

ARTISTIC FEATURES IN POSTMODERN PROSE VICTOR PELEVIN

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Annotation

Viktor Pelevin has long been a cult figure in modern literature. He is one of the few who publishes quite successfully abroad and has a certain circle of readers. To date, Pelevin is the owner of the Small Booker Prize in 1992 for the collection of short stories "The Blue Lantern", the author of such bestsellers as "Omon Ra", "The Sacred Book of the Werewolf", "Chapaev and Void", "DPP (NN) ("Dialectics of the Transitional Period from Nowhere to Nowhere), Generation P, Empire V. According to his novels and stories, performances are staged in Moscow, London and Paris, which are successful; his books have not been translated into Esperanto and Braille.

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Victor Olegovich Pelevin from the moment of his appearance in Russian literature has been called a mysterious figure. This definition equally applied and still applies to both the work of the young prose writer and Pelevin's personality itself. He has not yet given a single interview in the usual sense of the word - the only exceptions are transliterations of his forums on the Internet and infrequent participation in telephone blitz polls. Although Pelevin has been known to the reading public for more than ten years, photographic images of him that have appeared in the press are few. Problems arose even with the establishment of the year of birth of Viktor Pelevin - the date varies in different sources from 1960 to 1970. Perhaps the most complete and reliable biography of the writer is presented in the article by Dmitry Bykov, published in a selection of materials about the life and work of V. Pelevin in the *Ogonyok* magazine.[1. p. 131]

Viktor Olegovich Pelevin was born in 1962 in the town of Dolgoprudny near Moscow, where he spent all his childhood and youth.

After graduating from school, he entered the Faculty of Electrical Equipment and Automation of Industry and Transport of the Moscow Power Engineering Institute. After graduating from the institute, he became a graduate student and worked on a project for an electric drive for a trolleybus with an asynchronous motor. However, he never defended his Ph.D. thesis - in 1988, Pelevin entered the correspondence department of the Literary Institute and plunged headlong into writing.[2. p. 88]

However, the young writer was not destined to receive a second higher education - he was expelled from the Literary Institute, and began working at the popular at that time publishing house "Mif". There, Victor Pelevin edited the works of the cult writer and philosopher Carlos Castaneda, translated into Russian, who, as noted everywhere, had a huge impact on the formation of the worldview of the novice prose writer.

For the first time, Pelevin's short story "The Sorcerer Ignat and People" (its genre is defined by the author himself as "fairy tale") was published in 1989 in the journal Science and Religion. Then the stories "The Hermit and the Six-fingered" were printed in "Chemistry and Life"; "Reenactor" in "Science and Religion" and other works, including the first full-fledged story "Prince of Gosplan" and excerpts from later published stories "Omon Ra" and "The Life of Insects". They appeared on the pages of magazines, almanacs and collections even after the first book by Viktor Pelevin, *The Blue Lantern*, published in 1991 by the Moscow publishing house Text, saw the light of day. The collection included almost all previously published works and some hitherto unpublished. The story "Crystal World", which traces the motives of the "metaphysics of escape" (the term was first used by Dmitry Bykov in a review of "Chapaev and the Void" in the *Literary Gazette*) and "double historical reality", which were subsequently continued in the novel "Chapaev and the Void", entered the scandalous collection of Viktor Erofeev "Russian Flowers of Evil", released in the series of the Podkova publishing house "Native prose of the late 20th century. The best writers." [3. p. 3]

It is important to note that from the very beginning of his career, Pelevin willingly collaborated with a variety of magazines and newspapers, including socially oriented ones (*Spark*, *Capital*); and specially literary ones ("New World", "October"). A number of Pelevin's journalistic works, including the articles "UltimaTuleev, or the Tao of Elections" UltimaTuleev is another adventure of Viktor Pelevin, carried out by him in 1996, on the eve of the presidential elections in Russia. With the help of a special computer program, Pelevin, together with a number of like-minded people, compiled a "generalized" portrait of the country's leader - both visual and psychological. In connection with a number of overlays, the main goal of the project did not come true - UltimaTuleev was supposed to really run for the presidency.

