

Author's Role in the Literary Field by the Example of Kazakh Literature

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Abstract: The given article deals with the basic approaches to a problem of the deep interrelation between the author of a literary work and the reader. The author's image is revealed by the creativity developed in focus of the Kazakh customs and traditions. According to the author, the character's thoughts that have a number of interpretations attract the readers' attention by the person's inner world, cultural wealth and peculiarities of his national consciousness. The author's image in the Kazakh literature is concentrated on consideration about the relation of the person and his native land and the problem of the national culture's influence on the person's life.

Key words: Literary criticism • Author's image • Implied author • Literary field • Reader's interpretation
• National consciousness

INTRODUCTION

Criticism is "a general term for the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of literature." [1, 101]. Ch. Baldick calls the criticism "the reasoned discussion of literary works" [2, 54] and considers the criticism to be "the defence of literature against moralists and censors" [2, 54]. As a genre criticism is an interpretation of a work's meaning, "analysis of its structure and style, judgement of its worth by comparison with other works, estimation of its likely effect on readers and the establishment of general principles by which literary works (individually, in categories, or as a whole) can be evaluated and understood" [2, 54].

The relevant category of Literary Criticism is Image. The term "image" goes back to the 18th century, its origin is connected with the theory of imagination that was "faculty for visualization, so literature was often regarded as a medium which promoted visual responses in the reader: that is to say, 'images'" [3, 115].

In Russian Literary Criticism the term "image" is often used as a name for the character of a novel or a story. As used here image's structure consists of objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind of a literary personage. In this connection we draw attention to the discussion between scholars concerning the image of the writing's author and his/her role in the field of a literary work.

F.N. Magill defines the author as the person who originated or gave existence to anything and whose authorship determines responsibility for what was created [4]. But in the literary theory the term "author" "traditionally used to describe the person who originates a piece of writing" [1, 42]. In recent years the "idea of the author" has been the subject of an increasingly rigorous analysis.

The purpose of the research is to analyze the image of the author in literary work drawing attention to:

- The correlation between the author and the reader in focus of the comprehension and confidence;
- The author's role as a narrator and the reader's role as an interpreter in constructing a text;
- The author's conception of the national originality and cultural peculiarities

As the research material we used the novel "Majestic Altai, I do not care for your alps" written by a Kazakh writer Alibek Askarov.

As E. Quinn states "the term *author* is intimately related to *authority*. In the middle ages, *auctores* were those figures, such as Aristotle, who were the fundamental authorities' on their subjects" [1, 42]. Nowadays the term *author* may be defined as the creator of a work but for all that "readers should attempt to recapture the author's intention" [1, 42].

Every author is a narrator. First of all, an author constructs a plot – “the simple narrative line which we can then flesh out by considering character and description, tone and texture, pattern and myth” [3, 177]. E. Quinn defines the plot as “the design and ordering of incidents in a narrative or dramatic work” [1, 324]. The researcher writes: “The plot should not be confused with a simple outline of the events in a narrative. The plot portrays events in terms of their impact on character. For example, an outline such as ‘Boy meets girl, boy loses girl’ might be translated into a plot as ‘Boy meets girl but, because of his jealous nature, boy loses girl.’ Although plot and character are frequently treated as separable parts of a narrative, these elements are in fact interfused: plot requires characters to enact it; characters always engage in acts, however minimal.” [1, 324].

Frank Kermode notes that when we say a ticking clock goes ‘tick-tock’, we give the noise a fictional structure, differentiating between two physically identical sounds, to make *tick* a beginning and *tock* an end. “The clock’s *tick-tock* I take to be a model of what we call a plot, an organization that humanizes time by giving it form” [cited in 5, 83].

A plot is based on the meaning represented by the author. E.D. Hirsch asserts that “the author has a special privilege to determine the meaning because without his meaning all potential meanings are equally valid.” [6, 1]. But not only an author is taking a part in the development of the storyline in a work of fiction. A reader is also constructing the text in the image and likeness of his/her thoughts and feelings. A. Duranti thinks that “if the work is done properly, readers should be able to see a synthesis or at least a common thread that ties together the different traditions and projects an image whose outline can be easily recognized, critically appraised and remembered.” [7, 331].

A reader is able to identify a plot. Readers can find out that two works are versions of the same story, they can summarize plots and discuss the adequacy of a plot summary. The readers agree and disagree with the author and, in Culler’s opinion, the very “disagreements are to reveal considerable shared understanding” [5, 84].

