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The Problem of Female Subjectivity in the Novel "The Handwriting of Leonardo" by Dina Rubina

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the consideration of the problem of female subjectivity, which is directly included in the process of conceptualizing the gender picture of the world. This problem occupies a central position in the novel by Dina Rubina's "The Handwriting of Leonardo" (2008), while the main form of her artistic presentation is the heterotopy of the circus. The puzzle organization of this heterotopy allows you to focus attention on the circus culture as a way of life, as a kind of cosmos based on a transgressive act. D. Rubina, playing circus nomadism, turns the heterotopy of the circus into a space for the deployment of female subjectivity, an important role in this case is the fundamental refusal of the circus to "tell" and "reflect", its utmost demonstrativeness.

Androgyny of the main heroine of the novel by Anna Nesterenko becomes an indirect evidence of the reduction of corporeality, focusing on the production of female subjectivity, the realization of which is associated with the motive of the mirror: the view "on oneself" reveals the result of looking "into oneself." One of the forms of representation of the mirror motif is the interaction of an objectified and personalized narrative, while the masculine-personalized narrative (with the epistolary of Senya and the monologized narrative of Volodya in conversation with the Interpol investigator Robert Kerler) fulfills in the novel the role of a peculiar mirror, allowing to realize the view "on oneself." The correlation of these two aspects becomes a reflection of the process of the formation of female subjectivity, the space for the unfoldment of which is the heterotopy of the circus de-centered in all its manifestations.

Keywords: Female prose, Gender picture of the world, Dina Rubina, "The Handwriting of Leonardo", Female subjectivity, Heterotopy of the circus, Motif of the mirror.

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Introduction

In the modern Russian women's prose, the problem of female subjectivity is directly involved in the process of conceptualizing the gender picture of the world. This problem occupies a central position in the novel by D. Rubina's "Handwriting of Leonardo" (2008), while the main form of her artistic presentation is the heterotopy of the circus.

With regard to the heterotopy of the circus, its puzzle structure, including the circus school, the "barrel", the stuntmanry and the "Circus du Soleil", becomes principled. This organization allows you to focus on the culture of the circus as a way of life, as a kind of cosmos, based on a transgressive act. O. Burenina-Petrova, considering the phenomenon of the circus as a "culture on wheels", appeals to the "Treatise on nomadology" by J. Deleuze and F. Guattari, while the circus space that absorbs the artist's body becomes one of the variants of implementing the principle of nomadology: "Life on wheels, deprived of a permanent fixed place of residence, makes circus performers relentlessly to territorialize and deterritorialize other people's space. <...> Culture on wheels is a way of appropriating and circling the circus nomos of someone else's space, turning it into their own home, forming their own semiotic universe anywhere, that is, in a broad sense - the transgression of spatial, ethnic, national, social, semantic boundaries, carried out through the continuous movement of the circus caravan horizontally. <...> ... circus nomadism assumes the principal plasticity and variability of the subject and its role functions: the circus is perceived in culture not only as an artist, but also as an image of a living, eternally transforming, recoding structure, a sign of a potential code that provides permanent metamorphoses of a person and the world around him".

In other words, D. Rubina, playing with circus nomadism, turns a heterotopy of the circus into a space for the deployment of female subjectivity, an important role in this case is the fundamental refusal of the circus to "tell" and "reflect", its utmost demonstrativeness.

Methods

The leading methods used by the authors in analyzing the problem of female subjectivity are the structural-semantic method [2-3] of the basis for the gender analysis of the literary text [4-5].

Results

The structure of the absolute majority of female images in "The Handwriting of Leonardo" is determined practically by the obligatory pedaling of the category of corporeality: hypertrophied corporeality with respect to the image of Christina ("... huge from below, with a small stupid head". As if her body hurried to grow loose legs, grasping hands, a weighty ass... And to look after all this rich economy put on a flat core with a tight knotted doll on the back of the head and never closed mouth..." [6, pp. 47]); in respect of the images of Genevieve and Arisha, the flawed corporeality is fixed, in relation to Zoyka - the lower body, and both the latter options are being rehabilitated.

Thus, for example, the portrait characteristic of Genevieve ("... a small woman - an acute profile, a child's sunken chest, dragon's legs" [6, pp. 321]) is gradually transformed, the heroine's hump combined with the strong arms creates a metaphorical image of the "migratory bird". There is a metaphorical series in the novel that constantly accompanies the description of Genevieve: a "nest", "a drunken bird", a "poor bird", a "bird", "Carlson's house", "a crested parrot, a crest of a parrot, a bird's profile, a bird chirped".

The heyday of the female beauty of the already grown-up Arisha, "which by that time miraculously blossomed, and not only because it successfully operated on the mowing left eye in the clinic ..." She blossomed, as Firavelna would say, "all around": she recovered, stylishly sheared and generally acquired a

western-looking look; and time has already spent a lot of time in Belgium, in the city of Malin, where she was invited to teach in the international school of the carillon, then on tour ... "[6, p. 271]), not so much compensates for the reference to the child's squinting of the heroine (Arisha- squinting), but serves as confirmation of the alleged character of her disgrace: "Witness Arisha ... stands in the photo to the left of Anna; still squinting, before the operation, but still you can see how noble its traits are and how it resembles its unique grandmother Firavelna" [6, p. 219-220].

