

NARRATORY STRATEGY IN THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN STORY

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11068078>

Abstract. *The article examines narrative strategies in the modern American short story based on the collection “If You Ask Where I Am” by Raymond Carver. Narrative strategies are understood, following well-known narratological theorists, as the positioning of the subject of the narrative, i.e., the bearer of the narrative function who carries out the intended communication of the implicit author with the addressee - the reader. The communicative events presented in the works of R. Carver allow the reader to become part of the events defined in the genre discourse.*

Keywords: *narrative strategy, narrative, narrator, subject of utterance, reader.*

Introduction. The problem of the author has become, in the opinion of many modern researchers, central in literary criticism. Since the era of romanticism, literature has emphasized the personal, individual nature of creativity, and the emergence of various forms of “behavior” and “presence” of the author in the work. This is connected, first of all, with the evolution of literary science, which strives to consider a literary work both as a special world, the result of the creative activity of the creator who created it, and as a kind of statement, dialogue, communication between the narrator and the reader. Depending on the object of study, literary scholars consider the image of the author, the voice of the author, and the voice of the characters. In the theoretical aspect, the terminology has not yet become orderly and generally accepted. Therefore, first of all, it is necessary to define the basic concepts and then see how in practice, i.e. in a specific analysis, illustrate these terms.

The author’s problem arose back in the 19th century, the Russian classic L.N. Tolstoy in his “Preface to the Works of Guy de Maupassant” writes: “People who are little sensitive to art often think that a work of art constitutes one whole because only one person acts in it. and the same faces, because everything is built on the same premise or the life of one person is described. It's not fair. This is only how it seems to a superficial observer: the cement that binds every work of art into one whole and therefore produces the illusion of a reflection of life is not the unity of persons and positions, but the unity of the original moral attitude of the author to the subject. Whatever the artist depicts, we look for and see only the soul of the artist himself” [7, pp. 18-19]. Two important provisions are highlighted here: first: the unity and integrity of the work directly with the image of the author, second: the communication role of the narrative - the reader.

It is necessary first of all to distinguish between the event that is narrated in the work and the event of the narration itself. This distinction, proposed for the first time in Russian literary criticism, by M.M. Bakhtin has now become generally accepted. There are third-person narration (Erform, or, what is the same, Er-Erzählung) and 1st-person narration (Icherzählung). The one who narrates in the 3rd person, does not name himself (is not personified), we will agree to denote by the term narrator. The person who tells the story in the first person is called the narrator. Erform (“erform”), or “objective” narration, includes three varieties - depending on how noticeable the “presence” of the author or characters is in them - the actual author’s narration, the non-author’s narration and the non-direct speech.

The history of “relationships” between various subjects of consciousness and speech in a work of art is directly related to the history of the development of literature as the art of words in general and the categories of author and narration in particular. The system of narrative situations in any text will always “store” the stages of its formation in the structure. “Historical poetics as such, apparently, will have to preserve the approach that comes from Aristotle himself to describe a literary work as a whole,” says V.I. Tyupa, and continues: “However, being historical poetics, it is obliged to see the historical -literary process in a “removed” or “collapsed” form, to see a work in its genetic multi-layers, where the “excavation” of one or another “layer” of artistic reality presupposes the reconstruction of the corresponding stage of literary and, more broadly, general cultural evolution” [8, p. 22]. Consideration of the multitude of narrative instances existing in a modern literary work is impossible without understanding the reasons for the emergence of this multitude. The stages of complication of the relationship between writer and author, author and narrator, narrator and reader are determined by the historical development of artistic consciousness.

Methods. The methods used in the article are correlated with the objectives of this study and include: structural, typological and comparative analyses.

Discussion.

1. Narrative strategies are a type of communicative strategy, which represents the “modal positioning” of the subject of the narrative, whose activity is entirely controlled by a hierarchically higher authority - the abstract (implicit) author, who, unlike the bearer of the narrative function, acts as a “designated all individual text characters indicating the sender” [8, p. 145]. V.I. Tyupa considers the narrative strategy not as a consciously used system of narrative techniques, but as an extremely abstract “plan” for the intended communication of the author with the reader/listener that is not always realized by the narrator [8, p. 87].

Narrative strategies act as models of narrative analysis. S. Zenkin notes that “a narrative text, in principle, can be modeled in two ways: either from the narrative as a whole to individual events, or from individual events to the narrative as a whole. In the first case, the starting point is the concept of language... this is rhetorical narratology. In the second case, events are considered initial. as the direct material of human experience... this is realistic narratology” [5, p. 377].

