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Comparative Analysis of Flash Fiction by A.P. Chekhov and J. Joyce: The Narrator and the Main Character in the Structure of Narrative

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Abstract

The article presents a comparative analysis of the relationship between the narrator and the main character in the structure of flash fiction by A.P. Chekhov and J. Joyce. The authors conclude that there are typological similarities in the relationship between the narrator and the main character in the flash fiction of A.P. Chekhov and J. Joyce. This was influenced by the global trend in literature at the turn of the 20th century, according to which the role of the author as an omniscient and omnipresent demiurge of the fictional world started to wane. The paper puts forward that the unique entwinement of the narrator's and the main character's voices in A.P. Chekhov's and J. Joyce's short stories is the main structural-constructive factor of the free indirect speech and contributes to revealing the subtle creative substance of the works.

Keywords: flash fiction, short story, narrative, narrator, free indirect speech, discourse, Chekhov, Joyce.

Introduction

Late 19th – early 20th century was marked by fundamental changes in all spheres of life and society. The crisis of rationalist-positivist ideology, the discovery of the unmanifest and unconscious world, and the revival of the mythological model of life shifted the world order that had been established during the relatively "calm" 19th century (Jardine and Drage, 2018). A global worldview revolution took place: the "philosophy of thought" was replaced by the "philosophy of life" with its affirmation of the precedence of spirit, "organic matter", reconsidering the role of the spontaneous and irrational foundations of being (Zolotukhina-Abolina, Lysikov 2021). Not only social life but also the individual's inner world became more complex and acquired dramatic tension, which began to be perceived as a multilevel mental structure where factors of consciousness and subconsciousness interact and intertwine. These processes were comprehended artistically in the context of rethinking the connection between art and reality, in particular the autonomy of the artistic sphere and the socio-historical determinism of artistic images (Kozel, 2019).

New knowledge about the world and man was authenticated and often suggested, by fiction, where the adjustment and redistribution of genre-style systems took place, and a new understanding of the author and the author's position in the literary text was affirmed (Grechnev, 1979). Poetry and flash fiction was becoming the centre of artistic transformations of the era since these aesthetic systems showed the greatest sensitivity and mobility concerning modern challenges of life. Numerous literary scholars note the active development (Burtsev, 2010; Zenin, 2020) and the expansion of genre and style boundaries (Jackson, 1991; Friedman, 1976; Sharonova & Beavitt, 2020) of small genres in crucial times and, in particular, at the turn of the 20th century (Collins, 1965). The works by A.P. Chekhov and J. Joyce organically fit into these processes and can become material for discovering the typological patterns of the historical and literary process of the late 19th–early 20th centuries.

The selection of flash fiction by J. Joyce and A.P. Chekhov for analysis is due to several factors. First, both writers are vivid national artists, which makes it possible to diagnose various national mentalities in the similarities and differences (Fokina, 2010; Kuznetsova et al., 2020). Secondly, the writers' works reflected the cardinal processes of breaking down the forms of social life and reassessing the values, which naturally caused the search for new artistic and aesthetic forms of reflecting reality (Puchkova, 1993; Kaskatayeva et al., 2020). Thirdly, the new artistic concept of a person needed a transformation of approaches to the embodiment of the specific features of a person's inner life and new forms of expressing the author's position (Meletinskii, 1990; Tan, 2021). The indicative nature of these processes at the time was evidenced by flash fiction – a field in which both J. Joyce and A.P. Chekhov are justly considered to be acknowledged masters. Therefore, the comparative analysis of A.P. Chekhov's and J. Joyce's flash fiction provides an opportunity to explore more deeply the typological correspondences and original creative features of both authors. At the same time, the central issue in the focus of literary research is the problem of the status of a narrative as a manner of narration, and presentation of facts and events in the author's work.

The hypothesis of the study: the typological similarity of the flash fiction by J. Joyce and A.P. Chekhov is a specific relationship between a narrator and a character which acts as the main structural-constructive factor of free indirect speech and contributes to revealing the subtle creative substance of the works.

Methods

We used both general research methods (analysis, synthesis, description, definition, interpretation) and proper methods of literary studies; a complex of approaches and methods is integrated, the main ones being the ideas and principles of the traditional cultural-historical method which provided general culturological, sociological and psychological aspects of the study of J. Joyce's and A.P. Chekhov's flash fiction. The narratological approach to flash fiction by J. Joyce and A.P. Chekhov is used to analyze the narrative structure, the correlation between the author's and someone else's speech, identify different points of view on the problem, and establish the ambiguity of the author's position (Birke, von Contzen, Kukkonen, 2022; Toivo, Willumsen, 2022; Eiranen, Hatavara, Kivimäki, Mäkelä, Toivo, 2022). We used elements of intertextual analysis to identify the relationship between the works of J. Joyce and A.P. Chekhov at the level of ideas, stylistic features, etc.