The image of Zoyka is built along the same lines, the lower body of which, provoked by "constant hunger" and "debauchery" is compensated not so much by her adult appearance ("a magnificent lady, all covered with golden tresses ..." [6, pp. 129]), how much parallel with the proteins that arises in Anna's mind: "Squirrels are American and Canadian squirrels, shameless little girls, that's who later always reminded her of a little Zoyka... the perfect beastly embodiment of their former girlfriend: the reddish-white squirrel sat on the flipped lid of a trash can agile handles pawing something glancing furtively at this "[6, p. 128].

Unlike the paradigm of female images, the image of Nyuta is emphatically androgynous, beginning with the treatment of Howard's parrot - "Anna is a boy! Let me give you a kiss!". To the character given by Volodya - "an ideal being": "<...> its nature was created by some special order. Ideal creature for jumping, flips, stretches and other tricks. Whatever she did, it always wanted to watch for her all the time. She took looks away after herself and then embroidered with them any patterns. And it was folded ... not like these glossy pornstars with bloated breasts. On the contrary, she was low, so ... very proportionate ... each part of the body was driven to another in the most irreproachable way..." [6, p. 35 - 36]. Androgyny becomes an indirect evidence of the reduction of corporeality, focusing on the production of female subjectivity, the implementation of which is associated with the motif of specularity.

According to Yu.I. Levin, one of the semiotic possibilities of this motive is the opposition "to look at oneself / myself": "If the first member of this opposition makes it possible to realize the uniqueness of the inner "I", the divine, unlimited in itself, the second rather removes this feeling of uniqueness: I am similar to others.

Looking at themselves from the outside, various implications can be associated, from narcissism to aversion to one's own image. The latter can be explained by the fact that the reflection is self-contained, nonprocessed, completely predictable (when a person "makes faces" in front of a mirror, he tries to overcome this predictability), in a word, it is something dead-end, i.e. contrary to the way a person normally perceives his ego" [7].

Anna equally realizes both components of this opposition, while "looking inside" and "looking at oneself" are stages of the heroine's self-awareness and it is their correlation that becomes the production of female subjectivity: "Subsequently, she could quite accurately call this turning point, the pass in the seventh year life, beyond which the world opened from a different height, as if the developed right hand lifted the veil, pushed down for the time being. As if someone from the outside turned a bright spotlight on to the right, lighting up far and wide, and up and down the space of a secret mirrored scene. The world was heard in both directions, balanced, became full, round and deep. The body inside him turned out very deftly to move. And terrible, tireless a craving for mirrors that reflected and supplemented her right side, softened, subsided" [6, p. 121].

Discussion

Traditionally, for modern women's prose, the production of female subjectivity takes on a narrative form. As has been repeatedly noted by researchers, the narrative structure of "The Handwriting of Leonardo" is

determined by the interaction of an objectified and personalized narrative. The first is presented in the form of improperly direct speech, the second is presented by Senya's epistolary and Volodya's monologized narrative in conversation with Interpol investigator Robert Kerler.

Indirectly direct speech is organized in the novel through free indirect discourse, which is "the contamination of speech forms that convey the external and internal viewpoint of the characters" [8]. According to N.V. Konstantinova, "at the expense of such organization of separate proposals and proposals at the level of superfrasal unity, accompanied by a change in focus from subjective information to objective, creates the effect of interpenetration of two plans - author and personal" [9]. It is this form of narrative that assumes the function of conveying the heroine's view of herself.

Masculine-personalized narrative in the novel performs the role of a kind of mirror, allowing you to realize the view "on yourself." It is noteworthy that, despite all the external differences, the history of the relationship of the heroes with Anna is built exactly the same: both get acquainted with her at the same time, when she turns five years old, the same behavior of the heroine at the time of acquaintance⁴, is absolutely identical to the description of Anna's choice of each of the heroes⁵ and etc. In both cases, the symbolism of specularity is updated, emphasizing the possibility of reflection:

"Both of them" Semen and Anna did not concern anything at all. No, really! They were ... well ... as it were ... encapsulated in their love. He looked into it as if in a mirror, not stopping "[6, p. 35] and "... from her, I am tired, as soon as one prisoner in a prison cell can get tired of another. I, you know, will close my eyes - my face pops up on the retina, and it will always float up until I'm exhausted" [6, p. 157].

It is the inclusion of such a variant of the functioning of the motif of specularity that is responsible for the change in the plot of the ruby novel. In contrast to the established tradition, the plurality of points of view, supported by a variety of forms of narrative, is not focused primarily on creating the multidimensionality of the image of Anna Nesterenko. In this sense, it is difficult to agree with the conclusions of T.G. Prokhorova and R.R. Fattahova, who noted that in the novel "... different voices of the narrators sound, which in different" languages "tell the story of the life of the main character. Thanks to complex narrative "optics", a kind of stereoscopic, holographic effect is created that allows to see what is happening from different points of view, from the outside and from the inside at the same time" [10].

