

Markers of New Realism in Russian Literature of the First Twenty Years of the XXI Century

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ABSTRACT

This article provides general observations related to the process of identifying the main markers of new realism in Russian literature, which become distinctive features in the modern literary process.

KEYWORDS: modern Russian literary process, markers, modern literature, new realism in Russian literature

The beginning of the era of “new realism” can be considered the article S. Shargunova “Negation of mourning”. In his manifesto, the author claims that neorealism is “an alternative to postmodernism”, thanks to which “the spirit of the old traditional literature will breathe in a new way” [10; URL:http://magazines.russ.ru/novyi_mi/2001/12/shargunov.html]. According to the writer, the spiritual emptiness and inertia of modern society demanded that literature look for new ways to reflect life: “Mass culture takes its toll. With an infernal cry, the consumer is being torn to pieces by television, the Internet, Dashkova’s new novel...” [10; URL:http://magazines.russ.ru/novyi_mi/2001/12/shargunov.html]. S. Shargunov complains that because of the dictatorship of mass art, good “serious” literature is on the verge of extinction. Moreover, the author of the manifesto considers the reader to be the main culprit in the decline of quality literature.

In the article, the writer put forward the following qualities of new realism:

1. Lack of stylistic conventions, stereotypes. Search for new, original ways of artistic realization; the object of the image is the “average person” surrounded by a “living set of characters” [10; URL:http://magazines.russ.ru/novyi_mi/2001/12/shargunov.html];
2. dominance of seriousness, disregard for the postmodern technique of writing;
3. polyphony of ideas, opinions, rejection of political partiality;
4. the priority of “reliable fiction”, skimping on the techniques of fantasy and absurdity;
5. understanding the ideological and moral type of problems;
6. comprehension of objects in their primary meaning;
7. “... rhythm, clarity, conciseness”.

S. Shargunov’s manifesto, in our opinion, summarized the attempts of modern young writers to move away from the

aesthetics of postmodernism and the avant-garde. His article proclaims the main, in our opinion, principle that should be followed - the destruction of the capsule, inside which the authors of the works have been for the last 10-15 years and the exit “to the people” (to society). The openness of the public position of writers puts contemporary Russian literature in the leading position among other forms of art, which it occupied earlier. It should be noted that, unlike S. Shargunov, we believe that postmodernism and classical realism are the forerunners of neorealism.

This “Manifesto” was supported by the literary critic V. Pustovoy. In her idealist essay “Manifesto for a New Life” she goes further, declaring the existence of three signs that preceded the advent of the new realism. The first symbol, V. Pustovaya believes, is the cultural philosopher Oswald Spengler, who “predicted the birth of a young Russian soul after 2000. In his opinion, until now we have not lived, we have not been aware of ourselves [5; URL:<http://ijp.ru/razd/pr.php?failp=01501200215>]. The first symbol, V. Pustovaya believes, is the cultural philosopher Oswald Spengler, who “predicted the birth of a young Russian soul after 2000. In his opinion, until now we have not lived, we have not been aware of ourselves [5; URL:<http://ijp.ru/razd/pr.php?failp=01501200215>].

V. Pustovaya believes that the new realism is the first step towards the formation of culture and literature of the third millennium. Moreover, the critic is sure that the hero of such literature is in a permanent situation of search. New realism, in her opinion, is different from both postmodernism and traditional realism.

The analysis of the concept of V. Pustovaya made it possible to single out the following signs of neorealist works:

1. Author’s “I” - the leading principle of text construction.
2. Transformation of reality due to the energy of the writing personality, where “he author’s view is not typical of typical circumstances”.
3. Types are symbols where the character goes through the path: from type to personality.
4. Freedom, symbolization, juicy style – a characteristic feature of the artistic texts of the neorealists.
5. Not a reflection of life, but its interpretation; “the search for individual writer’s meanings”.
6. Purity, kindness and understanding of life as the basis of an artistic idea.

It should be noted that in the circle of modern realist writers V. Pustovaya includes all the significant names of young

prose: Zakhar Prilepin, Roman Senchin, Alisa Ganieva, Ksenia Buksha, and others.

