; the adjectives are not, but in standard Russian they are almost only used in medical terminology (Дмитровская 1999: 120).¹⁵ On considering Platonov’s texts as a whole, one observes that the divergent constructions we mentioned earlier – redundant localizations with verbs expressing “thought processes” – are not isolated cases. On the contrary, we can even speak of an entire, structured system. Not only the verbs that express thought processes are assigned redundant and “obvious” locations, but also other parts of speech and even descriptions which express various aspects of the thought process or refer to organs that take part in this process follow suit, a fact which only confirms Dmitrovskaja’s findings. Nevertheless, these constructions are less obvious than the aforementioned verbal ones because they do not, as has been observed by Dmitrovskaja in reference to *внутренний* ‘internal,’ consist of striking violations of the linguistic norm. They are not “severe mistakes,” they almost do not complicate the reading or the understanding of the text, and they might not even be noticed immediately by a native speaker.

As was the case for the verbal constructions, there are not many examples to speak of. In addition, the processes of thought and the “organs/body parts” and “instruments” that (might) play a role in the thought process are not always accompanied by redundant indications of place. In the case of *голова* ‘head,’ for example, only a small part of the word combinations with this word actually refer to thought process as such. This is due to the fact that *голова* fulfills roles other than those of an “instrument of thought” or a “a place where thought processes are located” (for example, it can be just a part of the body).

The redundant localizations of “thought processes” that occur alongside elements other than verbs and verbal constructions of “thinking” in the form of locative (or spatial) actants can be of many kinds. A number of types can be discerned. “Direct” localizations – denominations of *locus* or those places where the process of thought is expected to take place – belong to the first type. They can be locations in the form of an adjective (*головная мысль* ‘a head thought’ [Č,

403]), constructions of the type (*быть*) *в чем-то/ком-то* (for example, *в тебе ум* ‘there is a mind in you’ [K, 76]), or adverbial adjuncts (*разум в голове* ‘the reason in the head’ [SM, 32]). The second type represents constructions in which not a person but an organ/body part or (a part of) the thought process itself becomes the object of thought. On the one hand, the organ/body part or the thought process can be combined with a verb of thought as in the following: *в нем думала голова* ‘in him the head was thinking’ (Č, 216), *думать может [...] ум в голове* ‘[...] the mind in the head is able to think’ (SM, 54). On the other hand, the organ/body part or the thought process can also play the part of the object in elaborate descriptions as in the following: *сторож ума мог ... впустить мысль, где-то бродящую наружи* ‘the guardian of the mind could let in ... a thought, that floated around somewhere outside’ (Č, 537); *входит что-то в ум и там останавливается* ‘something enters the mind and comes to a stop/stays there’ (K, 102); *все, что потоком мысли шло в уме* ‘anything that swirled around with the stream of thoughts in the mind’ (SM, 45); *в сознание попадает нечто похожее на саму мысль* ‘something that resembles thought occurs in the consciousness’ (SM, 69). Besides that, a third group can be distinguished: “pure” descriptions, which are slightly related to thought processes (or not at all). What they do give us are more detailed descriptions of where certain instruments or phenomena are located and their mutual arrangements. *Мозг сжатый, чтобы поместиться уму* ‘the brain is compressed so that there is room for the mind’ (Č, 314), *память и ум заросли в ее теле* ‘the memory and the mind became overgrown in her body’ (SM, 9) are examples belonging to this group.¹⁶

The fact that redundant indications of the space of thought processes occur in Platonov’s work in the most formally various constructions indicates that we cannot speak of isolated cases or coincidences. Instead, we should speak of a logically structured system in which “thought processes” and everything directly and even indirectly related to them is (solely) dependent on these locations. Moreover, the immediate consequence of this “need for location” is that normative “thinking verbs” and constructions with localizations such as *приходить в голову* ‘to strike one, lit. to enter / to arrive in one’s head’ and *держат в голове* ‘to remember’ (literally, ‘to keep in the head’ become an

essential part of the reigning umbrella system as well. Because of this, the spatial meaning of their constituent parts, which disappeared in due course, is re-actualized.