In the work of D. Rubina can be called a number of works in which the main plot-forming motive becomes the mystery of the personality of the main character. The most vivid illustration of this is the story "On the

⁴ "And then runs out of the huge mirror to meet tomboy: mouth toothy, eyes are burning, laughing, pouring. Running back and forth along the corridor and stomping, dangling! As if she did not care for the deanery. <...> ... poured: "It's not me, it's my joy wants to run"! [6, p. 43 - 44] and "There appeared from under the earth a scarecrow of five years old, growing from a stump in a hat with flowers, in a long mother silk skirt and a blouse with a huge neckline, in which two buttons are children's "big-eyed" nipples.

- Want to see beau-u-uty?! <...>

... froze for a moment ... and suddenly burst out laughing, gaily, amusing, clutching at the stomach. The mouth from ear to ear, teeth - large "adults" mixed with baby's, sharpened. Two holes in place of the upper canines. Funny such a human, the joy of her was a fountain! And wild energy" [6, p. 63 - 64].

⁵ "But only in the end she chose me. That is, I did not choose, but I showed: now you are mine" [6, p. 163] and "... She came to me at the hotel room. I opened the door for a separate three-time knock - such a meaningful blow to fate, the theme of fate.

On the threshold she stood: want to see the beauty? <...>

She stood at my doorstep, I looked at her and everything, everything in these terrible eyes Gorgona saw. <...>

The whole whirlwind swirled and swept in front of me with an unthinkable corkscrew. <...>

And all this was offered to me - in my, as the classics wrote, the advanced years?!

I backed up, waved at her with my hands, and said: "No! No! For God's sake!"

She entered and closed the door behind her "[6, p. 173 - 174].

Upper Maslivka." However, with all formal similarity, both the narrative structure and its functional content in "The Handwriting of Leonardo" and in this work are profoundly different. In the story, the development of the love conflict between Peter Avdeich and Nina sets the plot-forming motive for the mystery of the hero's image; Nina, observing the nature of the relationship between Peter Avdeich and Anna Borisovna, gradually changes its initial impression of the hero - "Alphonse". The development of the central plot-forming motive is realized also by activating the point of view of the reader, the material for thinking of which is the space of improperly direct speech, which is associated with the retrospective of the hero's image (the "knightly" image of Peter Avdeich comes to the fore here). And, finally, the solution of this motive is connected with the point of view of Anna Borisovna, presented in the same form of improperly direct speech and characterized by an extreme degree of balance and even emotional detachment. In other words, in this case D. Rubina changes not so much the traditional orientation of polyphonic narrative points of view as their plot organization, involving Peter Avdeich's image in the "plot of creativity" and providing a dramatic tension in the development of the latter.

In the novel "The Handwriting of Leonardo" the variants of a personalized narrative are devoid of the character of completion. Here, the informative potential of Volodya's story or Semen's letters comes to the forefront, and the nature of their description⁶. The image of Anna, arising through the prism of the consciousness of each of the heroes, looks like an unbroken edge. Moreover, both narratives are practically devoid of reflexivity; neither Volodya, nor even Sema do not try to explain their actions or the behavior of the heroine. The perspective of the mirror prism in the minds of the characters is changing predominantly. The narrative of Volodya is replete with facts, a fairly consistent account of the eventual canvas of Anna's life. Epistolary of Seeds (especially due to temporary displacements: letters addressed to the heroine during life, letters, written after the disappearance of Anna included in the situation not only the missing addressee, but also the deceased addressee) is characterized by a reduced factuality, but it is here that any description leaves a kind of empty space that fills the image of Anna.

The interdependence of these variants of personalized narration, realizing Anna's view of herself, is partly illustrated by an episode from the childhood of the heroine, when she together with Arisha wanted to go "with a note from Uncle Leni to the Circus and for the first time in her eyes applied her abilities: And she walked with an even, relaxed gait, as if giving someone invisible to pull herself by the thread; fumbled between a man in a gray cloak and two teenagers and in front of a shocked Arisha flashed behind the old women. I did not slip, I did not poke my nose, I did not slip through - I went quietly and even ... disinterested, as if detached. Arisha could not explain this intelligently to herself. <...> And Nyuta in the vestibule of the circus leaned back against the column to stand on the weak legs, - wet, at least squeeze... She too could not say how it happened now and why the old women, looking at her, did not detain her. True, she ordered herself to become from within "transparent, that is, without looking away, looked intently into their own mirrors..." [6, p. 149].

Concluding Remarks

Thus, the view "on oneself" reveals the result of looking into oneself. The correlation of these two aspects becomes a reflection of the process of the formation of female subjectivity, the space for the unfoldment of which is the heterotopy of the circus de-centered in all its manifestations.

⁶ In part, this may be due to the very fact of the appeal of D. Rubina to a personalized narrative, in contrast to the gravitation of two other novels of the trilogy to the form of improperly direct speech.

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Footnotes

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