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Received June 20, 2017

Revised July 19, 2017

Accepted August 23, 2017

УДК 925:159.923

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PERSONAL RELIABILITY OF THE NARRATOR AS A FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION OF TRADITIONAL NARRATIVE DISCOURSE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

Ivashkevych E. E. Personal reliability of the narrator as a fundamental question of traditional narrative discourse from the point of view of psycholinguistics / E. E. Ivashkevych // Problems of Modern Psychology : Collection of research papers of Kamianets-Podilskyi Ivan Ohienko National University, G. S. Kostyuk Institute of Psychology at the National Academy of Pedagogical Science of Ukraine / scientific editing by S. D. Maksymenko, L. A. Onufrieva. – Issue 38. – Kamianets-Podilskyi : Aksioma, 2017. – P. 166–175.

E. E. Ivashkevych. Personal reliability of the narrator as a fundamental question of traditional narrative discourse from the point of view of psycholinguistics. In the article it was shown that the reliability of a narrator might be put to doubt in several ways, and the truthfulness of any

fictive narration as such had also been questioned. Unreliable narration is often linked with mental illness and instability, the voice of a broken mind. The so-called «mad» characters in literature have traditionally represented silenced views, they have been objects of ridicule or protagonists for cruel and unexplainable actions. However, this characterization of an insane literary narrator lacks much in definition, and instead one should focus on the question of how and with what kind of narrative structures mental instabilities are inscribed in fictive texts.

It was proved that the rise of cognitive narratology had also greatly contributed to the study of the depiction of the human mind and human consciousness in literary works, providing the reader with an insight into the interaction with the literary text.

As the examples of proving some details the author of the article used the novel «Watchmen» by Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons. It was shown that the question of the reliable and unreliable narrator had been viewed in traditional narratology a case of «an ironic form», a conflict between the story and the narrative in which the story undermined the discourse. «Irony» as such is a tricky term as it firmly resists definition, and is not without difficulties. It was shown that the ironic form of writing established a secret communication between the implied author and the implied reader, which gave forth the unreliability of the narrator. Detecting irony requires an interpretative strategy that involves reading against the grain of the text and assuming that one grasps the unwritten message behind the literal one.

So, analyzing «Watchmen» and describing psychological characteristics of narrative level of graphic novels the author of the article proposed such psycholinguistic aspects of narrative discourse: visual emphasis; focalization of information; epigraphs' emphasis; meta-narrative presentation of the text; contrasting visual linkings; actualization of narrative potential.

Key words: narrative discourse, visual emphasis, focalization of information, epigraphs' emphasis, meta-narrative presentation of the text, contrasting visual linkings, actualization of narrative potential.

Е. Е. Івашкевич. Особистісна надійність оповідача як фундаментальне питання традиційного нарративного дискурсу з точки зору психолінгвістики. У статті було показано, що особистісна надійність автора твору та достовірність оповідання може піддаватися сумніву кількома способами, адже навіть ненадійна розмова часто пов'язана з психічними захворюваннями та нестабільністю, «розбитим розумом» тощо. Так звані «божевільні» персонажі в літературі традиційно представляються за допомогою «мовчазних поглядів», вони нерідко висміюються головними героями твору в результаті виконання досить жорстоких і необґрунтованих дій. Проте ця характеристика «божевільного» літературного оповідача зосереджує нашу увагу на питанні, як саме і за допомогою яких нарративних структур створюються такі літературні тексти із зображенням психічної нестабільності їх персонажів.

Було доведено, що розквіт когнітивної наратології також значною мірою сприяв вивченню мислення та свідомості людини, що відображається в літературних роботах, надаючи читачеві глибину розуміння завдяки взаємодії з літературним текстом.

У статті як приклад використовується роман «Нічні охоронці» Алана Мура та Дейва Гіббонса. Було показано, що питання стосовно надійного та ненадійного оповідача в традиційній наратології розглядається в «іронічній формі», як конфлікт між історією та наративним дискурсом, в якому оповідання з боку автора створюється саме завдяки останньому. «Пронія» за своєю суттю є імпліцитним терміном, оскільки вона і за формою презентації, і за значенням не відповідає своєму визначенню. Було показано, що іронічна форма авторської оповіді має за мету так зване фасилітативне спілкування між автором та читачем. Розуміння іронії вимагає такої стратегії інтерпретації, яка включає в себе імпліцитне читання, розуміння підтекстової інформації тощо.

Аналізуючи твір «Нічні охоронці» Алана Мура та Дейва Гіббонса, автором цієї статті було запропоновано такі психолінгвістичні аспекти наративного дискурсу: візуальна акцентуація, актуалізація інформації, актуалізація епіграфа, метанаративна презентація тексту, контрастні візуальні словосполучення, актуалізація наративного потенціалу.

