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HUMAN-SIZEDNESS AS A PRINCIPLE OF EXISTANCE FOR LITERARY-ARTISTIC IMAGE

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Abstract

The article is devoted to literary-artistic image in context of its human sized-ness, or its correspondence with natural peculiarities of people who create and perceive it. In this article human sized-ness, characteristic for literary-artistic image, is defined as the principle according to which it exists. Investigations supposing formulation of this principle and justification of its content, precondition the analysis of theoretically formed findings about literary-artistic image and human sized-ness. The discovered statements are creatively processed and concluded in accordance with research goals. The article states as follows: human sized-ness of literary and artistic image must be recognized as ambivalent, as it is established according to two main lines of a person's life: horizontal and vertical, where the first one supposes the realization of natural and social potencies, and the second one is for spiritual potencies; literary and artistic image possesses features, regarded as projections not only of the writer and reader's essences and their virtual interaction, but also of the fragment of fictional literary reality, which this interaction absorbs; human sized-ness of literary and artistic image can be discovered in author-individual and superindividual dimensions because of numerous entwining variants of reader's perception of the author's personality; literary and artistic image, undergoing external influence, actualizes some potencies of human sized-ness, characteristic to it, while remaining the same. The statement of the discussed principle "Genuineness and peculiarities of existence of literary-artistic image are determined by its human sized-ness" is presented in the Conclusion of this article.

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1. Introduction

It was noted by Aristotle (1976) that the thinking ones regard forms in images, and as they see from the images what to aspire for and what to avoid, they come to movements and lack of feeling with the presence of these images. So many centuries passed after those words were written, and yet none of the scholars proposed any ideas that would be radically different from the ideas of the great ancient thinker, and which would provoke any serious doubts in his rightness. According to the modern general-theoretical ideas about imaginative cognition it should be noted that a human being that cognizes environment and its realia, creates and, if possible, projects outward various images of its fragments in their consciousness independently from surrounding circumstances.

Being a special case of image as it is, literary-artistic image is a wholesome, relatively completed product of a creative act in the area of art, uniquely-demiurgic synthesis of a phenomenon, non-existing before, reflecting in its content a general direction and some features of the author's ideas about Beauty and its relations with Truth and Good. Appearing as one of many possible resulting forms of comprehending reality, literary image becomes a reflection of both immediately dominant finest shades of emotional impulses and intellectual insights of the author, and the most stable components of their worldviews. Having become available for its addressees – viewers, readers or listeners, literary-artistic image is perceived by them with higher or lower degrees of authenticity and fullness and it is momentarily completed and constructed in the act of virtual co-creating with the author, according to the general direction and specification of the most acute individual intentions of their own worldview. Therefore, the image obtains individual and situational completeness, ephemeral in its essence, and fundamentally unrepeatable outside the consciousness that created it.

Literary-artistic image, in its turn, appears to be a specific kind of artistic image. The number of literary-artistic images, which have ever existed or will at some point exist, is virtually inexhaustible. At the same time every one of them tends to be unique (if not actually, then potentially), relatively independent, self-sufficient complex of concentrated concepts of various edges of human nature and multifaceted fragments of reality, discovered outside its limits. These concepts appear as vague flashes, initial syncretic ideas. Gradually maturing, obtaining completeness, convincingness and trueness, while simultaneously freeing themselves from non-vital content, they come into interaction with impressions from other images, and get explicated by the authors with imaginative creation of new content elements of literary-artistic reality and deducing the already existing ones.

It must be noted that literary-artistic reality appears and takes its place only when there are two interacting subjects: a) a writer – the creator of indigenously artistic product – a literary work, and b) a reader – the addressee of this product, in the perception of which they become compassionate, co-thinking and co-creative partner of the author. A literary work is a mediating initial of communication between these subjects, their mutually enriching creative dialogue. Aside that, establishment of literary-artistic reality supposes the appearance and reproduction of specific, virtual micro-environment, natural for both of them, within which the literary work that unites them, and the literary-artistic images, composing its content, possess some kind of positive value: artistic and extra-artistic.

Further on it must be stated that the notion of literary-artistic image is traditionally included into the main research vocabulary of literature studies. Nowadays in particular some domestic scholars pay a

very specific interest to the abovementioned notion and to the corresponding phenomenon that it represents. But in truth, their scientific investigation is usually directed not for the defining objective conceptions about it as a whole (Borisova, 2015; Paloyko, 2016), but for uncovering the peculiarities of its individual implementations (Gorbovskaya, 2015; Petukhov, 2016; Sergeyeva, 2010; Vereshchagin, 2018).

The following condition is methodically important for our literary study: having once appeared and started its existence as an inseparable part of literary-artistic reality, literary-artistic image inevitably undergoes the most various changes; however, whatever changes in the image's content, at any point of spacetime continuum of literary-artistic reality it preserves its initial *human sized-ness*, attributive in its essence.