A detailed analysis of all the types of localization enables us to reconstruct a fragment of Platonov's worldview. In other words, from all those locations or spatial redundancies, we can deduce how thought processes and the peripheral activities associated with them are structured in Platonov's conceptualization of the world: where they take place, how they operate, where the instruments that drive "thinking" are situated, where thoughts arise and reside.

By way of illustration, we cite the novel *Čevengur*. Regrettably, given the limitations of space in this article, only a number of all the possible localizations of "thought processes" can be mentioned. In the following overview, we chose to cover the most striking items that are directly related to the process of thought. In the world of *Čevengur*, as created by Platonov, the *head* (*голова*), it seems, fulfills the key role in thought processes, and, it would appear, operates totally independently from the individual: for example, the head thinks *inside* a man's body (*в нем думала голова* 'in him the head was thinking' [Č, 216]).¹⁷ The *head* is not only an active instrument of thought control, it is also a storage room or a space in which "vestiges of the observed world" or "memories" are located (*в голове его [...] плавали обломки когда-то виденного мира* 'in his head [...] floated pieces of a world seen sometime before' [Č, 365]). In addition to this, the *head* may (or may not) house thoughts as well: *Копенкин наклонил голову, не имея в ней мысли* 'Kopenkin bowed his head, without having a thought in it' (Č, 287); *головная мысль* 'a head thought' (Č, 403).

Where those thoughts come from is an unanswered question. It is almost as if the thoughts are being "imported" into one's head from an unknown or undefined place (*думать в [...] мою голову* 'to think into my head' [Č, 373]; *ему лезли в голову посторонние мысли* 'strange / unknown thoughts rose inside his head' [Č, 304]). Although the origin of these thoughts is mostly unclear, their apparition inside someone's head seems a clearly audible process: thoughts and their apparition in the head are accompanied by noise. Consequently, the

person whose head houses those thoughts can hear them: [он] *с интересом прислушивался к шуму в голове* ‘captivated, he listened to the noise in his head’ (Č, 304), *Кирей стал слушать шум в своей голове* ‘Kirej started to listen to the noise in his head’ (Č, 420). From the moment the person perceives that noise in his head, he expects those thoughts to gush out, at any time: [*Кирей стал*] *ожидать оттуда* [– *из своей головы* – *B.D.*] *думы* – ‘[Kirej started] to expect thoughts from there [from inside his head]’ (Č, 420). Sometimes, however, no thoughts come out, but puss oozes out of his ears instead, and this because of the effort which “thinking” requires from the characters: *у меня от ума гной из ушей выходит, а дума никак* ‘with me, due to (from) my mind puss comes out of my ears, but no thoughts’ (*от* ‘from’ indicates in the first place a cause, but the spatial aspect is also activated, cf. also Hodel 2001: 397-398; [Č, 420]). Here one should notice that, in some cases, these thoughts need not, necessarily, reside in the head. Sometimes their location is not specified any further: they simply exist *somewhere within* that person’s body: *он все время имел внутри себя главную мысль* ‘inside himself he always carried the main thought’ (Č, 443).

Besides thoughts and recollections, it appears that the *mind* (*ум*) is also housed in the head (*ум в голове* [Č, 292]). Apparently, *knowledge* is stored in that mind: a person is capable of “knowing something in the mind” (*он знал в уме, что* [...] [Č, 491]). Moreover, the mind also harbors memories, a separate kind of *knowledge*: *В уме всегда остальцы лежат* ‘There are always scraps lying around in the mind’ (Č, 444), *все эти ясные воспоминания плавали в его уме стихийно* ‘all those clear memories whirled around wildly in his mind’ (Č, 365). In other words, the mind fulfills the function of a storage room for knowledge and memories. As a result, all kinds of stuff can be transferred to the mind for permanent storage (*Складай в ум* ‘Just store it away in the mind’ [Č, 444]). It also happens that some things that still ought to be stored in the mind’s storage room get lost (*так уже было однажды, но когда – нельзя было узнать в своем слабом уме* ‘there once had been something like it, but when that was could not be retrieved in his weak mind’ [Č, 434]).