The last work of Viktor Pelevin - the novel "Generation P" - was published in 1999 by the Vagrius publishing house. At the moment, the complete collection of works by Viktor Olegovich Pelevin does not exist, there is only a two-volume edition released in the series "Large Library of Adventures and Fantasy" by the publishing house "Terra" (1996). It can be called the "complete collection of early Pelevin's works", since these books do not include only the "program" "Chapaev and the Void" and "Generation P". Motives and themes of Pelevin's creativity. In the most serious and fundamental reviews and articles on the work of V. Pelevin, a single semantic thread is clearly traced, "pulling out" several themes and features inherent in his prose that are fresh for Russian literature. As the most serious and promising of them, critics call the ideas of "escape metaphysics", "boundary reality" and "mardong", or "inner dead". [4. p. 4]

The themes of "boundary reality", "metaphysics of escape" and liberation as his goals are closely intertwined with each other in Pelevin's works. "Whoever his heroes are," writes Sergei Kuznetsov in the article "Vasily Ivanovich Chapaev on the Way of the Warrior" - chickens, insects, the dead or astronauts - they gradually realize the illusory nature of "reality" and rush towards true being, symbolized by the world outside the incubator window, "a lilac glow over a distant mountain or a "conditional river of absolute love" ...

Pelevin's world is an endless series of cells built into each other, and the transition from one cell to another does not mean liberation, but only a higher level of comprehension of reality. The search for authenticity becomes the main authenticity. Liberation is achieved at least by abandoning the established rules of the game ("To start moving, you have to get off the train" - the refrain of the "Yellow Arrow") ... and therefore the escape crowns "Chapaev and the Void", arising as the main theme in the final poetic monologue of the hero.

Pelevin, with rare persistence, repeats from text to text the situation of the subject's inequality to himself. For his heroes, obviously, the moment of "double presence" is relevant. It is noteworthy that Pelevin not only models new realities and worlds "from scratch" - he turns real history into an alternative to our time, its reverse side. The action of the novel "Chapaev and Emptiness" takes place in

the era of the Civil War and in our days, and these two eras "rhyme", are compared and reflected one in the other.

Pelevin's prose is based on not distinguishing between real and imagined reality. Unusual rules apply here: by revealing a lie, we do not approach the truth, but by multiplying a lie, we do not move away from the truth. Addition and subtraction are equally involved in the process of making fictional worlds. The recipe for creating such mirages lies in the fact that the author varies the size and design of the "viewfinder" - the frame of the window from which his hero looks at the world. Everything important here takes place on the "windowsill" - on the border of different worlds.

The most inventive theme of the border is beaten in the short story "Mittelspiel". Her heroines - currency prostitutes Lusya and Nelly - were party workers in Soviet life. To adapt to the changes, they changed not only the profession, but also the gender. One of the girls - Nelly - confesses to another that she used to serve as the secretary of the district committee of the Komsomol and was called Vasily Tsyryuk. The response is a reciprocal confession. It turns out that in a past life, Lucy was also a man and served in the same institution under the same Tsyryuk, who did not recognize her. [5. p. 3]

The episode with communist werewolves is just a special case of a more general motive for transformations. In the "Middlegame" it is important not who the heroes were and not who they became - the very fact of the change is important. The border between the worlds is impregnable, it cannot be crossed, because these worlds themselves are only a projection of our consciousness. The only way to move from one reality to another is to change yourself, to undergo a metamorphosis.

Pelevin's "trademark" idea was by no means the motif of a bifurcated, discordant, discrete reality. An unexpectedly wide response from critics specializing in the problems of modern Russian literature was found by the idea of "mardong" presented by him. In the story of the same name by V. Pelevin, mardongs are pseudo-Tibetan mummies, outstanding thinkers fried in oil, whom grateful descendants surrounded with stones and put out along the roads for subsequent worship of these peculiar monuments. The story is based on the real-life concept of the philosopher Antonov, who believes that "life is a process of nurturing the inner dead man present in every person, culminating in his actualization, the dead man." This very "actual dead man" becomes, if you're lucky, a revered mardong.

As already noted, V. Pelevin's prose is symptomatic - and this is its main aesthetic value. Today he continues to paint the bewildered state of Russian society at the turn of the millennium; when people, having abandoned the old system of values, are painfully looking for and "running in" a new one. It can be concluded that it is from here that the roots of all the "exotic" motifs of Pelevin's prose, extrapolated from real life and refracted in an artistic text, come.

What might be interesting about him?

Pelevin's books are a real encyclopedia of the intellectual and spiritual life of Russia in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. His texts make serious demands on the intellect and erudition of the reader. Not every even an educated person is able to decipher all the intertextual references in his books. These are a variety of myths and archetypes, various religious traditions and philosophical systems, all kinds of mystical practices and magical techniques. [6. p. 3]

His books contain classical texts, philosophical and religious treatises, classical and modern folklore. First of all, this is classical mythology - legends, myths and traditions of various peoples: Celtic, Germanic and Scandinavian myths, Chinese fairy tales and numerology, Buddhism and Taoism, shamanism and initiations, yogic techniques and ecstatic practices, werewolves and vampires, Sumerian mythology and Russian folk tales. The reader should recognize direct or indirect quotations from the philosophical and religious treatises "I-Ching" and "Tao TeChing", "Diamond Sutra" and "Tibetan Book of the Dead", recall Zen Buddhist koans and Sufi parables.