Thus, V. Pustovaya actually endows the modern writer with a medium function, i.e. the writer is a theurgist, he owns the truths and shares them with the reader. Renewal (after zeroing) of truths and values is the primary task of the neorealists, according to V. Pustova. In our opinion, the concept of V. Pustovaya is more streamlined compared to the manifesto of S. Shargunov, who focuses on the emotions and total criticism of the modern reader. The critic gives not only an exhaustive description of the neorealist technique of writing, but also highlights the features based on the analysis of the works of Z. Prilepin, R. Senchin.

A prominent young critic A. Rudalev goes further in characterizing neorealism. In the article "Catechism of the 'new realism'. The second wave" he notes both the gains and the failures of the new realists. What is important is that A. Rudalev there is no doubt about the existence of neorealist prose.

Summing up the results of the first decade of literary life and summing up the points of view of critics, he analyzes the work of neorealists through the prism of the challenges of our time. Denoting the new realism as an important and significant phenomenon in modern literature, the young critic, relying on the analysis of modern critical thought in Russia, concludes: "A commonplace has become the assertion that the "new realism" is a nail in the coffin of Russian postmodernism, a reaction to fatigue from it. This is also seen as a kind of generational struggle - young people came and actively work with their shoulders, having essentially done nothing yet" [7; URL: <https://www.rospisatel.ru/konferenzija/rudaljev.htm>].

Let's highlight the features of neorealism according to A. Rudalev:

1. "... the literature of the younger generation, a way of self-identification of authors who have just entered literature ...". In other words, novice authors will be able to actively express themselves only in this creative coordinate system.
2. "New Realism is not a mighty bunch, but a circle of interests ... a phenomenon that has not taken shape with clear boundaries ..." [7; URL: <https://www.rospisatel.ru/konferenzija/rudaljev.htm>]. This thesis directly indicates that neorealists do not take responsibility for the introduction of any ideology through verbal creativity, as their predecessors, realists. Moreover, the "circle of interests" allows you to concentrate on the transfer of the personal experience of the writer without imposing any truths.
3. "New realism" is a direct belonging to Russian culture and tradition... "New realism" is one of the manifestations of a nation in the face of a real danger of losing its identity... "New realism" is Russian realism, a manifestation of Russian civilization. These are "Russian people at a long table", where the table is a unifying Russian principle, which is accepted by completely different people, assimilated, included in this cultural tradition ... "New Realism" is an attempt to crystallize the Russian principle, only through which the country and its culture can be preserved. A. Rudalev insists on the Russianness of this phenomenon, but at the same time

he believes that this new cultural tradition unites multinational writers writing in Russian.

4. "Russian" is the only possible state ideology and "new realism" illustrates this thesis and is in anticipation of the emergence of a new Russian hero." The new Russian hero, according to the concept of A. Rudalev, is only being formed and the writers of new realism contribute to its maturation.

In addition, we note the main markers of the "new realism" in terms of A. Rudalev:

1. "From recording the surrounding being to a clear understanding of the situation and making a diagnosis". Interest focused on 'rebuilding society. This is direct acting literature.
2. "Hero-wanderer, wanderer, restless soul. Unsettledness as the main attribute of a hero. Ways of self-realization of the hero: personal autonomy, withdrawal into oneself, or explosion, rebellion, open confrontation".
3. Fight against philistinism, vision of life as a colorful and multifaceted world, "overcoming the inertia of the environment, breaking through the fetters of everyday life".
4. The absence of aesthetic criteria, the diversity of approaches, the rejection of any aesthetic dictatorship.
5. "Aesthetic diversity and diversity", writing technique - synthetic, synthesis of styles, literary genres and genres.
6. The search for a language, one's own intonation, a focus on "direct contact" with the reader.

It is no coincidence that we have presented the full quotes of A. Rudalev here. The fact is that the critic almost literally repeats the points of view of S. Shargunov and V. Pustova, slightly expanding them through figurative comparisons and postulating the great Russian idea. In other words, his belief system is based on national ideology.

Thus, A. Rudalev defines neorealism as a purely Russian phenomenon, which has not yet been fully formed, but which, according to A. Rudalev's point of view, already has certain signs.

Even before the release of S. Shargunov's manifesto, the writer Roman Senchin, in his article "New Realism - the Direction of the New Century", identified the dominants of neorealist literature - "addressing eternal themes, the rejection of verbal play, documentary, the primary form of narration, the study of the inner world of modern man" [8; URL: <http://www.ijp.ru/razd/pr.php?failp=00104600067>]. It should be noted that these signs contradict the aesthetics of postmodernism, and the literature of fact becomes an important component of the phenomenon of neorealism.

