

THE IMAGE OF THE NARRATOR IN S. MINAEV'S NOVEL "SOULLESS. THE TALE OF AN UNREAL MAN"

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Abstract. *The article is devoted to an overview of the categories "image of the author" and "image of the narrator". The purpose of the study is to analyze the category of "image of the narrator" as a literary concept and identify the means used to create it in postmodern novels using the example of the novel "Soulless. The Tale on an Unreal Man".*

Keywords: *image of the author, image of the narrator, literary criticism, narrator-protagonist, S. Minaev, novel "Soulless. The Tale of an Unreal Man".*

INTRODUCTION:

The imagery can be considered as an element of an artistic work. The creation of an imagery depends on what literary direction the author has chosen for himself. Each direction has its own image system, methods of its development and trends. A work of art is a holistic structure, all elements of which are represented by the of the author. The author is the center of the work, which reflects its values, motives and goals. The image of the author helps to penetrate deeper into the comprehension of the system of images of a literary work.

The image of the author in the criticism:

The researcher Mann defines the image of the author as "almost the central problem of literary criticism" [5, p.431]. This term is associated with Russian academician Vinogradov, who defined it as "an embodiment of the essence of the work, uniting the entire system of speech structures of the characters in their relationship with the narrator, storyteller or storytellers and through them being the ideological and stylistic focus" [3, p.78]. According to Vinogradov, the image of the author "is a form of complex and contradictory relationships between the author's intention, personality of the writer and the faces of the characters". The author's image is distinguished in three aspects: the stylistic features, structure and ideology of the work, where the essence of any image is determined by the reader himself.

In modern literary criticism, the author comes to the fore; he expresses his point of view, position and his own individuality, creating a dialogue between himself and the reader. In past decades, the author acted as an outside narrator, viewed in the context of the creator of a literary work, who reflects his inner experiences in the world he created. In the field of literary criticism, the problem of the connection of the image of the narrator with the narrator, as well as with the author of a literary work, is of particular interest.

The researcher Bakhtin worked on the analysis of the category "image of the author" and sees in the author, firstly, an existing person - a writer, and secondly, a reality assessment, which is expressed in the work. Bakhtin argues that "the author of a work is present only in the whole work, where content and form inextricably merge, and most of all we feel his presence in form. Literary criticism usually distinguishes the author from the content, which makes it easy to identify him with a person of a certain time, a certain biography and a certain worldview. At the same time, the image of the author almost merges with the image of a real person" [2, p.381]. Bakhtin

identifies the following hierarchy: biographical author - primary author - secondary author. A biographical author is a real person, endowed with his own biography, who is outside of the literary criticism. The primary author is the subject of aesthetic activity. The secondary author is revealed in the structure and meaning of a work of art; he unites the series formed by the author's word and idea.

Analysis of the novel:

Sergei Minaev's debut novel "Soulless. The Tale of an Unreal Man" was published in 2006 and present a work where the main character and the author have similar biographies and belong to the same society. Minaev is a writer, editor and began his career in the advertising business. He plays a prominent role in the media space due to his activities, which precisely leaves an imprint on him as an author and on his literary characters.

The main character of Minaev's novel is an unnamed top manager who narrates his glamorous life in Moscow. The twenty-eight-year-old head of the Moscow marketing department hangs out and seeks the meaning of life at parties, trying to resist the cult of money and consumption. He despises his colleagues and friends for their greed and narrow-mindedness. Minaev's hero reflects the secular Moscow of the 70s generation, the spirit of the era. Here an obvious comparison with famous literary heroes – Pushkin's Eugene Onegin and Lermontov's Pechorin rightly arises, which the author himself refers to more than once in the text. Minaev calls his work "a satirical story about the morals of that time".

Literary critic Ginzburg in her work "On the Literary Hero" points out that "a writer of the 20th century often strives to use autobiographical and any other life experience not for special documentary genres, not as a source and prototype of artistic creations, but as the direct material of the artistic structure itself. We are, of course, not talking about the raw material, but about the creative work of the writer; only this work has its own specifics" [4, p.9].

The writer's attitude to what is happening in the novel can be identified immediately - in the title of the book, where Minaev shows us a specific reading of the image of the main character. In the preface, Minaev, like the French writer Frederic Beigbeder, points out the coincidence of all characters, facts and phenomena with reality and emphasizes that "... all the abomination and horrors of the described society were invented by the author. For the reality is even more disgusting and terrible." This is how the author sets the tone and type of narrative.