Results

The function of the narrator as the key narrative instance in fiction

Every literary work is built according to certain rules – the writer's peculiar way of organizing events within. In the narrative of a literary text, an important figure is the one who leads the story – the narrator, that is, a person invented by the author. This literary figure can be the author, a character, or some other person. It is the narrator as the key instance that determines the features of revealing the content of the work, and the nature of the narration/story in the text. It is the important subject of the narrative space that verbalizes artistic information. F. Stanzel (1982, p. 48-49) points out the main function of the mediator-narrator in the narrative text; E.S. Maslov (2015) notes that "a narrator is a linguistic and stylistic epicentre of narration, a fictional person invented by the author, derived from the author's consciousness" (p. 67). L.V. Tataru (2011) argues that:

"The real subject of narration in a literary work is the narrator, therefore, speaking about the attitude between the world of the author and the main character, we mean, first of all, the relationship between the level of the narrator and the character" (p. 57).

W. Fisher (1985) points out that:

"a narrator is a fictional storyteller created by the writer, predominantly one (sometimes several) in the same diegetic space as the narrator whom the narrator is addressing. A narrator can be vivid (explicit), omniscient, self-aware, and confident. The narrator forms the object of the narrative, the fictional world, can distance themselves from the narrative, characters and the narrator" (p. 348).

There is a definition stating that the narrator in the narrative text is a "voice" that speaks, is responsible for the act of narration, and tells an event as a "true story" (Belousov, 2012, p. 19).

W. Schmidt (2003) notes that "the narrator is perceived by the reader not as an abstract function but as a subject with certain anthropomorphic features of thought and language" (p. 38). Usually, the purpose of a narrator in a literary text is identified with the points of view present in the narrative. An important understanding of the narrator's status in artistic and textual communication was offered by G. Prince who pointed out the following significant components of this literary category: the ability to assimilate a complex of prompts from the "author's discourse" into the reader's one and become the centre of understanding in the classic oppositional structure between addressee and recipient. According to the scholar, the narrator's main function is focused on establishing the level of the reader's independence and responsibility and delineating the boundaries of the artistic space (Prince, 2003).

The main criteria in determining the types of narrators are the dichotomies of diegesis (a fictional world in which narrative situations and events occur) and exegesis (non-narrative units of the text: explanation, interpretation, comments, reasoning, meta-narrative). It is necessary to clarify that diegesis and exegesis represent the text of the narrator, and mimesis represents the text of the characters of a literary text. With a diegetic narrator, the narrative is about oneself, and with a non-diegetic narrator, the narrative is about other objects. It has been established that the diegetic narrator functions in two hypostases: as the subject of the narrative and the object of the narrative

story (Schmidt, 2003). Moreover, the following types of narrators are distinguished according to their functions (based on the classification by G. Genette (1998)): homodiegetic – a narrator who functions in the text and acts as a participant in the events. In this type of narrative, the narration is usually in the first person; heterodiegetic – a narrator who is in the fictional world, but outside of the action, the narrator appears as an outside observer, although the narrator leads the story; extradiegetic – a narrator who leads the reader, acts as a commentator on events, reflects on the events. Usually, such a narrator is not present in the fictional space of the work so the story is presented in the third person. In any case, a narrator is a fictional person created by the writer.

In modern narrative discourse, using F. Stanzel's principles, there are actorial, auctorial, and neutral narrative types (and, consequently, the types of narrators). The narrative type is actorial if the narrator's judgments, assessments, and remarks come to the foreground; in auctorial type, the fictional world of the work is presented through the character's eyes; the neutral narrative type is devoid of individualized interpretation and is characterized by an impersonal image of what is seen and heard in the outside world (Stanzel, 1982). The narrator, as the main subject of the narrative, on the one hand, can be a prominent individual, on the other hand, simply a bearer of some impersonal assessment of others. It is discovered that when a narrator is an impersonal bearer of a feature, then there is often an ironic context. In this regard, W. Schmidt (2003) notes that "the reduction of the narrator directed towards the ironic voice is mainly found in the 'personal' narration, that is, where the nation is oriented towards the character's point of view" (p. 39).