R. Barthes called the author “an ideological construct whose purpose is to legitimate a practice of writing and reading” [cited in 3, 13]. But as P. Childs and R. Fowler assert, “every text is a weave of voices or codes which cannot be tied to a single point of expressive origin in the author. Reading is not about the discovery of a single hidden voice or meaning, but a production working with the multiple codes that compose a text” [3, 13].

According to E.D. Hirsch author’s interpretation and the reader’s interpretation are not the same: if the author’s interpretation is meaningless, the reader’s interpretation is everything, because 1) the reader has simply replaced the author and 2) since the reader’s interpretation varies from person to person there is no place to base valid interpretations because everyone’s opinion will be different [8].

A famous Italian scholar U. Eco considers a reader to be the creative interpreter who is taking an active part in the production of the literary text. He writes: “The very existence of texts that can not only be freely interpreted but also cooperatively generated by the addressee (the ‘original’ text constituting a flexible type of which many tokens can be legitimately realized) posits the problem of a rather peculiar strategy of communication based upon a flexible system of signification” [9, 3].

Thus “the plot is something readers infer from the text and the idea of elementary events out of which this plot was formed is also an inference or construction of the reader” [6, 85].

Another feature of narrative is the presentation. J. Culler marks that “confronted with a text <...> the reader makes sense of it by identifying the story and then seeing the text as one particular presentation of that story; by identifying ‘what happens’, we are able to think of the rest of the verbal material as the way of portraying what takes place” [5, 86]. Depicting the events from the point of view of an observer, the author deepens the storyline based on the truth. As a result the reader is inspired by the narration and observes the events as if he is the author himself.

Readers infer from the text a narrator, a voice which speaks. In this connection narrative theory explores different ways of presentation. Theorists distinguish ‘first person narration’, where a narrator says ‘I’ and ‘third person narration’, when all the characters are referred to in the third person – ‘he’ or ‘she’. And in both narrations the image of the author may be revealed.

Describing the “second self” of the author, the critic Wayne Booth coined the term “implied author” as the creative presence governing a narrative. He writes: “Distinct from this internal author is the external or ‘real’ author. For example, the actual author of ‘A Farewell to Arms’ is Ernest Hemingway, an American novelist who achieved worldwide fame for living in a style that seemed to exemplify the “code” of the heroes of his novels. The implied author of this novel is neither Hemingway the man, nor Frederick Henry, the first person narrator of the novel.” [cited in 1, 208]. The implied author, as described

by Booth, is a figure who “stands behind the scenes whether as stage manager, or puppeteer, or as an indifferent God. . . .” [cited in 1, 208].

From the point of view of the critic and novelist David Lodge, the implied author of a novel is not the same as “the actual historical individual who sat at his desk and wrote it”, the implied author “has no his own life before” and “exists only at the moment of composition?” [cited in 1, 208].

If “the implied” author is, then “the implied” reader must be. Wolfgang Iser defines the “implied” reader as “the ideal hypothetical reader who enters into a partnership with the implied author in order to complete the work—that is, to read and understand it. In one sense, the task of the real reader is to become the implied reader” [cited in 1, 208].

There are two conceptions about the author’s image in the literary researches.

From one point of view, the author’s image consists of the main features of the author’s creative work in which we can find the elements of his/her biography. The author’s image is based on the reader’s idea about the author which he/she may conclude after reading the book. In this case the author’s image, in contrast to the writer’s biography, is a part of the novel’s or story’s structure, together with the personages’ images. Another theory rests of author’s image is based on including the author’s worldview and ideological notes in the plot. Thus the author’s image is the very essence of a novel or a story.

The conception of the author’s image is taking an important part in the literary criticism. But there is another paradigm of the textual interpretation called as “the author’s death”. It was raised by a French scholar Ronald Barthes.

In his essay “Death of the Author” (1968) R. Barthes “attacks the common and traditional view of the author as the ultimate ‘explanation’ of a work. Barthes (and poststructuralist theory) contends that the author can no longer be regarded as the omniscient and all-pervading presence and influence in a work of literature; indeed, he implies that the reader takes over as the prime source of power in a text” [10, 59].

So, according to Barthes, an author must be suppressed “in the interests of writing (which is, as will be seen, to restore the place of the reader)” [11, 1467].

R. Barthes writes: “The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. Yet this destination cannot

any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the text is constituted” [11, 1470].

At the end of the essay Barthes suggests that “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” [11, 1470]. Thus for Barthes “the author becomes little more than an hypothesis, a ‘person’ projected by the critic from the text and a convenient catch-all for the critic, whereas the reader is at liberty to see the plurality of the text.” [10, 59].