Not only does the mind contain all kinds of knowledge, it is also home to a steady flux of *thoughts* (*мысли*). The thoughts that roam within the mind do not, however, originate in the mind itself, but enter it from somewhere outside. Thoughts, apparently, float around *somewhere outside* and have to *gain access*, as it were, to the mind (*старый сторож его ума [...] мог впустить [...] бродящую где-то наружи мысль* 'the old guardian of his mind could let in [...] a thought, that floated around somewhere outside' [Č, 537]). Sometimes, it seems, there are no thoughts about (*Наружи ее [- мысли - В.Д.] не было* 'Outside there was no thought' [Č, 537]), and at such times people are incapable of thought. Occasionally, something evolves in the mind itself, but this "product" is, by all accounts, indistinct, vague, or undefinable (*Но рождается самое смутное в уме* 'But the vaguest of things is born within the mind' [Č, 298]).

On the one hand, thoughts do not normally originate in the mind itself, but are "imported" into it. Nonetheless, on the other hand, one of the mind's functions is to house all manner of thought processes. For example, it is within the mind that Platonovian people think (*Чепурный ничего не думал в уме* 'Čepurnyj thought nothing in his mind' [Č, 433], *бормотал незнакомый человек, думая что-то в своем закрытом уме* 'an unknown man mumbled, thinking something in his closed mind' [Č, 342]) and take certain factors into consideration (*но с этим старые чевенгурцы не считались в своем уме* 'but this the old Čevengurians had not considered in their minds' [Č, 363]). It is within the mind that all manner of things catch our eye and that we endeavour to remember them (*Этот вопрос я пока замечу себе в уме* 'For the time being I will take note of that question in my mind' [Č, 444], *Надо завтра пройти тут с мокрой тряпкой, - отметил в уме Чепурный* 'Tomorrow I should wipe a damp cloth over here, - Čepurnyj noted in the mind' [Č, 403]). This function of the mind comes very close to another of its functions, namely the mind as storage room.

As is the case with *thoughts*, the place where knowledge is found is not always indicated: knowledge is not only located within the mind, but also in other *storage rooms*, although where exactly is not always clear. For the thinking subject,

though, these other places are still accessible; this is the main thing: knowledge can still be “recalled” from somewhere (*Копенкин [...] помнил откуда-то это слово* ‘Kopenkin [...] remembered that word from somewhere’ [Č, 380]). The same thing goes for memories: they are located *somewhere* within the person: [...], *желая сохранить в своей спутнице достойную память о себе* ‘[...], longing to keep a worthy memory about himself in his travel companion’ (Č, 504). Yet another group of memories is nested, apparently, in one’s imagination and is recollected from there: *Дванов [...] вспомнил в своем воображении деревни, которые проехал* ‘Dvanov [...] recalled in his imagination the villages he had passed’ (Č, 323). Memories, evidently, also reside in the place where one would most expect them, namely in the memory: *человек [...] не оставит меня в вечной памяти своей* ‘that person [...] will not leave me in his eternal memory’ (Č, 196). In contrast to the mind, the exact location of the memory (where the memory is found) is not further specified.

Certain facts appear to enter the memory and are then converted into memories: *Алексей [...] стоял [...], чувствуя [...] как было давно, что ушло в [...] вечную память* ‘Aleksej [...] was standing [...], and felt [...] how long it had been, which then disappeared in [...]eternal memory’ (Č, 363). Not only memories, but also various kinds of knowledge – even topics like political science – are imported into that very same memory in order to be stored there: *какой-то рабфаковец вбифал в свою память политическую науку* ‘some rabfak-student¹⁸ stored political science in his memory’ (Č, 506).