In the modern literary plane, the existence of two main narrative forms has been noted: I-narration, that is, the narrator in the first person and the narrator in the third person with an objective presentation. Under those conditions, when the writer talks about events in the third person and indicates their presence as a character, it is said that a narrator takes the "position of an Olympian". In the narrative continuum, an equally important function is performed by the image of the author that directly or indirectly influences the image of the narrator, coordinating the narrative realm. Speaking about the correlation of the narrator with the author, various trends were revealed: on the one hand, the narrator may have in common with the author, and be simply imagined by the latter; on the other hand, the narrator may be a direct reflection of the author's positions, thoughts, and ideas. Such a narrator acts according to the author's strategies and appears as the author's "mask". The narrator can be viewed identically to the author, or completely differently.

The narrator and the main character in flash fiction by A.P. Chekhov and J. Joyce

Researchers of A.P. Chekhov have repeatedly noted the important role of narrators in organizing the narration (Tamarchenko, 2008). Chekhov often creates a multilevel system of narrators, the relationship between which creates the plot and, most importantly, the semantic tension of the text. Thus, in the story "Lights", the narration begins with the "I"-narrator, and then the function of the narrator is taken over by one of the characters participating in the night conversation at the railway construction – engineer Ananyev, who details his visits to the childhood city and meeting a young the woman who was called Kisotchka in her youth. At the same time, the engineer's story returns several times to the starting point of narration, forming the so-called "dashed narrative", when the built-in narrative is intermittently interrupted by the framing story

(in terms of narratology these are extradiegetic and intradiegetic narratives). The short stories "About Love", "Gooseberries", "Easter Eve", etc. are organized similarly.

Unlike A.P. Chekhov, J. Joyce usually does not use too complex narrative forms or create a multilevel narrative in flash fiction. Even such a common narrative situation in short stories as "I"-narration, does not often occur in Joyce's work. Namely, out of fifteen stories in the collection "Dubliners," only three ("The Sisters", "An Encounter", "Araby") have just such a narrative structural form. However, even when there is only one narrator in the story, and the event of the narrative and the narrated event do not seem to be separated at all (neither in time, nor in space, nor in terms of lexical and grammatical parameters), one can find markers hidden in the verbal-compositional development of the text that indicate the heterogeneity of these events and the significance of the relationship between them.

The structure of literary speech for both Joyce and Chekhov is characterized by a tendency to overcome the "author's subjectivity", which manifests itself in the search for various forms of indirect speech and the dominance of free indirect speech. The authors utilize this form of narration in an attempt to impartially reproduce complex internal collisions of characters through the contamination of the means of external and internal narrative planes. As a result of such a narrative strategy, a situation is created when the concept of "author's voice", which is traditional for analyzing the stylistic features of a work, is unproductive. The author, as a biographical personality, remains outside the created fictional world. However, the narrator's discourse and the character's discourse are actualized in the text.

Both in Chekhov's short stories and Joyce's novellas, tense internal collisions that hide external inactivity break through outward in the very nature of the narrative. The latter becomes not descriptive but dramatized and is conducted mainly from the point of view ("in perspective") of the character, and the character's state, feelings are not described at all but are embodied in detail, conveyed in gesture, facial expressions, facial expressions, intonations, etc.

J. Joyce, while working on the collection of short stories *Dubliners*, formed the conviction that artistic creation is not journalism or journalistic reporting but a specific transformation of the real world and human consciousness. The writer brings this belief into fruition in the idea of epiphany which is understood as a state of insight and sudden spiritual clarity which gives rise to specific images of objects that "combine physical and psychological reality (the physical reality of their being in the world and the psychological reality of their perception by the subject)" (Puchkova, 1993, p. 168).

In the work, this phenomenon is manifested in a wide variety of elements: facial expressions, a suddenly uttered phrase, unexpectedly accented interior details that can associatively convey a person's state of mind, etc. In the text, epiphany takes on the form of diffused speech, in which the voices of the narrator and the character are combined due to the absence of axiological comments. At the same time, there is no direct immersion into the inner world of a person like L. Tolstoy. To gain access to the hidden images of human consciousness, the author resorts to a strong intrusion from the outside which ensures the launch of active processes in the consciousness. Such a situation occurs in the short story "A Little Cloud", when the main character Chandler, after a conversation with his former friend, sharply realizes the hopelessness of his existence; in "A Painful Case", where Mister Duffy, having learned about the suicide of a loved one,

actually admits his guilt; in "The Dead" where "freelance artist" Gabriel Conroy, discovering an unknown past of his wife's life, reveals a sense of mental stagnation and spiritual baseness. Moreover, all these realizations are given to the reader not through the author's direct characterizations but exclusively through their observations and conclusions.