It is also necessary to navigate in the modern "drug mythology". You need to know the theory of altered states of consciousness, the philosophy of virtual reality and the semantics of possible worlds, modern philosophical theories of mass culture and television. The reader will have to think of fringe authors and cult figures, almost unknown to the masses today.

In addition, you need to have an idea about the fashionable ideas of crypto-history and alternative history, about the mystical understanding of history. It is necessary to take into account discussions about the role of the individual in history, about the significance of secret societies in political upheavals and revolutions, to be aware of disputes about the esoteric roots of revolutionary movements, the mysticism of violence and blood magic. It will not be superfluous to have an idea about traditionalism and the conservative revolution.

Pelevin's text is an entertaining dictionary of modern mythology, philosophy "for the poor", mythology "for dummies", and theology in comics. But if they help someone turn to serious philosophical questions, that's good.

Pelevin has a rich imagination, a developed imagination, he has an artistic taste, his own style. He always finds a new angle, a fresh look, an original approach. He constantly surprises, astonishes, sometimes amazes and shocks. The lightness of the language does not allow the reader to get tired of complex philosophical constructions. The game of intellect and imagination balances the conceptual overload of texts. The reader becomes an observer and participant in a fascinating manipulation of words and images, symbols and metaphors, ideas and concepts. Religions and philosophies are mixed with dreams and hallucinations. Myths are exposed, re-created and exposed again right in the process of reading.[7. p. 3]

The characters are vivid and memorable. Wits turn into aphorisms. Pelevin's style is a mixture of literary styles and forms, stylization and parody, collage and popular print, kaleidoscope and puzzle, a collection of aphorisms and anecdotes, subtle irony and almost outright banter. In Pelevin's books, fantasy and reality are indistinguishable, humor and seriousness are inseparable. The plot of his books is always unpredictable; it makes unexpected turns, sudden transitions. Clip editing of action episodes allows the plot to develop extremely dynamically. The reader is carried away by the apparent obviousness of what is happening and constantly falls into intellectual traps.

In one text, you can find all literary genres: science fiction, mysticism, detective story, action movie, drug novel and even cyberpunk.

Each text by Pelevin is a parody and, at the same time, a self-parody as a way to distance oneself from suggestiveness. A parody of something serious and a parody of this parody allow Pelevin to show or express something serious. Pelevin suggests preaching the idea under the guise of mocking it, perhaps so that he would not be suspected of excessive pathos. Irony over the overly serious is a test of its strength, a test of truth. Parody can only destroy what is false and inferior, making room for true reality, while what is true and superior only clarifies, strengthens, and thereby affirms.

Through laughter it is very easy to slip into skepticism, cynicism and nihilism. But for some reason it seems to me that behind Pelevin's irony and grotesque, satire and parody, there is an author with a sensitive heart, a tender and vulnerable soul. In fact, Pelevin is a romantic, he believes in goodness and love. His laugh is cruel and bitter, but it is laughter through tears. But even from the darkest of his works, the reader is left with a bright impression.

One of the main themes of Pelevin's work, as mentioned above, is the myth, taking into account all its forms, variations and transformations from classical mythology to modern social and political mythology. Like many writers of the 20th century, Pelevin addresses, firstly, the content of myths, their heroes, plots and ideas, using the hidden and not yet realized potential of mythological thinking. His technique - exposing the old myth, creating new ones and pushing them together - is typical for many

authors of the mythological novel in the twentieth century: F. Kafka, J. Joyce, T. Mann, G.G. Marquez, J. Borges, J. Updike. However, a myth in itself does not guarantee participation in spiritual foundations; the form of a myth can be empty, which is what we are seeing today. The main modern mythologeme - television, advertising and PR - are also carriers, translators of myths and are themselves a myth. And Pelevin is merciless to these myths.

Pelevin's works present a very wide cultural context: from Russian literary classics to modern youth subculture. His texts are on the verge between classical and modern, academic and popular, elite and popular culture. We can say that Pelevin is building a bridge between cultural heritage, classical tradition and youth subculture.

He is called a follower of Gogol and Bulgakov, the successor of the line of social satire and the heir to the mystical trend in Russian literature. The main themes of Pelevin's books are the presence of a hero in a "bad reality", his self-knowledge in a difficult situation, the existence of a personality in an era of historical cataclysms, a person's self-determination in a terrible surrounding reality. These are the problems of personal choice and social responsibility, artistic creativity and spiritual quest, fear of death and hope for salvation. In my opinion, the general educational orientation of his work is obvious. The sermon that is in his books is addressed specifically to the conscience of our contemporaries.

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