“The narrator is a special artistic image, just as invented by the writer as all other images. The author is a real living person, and the narrator is the image he created” [4, p. 120]. In literary theory, the narrator is sometimes equated with the image of the author in a work, presented as synonyms.

The uniqueness of narrative genres of literature lies in a special communicative structure: “author – depicted – reader” [10, p.63]. In many explanatory dictionaries, the definitions of “narrator/storyteller” are given as synonyms (Ushakov D.N., S.A. Kuznetsov, Efremova T.F.): narrator – the one who narrates, tells; narrator - storyteller, storyteller, narrator. V.V. Vinogradov noted: “The narrator is the speech creation of the author, and the image of the narrator is a form of the author’s literary artistry. The image of the author is seen in him as the image of an actor in the stage image he creates. The relationship between the image of the narrator and the image of the author is dynamic even within one story composition, this variable value” [2, p.85].

2. The image of the author will also involve the study of the form(s) of the author’s presence in the text and the form of the author’s consciousness, since to understand the work it is important to separate the position of the author from the position of the characters. It seems logical

to use the concept of “image of the author”, since it summarizes various aspects of the study of a literary work and involves a comprehensive analysis. The image of the author absorbs all the components of meaning that form the reader’s idea of the author’s picture of the world and his position, the idea in relation to the problems of the work, the pragmatic attitude, which is expressed in the writer’s idiosyncrasy.

The image of the author in a work of art can be identified at the surface and deep (semantic) level. The surface level involves those components of the text where the reader can understand the author’s position without involving additional background knowledge, where the author “directly” speaks to his reader. The deep level also involves explicitly expressed linguistic means. But they acquire a certain meaning only in the context of the work or in the context of a certain culture and require interpretation with the involvement of extralinguistic information.

At a superficial level, the image of the author can be expressed in the so-called “framework components,” which include the title, epigraph, beginning, ending, dedication, author’s notes, preface, and afterword. However, these components of the compositional structure are just indicators for searching for the characteristics of the author’s image, which do not exclude the use of components that contain subtext and deep meaning.

Analysis at a deep level consists of studying the themes, issues and ideas of a work of art. The theme or theme of a work is the object of the depicted artistic reality, the background for the formulation of the problem or problematic of the work. The problematic involves a range of issues that concern the author and are the motive for creating the work. The author also offers his solution to the questions posed as an artistic idea of the work, perhaps with an outline of an ideal representation, always with an expression of the author’s assessment. Scientific analysis of a work of art at this level involves recording subjective impressions and arbitrary associations [4, p.38].

At the level of specific components of the text, the world depicted in a work of art is analyzed. It is represented by artistic details that characterize the object of description, or symbolic details that characterize the essence, meaning of a phenomenon or object. The object of the description can be a portrait, a landscape, the material world, the inner world of a hero, or some event, a name.

The poetic category “image of the author” is considered a linguistic-stylistic category that combines all the elements of the meaning and style of a work of art into a textual whole. A work of art is, first of all, an expression of the personality of its creator, both in terms of a set of ideas and at the level of their linguistic and stylistic implementation. In addition to the subject of the work, the creator of the picture of the world, the “image of the author” also includes “the verbal and speech structure, which is the organizing center of the work of art” [1, pp. 144-145]. The image of the author finds its synthesized speech expression in the verbal fabric of the literary text, the initial stage of which is the author's speech.

“The author’s speech” includes a certain speech plan, designated as the “narrator’s plan” or “storyteller’s plan”, while the author of the work either identifies himself with the picture of the world he creates, or moves away from it as much as possible, creating an “epic distance” between himself and the person depicted. Depending on the way the author's ideas are presented, the narrative perspective (or narrative perspective) is determined. Including a term complex of subjective-speech, spatial-temporal and compositional-plot organization of the work, the narrative perspective gives a certain type of narration in which both the world of the work and the world of the author are co-present. “The world of a work includes not only material data, but also the

consciousness of a person - himself as a mental-physical unity... this is reality, both material and personal,” i.e. author of the work [9, p.194].