Ключові слова: наративний дискурс, візуальна акцентуація, актуалізація інформації, актуалізація епіграфа, метанаративна презентація тексту, контрастні візуальні словосполучення, актуалізація наративного потенціалу.

The topicality of the research. The reliability of the narrator has been one of the fundamental questions of traditional narratology. The reliability of a narrator may be put to doubt in several ways, and the truthfulness of any fictive narration as such has also been questioned. Unreliable narration is often linked with mental illness and instability, the voice of a broken mind. The so-called «mad» characters in literature have traditionally represented silenced views, they have been objects of ridicule or protagonists for cruel and unexplainable actions. However, this characterization of an insane literary narrator lacks much in definition, and instead one should focus on the question of how and with what kind of narrative structures mental instabilities are inscribed in fictive texts.

In «Watchmen», one of the key characters and narrators, the vigilante Rorschach, is represented as an ambiguous character in connection to his mental health, and it is stated on several occasions by the other characters that he is not mentally reliable. The concept of unreliable narration must be redefined when discussing a visual narrative such as a graphic novel, as the imagery linked to narration and focalization of a potentially unreliable narrator transfers the discussion to a completely different level. How reliable are the ima-

ges and visual storylines shown to the reader through Rorschach's inner focalization? Is it possible to determine the state of his mind from his narration?

As a part of this discussion, the rise of cognitive narratology has also greatly contributed to the study of the depiction of the human mind and human consciousness in literary works, providing the reader with an insight into the interaction with the literary text.

The review of recent researches. This article will discuss the questions of reliable/unreliable narration through the character of Rorschach, a character who is repeatedly given a narrative position in «Watchmen», an authoritative position through which he is able to affect the narrative schemas created by the readers. This creates an ambiguous element in the narration, as his sanity is repeatedly questioned by the other characters, and yet, according to M. Wolf-Meyer [5, p. 508], he is one of the most popular characters of the graphic novel and one the readers identify with. Apparently, the key to his success is simply the fact that he is «a misanthropic, has poor social skills, and is ostracized by his peers and society». This creates an interesting dilemma concerning the formal elements of narrative and their ethical consequences. The ethical and political consequences of identification with a sociopath are many-fold, and could in a detailed analysis reveal something about the hidden politics of the narrative that is «Watchmen». This relates to the question of the comic book audience, which according to M. Wolf-Meyer, is either the stereotypical «adolescent male» [5, p. 508], or alternately, consists largely of men, which means that his argument on supposed reader identification must be read with reservations. In this section I will examine how the varieties of focalization borrowed from traditional narratology will function in the context of a visual narrative of a graphic novel. The concept of focalization that has been developed further by the way of cognitive narratology, which focuses on the perception of the reader and how it effects the way the text is read and interpreted, will be taken into consideration in this section of the thesis. In addition, the thematic structure upholding symmetry will be discussed in connection to Rorschach and his character, as his mask already manifests concretely the thematic symmetry in the manner of Rorschach inkblots.

So, **the tasks** of our research are:

1. To analyze the narration of «Watchmen» and to show the role of implicit irony.
2. To describe psychological characteristics of the narration with the details of implicit irony in its context.

3. To propose psycholinguistic aspects of narrative discourse.

The main material of the research. As a key character in «Watchmen», Rorschach (as known as Walter Kovacs) is repeatedly described by various other characters and sources as an unstable person, and his mental health is often put to doubt. Even his actions suggest it, as he evokes fear in everyone and commits acts of brutal violence without hesitation [4, p. 14–16, 24–25]. The appendix of Chapter VI includes a report on him by the New York State Psychiatric Hospital as well as reports from his childhood dreams, contextualizing his character further and providing clues and motifs as to how he has become the «madman» he is today. The appendix is clearly a part of the «Kovacs-file» Dr. Long uses in the main narrative, and a handwritten note by Dr. Long actually proposes to «identify a new syndrome that will help us to understand those other people who have in the past shared Kovacs masked vigilante activities» [4, p. 32]. The superhero activity is viewed as a psychological anomaly, suggesting that in fact all the heroes of *Watchmen* are nothing more than madmen. The chapter also makes an allusion to Friedrich Nietzsche through the epigraph of Chapter VI, titled «The Abyss Gazes Also». The epigraph provides also the title of the chapter, becoming the key motif of the chapter:

*«Battle no and if you gaze
with monsters, into the abyss
lest ye become the abyss gazes
a monster, also into you»* [4, p. 32].

