

УКРАЇНСЬКА МОВА ТА ЛІТЕРАТУРА

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FORMATION OF THE UKRAINIAN LITERARY CHARACTER AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURIES: FROM «HOMO SOVIETICUS» TO CONSTANT SEARCH

The literary process in any culture and state always undergoes changes influenced by the political and social situation, history and nowadays often the popularization of trends. Therefore, the variability of genres and themes in literature must be seen as obvious, as is the variability of prototype characters. Of course, we are not talking about a single distinctive type, but a transformation of a character that may be of interest to the reader, the author's contemporary.

A character in literary science has always been an open question about the methods of her theoretical analysis and her perception of her and her place in the literary work. Today, however, we are inclined to the so-called theory of fictional worlds, where we cannot identify a character with a truly existing man, because he does not live in the real world, but in the artist's imagined reality. But it is important to note that in the case of such a view of the character, the fictional world created by the writer often and inevitably blends with our real [9]. And therefore, the characters of the prose, by their appearance, nature, behaviour and reasoning, the inner and outer world, reflect the characteristics of man, a personality that we might consider to be one of us.

Regardless of the language in which the work is written, the author depicts a world whose characters belong to a certain society, even if it does not indicate the place and time of events, as they occur at certain times of calendar time in history. The author creates a non-existent world through reality, which includes readers who recognize themselves and

their surroundings on the pages of the novel [2, p. 293-269]. Moreover, in contemporary prose the author's narrator often blends in with the character, which brings the text even closer to reality. And for this reason, we can perceive the fictional world as a reflection of ours and the literary character as a reflection of ourselves.

The variability of Ukrainian literature is no exception and at the beginning of the 20th century we see a significant change not only in artistic styles, directions and themes, but also in the characters themselves. In the 1920s a completely new theme of the city came to Ukrainian literature, which required a genre transformation and prose tended to be an intellectual novel. Of course, the Ukrainian modernism and novel of these years were quite different from the world modern, and from the intellectual novel in other European countries, but the Ukrainian intellectual novel and modernism brought with it a completely new character. If novelists Hryhoriy Kosynka and Volodymyr Vynnychenko remain on the subject of the village and describe the life dramas and the mental quest for villagers, Valerjan Pidmohylnyj presents his first urban novel *The City* (1928), where the main villager is undergoing a turbulent development. This topic is something new and unknown in Ukrainian prosaic works. The fatal crisis of seeking oneself in a big city creates an uncertain person and at the same time precise in achieving its goals [9].

Similar characters for his prose are chosen by the Ukrainian novelist Hnat Mychajlyčenko, who worked literally between 1915 and 1922. In the novels *Kiss*, *City*, *Prostitute*, *Prison* and others depict personalities whom unknown will throw into the world of suffering and mental upheavals. They live in conditions of absolute alienation from reality, lonely, forced to solve existential problems every minute of their livelihood [9].

Describing the artistic and scientific environment was also quite new to Ukrainian literature, giving writers space in their works for intellectual figures and introducing readers to their intricate inner world. For example, the novel by Yuri Janovsky's *Guardian of the Ship* (1928) opens the creative process of filming a film, and the main character often thinks about life and death, the meaning of artist's life and the mystery of the human soul [9].

It was the breeze of Western European modernism with the challenge of «art for art» and the pursuit of «pure art». Writers sought to move their

protagonist away from the masses and politics and to focus his thoughts on the evolution of the inner world and seeking answers to their psychological and philosophical questions. These figures were at the beginning of the birth of the intellectual that we meet in Ukrainian literature at the end of the 20th century, as the modernist image was influential and attractive to the post-Soviet generation [3].

Similar paintings and the theme of the human soul and humanity were chosen not only by these authors; It is these characters, as called by the American literary researcher and Ukrainian Marko Andrejchuk – «marginal intellectuals», which became the prototype for the creation of a new person captured in a literary work of art. They were, as mentioned above, apolitical, civic, non-committed intelligent people who were most often city-centered and who, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, gave birth to a new character, a hero-artist constantly searching for his life purpose and place in the world [3].