In this regard, the point of view of the Czech researcher is interesting. I. Kalita in the article "New Realism of Russian Literature in the Mirror of Manifestoes of the 21st Century" she analyzes the critical views of neo-realist apologists and their attempts to give a theoretical justification for this trend in literature.

Noting the debatability of the term "new realism", I. Kalita pays tribute to this phenomenon in modern Russian literature, believing that "new realists are the fruit of the synthesis of social realism and postmodernism" [3; C.70].

It is noteworthy that the researcher ranks among the new realists all those who did not consider themselves postmodernists. Among them are S. Shargunov, Z. Prilepin, G. Sadulaev, V. Airapetyan, A. Babchenko, R. Senchin, A. Ganieva, D. Gutsko, I Kochergin, A. Karasev, D. Novikov, I. Mamaeva, N. Klyuchareva and others.

As a conclusion, I. Kalita formulates the distinctive features of young realists: "linguistic looseness; a combination of elements of social realism and postmodernism; interrupted literary continuity, fragmentary depiction of reality, autobiographical reflexivity; the use of various PR methods by authors to promote their work" [3; C.77]. In our opinion, both Roman Senchin and Inna Kalita compiled an algorithm for creating texts using the neorealistic writing technique.

Alisa Ganieva herself in the article "Both boring and sad. Motives of Outcasts and Alienation in Modern Prose" [1; URL: http://magazines.russ.ru/novyi_mi/2007/3/ga15.html], analyzing all the pros and cons around the new direction, recognizes the existence of a "new realism", believing that both realism and postmodernism are relatives of new realism. The writer is sure that both V. Pustovaya and M. Antonicheva, and E. Yermolin, analyzing this prose, distinguishes both realistic and postmodernist techniques in literary texts. Besides, A. Ganieva sees the combination of romantic and realistic principles in the "new realism", which is complemented by elements of neobaroque.

Of the signs of new realism identified by A. Ganieva, the following should be noted:

1. "Fragmentation, fragmentation, bipolarity, metonymic transfer from the whole to the detail and the strong desire of the characters to resist everything and everyone, including themselves" [1; URL: http://magazines.russ.ru/novyi_mi/2007/3/ga15.html].
2. "Redundancy and pushing some elements to the limit" [1; URL: http://magazines.russ.ru/novyi_mi/2007/3/ga15.html].

An analysis of the scientific literature on this phenomenon has shown that scientific reflection on neorealism is only gaining momentum. In particular, the works of E. Yermolin, E. Rotai, A. Serova and others should be noted.

So, E. Yermolin in the article "Does not divide by zero", analyzing the latest Russian literature, believes that today's writer is moving "toward the primordial task of art - the knowledge and expression of truth".

And the scientist calls this movement "new realism". It should be noted that for E. Yermolin "new realism" is "the answer of Russian literature to the abominations of the historical season", this is a kind of "new quality of literature" [2; URL: <https://magazines.gorky.media/continent/2009/140/ne-delitsya-na-nul.html>], which manifests itself both at the level of style and at the level of meanings. As the goal of this way of reflecting reality, E. Yermolin defines the following: "search and expression of the authenticity of being".

We single out the classifying features of neorealism, based on the point of view of E. A. Yermolin:

1. "Compromise form of existence." In other words, the new realists do not quarrel with anyone, do not reject anything, but peacefully coexist, borrowing styles and techniques of writing.

2. Neorealist texts are based on "existential search, lyrical meditations, confessions and memories, and sober social realism" [2; URL: <https://magazines.gorky.media/continent/2009/140/ne-delitsya-na-nul.html>].
3. Neorealist texts are based on "existential search, lyrical meditations, confessions and memories, and sober social realism".
4. Lyrical confession.
5. Artistic generalization.
6. Conventionality, understanding of modern life through the prism of the author's worldview.
7. Documentary, reliance on fact or human document.
8. The hero is "not typical, but characteristic, revealing the drama of the moment, the crisis of hopes and dead social horizons" [2; URL: <https://magazines.gorky.media/continent/2009/140/ne-delitsya-na-nul.html>].