In the second half of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century author’s image in focus of the national literature is a subject of literary criticism researches. Foreign, Russian and Kazakh scholars are discussing if the author is acting throughout the literary text or he doesn’t take part in the narration at all.

G.Th. Kurian describes the peculiarities of the literary process of this time with the following words: “One of the characteristics of the century was that, at least in literature, the word ‘national’ became somewhat imprecise and outdated. Literary traditions overlapped; authors themselves were of mixed national heritage or were born in one country but wrote in the language of another; émigrés and expatriates became a large literary community within many Western countries.” [12, 151].

Allegiances and interests of the present-day writers, critics and scholars lie with the continued existence of “high print culture”. For readers, “the emergence of the new media provides a much wider diversity of opportunities to participate in literary culture, ranging from gathering information about authors and literatures without needing to rely on publishers’ blurbs or critics’ recommendations to participating actively in valuation processes through publishing online reviews.” [13, XI]. It is certainly worthwhile to draw readers into the creative analysis of literary works.

Literary works of the FSU Region’s writers may be examined and analyzed with relation to national peculiarity and cultural originality. Literary works of Kazakhstan’s authors is no exception. N. Sadykov considers Kazakh literature to be “one of the topical issues, which still demands a careful study and a relevant assessment” [14, 371]. The Kazakh literature that dates back to ages has been reflecting cultural, spiritual and social state of the nation in every period of its development.

The voice of the author is being heard in all the novels and stories of Kazakh literature. Alibek Askarov in his novel called “Majestic Altai, I do not care for your alps” describes the Kazakh village (aul) in the years of

“perestroika”. He adverts to the past of his country and nation. The narrative begins with the memories: “The fourth aul, located on the spurs of the Altai was a fertile settlement. Before, in the heyday of this land, there were three streets, with three different names. Nowadays these three streets became things of the past” [15, 9].

The glorious past of his native land is in the writer’s heart. Askarov is feeling himself as a part of the past, a part of the national history. He describes the aul’s national traditions in focus of his worldview and attitude. “In general, for Mukyrchans stealing a bride mustn’t be a good thing for dzhigits. There are two reasons for stealing a bride in Mukyrchans’ mind: the lad’s weak will or his parents’ stupidity. In the first case the young man is out of sympathy with the girl, so he dares to steal her. In the latter case the situation is complicated: the boy and the girl love each other and wish to be together forever but the girl’s parents are against their marriage. What can the young people do? Only escape. And the girl uers away from home, together with her boy-friend” [15, 175].

The author narrotates about Kazakh traditions with humour and at the same time he is pays attention to the negative features of his native land. He doesn’t accept the prevalent stereotypes and wild customs existing in the Kazakh society. We hear the author’s voice through thoughts of the novel’s characters. Thus Sarsen, a character of the novel, says: “Oh my God, where are feelings, pure as the morning breeze, where is the high love? How and where did he lose them? We don’t know it... I nerearingly he believes that the most wonderful period of his life was spent in Mukyr. Sitting on the doorstep Sarsen is playe the accordion and sings from morning till midnight. But now his songs are not the same than as earlier ...” [15, 69]. The author reminds to his reader that the person’s outer and inner life must change with years, shades of the past fill up the person’s life and he/she car feel the native land deeper and deeper. Sarsen’s thought are tied to the past but he hears the present’s steps. New era implies new songs and we cannot change the course of time.

A.Askarov’s critical mind concerning Kazakh customs and traditions is in all the novels and stories of the writer. His works (among them – “Steppe’s pictures”, “Stories of the Steppe”, “Wedding”, “Revival” “The epoch’s favourite”, “Whose fault is it?”) were written when Askarov lived in Tashkent and was homesick. So the steppe as a symbol of nostalgia is present in all his books.

The author of the novel “Majestic Altai, I do not care for your alps” is admiring of his native land’s beauty. The reader is feeling the writer’s love and kindness to the aul’s people and is keeping up the narrator’s relations towards traditions revealing the aul’s spirit.

Such prominent literary figure in Kazakh literature as A. Askarov has helped to bring the history and traditions of the Kazakh peoples to world attention. His prose blends romantic and realistic details to depict the struggle between reality and traditional culture caught up in the rapid changes of modernization. In his novels and stories the author’s image is revealed by the way of the deep interrelation of the reader’s national consciousness and the writer’s creativity, whose wholeness is a phenomenon that can be examined in all of the aspects literary researche.

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