

The Concept of "Character" in Literary Studies. Character System in Literature

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Abstract:

This article examines the concept of "character" from various literary perspectives. The main character classification systems proposed by researchers such as A.B. Yesin and N.L. Vershinina were analyzed. Special attention is paid to the structure of the character system in literary works. During the study, it was established that both classifications distinguish main, secondary, and episodic characters, however, N.L. Vershinina's system is the most detailed.

Keywords: character; character system; main character; secondary character; episodic character.

Literary studies offer various definitions of the term "character" and approaches to its classification. When analyzing epic and dramatic works, special attention is paid to the compositional organization of the character system, as they represent bearers of artistic idea, reflecting the social and psychological features of the era. Through characters, the author reveals the inner world of people, demonstrating their evolution or degradation. Within the realistic method, the character often represents a reflection of a certain society, which allows the reader to understand the depicted era more deeply.

A.B. Yesin in his work "Principles and Methods of Analyzing a Literary Work" defines a character as the main actor of a work. He emphasizes that literary studies pays considerable attention not only to the analysis of characters, but also to their interrelations within the text. According to his classification, characters are divided into main (being in the center of the plot), minor (supporting and complementing the main character) and episodic (having a limited role in the narrative) [2, p. 134].

G.N. Pospelov in "Introduction to Literary Studies" considers the origin of the term "character", noting its French and Latin roots. He argues that a character is not just a set of individual

characteristics, but an integral artistic image capable of evoking a certain attitude in the reader. According to his classification, characters are divided into main, central, minor and episodic [3, p. 189]. This approach is especially relevant in the analysis of complex works, such as the novel-epic by L.N. Tolstoy “War and Peace”, where there are central characters that have a special significance in the narrative.

G.G. Khazagerov and I.B. Lobanov in their textbook “Fundamentals of Literary Theory” offer a broader definition of a character, considering it as any actor who takes a direct part in the development of events or is mentioned in the text episodically. They also classify characters into primary, secondary and episodic, based on their role in the plot [4, p. 90].

N.L. Vershinina in “Introduction to Literary Studies” gives a more detailed definition: a character is a kind of artistic image acting as a subject of action. She notes that the concept of “character” can be replaced by the terms “literary hero” or “protagonist”, but there are conceptual differences between them. Vershinina's classification includes main (first plan), side (second plan), episodic characters, and also subdivides them into active and passive depending on their participation in the development of events [1, p. 28].

V.E. Khalizev considers a character as a result of author's fiction, reflecting real or fictional images. In his opinion, the character is the subject of action and the bearer of certain characteristics, which makes it the central element of the artwork [5, p. 197].

It should be noted that the concept of “character” is mainly used in the analysis of epic and dramatic works, while in lyrics a similar role is played by the “lyrical hero”.

Thus, having analyzed various approaches to the definition of a character and its classification, we can conclude that the system proposed by A.B. Yesin remains the most accessible and comprehensive. However, the most detailed and profound is the classification developed by N.L. Vershinina, as it takes into account additional aspects of the functioning of characters in the artistic text.

Literature

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