Both with “objectified authorial, epically distanced narration” and with “subjectivized, personified story,” several types of narrators are distinguished, finding their special embodiment both in terms of content and in terms of expression. So Dolinin K.A identifies types of narrators:

- an invisible narrator, not indicated in the text, who is as close as possible to the author and tells the story from the 3rd person

- “personalized narrator”, participant in what is happening, commentator “from within” the action

- combined narrator: the narrator and the main character (from the 1st person), in contrast to the personified one, this is an emotional and evaluative display of the picture of the world, the narration takes on the character of a confessional story [3, pp. 181-220].

In modern foreign literary criticism, a direction has emerged - narratology, which studies a work as a system of subjects of speech - storytellers (narrator, English - narrator, French - narrateur, German - Erzähler). And in this tradition, they distinguish (although there is no complete unity in concepts among foreign scientists) between a personal or impersonal narrator, although we will not find the concept of “narrator” here. And - regardless of the Russian tradition and without familiarity with the works of, for example, B. O. Corman and the scientists of his school - here it is customary to contrast the storyteller-narrator (narrator) and the “real” (“specific”, in our terminology - biographical) author. In order to “separate” the real author from the image of the author, the concepts of “implicit” and “abstract” author are used (See: Modern foreign literary criticism. Encyclopedic reference book. Editorial: I.P. Ilyin, E.A. Tsurganova. M., 1996.)

3. Stories by R. Carver [Raymond Carver, 1938-1988] - the masters of American short prose of the late twentieth century call people to think about common troubles and troubles, to search for a way out of the spiritual crisis and depression. The writer’s work has been awarded many prestigious awards, including the O. Henry Award, the Award for Contributions and Development of American Art and Literature, the Guggenheim, Levinson and Strauss Awards. Carver's stories call people to think about common troubles and troubles, to search for a way out of spiritual crisis and depression. This path does not seem at all clear and obvious to the writer. In any case, he is clearly not inclined to look for a way out in the area of social upheaval, although he willingly spoke about the need to solve social problems on the basis of more radical and thoughtful programs for improving economic and social relations than during the years when the Republicans led by Reagan were in power. wrote at the end of his life. In Carver’s stories created at this time, in addition, another means of treating the erosion of human relationships is outlined, which will introduce “especially bright glimmers of hope” into his work. This is noticeable in the stories “The Viewfinder”, “What We Talk About When We Talk about love”, “Everything stuck to him” (collection “What do we talk about when we talk about love”), “Fever” and especially “Cathedral” from the collection of the same name, where from the husk of everyday life, the stultifying stereotyping of living conditions, hopeless disunity , like a majestic temple, where people, gathered together, can strive with their souls to the highest ideals, the conviction grows in the imperishability of such values as love, mutual understanding, help in trouble and the joy of participation in the very miracle of existence, no matter how complex and sad it may sometimes be. The short story “Elephant” from the collection “If You Ask Where I Am” was chosen for analysis. It, like twenty-one of the thirty-seven short stories in the collection, is written in the first

person. The heroes-narrators are more often men, but there are also women and teenagers. Raymond Carver uses a technique familiar to prose writers - the dramatic method of inhabiting a character who is not identical with the author and depicting events through the prism of his perception. The “absent” author in the narrative creates the illusion of authenticity of everything that happens. In turn, the hero - an eyewitness and participant in the events - is called upon to postulate the “plausibility” of what is depicted. In this case, in any case, the reader finds himself closely, close to the hero, seeing him as if in close-up, without an intermediary in the person of the omniscient author. Such a narrative is more trusting for readers and, therefore, more convincing.

At the center of the story is the father of the family, whose name remains unknown to readers. He lives alone, but this does not exempt him from refusing to support everyone, including his unlucky brother, who constantly borrows money, as well as his elderly mother, his daughter with two children and her partner, a slacker son who dreams of leaving for Germany in search of a better life. By a court decision, every first day of the month he is forced to transfer a tidy sum to his wife’s account, which every time reminds him of the unpleasant moments of his painful divorce from his wife.

“So, my dependent mother is one, my daughter is two, and my ex-wife is three. Three people on my neck - not counting my brother. But there is also a son. And he also needs money... I'm just crazy. I lost sleep. Day and night, I thought about the same thing” [6, p.527-528].

Before the reader is a man tired of life, driven to despair by his loved ones. His monologues have a tragic sound.