The uniqueness of the narrative discourse in most of Chekhov's stories is also largely because the work lacks the author's assessments and characterizations of the events. Everything that is presented to the reader from the impersonal narrator passes through the prism of the main character's consciousness: we only have access to what the main character sees, hears, and feels. For example, this is the structure of the short story "At Christmas Time". At the same time, in some works, for example, in the short story "Gusev", there are clear transitions from the narrator's point of view and voice to the main character's narrative perspective, which are set by parentheses (Chekhov, 1986, p. 327).

Both Chekhov and Joyce, as authors, try to objectify the narrative as much as possible and distance themselves from the axiological sphere of narrative. Contemporary literary criticism calls fictional discourse of this kind "the poetics of absence", linking it with the phenomenon of "open work" (Eco, 2003). The characteristic features of such poetics are the author's non-interference in the development of events, the avoidance of any value judgments, the open motivation of the characters' behaviour, explanations regarding changes in the temporal and spatial plans of the story, the reduction of cause-and-effect relationships in the plot development, the dissolution of the author's thoughts in the speech of the characters. In the short stories by Chekhov and Joyce, the dominant speech form is textual interference, that is, the combination of the narrative planes of the narrator and the main character performing the structural and constructive function and serving as the main means of revealing the subtle artistic content of works.

Typology of fictional speech in prose usually involves the identification of such types of speech as the author's, free indirect, and character's speech. Each of them represents a certain compositional structure, organized by the ratio of the voices of the author, narrator, and character, and has its content, and functions, characterized by a relatively fixed set of constructive features and speech devices (intonation, the ratio of tense-aspect forms, word order, the general nature of vocabulary and syntax) (Kozhevnikova, 1994, p. 133). In the general structure of the text, the uniqueness of these types of narration is determined by the presence of an identified or unidentified subject of speech and is embodied in the corresponding speech forms, which in themselves evoke, with some certainty, an idea of the subject, create the subject's image. Thus, a special type of narration (or some combination of the types) is distinguished by the sphere of the prevalence of forms of one's own/author's or someone else's/character broadcasting within a literary and artistic work.

Free indirect speech is particularly common in flash fiction of the psychological direction. This type of indirect speech is characterized by the presence of two voices in the structure of separate fragments of the text. It can be a phrase or several phrases that are most often distinguished by a paragraph in writing. As a rule, a paragraph begins with the narrator's speech, and has the goal of introducing the reader to a new situation, a plot twist, and preparing a psychological motivation for events. Further, with more or less obviousness, the main character's speech is interspersed into the voice of the narrator, forming a two-voice narration, in which, depending on the specific goal, one or another voice dominates. In the development of free indirect speech, emotive elements

(colloquial vocabulary, epithets, individually marked phrases) play an important role, since their emotional-subjective colouring makes it possible to identify the character's voice and establish the semantic significance of the transition from one type of speech to another.

Flash fiction by Chekhov and Joyce is characterized by a general tendency in literature at the turn of the 20th century, according to which the role of the author as an omniscient demiurge of a literary text is gradually lost (Meletinskii, 1990). In the structure of fiction, this trend is manifested in the search for various forms of indirect speech and the dominance of free indirect speech. The authors resort to this form of narration, trying to impartially reproduce complex internal collisions of characters through the contamination of the means of external and internal speech. As a result of such a narrative strategy, a situation is created when the concept of "author's voice", which is traditional for analyzing the stylistic features of a work, is unproductive. The author, as a biographical personality, remains outside the created fictional world.

To characterize the features of the relationship between the voices of the narrator and the character in the narrative discourse by A.P. Chekhov and J. Joyce, let us consider the stories "The Bishop" by A.P. Chekhov and "The Dead" by J. Joyce. These works are chosen because these works represent the most characteristic features of the writers' flash fiction: "The Dead" completes the collection *Dubliners* (Joyce, 1982; Joyce, 2019) (the last of the 15 stories included in it) and summarizes the ideological-content and formal searches of the early period of the writer's work. "The Bishop" was written by A.P. Chekhov in 1902 and marked the transition, according to the author, to a new outlook on life (Chekhov, 1986, p. 452, 456).