From the analysis of the localizations and the functions of “participants” in the thought process, it is plain to see that a fixed number of constants are involved in the representation thereof. In the world of *Čevengur*, it appears that thought processes cannot go without a localization, however vague. To be located in a certain part of the human body, to have a *locus*, appears to be necessary for the processes of thought, as Ju. I. Levin noticed as well (cf. above). Due to these localizations, the process of thought as a whole, and especially the instances which are responsible for this process, acquire a high degree of independence from the thinking subject; it is not the *I* that thinks or remembers, but the

separate localizations within the *I*, the *mind* or *memory*, that do so. This form of autonomy also applies to the localized instances of thought in their mutual relations: head, mind, memory, and others operate independently from one another, exist alongside each other (cf. also Hodel 2001: 390-392). Hodel indicates that such personalization and autonomization does not only occur where instances of thought are concerned, but also where a person's different body parts (for example, hands) are concerned, which leads to a radical uprooting of the "I" ("[eine] radikale Entwurzelung des Ich") (ibidem). In addition, the distribution of the various locations of memories, thoughts, and knowledge appears to be highly inaccurate, even vague. All three categories seem to mix and merge with each other: they appear inside the head as well as inside the mind or the memory. As there is no clear system, one can assume, on the one hand, that where the thought processes precisely take place is of no importance as long as they have a localization or happen in a certain place. On the other hand, it is also quite possible that the line between different – even opposed – fields is blurred, specifically between *reason* (knowledge) and *feeling* (memories with a strong emotional connotation). The merging spheres of *reason* and *feeling* have often been brought to the attention of scholars: in Platonov's conception of the world, both spheres are inseparably connected, even to the extent that the different actions become mutually interchangeable (*чувствовать, ощущать* 'to feel' and *думать* 'to think') or even complementary (*задумчиво почувствовать* 'to feel sunk in thoughts' [Ā, 441]) (Вознесенская & Дмитриевская 1993: 141 ff.; Hodel 2001: 394).

We can draw a number of conclusions from the above analysis. The reader will indeed *stumble* over the redundant constructions in thought processes and will therefore read more slowly and more attentively. As a result of his *stumbling*, he will understand that the text is dealing with something important and will intuitively compare the Platonovian turns of phrase with normative Russian word combinations, on which he will base his attempt to construct an alternative meaning (that is, automatic correction). But Platonov's non-normative use of language does not restrict itself to just that. By themselves, the

findings of the analysis clearly show that these specific Platonovian constructions are neither isolated cases, nor a single system. On the contrary, we should speak, more accurately, of a broadly, maybe even universally applied principle, which operates within a greater whole, namely inside an umbrella system. The largest part of the thought processes in Platonov's oeuvre appears to display one and the same characteristic: an obvious need for localization. This common characteristic allows us to speak of one whole, of one superstructure. Moreover, the analysis of separate cases of redundant spatial indications with "thought processes" enables us to form a coherent image of the conceptual field of "thought processes" in Platonov's worldview and, more specifically, an image of what thought processes look like in Platonov's conceptualization of the world, how they are structured, how they function, where the organs/body parts that cover the process of thought are situated, what happens inside them, where thoughts, memories, and knowledge are stored, where they spring from, where they come from, and where they go to. In other words, by approaching the text as a whole and the separate cases within the context of a larger whole, the possible meaning of what strikes us at first as meaningless and isolated non-normative redundancies becomes clear. Moreover, such an approach also shows that not only "thought processes" need localizations in Platonov's worldview, but that this is also the case for occurrences from other, albeit related, fields, such as *speech* (*произнести во рту* 'to pronounce in one's mouth' [K, 42], *сказать из своего ума* 'to speak from one's mind' [K, 68]), *feelings* (*ощущая скуку внутри всего тела* 'feeling boredom inside one's entire body' [Č, 265], *в нем [...] чувствовало сердце* 'in him [...] the heart felt' [Č, 216]). Therefore, the fact that this principle, a *need for localization*, extends to other semantic fields would appear to further validate our choice to adopt a "text-immanent" approach to Platonov's works in general and to Platonov's "erroneous" language in particular.

Notes

1 The author thanks Th. Langerak, A.V. Yudin, and L.N. Nekrasova for their valuable advice and comments. The article is part of a broader research project of Platonov's oeuvre (the reconstruction of Platonov's worldview) that is supported by the Research Foundation – Flanders (*FWO-Vlaanderen*).

