

Lidiia Matsevko-Bekerska

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

SUBJECTIVE MARKERS OF ARTISTIC PRESENTATION

The paradigmatics of modern narratology testifies to the manifestation of the methodological phenomenon when each next turn of the “polaroid lens” highlights new possibilities for expanding the scientific discourse, unfolds an ever wider terminological and analytical perspective. Obviously, classical, and then post-classical narratology took the next step after its “revolution” and turned toward cognitive science. Narrative theory productively assimilates the ideas of convergence with cognitive psychology, whose interest is “how people acquire information about the world, how this information is presented by humans, how it is stored in memory and transformed into knowledge, and how this knowledge affects our attention and behavior” (my translation from Russian – L.M.-B.) [Solso 1996]. And if cognitive psychology considers “the entire range of psychological processes – from sensations to perception, image recognition, attention, learning, memory, concept formation, thinking, imagination, memorization, language, emotions, and developmental processes” [Solso 1996] – to be important and valuable, it is quite obvious that the stages of artistic presentation are directly related to each of these elements of the cognitive chain.

Therefore, among the numerous concepts of cognitive narratology, the subjectivity/subjectivity of the presentation of history with its subsequent representations in the reader’s mind is prominent. We also agree with the researcher’s outlining of two key issues that should be considered in the discourse of cognitive narratology: 1) “how the cognitive status of a narrative is determined and what determines it” and 2) how to ‘recognize the way we construct and understand narrative, including fiction, given our cognitive competencies’ [Savchuk 2013: p.218].

Thus, the plane of objectification of the literary narrative takes on a slightly modified form: the reader becomes an active participant in the “coming to life” of the narrated world, activating a certain cognitive stage in the implementation of a holistic perception of the literary and artistic phenomenon. The reader has a significant responsibility: first, he or she must follow the author’s path (in order to return to the origin of the intentional idea in the receptive plane), then reproduce the sequence of narrative elements in the unfolding of the primary idea, and finally form his or her own intentional attitude towards the story and its representation, while observing all the essential coordinates of the presentation (in terms of time perspective, duration, modality, perceptual aspects, etc.).

In order to outline the receptive paradigm of a literary narrative, we should take into consideration the three forms of manifestation of the reader’s presence in the matrix of literary and aesthetic communication identified in contemporary literary studies: “1) a real historical personality that we restore on the basis of historical documents of a certain era; 2) a reader whom we imagine based on our knowledge of the social and historical situation of a particular era; 3) a reader whose role is programmed in the text” [Zubrytska 2004: p.221]. From the standpoint of cognitive narratology, each form of manifestation of the receptive

FICTION THROUGH THE AGES

essence emphasizes a certain element of the psychological chain of meaning generation.

The “real historical face”, given its objective involvement in the spirit and mood of the era, will almost synchronously actualize sensations in the process of perception (acting by analogy), recognize images through instant reproduction of what is observed in reality, and the formation of aesthetic experience will last much longer than the process of direct (pro) reading and first interpretations. The cultural and historical context is a reliable guarantee of the identity of the cognitive-creative and cognitive-receptive processes, with the least room for (little) (un)justified expectations, and the reader can harmoniously take place as a co-creator of meaning, regardless of his or her personal attitude to the real (historical) author. For this type of reader, markers of reality play only an additional role, since he understands the language of signs and symbols, and the semantics of subtext is an integral attribute of his understanding of modernity. The modeling of the receptive plane is more influenced by the reader’s self than by the creator’s intention. Thanks to the common coordinates of the era, the worldview vectors bring the two cognitive chains of creation and perception as close as possible.

The second type of reader is the result of secondary subjectivation: having imagined or researched the historical and cultural context, we try to model other (= different from the first perception) receptive reflections of the artistic narrative. The farther away from the historicity of the creation, the greater the degree of uncertainty and hypotheticality. The time interval significantly transforms the cognitive chain. It unfolds from imagination and thinking in the opposite direction: through image recognition to perception and the formation of a holistic range of aesthetic reactions (from sensations to evaluation).