This quotation comes from Nietzsche's «Beyond Good and Evil» (1886), and it creates several parallels and interpretative possibilities in the narrative context of «Watchmen». One obvious link is naturally the relationship between Rorschach and Dr. Long, as Dr. Long «battles» with Rorschach during their psychotherapy sessions, ultimately losing the battle and discovering the abyss gazing back at him: «*The horror is this: In the end, it is simply a picture of empty meaningless blackness. We are alone. There is nothing else*» [4, p. 28].

Staring at a Rorschach ink blot in the increasing darkness of the panels, Dr. Long has lost the battle, and wades into the abyss. The relevance of the quote is more subtle than this, however. Analyzing the relationship between madness, philosophy and literature in connection to Nietzsche's writing, I can characterize madness in terms of «blindness», of being blind to oneself to the point of entailing an illusion of reason. Madness is thus a major philosophical preoccupation, which can be discussed through such literary

figures as Nietzsche, and, I shall claim, by such fictional characters as Rorschach. Rorschach's moral conviction is infallible and uncompromising to the point of illusionary reason, as his narrative monologue reveals: «*Soon there will be war. Millions will burn. Millions will perish in sickness and misery. Why does one death matter against so many? Because there is good and there is evil, and evil must be punished. Even in the face of Armageddon I shall not compromise this. But there are so many deserving retribution... and so little time*» [4, p. 24].

His belief in good and evil knows no shades of grey, and his conviction for truth at all costs acts as an indicator of his madness, his unwillingness to compromise moving to the point of illusionary reason – at least according to Nietzsche, who states that «The belief in truth is precisely madness». This rhetoric echoes the image already familiar from Shakespeare's era of madmen being the only ones being able to see the truth. Rorschach believes in the absolute value of truth, and his position as a madman enables him to see the «truth». One must also remember that the morality of a narrator does not determine his/her reliability; we do not, for example, question Dr. Manhattan's narrative on Chapter IV, although he himself admits that «The morality of my actions escape me» [4, p. 14]. As S.Chatman among others has pointed out, unreliability is a question of discourse, the view of what happens and what the existents are like, not a question of the personality of the narrator [4, p. 23]. An «unsavory» narrator, like Humbert on Vladimir Nabokov's «Lolita» (1955), can tell a story completely reliably, which means that Rorschach's narrative account and its reliability cannot be judged by his moral views.

The name «Rorschach» that Walter Kovacs has given his «unhealthy fantasy personality» [4, p. 8] as Dr. Long calls it, is familiar from the field of psychology, where the so-called Rorschach inkblot tests are used in psychiatric evaluation. The Rorschach Inkblot Test was introduced to psychology in 1921 by Hermann Rorschach, and it is a projective personality test in which the unconscious level of the mind determines the way one perceives the inkblots, which in and of themselves are «nothing». Today the test is held somewhat unreliable, and is used only when it forms a part of a larger battery of tests. These today controversial symmetrical inkblots appear in the narrative as well as in the mask Rorschach wears, which is made of a special fabric which has viscous fluids between two layers of latex and which is heat and pressure sensitive, thus being in

constant motion, creating continuous «inkblots» on the surface of Rorschach's «face». As mentioned above, the meanings of the inkblots are projected on them by viewers unconscious, as they are in themselves meaningless. Rorschach's face is a continuous flow of varying inkblot images, constantly shifting and changing, even at times creating visual continuums in the narrative, as in Chapter XII, where the shadow of Dan and Laurie embracing on the bottom of page 22 is followed by an inkblot image of Rorschach's face with a similar pattern – and yet, the inkblot only shows the reader a projection, an interpretation. The visual narrative leads the reader, encourages him/her to make certain interpretative decisions concerning the narrative. Rorschach's ace is «empty» in a way, he is a blank canvas on which to project emotions.

The madman is not, strictly speaking, a person: he is no one, a blank, an empty speech receptacle. And it is insofar as he is «no one», a null set or an empty square, that he makes the system function. Rorschach's mask could be read as a mirror, representing the world around him, the constant change, a possibility of permutation of signifiers. He is no one, a mirror for his world – but the mirror not only reflects, it transforms, it becomes a crucible. Rorschach transforms himself, the city in which he lives in, becomes a vigilante. The symmetry provided by the mask of Rorschach is filled with projections of the readers, transformed from a mere black-and-white image into a metaphor.