2 In a recent article, Angela Livingstone treats some "strange" aspects typical of Platonov's oeuvre, and this in comparison with a number of writers such as Dostoevskij, Kafka, and Rilke. Concerning Platonov's "strange" language, Livingstone (2003: 301) writes the following: "[...] Platonov's [language – BD] only seems [fluently normal], the smallest excavation revealing abnormalities all the way from curious to dire".

3 About this peculiarity, see, among others, Толстая-Сегал (1978), Seifrid (1992), Hodel (1998 & 2001), Михеев (1998: 13 ff & 2003), and Левин (1998).

4 See also the statements in Меерсон (1997: 127) about the question whether, on the one hand, "[...] странный до дикости диалект" ("[...] the strange, even absurd idiolect") (ibidem) of Platonov and other authors such as V. Chlebnikov comes forth out of negligence or out of choice, and, on the other, about the idea which the reader forms about the linguistic competence of the author due to the constant confrontations with consciously deformed language.

5 *Думать* 'to think,' for example, can only have a subject or agens and an object or patiens (either in the accusative case or with *о* in the prepositive case) as its actantial roles. Platonov, however, adds another actant of direction to this, *в голову* 'into the head.'

6 *Range* or *range of collocability* refers to the degree to which words can be combined with one another, in other words, to which degree they are *compatible* (McIntosh 1966: 186 ff). This compatibility can be limited for various reasons, more specifically because of morpho-syntactical, semantic, or lexical reasons. Morpho-syntactical collocation refers to the formal requirements to which a word B must correspond in order to be combined (syntactically) with a word A (what sort of speech, its syntactical status, and grammatical form). For example 'to mistake addresses': *ошибаться адресом* (noun, instrumental case) vs. *перепутать адрес* (noun, accusative case); 'to desire something, to desire / to want to do something': *желание чего-либо* (noun, genitive case) / *делать что-либо* (verb + obj., accusative case) vs. *охота делать что-либо* (verb + obj., accusative case) (Апресян 1995: 60-61). Lexical collocation defines which word a word B must be or to which class of words it must belong in order for it to be combined with a word A. For example: *ошибаться* in the meaning of 'to be mistaken in' can only stand in combination with a small group of substantives, more specifically, with certain substantives as *адрес* 'address', *дом* 'house', *дверь* 'door', *окно* 'window', *номер* 'room', *этаж* 'floor', *телефон* 'telephone', etc. *Перепутать* is, however, not limited as far as its possibilities of combinations are concerned. Not only can it be combined with the words above, but also with *зонтик* 'umbrella', *книгу* 'book', *дату* 'date', *ключ* 'key', *название* 'name / appellation', and many others (idem: 61). Semantic collocation refers to which semantic qualities or characteristics word B must possess in order to be combined with word A. The difference with lexical collocation lies in the fact that any word X which possesses these qualities, and not only a certain group of words Y, can be combined with word A.

Ухудшаться 'to worsen' and *улучшаться* 'to improve' are only possible with situations (*погода ухудшилась* 'the weather worsened'), processes (*поведение улучшилось* 'the behaviour has improved'), abilities (*у него зрение улучшилось* 'his vision has improved'), but not with actual things or persons. However, related expressions, such as *становиться хуже* 'to become worse, to deteriorate' and *становиться лучше* 'to become better, to improve' can be combined with actual things or persons: *ручка стала хуже* 'the pen has deteriorated', *Петр стал лучше* 'Piotr has become better' (idem: 61-62). It is often very difficult to discern between lexical or semantic collocation. Therefore, the term lexico-semantic collocation is used here. For more about the differences between lexical and semantic collocation and the difficulties in naming them, cf. idem: 62-67.

7 About the verbs of *intellectual activity* in Platonov's oeuvre, see Бабенко (1979 & 1980) and Вознесенская & Дмитровская (1993).

8 The following abbreviations appear in this article: (Č) – *Čevengur* (1929), (K) – *Kotlovan* (*The Foundation Pit*, 1930) and (SM) – *Sčastlivaja Moskva* (*Happy Moscow*, 1933-1936). The abbreviations are always followed by the relevant page number. The quotes are from Платонов (1988), Платонов (2000), and Платонов (1999).