A key episode in A.P. Chekhov's short story is the visit of a mother to her son, "his Reverence Peter", who was called Paul in his childhood. This episode significantly changes the stylistic pattern of the text, in particular the nature and content of free indirect speech. The latter organizes the narration from the very beginning of the work when the voice and focus of the character's vision are emphasized:

"One could not see the doors through the haze ("one" obviously means the Bishop – author's note); the endless procession rolled toward him, and seemed as if it must go on rolling forever" (Chekhov, 1986, p. 186).

Illness, fatigue and physical exhaustion of the main character are conveyed by a gradational series of emotional statements and a string of epithets,

"How hot and close the air was, and how long the prayers! His Reverence was tired. His dry, parching breath was coming quickly and painfully, his shoulders were aching, and his legs were trembling" (Chekhov, 1986, p. 186).

After the news of the mother's arrival, the Bishop's outlook sharply changes perspective. From the "difficult" present, the Bishop organically moves to the "easy" past, the time of his childhood. The main character returns to the childish, directly intuitive way of thinking about the world, in which the subjective-evaluative categories of a "positive" plane play a decisive role, and are conveyed through several appropriate epithets,

"Oh, that dear, precious, unforgettable childhood of his! Why did those years that had vanished forever seem so much brighter and richer and gayer than they really had been?" (Chekhov, 1986, p. 188).

As one can see, the stylistic patterns in this and the above passage are significantly different: before the mother's arrival, stylistic components with negative connotations prevailed in free indirect speech, and the components with positive connotations were predominant after the arrival.

The narration in Joyce's story "The Dead" (Joyce, 2019) unfolds in a similar pattern. The narrative here is in the third person but mainly from the perspective of the vision and perception of the main character, Gabriel Conroy. The constant fluctuations between the narrator's voice and the main character's voice create the discrete, undulating speech movement of the narrative. Each fragment, starting with the neutral voice of the narrator, is then transformed into free indirect speech with the dominance of vocabulary and intonation-syntactic structure, which are characteristic of the main character's speech. The text fragment ends with a brief conclusion to the situation that belongs to the main character or a more or less detailed meditation about certain circumstances or problems. Cf.:

"He waited outside the drawing-room door until the waltz should finish, listening to the skirts that swept against it and to the shuffling of feet. He was still discomposd by the girl's bitter and sudden retort. It had cast a gloom over him which he tried to dispel by arranging his cuffs and the bows of his tie. <...> He would only make himself ridiculous by quoting poetry to them which they could not understand. They would think that he was airing his superior education. He would fail with them just as he had failed with the girl in the pantry. He had taken up a wrong tone. His whole speech was a mistake from first to last..." (Joyce, 2019).

As one can see, at first the narrator's voice is completely devoid of subjectivity, but the fragment ends, in fact, with the main character's direct speech which is not in quotation marks. It gives a negative assessment of his actions, even running ahead since his speech has yet to take place during the evening feast.

Joyce, as an author, tries to distance himself from the organization of the story and present a direct look at the psyche of the main character using free indirect speech. This technique subsequently developed into the method of the stream of consciousness consistently and systematically applied in J. Joyce's famous novel "Ulysses".

It is important to note that, the opposition of the bottom and the top is an important factor in the narrative structure of both stories. In the perception of Chekhov's character, the horizontal projection of space is indicated by the dominant "dark" with the appropriate stylistic design: "dark streets", "black shadows" (shadows – that which is located on a plane, that is, horizontally). However, the "top" is represented by images of height and light: "a tall belfry, all bathed in moonlight"; "calm, brooding moon". The "earthly" world for the bishop is darkness, an unpleasant, hard monastic life, in which the bishop notes the burden of "low ceilings", "heavy smell". The upper world is always dominated by light, solar or lunar ("the sky bathed in sunshine"; "in the moonlight, bright and tranquil") and life-affirming sounds: birdsong in the sky, music of church bells. It is significant that individual details of the "lower" world act as a kind of mediator relative to the upper ones (for example, "white crosses on graves"), and also carry semantics similar to the "upper" images. As one can see, the structure of the fictional space of Chekhov's short story is

formed with the help of markers of free indirect speech, which makes it possible to understand that the death of the protagonist is not final (it is significant that the author, obviously, deliberately did not include either the bishop's death episode or the burial episode in the plot of the story).

