

EXPRESSIVE MEANS OF CREATING ARTISTIC FEMALE IMAGE IN L.ULITSKAYA'S STORY "SONECHKA"

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Abstract:

The article presents the results of an analysis of L. Ulitskaya's "Sonechka" artistic text based on tropes. The aim of the article is to show readers, especially students of Russian as a foreign language, the expressive means used by the author in the novella "Sonechka." The article employs contextual and stylistic analysis methods with book citations.

Keywords:L.E. Ulitskaya, Sonechka, linguistic means, metaphor, epithet, sarcasm, irony

Results: This work analyzes the use of tropes in the context of the author's style and describes the image of a woman in the popular novel "Sonechka" by L. Ulitskaya.

Conclusions: Based on our analysis of "Sonechka," we conclude that the author's artistic imagination, which takes into account the signs of the female soul, serves as the main pole in constructing the context from a feminine perspective. We can conclude from the conducted research that the use of tropes as an expressive means involves similar processes.

Introduction:

In the novella "Sonechka," the most important elements, in our view, are the techniques and methods the author uses to create the image of the main character: the poetics of the name, portrait and speech characteristics, behavior and actions, as well as her material world. These facets of Ulitskaya's artistic world attain completeness when examined in the context of cultural traditions. Moreover, placing the heroine's name in the story's title acts as a "intertextual" signal, directing the reader towards classic works such as Sophia from "The

Minor" by D. I. Fonvizin (1782), "Woe from Wit" (1822–1824) by A. S. Griboyedov, and Sonia from "Crime and Punishment" (1866) by F. M. Dostoevsky, among others.

In Russian literature, heroines bearing this name are traditionally regarded as embodiments of wisdom, which is their primary attribute. They are benevolent, "compliant" women, adept at providing assistance and attentive listening, bearing their burdens with humility, while maintaining faith in the eventual victory of good. Dostoevsky's "Sonia" possesses similar attributes, as does Sofia Petrovna from L. Chukovskaya's titular "delayed" narrative (1939-1940, released in 1988), and the "officially" acknowledged protagonist from Y. Trifonov's "The House on the Embankment" (1976).

"Sonechka" is a remarkable narrative that explores the affection for literature, the appreciation of life, the admiration for art, and the concept of love as an art form—a unique talent for understanding how to love. The text contains multiple quotations that affirm the heroine's passion for literature. The author's portrayal of the protagonist as one who "falls into reading as if falling into a faint" enralls the reader (Ulitskaya 2018: 06).

Sonechka's reading, which had evolved into a slight obsession, persisted even in her sleep; she appeared to 'read' her dreams as well. She envisioned captivating historical novels and, based on the character of the narrative, would deduce the book's typography, oddly perceiving the paragraphs and ellipses. This internal displacement, associated with her fervent obsession, would intensify in her dreams, where she manifested as a fully realized heroine or hero, navigating the tenuous boundary between the conscious authorial intent she willingly embraced and her intrinsic yearning for movement, action, and accomplishment. (Ulitskaya 2018: 07).

For Sonia, literary characters possess a vitality comparable to that of her real-life companions. Nonetheless, her reading serves as a conscious evasion of reality.

Sonechka, having completed her education, circumvented the obligation of enduring the melancholic and cacophonous 1930s daily and nurtured her spirit through the vast realms of esteemed Russian literature. (Ulitskaya 2018: 09)

The highlighted phrase metaphorically signifies her fervor for reading — "to give one's soul" — "to give oneself entirely," suggesting a yearning for solitude. It serves as an evasion from reality, illustrating the conflict between aspirations and actuality, and encapsulates the concept of deliverance from the harshness of the external world.

Metaphors are similarly conveyed in other instances through the lexical application of linguistic actions: "to engage in reading," "to immerse oneself in reading."

Examples:

1. "Sonechka immersed herself in reading." [Ulitskaya 2018: 05].

Metaphor: This expression means that while reading, the main character becomes completely detached from the external world.