9 Also note, by the way, the redundant character of *свой* – as if you were also able to think someone's else's thoughts (**чужие мысли*) or *into* someone's else's head (**в чужую голову*). For more about the use of *свой* in Platonov's works, see Бобрик (1995).

10 Note that in standard Russian there is often a redundant *свой* or an extra adjunct which is added to the obvious instrument, like in *плакать ГОРЬКИМИ слезами*. For more about this, see Михеев (2003: 302).

11 O. Meerson holds an opposite opinion. In her monograph *«Свободная вещь»: поэтика неостранения у Андрея Платонова* Meerson states that the reader does not “stumble” over Platonov's strange turns of phrase. On the contrary, the reader, supported by the context, sees them as ‘оговорки’ or ‘slips of the tongue’ by the author and corrects them automatically. This automatic correcting has an obscuring effect, and the reader does not notice the actual (and often opposite) meaning of the deviating phrase (Meerson 1997: 18 ff, 35). This poetical *procédé*, the unusual or even fantastic aspect of which the reader does not notice as such, Meerson calls *неостранение* – in analogy with V. B. Šklovskij's *остранение* or ‘alienation’ (eadem: 10). This ‘non-alienation’ occurs not only on the level of language, but also on the level of actions and events. By lifting fragments out of their context or rereading them attentively, the reader notices what is actually expressed and *неостранение* is abolished. According to Meerson, *неостранение* on the level of language does not apply to non-native speakers: because of the fact that, for them, Russian is a learned language, they are not able to rely on their linguistic feeling and automatically correct the “slips of the tongue” to the same extent as native speakers do (eadem: 10, 35 ff). It is beyond doubt that the strange, “incorrect” Platonovian phrases lead to automatic correction, that is, to the reader's translation into standard language (cf. Micheev's concept *Предположение*). Evidently, a native speaker will not only do this with greater ease, but also tends to do so sooner than a non-native speaker. It does seem improbable, however, for a native speaker not to notice the shifts in meaning which are caused by Platonov's deviating use of language. Platonov's more mature work, written between the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, is literally permeated with deviating language. Reading these works is complicated to the extent that the reader will either search for the underlying meaning or will soon tire of reading and give up. This explains why to this day Platonov is viewed by many as “difficult,” “unpleasant,” or even “unreadable.”

12 E. Tolstaja-Segal understands the following by *многомерный текст*: “[...] текст [...] с несколькими возможными прочтениями” (“[...] a text with various possible readings”) (Толстая-Сегал 1978: 170).

13 The process during which a reader or listener “corrects” deviating constructions seems to be a totally normal one. N. Chomsky, for instance, already wrote about this in the 1960s: “Given a grammatically deviant utterance, we attempt to impose an interpretation on it, exploiting whatever features of grammatical structure it preserves and whatever analogies we can construct with perfectly well-formed utterances. We do not, in this way, impose an interpretation on a perfectly grammatical utterance (it is precisely for this reason that a well-chosen deviant utterance may be richer and more effective)” (Chomsky 1964: 384-385).

14 The term “*Предположение*” appears for the first time in Михеев (1998). M. Ju. Micheev understands it in the following way: “[...] *Предположение* – это смысл, явно не представленный в тексте, не выраженный впрямую, буквально, на лексическом уровне. Одновременно, это смысл, имеющий в языке свое прямое, законное выражение, т.е.

потенциально вполне *выразимый* в словах [...]” (“[...] a Supposition is a meaning which is not present in the text and which is not expressed directly, literally, on the lexical level. At the same time, it is a meaning which has its own legitimate expression in a particular language, i.e. it is potentially entirely *expressible* in words [...]”)(idem: 15).

15 According to M. A. Dmitrovskaja, the occurrence of superfluous localizations is also related to the human feeling of inner emptiness which plays a great part in Platonov's conceptualization of the world (Дмитровская 1999: 120). For more about the localization of physical and psychological processes in Platonov's work and the construction of human space, see Дмитровская (1999).

