

THE IMAGE OF A "TERRY EGOIST" IN THE PLAY BY EVGENY GRISHKOVETS "THE CITY"

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the structure and method of creating the image of a "terry egoist". The definition of the modern understanding of a remark as a plot-forming element, the transition of a remark from the category of a service function to the category of a compositional device is given. Special attention should be paid to the remarks of "silence": pause remarks, extended remarks of "silence" ("silent", "she is silent", "a short pause", "father is silent", "he stands silently nodding his head", "trying to say something") and the dots scattered in the narration of the text in huge numbers.

Keywords: remark, function, playwright, prototype, play, phenomenon, interpretations

ОБРАЗ «МАХРОВОГО ЭГОИСТА» В ПЬЕСЕ ЕВГЕНИЯ ГРИШКОВЦА «ГОРОД»

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Аннотация

В статье рассматривается структура и способ создания образа «махрового эгоиста». Дано определение современного понимания ремарки как сюжетообразующего элемента, переход ремарки из разряда служебной функции в разряд композиционного приема. Особое внимание заслуживают ремарки «молчания»: ремарки паузы, расширенные ремарки «молчания» («молчат», «она молчит», «небольшая пауза», «отец молчит», «он стоит, молча кивая головой», «пытается что-то сказать») и многоточия, рассыпанные в повествовании текста в огромном количестве.

Ключевые слова: ремарка, функция, драматург, прототип, пьеса, феномен, интерпретации

INTRODUCTION

In the play "The City", Evgeny Grishkovets gives his characters names for the first time. "A man in a big city", "megapolis as a complex mechanism affecting the mental and physical condition of the hero", the psychological incompatibility of the hero with his hometown, loneliness - this is the intention of the work. "Strangely enough," writes Sergey Borovikov, "it was not Grishkovets' monologue plays "How I Ate a Dog" and "At the same Time" that brought me to an acute sense of an existentially lonely crying voice as the dominant creative force

defining him (Grishkovets), but the play "The City" ... with five actors"[1]. Basin's main mental illness is "fatigue for many years to come."

According to Dmitry Bykov, the playwright's hero "has seen and understood something, but no one needs all this. A certain fatal gap has formed between him and the world, it is through this gap, and this dramatic collision becomes the main one for Grishkovets. A person is no longer reduced to his social role, he is cramped in it. Meanwhile, our impoverished reality, with its rapid changes that do not affect either the soul or the mind, absolutely does not need personalities. The world is a phantom, everyone is busy with some terribly important, but completely meaningless things to check... A new type of people has appeared, a new class, if you will — these people have gone through all the temptations of their era and have not taken root in it. It is on behalf of these new superfluous that Grishkovets speaks"[3].

The problem of "superfluous people" is a traditional problem for Russian literature. V. G. Belinsky called Onegin a "reluctant egoist", a "suffering egoist", because society made such a strong, remarkable nature, the life of a "suffering egoist" Pechorin becomes a "tragedy of a gifted personality", Chernyshevsky's heroes create a "theory of reasonable egoism", and Raskolnikov – the theory of being chosen. According to V.E.Khalizev: "Many characters of the "post-Gogol" literature are completely subordinated to lifeless routine and deadened stereotypes of the environment, subject to their own selfish motives. They either languish in the monotony and meaninglessness of existence, or they come to terms with it and feel satisfied. In their world, what Blok called the "immense" gray spider of boredom is present, or even reigns supreme"[4 p.67]. Such is the hero of the story "Ionich" and numerous of his likenesses in Chekhov, such is (in a uniquely peculiar variation) the atmosphere of a number of Dostoevsky's works. Let us recall the terrible image that arose in Svidrigailov's imagination: eternity as a neglected village bathhouse with spiders"[10, p.108]. Each of them is selfish in their own way.

M.I. Gromova notes classical traditions in the psychologism of the play "The City", in particular, correlating Basin, "experiencing mental discomfort, with the state of Chekhov's three sisters", "as the closest in time to the "prototype" of the reflective Sergei Basin mentions Viktor Zilov, the "playwright Vampilov"[4, p. 352]. The inner world of a person, including his intentions, thoughts, conscious feelings, as well as the sphere of the unconscious, has always been and remains the subject of close attention of writers.

According to I.V. Strakhova: "The main forms of psychological analysis can be divided into the depiction of characters "from the inside", that is, through artistic cognition of the inner world of actors, expressed through inner speech, images of memory and imagination; into psychological analysis "from the outside", expressed in the psychological interpretation by the writer of expressive features of speech, speech behavior, facial expressions and others means of external manifestation of the psyche"[9, p. 4]. "Terry egoist" is how the playwright characterizes his hero. In the explanatory dictionary, the egoist is interpreted by S.I.Ozhegov as "a person distinguished by selfishness," i.e. a selfish person who puts his personal interests above all else. Terry in a figurative sense is "pronounced from the side of some negative quality" [7, p. 303]. Let's turn to the analysis of the play and try to explain: what is the "terry" of the egoist Basin manifested in. The image of the hero as a phenomenon of a certain historical epoch will be investigated in the light of the problem of time-space. Artistic time and artistic

space are the most important characteristics of an artistic image, organizing the composition of a work and ensuring its perception as an integral and original artistic reality. Conventionally, the play is divided by the playwright into 6 parts – four conversations and two monologues.