The chronotope of Joyce's story is limited to a short period (one evening) and the space of the house (at first the action takes place in the house of the Morkan sisters, and ends at the hotel, where the Conroys come after the party). However, here, too, is an antithesis between the internal and the external. Gabriel, just before the speech at the table, which the character already assessed as hypocritical and unsuccessful, suddenly turns his inner eye to what is happening on the street,

"People, perhaps, were standing in the snow on the quay outside, gazing up at the lighted windows and listening to the waltz music. The air was pure there. In the distance lay the park where the trees were weighted with snow. The Wellington Monument wore a gleaming cap of snow that flashed westward over the white field of Fifteen Acres" (Joyce, 2019).

Later, at the hotel, after the wife's confession, Gabriel looks outside again,

"He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead" (Joyce, 2019).

These final phrases of the story, of course, are performed in a minor key, but the phrases simultaneously expand that narrowed world of a hardened and self-confident existence that was previously characteristic of Gabriel.

In addition to the spatial opposition, the temporal opposition of the present and the past is also significant in both short stories, which are also organized using the relationship between the narrator's voice and the characters' voices. In Chekhov's short story, the narrative unfolds in time as a movement from the present, which describes the mother's arrival to the bishop and his death, to the past, in which two periods of the bishop's life are presented in more or less detail – his childhood and his eight-year stay abroad.

The antithetical comparison of the present and the past is reinforced by the opposition of darkness and light. Thus, when the bishop returns late in the evening after the service to the monastery where he lives, and the bishop is informed of the arrival of his mother, pictures of the past stand before him painted in clear, light colours. The next time, during the evening service, listening to the chanting of the monks, the bishop sits in the altar ("it was dark") and unexpectedly compares the "other world" (the conventional future) and childhood (the idealized past), which seems to him bright and joyful. In this fragment, the saturation of free indirect speech with numerous signs of the character's worldview makes it possible to understand his inner drama, which has, in fact,

an existential meaning, as it portends the imminent departure of the bishop from "this" world – at the same time inexpressibly beautiful and vain and sinful.

Like Chekhov, Joyce unfolds a dual time perspective – the perspective of the present and the memory perspective. In the short story "The Dead", there are quite a few scenes of dual time perspective. The present and the past are clearly opposed to each other in the main character's inner world. Gabriel Conroy is not fully aware of his drama, which is the artificiality of his life, alienation and the inability to establish a truly organic connection with the world around him and those closest to him. The main character loves his wife but cannot express his precious thoughts to her, feels helpless and confused. Therefore, Gabriel is trying to cross the boundaries of the present and plunge into another, ideal world, which to him is the circumstances of his past: the first letter received from Greta, their honeymoon, sailing on a ship, etc. (Ghandeharion, Abbaszadeh, 2020).

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that the typological similarity in A.P. Chekhov's and J. Joyce's flash fiction is the relationship between the narrator and the main character. This is determined by the global trend in literature at the turn of the 20th century, according to which the role of the author as an omniscient and omnipresent demiurge of the fictional world starts to wane. Joyce unfolds the narrative in such a way that a certain story is not told but shown. In this case, the author's participation is reduced to a minimum not only in the development of events but also in the descriptions and characteristics of the characters; cause-and-effect relationships are not accentuated at all; rather, on the contrary, are veiled in every possible way. Like Joyce, Chekhov avoids "the author's" describing the state of mind of the characters; this state of mind is understandable from the comparison of the main character's actions with the details of his inner monologue, the details of his perception of reality, thoughts and feelings, which are reflected in his inner speech. At the same time, the uniqueness of psychological analysis in the works of both authors lies in the fact that the authors give preference to the disclosure of the internal state through portrait and object details, landscape, gesture, and action. However, the author's "analysis-motivation" is completely absent.

The unique entwining of the narrator's and the main character's voices in A.P. Chekhov's and J. Joyce's short stories is a main structural-constructive factor of the free indirect speech and contributes to revealing the subtle creative substance of the works. For Chekhov, this is the realization that the story told in the short story is not death, but the resurrection of the main character; then the author's deepest idea of the unity, integrity and invincible essence of life is embodied. For Joyce, on the one hand, a person overcomes speculative, arrogant ideas about his superiority over other people, and on the other, liberation from suppressed desires, overcoming alienation and comprehending the higher essence of life. Therefore, the hypothesis of the study was confirmed: the typological similarity of the flash fiction by J. Joyce and A.P. Chekhov is a specific relationship between a narrator and a character which acts as the main structural-constructive factor of free indirect speech and contributes to revealing the subtle creative substance of the works.

Declaration of Conflict of Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest.

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