16 The strange literalizations of “mental space” in general and of thought processes in particular which pervade Platonov's works are highly reminiscent of the way in which the mind and related processes of thought and knowledge acquisition were conceptualized in the empiricist philosophy and theory of knowledge in the seventeenth century (for example, J. Locke) as well as in the eighteenth century Enlightenment ideas of, among others, E. B. de Condillac, who was strongly influenced by empirism. Here the mind is depicted as a *tabula rasa*, on which are etched all kinds of impressions (experiences, senses) from the outside world (the so-called “ideas”), thus allowing man to acquire knowledge about the world that surrounds him. Although Platonov did not master any language other than Russian, the empiricist-orientated ideas were most probably accessible to him either directly through translation of the works in question or indirectly through their reception by Russian thinkers and writers. A definite, decisive answer to the question of actual influence would require separate research, which lies outside the limitations of this article. The same goes for the supposition that Platonov would parody the aforementioned representatives of “Enlightenment” epistemology. This is not impossible, seeing that Platonov's oeuvre can easily be placed under the header of “satire” or “parody,” not in the least because of the many (and sometimes alienating) literalizations of abstract ideas, fixed expressions, idioms, and slogans. Without wanting to make any definitive statements about the possible influence of empiricist epistemology on Platonov, the following needs to be said: Platonov's keen interest in science and technology, the permanent presence throughout his work of the opposition between man (reason, science, progress) and nature (emotion, natural forces, chance), the belief in progress by battling nature with human reason (cf. also Hodel 2001: 17, 97), and the often mechanical depiction of man (cf. idem: 275-276) rather seem to point in the opposite direction. All of this corresponds with the mechanistic view which arose from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Body and mind are considered as separate entities: the human body belongs to the world of nature, which man can influence by exercising his mind (that is, his reason), thus bringing about progress. This leads us to the conclusion that there can be no question of pure parody in this case.

Apart from the similarities with and possible influences from empiricist thought, eighteenth-century Russian literature appears to present similar literalizations of “mental space.” Whether these eighteenth century literalizations are related to the empiricist body of thought is another question altogether. The following fragment from Radiščev's *Путешествие из Петербурга в Москву* (*A Journey from Petersburg to Moscow, 1790*) speaks for itself: “Возмущенные соки мысленно стремились, мне спящу, к голове и, тревожа нежный состав моего мозга, возбуждали в нем воображение. Несчетные картины представлялись мне во сне, но исчезали, как легкие в воздухе пары. Наконец, как то бывает, некоторое мозговое волокно, тронутое сильно восходящими из внутренних сосудов тела парами, задрожало долее других на несколько времени, и вот что я грезил” (“During my sleep, the bodily fluids, excited by my thoughts, went to my head, where they touched the tender substance of my brain and woke my imagination. A myriad of images appeared to me in my sleep, but disappeared like thin smoke in the air. Finally,

as often happens, a cerebral fibre that had been touched by the fumes rising from my inner corporal vessels trembled for a while longer than others, and this is what I dreamt”) (Радичев 1994: 30). There is no doubt that Platonov knew Radišev's *Journey* – he would even have written a novel with the similar title *Путешествие из Ленинграда в Москву* (*A Journey from Leningrad to Moscow*), but the manuscript has been lost. There is also no doubt that he had a high regard for Radišev, who was the first to describe the miserable fate of the farmers (cf. also Markstein 1978: 130). Whether or not Radišev influenced Platonov is, however, a different question. In her underpraised article, in which she shows some striking correspondences in language between Platonov and a number of eighteenth century writers (Radišev, V. Trediakovskij, and Novikov), E. Markstein stresses that proving any case of direct influence is impossible. She therefore prefers to label possible correspondences as “literary convergences” rather than “direct influences.” (Markstein 1978: 129-133)

17 Note that the head thinks *in* the person, and not *on top* of the person, as one would expect. Hodel also indicates that *голова* in Russian, like in other languages, can be used in the transitive meaning of “mind” without any problem (Hodel 2001: 391).

18 *Рабфак* or *рабочий факультет* (‘worker's faculty’) was an educational institution during the first years after the October Revolution. Its aim was to prepare workers and peasants for higher education.

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