All the elements of the composition are subordinated to the disclosure of the image of Sergei Alexandrovich Basin. Conversations in the kitchen with a friend, in the room with his wife Tatiana, at his parents, in a taxi highlight fragments of the hero's life, his relationships with loved ones. The very name "City" is organically woven into the discourse of the play and is aimed at perceiving the city as a semantic binary opposition. For Sergey's hero, the city is a space that he wants to leave, not "somewhere, but from there, i.e. from here", because "in this city I can't do it any other way", "in any other city it will be different", in this city even "urban mosquitoes" they are especially evil, but in which city and how else the hero cannot determine; for Tatiana, the city becomes her native, the warmest memories are associated with it, this is the city where she was born, grew up, studied, and now raises her son: "He is the only one for me. There will be no other" [5, p. 171]. Man cannot exist outside of time and space.

Time changes a person, space fills life with meaning. A retrospection of Basin's reflections shows his "somewhere" missing ability to enjoy the little things: "I remember how you and I bought our sofa... then we were happy... and now I can't remember the feeling itself..."[5, p. 195]. The prospect of reflections suggests that the hero cannot escape from the captivity of his own "inability", "the process of understanding his weakness": "I understand, very acutely, that I will always be who I am"[5, p. 191]. The realization of his inability to do "something global" did not come to Basin immediately. The second part of the play, entitled "His monologue", is confessional in its content and is aimed at the perceptual perception of the reader. It is in this part that the hero is given at the moment of moral choice, the soliloquy exposes the soul of the hero. Basin cannot remember the moment that changed his life "in an instant", how the lives of people who survived the tragedy change. But the hero clearly remembers an unknown woman who died in an accident. The tragedy of an unknown family became the starting point "when everything changed."

Tragedy and "exclusively external causes" - circumstances entangling legs and arms, "a pile of cases, a turmoil of phenomena", an endlessly ringing phone, in front of which the hero is defenseless ("Anyone can break into me") – all this led the hero "to fatigue for many years to come", to the realization: "...The main thing is to make sense!...how can I imagine that I will always live here, here... in this city, on this street, in this apartment! So that's it, I don't like repairs, I don't want to wash the dishes ... and wash myself too"[5, p. 185]. The torments, doubts, and reflection of the hero make up his inner space. The playwright offers the reader a look "from the inside" at the problem of "a man in a big city." Psychological remarks that are in tune with the general context of the play play an important role in revealing Sergei's character. These remarks are aimed at creating the image of a modern middle-aged hero, a "terry egoist", talking about the meaning of life, about a crisis, but unable to overcome his own arrogance and selfishness, looking for "something", losing the most important thing in a person's life – a friend, a wife with a child, trusting relationships with parents.

"He takes a pen, goes through different pieces of paper, can't find what to write on", "looks around in search of something", "flips through a book, leaves and cards fall out of it, he picks

them up, goes through them" - these remarks in combination with the actual time of action, the hero's remarks are aimed at creating a certain subtext of the play. In the "City" of E.Grishkovets, calendar time runs from April to September. For the hero, time "falls out", remains unnoticed. The space of the "hero's dwelling" is represented by a room, a kitchen, a bench, an "unloved city". The playwright does not fill Sergei's space with household items or pleasant trifles, although his friend's space is filled with "repairs", his wife's space is filled with "pleasant trifles". The world around Sergei is filled with "ornate reasoning", whims, arrogance - people around the hero become cramped. The hero's memories take us to the month of April, when nature wakes up, leaves appear on the trees as a symbol of a new life.

Symbolically, this is the youth of the hero. It is this experience, the past, that the hero does not need: "What I can do, all my experience is useless," how useless it is to "re-educate him, it is already useless," it is useless to "teach him." This is followed by summer, a time that "fell out", which Sergei did not notice. He did not notice how his son grew up, did not notice how he pulled his wife with an endless "bring-give", offended his mother, disappointed his father ("you are even more selfish than me"). And on the eve of autumn (there are five days left), the hero "suddenly, in one second" realizes that he is tired, that he has a "new state", and he "does not know how to do anything in this new existence", feels nothing except "the process of his weakness".