Thus, the main qualitative feature of the new realism is the focus on reliability and authenticity. It is noteworthy that "the means of expressionism and surrealism" is the leading technique of writing and a special approach, according to the concept of E. Yermolin.

Calling neorealism the leading project of modern Russian literature, E. Rotai highlights the work of Z. Prilepin, R. Senchin, A. Ganieva, E. Pogorelaya, D. Gutsko, who "managed not only to create memorable images of modern Russia, but also to introduce into literary use heroes who claim to be the archetypes of the reality of the 21st century" [6; P.50]. The researcher believes that neorealism is a holistic artistic and aesthetic phenomenon, endowed with the following features:

1. Reliance on the traditions of classical Russian literature: "Realism is the highest achievement of Russian literature, adherence to realistic principles is a form of rapprochement with a wealthy tradition and demarcation from postmodernism, with which it is customary to associate the main failures of literature at the turn of the 20th-21st centuries" [6; P.50].
2. Polyplot, stylistic diversity: "His goal is to follow the rapidly changing reality without imposing predetermined ideologies on it" [6; P.53];
3. Autobiography, the primary form of storytelling. The fusion of the biographical author with the intratextual author's "I": "One of the significant beginnings of the "new realism" is the young writer's interest in his own life, in personal experience, in modernity, passed through a personal biography" [6; P.54].
4. Creation of a new character through the prism of one's own experience and a positive attitude towards reality: "Referring to one's own experience should help the author and the reader not only to know reality, but also to morally overcome the temptation that is common in modern culture to take the side of world negation" [6; P.54].
5. Confession, focus on understanding and accepting one's own "I": "It is not about opposing the "I" to objective reality, but about the need for artistic discoveries within the framework of the inner world" [6; P.55].

6. Documentary and naturalism as the main ways of characterizing the era: ““New Realism” is often reproached for naturalism, depending on a kind of “truth of fact”, over which the writer does not want to rise, remaining a kind of documentaryism” [6; P.55].
7. The use of all the resources of the language: from high vocabulary to argotism, as well as political incorrectness as the forced sincerity of neorealists: “...by returning interest in reality, writers also solve an ideological, moral and philosophical task: they raise the status of real life, opposed to the discourses of mass culture. The struggle for reality requires aggression” [6; P.55].
8. Synthesis of various writing techniques and a combination of heterogeneous ways of reflecting reality: “...recreating images of the modern world allows the use of classic, baroque, modernist, postmodernist methodologies if they contribute to the task of understanding the reality of our time. There is reason to believe that the “new realism” will actively offer itself as a kind of synthetic method, going back to the traditions of national classics, but actively using the positive technologies of various artistic systems” [6; S.56].

Thus, E. Rotai, having systematized all points of view, considers neorealism to be a certain “type of artistic worldview” and a literary project actively developed by young writers. This phenomenon of modern Russian literature, in her opinion, appeared in opposition to postmodernism and is based on an optimistic worldview. The main character is an active young man.

A.A. Serov in her study “New Realism as an Artistic Trend in Russian Literature of the 21st Century” [9; P.67] links together the new realism of the Silver Age and the neorealism of the beginning of the XXI century. This approach allowed the researcher to construct an aesthetic program of the new realism. As a leading mode A.A. Serova highlights civic activism, where the writer, along with writing literary texts, actively participates in the public life of the country, and a critical attitude towards the existing government.

As the main markers of the neorealistic way of reflecting life, the researcher identifies:

1. Development of a new reality, priority to topical topics and issues.
2. Personality is opposed to the surrounding reality, which, as a rule, is hostile.
3. The hero is formulated by the society of the 90s.
4. Simplicity, accessibility, openness and sharpness for the general reader.
5. Psychologism, diversity of styles, national identity.

As a main conclusion, A.A. Serov, argues that the emergence of a new aesthetic worldview is due to socio-political and cultural factors and “is one of the stages in the development of realism” [9; S.21]. In addition, “the creation of a holistic and consistent image of reality and the connection of artistic

images with the social soil” are mandatory conditions for the existence of this way of reflecting life.

Thus, scientific reflection, unlike publicists and writers, noting the new quality of Russian literature of the last twenty years, rightly highlights the predominance of national, sociocultural types of problems in the texts of young writers, artistic generalization and the creation of a new type of hero, radically different from the inert, non-initiative hero 90s - 2000s.

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