The question of the reliable and unreliable narrator has been viewed in traditional narratology a case of «an ironic form», a conflict between the story and the narrative in which the story undermines the discourse [1, p. 33]. «Irony» as such is a tricky term as it firmly resists definition, and is not without difficulties. According to Chatman, the ironic form of writing establishes a secret communication between the implied author and the implied reader, which gives forth the unreliability of the narrator. Detecting irony requires an interpretative strategy that involves reading against the grain of the text and assuming that one grasps the unwritten message behind the literal one. These types of ironic forms through conflicts between the story and the narrative do appear in Rorschach's narrative sections. For example, in Chapter I Rorschach writes in his diary, asking the rhetorical question: «*Why are there so few of us left active, healthy and without personality disorders?*» [4, p. 19]. This contemplation on the sad state of the former superheroes is cast in an ironic light as the previous narrative has already shown

that Rorschach himself is far from being a sane and «healthy» individual. The essence of irony arises from casting a language of a subjective mind into the grammar of objective narration, in which every «false note» struck by a fictive mind is thrown into ironic relief. So, when we read Rorschach's diary entry in Chapter V, as he describes his gloves as «spotless» [4, p. 18] while the image shows that being far from the case, his observations of the world around him are cast in a doubtful light. Shoshana Felman, on the other hand, connects madness as an integral part of irony; irony is, in its extreme, madness, and the madman is not only the instrument of ironic knowledge, but in fact he incarnates as well the imminence of the peril that threatens reflexive consciousness, always endangered by its own integral split, by the very tension that grounds it in its own contradiction. Madness exists in the gap between the implied author and the implied reader, perilous in the gray area that contains the ironic message between the lines.

However, this view of irony and unreliability in narration is based on a communication between an implied author and an implied reader, yet «Watchmen» lacks a clear «author» who makes himself known to the reader. There is no authorial commentary behind the story, no outside commentary in the captions. It could be claimed that the basic story comes from the unfocalized visual and verbal narrative and the discourse of a written monologue by one character in the discourse which then becomes undermined by the story level. This «secret communion» between author and reader could be seen as taking place in the form of the appendices, which are chosen by someone, possibly the narrator. These appendices deliver information the characters do not possess, thus creating a line between reader and author that leaves the characters that narrate the story in the dark. It should be noted, though, that both the reader and the implied author belong to a same «in-group» that shares values, meanings and judgments, and to which the unreliable narrator is excluded [2, p. 107].

Does Rorschach's apparent insanity affect his credibility as a narrator? Should the subtle marks of irony detected in the story be interpreted as a sign of his unreliability? As mentioned above, his moral views do not compromise the truthfulness of his words, and if this be madness, there is yet a method in it, a certain logic that allows the reader to give credit to his narration. Because after all, the line between madness and sanity is a fragile one, and at the end of «Watchmen», the reader is faced with a question: which of them is in fact «mad», Rorschach or Ozymandias?

Where then can we draw the line between the demented and the «reasonable», the delirious and the sensible behavior? Where does reason end and madness begin? The illusion of reason can in itself be madness, the illusion of superiority a sign of insanity. Rorschach is the product of the alternate history of «Watchmen», the crooked Western culture that has for decades lived on the edge of nuclear war and has had to accept the fact that the arrival of Jon as the omnipotent Dr. Manhattan in 1959 has irreversibly altered the course of history and the development of technology. To reflect on Rorschach's madness is to open up and question the entire history of Western culture, both in fiction and in reality.

Conclusion. So, analyzing «Watchmen» and describing psychological characteristics of narrative level of graphic novels we can propose such *psycholinguistic aspects of narrative discourse*:

- visual emphasis;
- focalization of information;
- epigraphs' emphasis;
- meta-narrative presentation of the text;
- contrasting visual linkings;
- actualization of narrative potential.

Also «Watchmen» as the socio-cultural phenomenon has been studied in the courses of history, economy, politics and sociology, while there have been no psycho-linguistic study on the novel. In other our articles we'll decide to focus mostly on the culturelogical aspects of the novel, and the results of these researches will be discussed and completely described.

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Spysok vykorystanyh dzherel

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Received June 21, 2017

Revised July 24, 2017

Accepted August 18, 2017

УДК 81'233:378.011.3–051

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Особливості психологічних і психолінгвістичних характеристик комунікативно–мовленнєвої діяльності майбутніх учителів

Kyrychenko T. V. Features of psychological and psycholinguistic characteristics of communicative-speech activities of future teachers / T. V. Kyrychenko // Problems of Modern Psychology : Collection of research papers of Kamianets-Podilskyi Ivan Ohienko National University, G. S. Kostiuk Institute of Psychology at the National Academy of Pedagogical Science of Ukraine / scientific editing by S. D. Maksymenko, L. A. Onufriieva. – Issue 38. – Kamianets-Podilskyi : Aksioma, 2017. – P. 175–186.

T. V. Kyrychenko. Features of psychological and psycholinguistic characteristics of communicative-speech activities of future teachers. The article presents the results of the analysis of some scientific approaches to