The author's consciousness merges with the consciousness of the hero: "*We are sitting in the Vogue Cafe, which (as is known from the Moscow crowd) has bad cuisine, problems with parking, rude staff and eternal crowds at the bar*" [6, p.7]. In an interview after the release of the novel, Minaev admitted that he copied the book from himself in 1997.

The main character of the novel has a bright individual appearance and at the same time he can be designated as representative of a certain social group - a young dandy who has no goals and burns money in nightclubs. The hero of the work is part of social life and the world of glamour, but his behavior in society is contradictory. He is used to being in an environment of consumption and the cult of money, but his inquisitive mind and self-reflection criticize society. Through criticism and dissatisfaction with reality, the author of the work expresses his opinion and, with the help of the narrator, expresses his attitude towards the social life of Moscow and its participants: "*Half of this city simply doesn't exist. In my opinion, the space inside the Garden Ring in the evenings turns into some kind of computer toy, populated by empty people*" [6, p.9].

The author of the novel appears in author's notes, afterword and in the epigraph, where he connects incompatible things: Stalin's quote "Life has become better, comrades! Life has become more fun!" and the phrase in English "In memory of our sweet dreams". The reader, without additional context, understands the author's position and his irony.

Minaev's style of narration is free, colloquial, and it leaves an imprint not only on the main character, presenting him as indifferent, but also on the author himself. Here it is fair to note the concept of scientist Korman "conceptualized author", which researcher Barkovskaya summarizes in her article "... this is the idea of the author that is involuntarily formed in the mind of the reader based on the speech manner of the author-narrator. The author creates a work, but the author is also created by the work. Not only the individuality, character, and aesthetic tastes of the author determine the speech embodiment of the narrative, but also the forms of speech themselves "build" the image of the author" [1, p.16].

The individual characteristics of the narrator are expressed in appropriate speech forms: "*I lie there, smoke a cigarette and think about how people who were once close to you become such freaks? What changes them? What changes their faces, behavior and consciousness? How quickly can you go from first getting into a party to complete degradation?*" [6, p.130].

The reader gets to know the main character through a first-person narration; there are practically no other points of view. The narrator-protagonist is involved in the events and introduces the secondary characters, and it excludes any possibility of interpretation. The storytelling is combined with commentary from the author. The author appears in the descriptions for each chapter, which he accompanies with lines from songs and quotes from books: "*I also find that many of the characters are so caught up in social life that they are ready to attend any event, even launch of the refrigerator. Alexander Vasiliev*" [6, p. 117].

In the book, the author acts as the creator of the work, the main character is not identified with him and remains the object of the image. Literary critic Chepurina argues that the classification of the narrator is revealed by determining his distance or involvement in the story he is broadcasting. "Maintaining a distance or reducing it largely determines a person's sense of self and his perception of the world around him. Depending on whether the narrator is outside the framework of the narrative or is an integral part of it, this image can be considered external or internal" [7, p. 102].

The narrator in Minaev's novel narrates from the first person and is a direct participant in the plot. He describes the events of his life and shares his emotions and impressions: "*For a second after my tirade, everyone falls silent, then they laugh enviously. Thus, I become the media hero of the evening. And everyone smiles at me and wants to have a drink with me. But this goes on for about ten minutes, until the next comedian tells a funnier story*" [6, p.67].

CONCLUSION:

An imagery in a work of art is a transformation of reality, which becomes possible thanks to the rich author's imagination. It is not at all copied from life and does not resemble a real phenomenon or object; its main function is to reflect ideas and experiences that are important to the writer. With its help, the author's idea is embodied in a non-trivial form. The creation of an artistic image will always be relevant for literature since it determines the spirit of the age and a certain worldview.

An artistic image can be interpreted in different ways and have meanings that the author did not initially intend. This feature is associated with the perception of the world through the

prism of individual consciousness. The author's presence has various forms and is central to the work; it unites all its constituent parts. Identifying the image of the author and narrator contributes to effective work on a literary text. The “image of the narrator” in the novel “Soulless” is seen in narrative specificity, expressive quotes and stylistic features.

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