Subjectivity becomes an attribute of reception and interpretation; in a literary narrative, the reader is looking for himself or herself, and communication takes place within the receptive consciousness. At the level of cognitive processes, each stage is a question and an answer to itself: the reader addresses the question not to the author with his or her intentional assumptions, but to himself or herself with his or her own expectations or hopes. The proportion of the reader’s projection changes: he or she becomes “active rather than passive” and demonstrates much more signs of “a complex of individual reactions”, than positioning himself or herself as part of the “actualization of collective competence”. The artistic narrative ensures the life of the work, preserves its textual identity, but the aesthetic coordinates appear on a much broader interpretive plane. For this type of reader, the problem of preserving the author as a meaning-making basis is essential, since the distance from historicity multiplies ontological meanings. On the one hand, reader’s freedom is allowed, but on the other hand, there is an urgent need to follow the rules and restrictions set by the author himself. The cognitive process becomes more complicated, because memory and image creation must be actualized synchronously, feelings and knowledge are not in a cause-and-effect relationship, but balance within the artistic world as real and imaginary, etc.

The third type of reader, the “reader whose role is programmed in the text”, postulates constant attributes of reception and implements the cognitive process in a way that is primarily and directly determined by narrative means. Generally speaking, “in order to be realized, a literary text requires the reader’s imagination, which gives shape to the interaction of correlates outlined in the structure by the sentence order” [Iser 1996: p.352]. Similarly, the “order of sentences” ensures the movement of receptive efforts, shapes the mood of the

first perception and determines the reading strategy in general. Formal means of organizing the narrative focus on clearly defining the “points of support” in sense-making, in imagery, in the paradigm of problems or poetic techniques. The reader’s reflection is based on the sum of the first and current readings of the work, but also includes both the meaning already gained and multiplied by this text: “reading removes the synchronicity of collective reception, it hierarchizes, structures and transforms it into a complex multi-stage process” [Zubrytska 2004: p.26]. The cognitive foundations of these transformations are of considerable interest for the study of forms and methods of organizing a literary text. The reader who is exposed to the narrative not only absorbs the sum of the meanings acquired by the text, but also anticipates possible questions to the author, and can identify certain concerns about the original meaning, the author’s intention, and various extra-literary influences on the creative process.

In the literary discourse, two topical issues are equally important: Thus, the two main modes – “modus of potentiality” and “modus of reality” – of modeling the reader’s presence in the artistic space, according to A. Compagnon, are consistent with the fundamental approaches to literature: “with the formal-objective approach to literature, the main attention is paid to the work; with the mimetic approach – to the outside world; finally, with the pragmatic approach – to the public, the readership” [Compagnon 2001: p.164].

Thus, the cognitive and narratological differentiation of the reader as an organic component of literary discourse brings the pragmatic approach to literature closer to the possibilities of studying text transformations in the projection on perception as a psychological process and as the beginning of the development of a multitude of interpretations. Taking into account the quite reasonable question formulated by O. Sobchuk: “what is the subject of study of cognitive narratology: textual structures or structures of human thinking?” [Sobchuk 2012: p.12], we can assume that the emphasis on a certain type of reader’s revelation gives grounds for finding ways to ensure the mutual transformation of the structures of both classes.

References:

- Zubrytska, M. (2004). *Homo legens: Reading as a Sociocultural Phenomenon*. Litopys.
- Iser V. (1996). *The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach*. In M. Zubrytska (Ed.), *Word. Symbol. Discourse: An Anthology of Literary and Critical Thought in the 20th Century* (pp. 349–368). Litopys.
- Compagnon, A. (2001). *The Demon of Theory*. Izd-vo Sabashnikovyh.
- Savchuk R. I. (2013). *Cognitive narratology in the context of new research guidelines of modern text linguistics*. Problems of semantics of the word, sentence and text. Issue 31. 2013. C.214-220.
- Sobchuk O. V. (2012). *Rethinking the concepts of narrativity, character and focalisation in modern conative narratology*. Magisterium. Issue 48. Literary studies. 2012. C. 108-113.
- Solso, R. L. (1996). *Cognitive Psychology*. M. Trivola, 1996.