The hero decides to get rid of both the phone book and everything that connects with "this city". A symbolic detail is a phone book with a lot of leaves constantly falling out and getting lost. The hero, like trees shedding their leaves in autumn, seeks to throw off everything superfluous. His wife and child turn out to be superfluous for him ("And Tatiana, ... women are much more resilient creatures"), a friend, a job with good earnings and a free schedule. Special attention should be paid to the remarks of "silence": pause remarks, extended remarks of "silence" ("silent", "she is silent", "a short pause", "father is silent", "he stands silently nodding his head", "trying to say something") and the dots scattered in the narration of the text in huge numbers (about 200). A.N.Zorin notes the "contextual complexity of the pauses" that open "the way to the drama of the "undercurrent".

The metapause in the play, the researcher believes, establishes the correlation of moments of silence and silence at various levels of the text structure... Pauses that can reflect character traits or a certain type of character behavior reveal the personal inconsistency of the characters, the insignificance of their silence against the background of the "emptiness" that gave rise to them. Being in metapause also dictates a special psychological state for the characters"[6, p. 37]. In "The City", the image of the hero's wife Tatiana is associated with moments of silence, the remark "she is silent". The heroine is silent not because she has nothing to say, not from lack of will or downtroddenness. Tatiana "listened to so many things that she did not want," "everything is about the same thing," i.e. about her husband's "new condition," his desire "not to be alone, but to be alone." The playwright allows his heroine, who has not found understanding with her husband, to speak out in a "Monologue", from which it becomes clear: the heroine does not hope for her husband's understanding, it is easier for her to remain silent, her husband is "not even a relative, ... not a relative." They couldn't become family people. One capacious and significant detail appears in the "Monologue" – the heroine's reasoning about a plastic mannequin. In fact, in a family relationship, the plastic

mannequin is her husband. The hero's father is "silent", he twice tries to interrupt a conversation with his son, knowing in advance that his son does not need advice, but "approval" of his "condition".

The image of Sergei, his monologue, and remarks are literally "strewn" with dots and pauses. Grishkovets introduces ellipsis as a semantic device reflecting the consciousness of the hero, "flickering consciousness" (P.Rudnev). "With the help of ellipsis," A.M.Sidorova, "the author controls the pace of the narrative, turns the world from a fluid, continuous stream of events into a dotted line, the gaps of which are provided to fill in the reader (or not to fill in, considering them insignificant), emphasizes spontaneity, impressionism, sincerity of presentation, anticipates unexpected or especially important information – in a word, it signals to the reader"[8]. It is difficult for Basin to find the right words in order to explain his heartache to his loved ones every time, and he is sincere. The hero utters the same words, "wanders" in them: either he cannot express his thought, or does not know how to say it, or "loses" his thought – this is how "ornate reasoning" is built. The pauses and frequent use of the personal pronoun "I" in the hero's speech indicate some pathos and arrogance. The organic fusion of nominative, psychological remarks, pause remarks and ellipsis reception creates not only the illusion of communication (in fact, Sergei's relatives and friends cannot enter into full-fledged dialogical relations with him), a new type of hero appears - a "terry egoist". Can the hero be considered a "double egoist"? From the point of view of the inner circle, yes! Maxim's friend accuses Basin of arrogance: "I envy you (mimics Basin)...And there is so much arrogance in this... I am so thin and suffer, but I would like to be simpler, that's how you are, Max, and see the point of doing repairs"[5, p. 187]. Tatiana's wife is offended by the hero's habit of "defining" everything for her, giving what "he likes", detachment from his family, his confidence in his wife's independence and, as a result, detachment from everyday problems. The father, a strong-willed, strong man, does not approve of "all these snot", there was a period of "such a state" in his life and he coped, found the meaning of life in the family. Therefore, the father has the right to accuse: ".. and you are an egoist. And such a terry egoist. A kind of classic"[5, p. 208]. The meaning-forming center in the play is the chronotope of the road. The path does not bring the hero any experience or awareness of the meaning of life. The symbolism of the hero's path is presented by the playwright as an aimless road to the unknown ("He stops the car"...I don't care... (he calls the name of a street, train station or some other place"). Moreover, this aimless road should be comfortable (a taxi ride) and carry a pleasant feeling of receiving benefits for "free". The road does not have both a goal and an end coordinate ("Driver. It is better to be on the right or on the left. Him. Anyway... it doesn't matter"). The hero remains alone. Before us is a hero, on the one hand, endowed with the traits of an egoist: he lost the ability to enjoy the little things, could not overcome the desire to leave everything and leave, an inattentive husband, busy with self-admiration and ornate reasoning. On the other hand, Basin has lost the meaning of life, wants to start a new one, is looking for his way. But the hero's path brings suffering both to himself and to people close to him. Reflection, an understanding of one's own "inability", self-doubt, a desire to escape rather than correct the "meaninglessness of the way of life" - constitute the "double" egoism of the hero.

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