One may think that the notion of human sized-ness, a human characteristic of various everyday life realia, introduced into the socio-humanitarian knowledge by the domestic thinker Petrov (2003, 2012), most correctly expresses the obvious and at the same time the subtle in the literary-artistic image, which in the framework of this research is understood as the principle of its existence. However, productive investigation into the process of existence of literary-artistic image in the context of this principle is prevented by the insubstantial elaboration of the issue of human sized-ness of any reality fragment.

Back in 1976 Petrov (2003) wrote an article titled "Human sized-ness and the world of substantive work", where he noted that this issue "remains open and rarely goes out to the explicit level as an independent question, and more often it is only touched upon for some other reasons" (p. 8). The fate of this article went so that it was only published many years after it had been written, in 2003, and still the presented statements were fully relevant.

Further on it must be mentioned that up to today some aspects of the contents of the notion of human sized-ness lack the deserved attention. Despite that, the appropriate term is quite often (and not always properly) used in the texts of socio-humanitarian character. Speaking of particular appeal to the studied notion, it unravels promising scholarly opportunities, which some modern scientists dealing with socio-humanitarian issues more or less successfully attempt to realize (Barabanova, 2012; Baranov, 2016; Bublik, 2004; Konstantinov, 2012; Ogurtsov, 2012; Perminova, 2012; Smirnov, 2019; Trofimov, 2014).

Heuristic value of the discussed notion is potentially rather high. This condition encouraged the author to seek a productive variant of its application in literary investigations. By that it was supposed that the discovered variant would support the creation of general and special theoretical grounds for complete introduction of the discussed notion into the body of research vocabulary for the field of socio-humanitarian studies.

2. Problem Statement

Modern literary studies possess affluent, versatile and diverse conceptions about literary-artistic image, derived mainly from the works of scholars of previous generations. Alongside that, the researchers haven't found a more general and fundamental principle of existence for this phenomenon yet. Moreover, on the one hand, nowadays fundamental researches, in the objective area of which literary-artistic image is dominant, could not be included in prioritized studies. On the other hand, the characteristic feature of our time is the fact that information, lacking a high degree of generalization, loses an opportunity to

become essential, inseparable from real, increasingly unravelling sociocultural processes. It all shapes a controversy, leading to a problem, elaboration of which must be accepted as highly relevant.

3. Research Questions

To achieve the aims posed for the following research, we suppose to implement the following tasks:

- to analyse the contents of the notions of literary-artistic image and human sized-ness and to select the information that has the most scientific-investigating potential in accordance with the carried research;
- to interpret the selected information, to complete it and to present it in the form of statements, the contents of which would serve as the bases for elaboration of the principle of human-sized-ness in the existence of literary-artistic image;
- to form the definition of the abovementioned principle, which can correspond with the modern level of development of socio-humanitarian knowledge;
- to collect all the findings together and to put it into a generalized and conceptualized whole in accordance with the structure of implemented research.

4. Purpose of the Study

The main aim of the research is to prove that the fundamental principle of existence for literary-artistic image is its human sized-ness.

5. Research Methods

The methodological base of the present study is Pivovarov's (2011) synthetic paradigm. At that, analysis and synthesis belong to the methods that provided us with significant heuristic results.

The method that dominated at the start of our research was the analysis of literature on various aspects of the studied problem. To structure and interpret the findings, the methods of structural and functional analysis were applied. Later we predominantly resorted to the synthetic method, which gave us an opportunity to select, generalize and outline our findings in an assimilated, reconsidered and significantly augmented form.

6. Findings

If regarded cautiously and objectively, the claim that there exists any fragment of reality that is cognized and transformed by humans under the condition of "two relatively independent sources of definition, where one of them is beyond us, objective, and the other is located within a person, their mental and physical abilities" (Petrov, 2003, p. 10), becomes obvious and substantial ground for recognition of human sized-ness. But then, as noted by Petrov (2003), if "there's no real need to prove human sized-ness of tables and chairs, irons and alarm clocks" (p. 12), it's not that simple with many

other non-practical products of creative activities, that, when reproduced, inevitably lose some of their original features, defining their relevance (in particular, literary-artistic image).

We would dare to state that if the realization of an opportunity to *demonstrate or elicit* human sized-ness of a literary-artistic image rather clearly with examples is quite obvious, but an opportunity to *prove* it with an absolute accuracy is more likely to be just visionary. In the given intellectual situation, it would make sense to step away from the ambiguous and empirical and opt for the well-defined and axiomatic; to constitute human sized-ness of literary-artistic image a priori as a principle for its existence, and at this ground to make an attempt to pattern and interpret some fine points of classic conceptions about the investigated phenomenon of literary-artistic reality.

It should be noted, that here, considering the given situation, a principle is regarded as a theoretically formulated statement, the contents of which lie at the basis of conceptions about the essence and existence of any fragment of reality.

Human beings, as paradoxical and antinomical creatures, project these attributes beyond themselves, giving them to everything that they come across in a varying degree. At that, on the one hand, human sized-ness by its definition cannot be antithetical to any characteristic of human nature. On the other hand, kinship to those characteristics infringes the original wholeness of human sized-ness, as if dividing it in two. In our case, one half of human sized-ness is characteristic for literary-artistic image, while the other is for the individual, who perceives it. Each of those halves, just like the parts of Plato's androgynes, aspires to rejoin the other one. Now that is why it's no wonder that the real content of any phenomena, "fixated" in culture, including our interest – literary-artistic image, having been replaced by idealized content could be discovered by the people who entered an internal dialogue with it.