“I knew I was making a mistake by lending my brother money. I already have enough parasites... I worked tirelessly, got up before dawn, went to work and worked until late in the evening. Arriving home, I simply fell into a chair and sat without moving: I was so tired - I didn’t even have the strength to untie the laces on my shoes. I sat and looked at one point, but I couldn’t get up and turn on the TV” [6, p. 520, 525] - the hero’s tragedy lies in the loss of his personal “I”. The transition from the pronoun “I” (I knew, I was making a mistake, I was plowing) to the impersonal “He” (fell, sat, tired, had no strength, sat and watched, etc.) is a kind of loss of individuality. He loses himself, becomes defenseless and vulnerable. Carver's characteristic style of storytelling comes into play here.

The main character of the story draws images of other participants in the events - standing apart from him, as it were, but at the same time united into a single center of “dependents, consumers and parasites.” Through the narrator's voice, the reader gets to know the hero's “relatives and friends,” each of whom defines a new storyline. The story contains the polyphony characteristic of Carver’s prose, the voices of a son, a former drug addict, allergic to cocaine, who dreams of leaving the country: “society here is thoroughly mercantile, he is simply suffocating: everyone only talks about money, they are not interested in anything else, he It all makes me sick.”

The daughter’s voice is no less pitiful and tragic: “I am not a victim. “I’m an ordinary young woman, I have two children in my arms and a damn slacker who for some reason I have to feed,” the father remembers these words to his daughter in moments of despair.

Here comes the voice of a brother who has been laid off and lives on unemployment benefits. All his attempts to find a job are unsuccessful, he is mired in debt and lies. The father’s story includes a voice pleading for help: “I’m on the edge! All hope is only for you” [6, p.521].

The voice of his mother sounds even more tragic, the responsibility for which fell solely on him alone: his brother withdrew, and his pension catastrophically does not cover her expenses.

In this kaleidoscope of complaints about life and cries for help, only the voice of the protagonist's wife is not heard: "And only my ex-wife did not deign me with an answer. Why does she need it? She knows that she will receive her money on the first of the month, and where it comes from - whether from Sydney or from Mars - does not concern her. And if the money doesn't come, all she has to do is pick up the phone and dial her lawyer's number" [6, p.531].

The narrator addresses the readers, and we become, as it were, participants in the events: we empathize, try to understand, give advice when he asks, as if we answer questions - the voice of the narrator becomes consonant with the fictitious reader - the "narrator" [6, p.98] "*This time he asked for a thousand. Imagine - a thousand! Where can I get a thousand dollars?* [6, p.532] or, when the son once again tried to beg for money, when all means of influencing his pity, conscience and any understanding of "inclusion" in the problems had already failed, threats of suicide came to the fore.

"No, it's better to shoot yourself in the forehead right away and not suffer anymore. Or hanging yourself is also an option; you won't have to borrow a gun, and you won't have to spend money on bullets. Can you imagine? That's what I wrote directly" [6, p.530].

The hopelessness and unbeatability of existence, mutually caused by close people, reaches the extreme point. The hero, driven to despair by the endless requests of his relatives to help them with money - and, in turn, driving his loved ones to hysteria with his attitude as a benefactor, finds in himself the last strength to give up on everything and, like a bird, feel the speed of flight in his neighbor's car. He does not worry about what awaits them around the corner - life or death.

"Come on, push! - I shouted to him, "Show your class, George!" - And he pushed it to the fullest. We rushed forward, the wind roared in our ears, and there was no force that could stop us. We rushed like crazy in his huge car, on which hung a large debt, and the devil himself was no brother to us" [6, p.540].

Understanding the narrative structure of the text allows you to take a fresh look at the meaningful ending of the story. On the one hand, this is despair, on the other, a kind of protest to the modern world.

Conclusions. The story presents a classic example of a "personalized" narrator, in which one of the characters in the work of fiction is designated as "the narrator - a participant in what is happening," a kind of commentator on the action "from the inside." The concentration of the narrative perspective on the subjective plane of the narrator gives the writer the opportunity to show and evaluate what is happening from the inside. This is an example of the so-called diegetic narrator: "the diegetic narrator narrates about himself as a figure in the story being narrated" [10, p.81].

Thus, the choice of narrative strategy in R. Carver's stories is determined primarily by the position of the narrator, who determines the addressee of the narrative - the reader. According to V. Schmid, "the intended, postulated addressee to whom the work is addressed, whose language codes, ideological norms and aesthetic ideas are taken into account in order for the work to be understood by the reader" [10, p. 219]. The American writer counts on the attention of such a reader, who is able to see deep existential meaning in everyday life.

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