It should be noted, however, that in the Ukrainian literature of this period, ie in the years of the birth of postmodernism, we can see an ambiguous view of artistic values, which has created diverse works of art and divided Ukrainian literature into so-called «schools» – Stanislav and Kyiv-Zhytomyr. Representatives of the first (Yuri Andruchovyeh, Taras Prochasko, Yuri Izdryk, Yuri Vynnychuk) made their way to the underground, while others wanted to preserve the traditions of Ukrainian literature (Yevhen Pashkovsky, Oles Ulyanenko, Vyacheslav Medvid) [4]. In many senses, postmodernism was the only right way after the fall of the totalitarian regime. Only she could become a decisive impetus for a significant change at the turn of the century, to be realized only in this direction, which broke the boundaries between fiction and reality, blending genres and texts, revealing previously prohibited ones, and thus became a provocative game. Despite the fact that the writers of both schools diverged in opinions, perhaps the postmodernist elements combined them, for the author's and his reader's desire consisted of themes, characters, and situations that could not be depicted at the time of Communist bans and censorship.

Soviet historian and dissident Mikhail Heller, who emigrated to France in 1963, describes well the person affected by the Soviet regime. He writes about emigrants who, although they have gone abroad but «have

not stopped breathing the 'Soviet' air. Of course, the fact that they have left their state speaks of defects in their communist upbringing, but their thinking has remained different, and when they interact with the non-Soviet environment, differences in world view and differences between the Soviet and non-Soviet mentality began to be seen» [8]. Perhaps it is similar and the writers and their characters, despite their freedom, were indeed infected with the «Soviet» air, the consequences of which will last for another decades. Ukrainian writer Volodymyr Dibrova puts it right in his 1990 series of short stories, *Mukumenty*: «моє «Я» не обмежується даним тілом службовця та мешканця вулиці Імені Роковин Вихідного Дня, а міцно сидить у моїх нащадках та предках, в той час, як вони, відповідно, сидять у мені. Відтоді я переродився і став новою людиною. Втім, стара людина зовсім не зникла, а лиш причаїлася, бо боротьба між новим та старим – це і є джерело мого розвитку. Кожного ранку у своїх тисячах перевтілень, які ланцюгом обіп'яли, ми прокидаємося» [5, p. 265].

Similarly to other literature as well as to the Ukrainian literature, postmodernism is rapidly exhausting and no longer serves as a reader or author. Alena Fialová, a Czech literary scientist, aptly speaks of this: «The boom of postmodern experimental prose has also been slowly exhausted: postmodernism has lost the hallmark of a surprising and provocative gesture and has become – alongside other poetics and means of expression – an organic part of individual literary styles» [6, p. 341].

Therefore, after the first decade of the 21st century, Ukrainian prose is seeking new directions and tendencies. Writers may also partially reconsider the previous period, just as their predecessors threw everything socialist behind their heads, giving up a sharp interest in their bodies and excessive sexuality in the lyrics. They refuse to be closed to a critical process where everyone can be a genius. They try to create a quality and laborious text and with it characters that are interesting for today's readers [3].

The past also plays an important role. As we see in the above-mentioned novel by Viktoriya Amelina [1], the consequences of the communist regime persist to this day and the Ukrainian writers after 2014 increasingly use this theme in their books. Therefore, it would be wrong to ignore here the return to the socialist past in the literature of

recent years in order to reconsider this period and perhaps a better understanding of the present.

The information world and a sufficiently high standard of living force individuals in today's society to change constantly. Therefore, in the modern world, we observe the delicate boundaries between values, religions, cultures, traditions, etc., leading to the blurring of national traits, which in turn creates the basis for future globalization. But in such a case, will the future identification of the individual not merely an understanding of oneself, the meaning of its existence and finding its individual place in this world and in this global society, by forming an individual view of this world with rejecting the aspect of belonging to any nationality? We do not know, it is possible that this is also the future success of humanity and culture, which will change the literature, and above all the future character of prose works and its author as a representative of world literature.

Shaping the character of Ukrainian prose works from the late 20th century to the present was not easy. Postmodernism brought with it an insecure figure, forced into constant search, often uncertain and without looking ahead. The protagonists of today's Ukrainian novel have changed, looking to the past to rethink and understand this world, but perhaps they have not yet stopped their quest and need another path of self-knowledge to stop and fully identify their identity.

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