Human sized-ness of literary-artistic image must be named ambivalent, as the process of its complete establishment is a movement in two different directions, corresponding with the two main lines of human life. According to Trubetskoy (1994), the first of the abovementioned lines "is established here, on the ground, and roots to the earth with both its extremes. The other one, on the contrary, gasps *away from the earth, up*" (p. 18). The existence of literary-artistic image is none other than a specific reflection of the horizontal line of human aspirations, typical for any representative of human kind. Moving along this line, a person actualizes their natural and social potencies. At that, existence of literary-artistic image quite clearly reflects the vertical line of human aspirations as well. The process of movement along the vertical line supposes the unraveling of a person's spiritual, or properly human, potencies.

Literary-artistic image is human sized, when it goes beyond the limits of the inner world of its maker, gets positively accepted by the available fragment of literary-artistic reality, and therefore becomes more or less firmly placed into its wholesome content. This statement is undoubtedly just. We must only note that the image, if it is separated from its author and becomes an element of literary-artistic reality as it is, inevitably absorbs its spirit and language, and it turns into an explicit or implicit carrier of specific characteristics, and with its whole being it make its own unique contribution in its development.

Originally-ontological character of more or less clearly visible implicitness of the author's presence in the contents of literary-artistic image doesn't provoke any doubts (we must herewith remember G. Flaubert and the image of Emma Bovary that he created). However, it is also doubtless that the author's personality may be (and quite often is) unambiguously reflected in the worldview of the

readers who perceive the image that the author created, only in a transformed way. Within the process of human relationships numerous individual reflections of the original image fuse together. The consequence of such happening is the formation and stable reproduction of the sum of images, inner variability of which doesn't weaken but strengthens and clarifies the qualitative definition of the original image. At that, human sized-ness of the original literary-artistic image, embodying some features of the creating author, gets transformed. Newly created superindividual content of the image turns into a carrier of some other human sized-ness, deprived of the univocal and initially obvious connection with the author's unique individual features. Therefore, we must emphasize principal possibility to consider human sized-ness of literary-artistic image in both author-individual and superindividual dimensions.

Whoever attempts to describe literary-artistic image as an individual matter that could only be found in superindividual dimension, is bound to fail, and their failure would sooner or later be discovered and disclosed by unbiased professionals in the area of literary studies. So, in modern times, an idea of questionable theoretical validity of the ideas of post-modern scholars could hardly seem to be outstanding. Then again, the fact of eager attempts to defend such contemplations would neither astonish those who criticize them, nor those who remain indifferent to them and to everything directly connected with self-realization of their advocates in the selected area of artistic endeavors. Okudzhava (2001) once remarked that "everyone writes as they hear, everyone hears as they breathe, as they breathe, they write, not trying to oblige..." (p. 64). Agreeing with Okudzhava on the whole, we must clarify that even if the writer tries "to oblige" someone, still they can only "write as they breathe" and in no other way.

Processes of creating literary-artistic image and its cultivation altogether present themselves as an actualization of the person's attitude to the world, congenial for literary-artistic reality in its acquired configuration. At that, the already existing literary-artistic image, in the process of its perception by the reader, is artificially potentiated and repeatedly actualized, therefore undergoing a renewal of its own human sized-ness. Getting transformed in reaction to external influences, the image remains the same. All of its transformations, becoming available to an outside observer, are non-other than a fulfillment of a certain potency of development of attributable human sized-ness.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion of the article, we must put forward a rather clear definition of the discussed principle. One might think that this principle might be represented as follows: "Genuineness and peculiarities of literary-artistic image are determined by its human sized-ness".

We should add that a researcher who would make an attempt to unravel the meanings of multidimensional applications of the human sized-ness principle of literary-artistic image and to specify its content must handle the selected object very cautiously. This is because such a research object is like a captured bird for the fowler who is holding it. If the bird is held too tightly, the fowler risks smothering it, but if the grip is too weak, the bird may just get away. We may apply this maxim to the topic of our discussion in the following way: "There is nothing difficult in choosing the human sized-ness of literary-artistic image as a cognitive object. The difficulty is in investigating this object in such a way so its heuristically valuable peculiarities don't get lost or become unavailable for the researchers along their investigations. Real, truly human-sized content of literary-artistic image, being subjected to strictly

formal, mechanical dissection, enforced gnosiology or unreasonable intentionality, gets emasculated surprisingly easy, and then the interested observer faces something at the best case, expressing an immediate state of the author's spirit, and at the worst, - its strong alienation from the souls of other people, at the same time irremissibly deprived of a proper liking with anything already existent, which appears to be nothing, an empty shell, a phantom and fiction, what we nowadays call "simulacrum" courtesy of postmodern thinkers (J. Deleuse, J. Derrida, J. Baudrillard, P. Klossowski).

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