2. "Sonechka's reading, which became a light form of madness, did not leave her even in her sleep; she seemed to read her dreams as well." [Ulitskaya 2018: 07].

Personification/Hyperbole: The term "madness" is similar to an obsession, an inexplicable passion for something, indicating an extreme zeal for reading.

Ulitskaya employed various other artistic devices in her work.

The title of the story reveals the author's attitude toward Sonechka, which is evident from the title of the story. The diminutive suffix "-echk-" allows for a comparison with Chekhov's story "Darling." Furthermore, all of the names in the novel are written in lowercase. The author only uses the form "Sonia" a few times, while the full name "Sofia Iosifovna," appearing only at the very end of the novella, signifies the protagonist's old age and nothing more. The name "Sonechka" symbolizes an unchanging soul.

Sonechka uses expressive evaluative language tools (from Modern Russian Language 1983: 377) to create her inner world, such as "fire of love," "peaceful soul," "intoxicating passion,"

"sublime and divine naivety," and "endless reflections," which form a warm and exalted image of the lady in connection with Russia, similar to the image in classic literature.

Examples:

1. "And the serene soul of Sonechka, wrapped in a cocoon of thousands of read volumes, lulled by the smoky murmur of Greek myths..." [Ulitskaya 2018: 15].

Here, the author describes the balanced heroine living in an isolated literary world, cut off from the reality around her, reading ancient legends.

"Serene soul" (epithet): perfectly calm, free of anxiety, unaffected by worries.

"Cocoon of thousands of read volumes" symbolizes a special, isolated, impenetrable world of books, undisturbed by anyone.

The **"smoky murmur of Greek myths" (metaphor)** refers to an obscure, mysterious world of ancient legends.

2. "The serene soul of Sonechka did not recognize her great moment." [Ulitskaya 2018: 15].

Here, the writer talks about her protagonist, who, despite her sensitivity, is unable to feel the crucial moment in her life that drastically changed everything.

3. "She lay for two weeks in a high fever. Evidently, the fire of love was leaving her in this classic way." [Ulitskaya 2018: 19].

Metaphor: Refers to the protagonist's severe illness due to unrequited love. "Fire of love" heresymbolizes an intense, painful feeling.

4. "Her responsiveness to a sorrowful word was so great that fictional characters stood in the same row as living, close people."

This suggests that the protagonist sympathizes equally with book characters and her real-life close ones.

"Sorrowful word" refers to pitiful stories that evoke sadness.

"Responsiveness": a positive moral-spiritual quality of the personality (as per Krepkikh, Narushevich, Narushevich, Soboleva 2001: 460-461]), manifesting as the inclination to help those in need, notice their distress, practice selflessness, generosity, magnanimity, forgiveness, and tolerance.

There are several ways of lexical intent in the text:

- **Nicknames and Descriptions**: Examples include "pear-shaped nose with a shimmering plumpness," "sparse eyelashes," "outrageously trusting," "absolutely religious," and "reading like a fog," among others. These descriptors help create vivid and often exaggerated images of the characters.

Examples:

1. "After endless reading, Sonechka's backside took on the shape of a chair, as did her nose—the shape of a pear." [Sonechka 2018: 05].

Irony: The author uses subtle irony to describe the somewhat unattractive and unflattering appearance of the main character, emphasizing the consequences of her excessive reading.

2. "But the mysterious beauty of the misty Slavic..." [Ulitskaya 2018: 207].

Epithet: The term "mysterious" comes from the word "mystery" and implies a mystical beauty, meaning something strange, extraordinary, incomprehensible, yet enticing and enchanting.

3. "Perhaps it was the first event of her entire young life that pushed her out of the foggy state of constant reading." [Ulitskaya 2018: 10].

Metaphor: "Foggy state of constant reading" represents the protagonist's particular state where she notices nothing around her, living entirely within her bookish world.

4. "...warmed by the unprincipled and generous love of the somehow second-rate Leskov." [Ulitskaya 2018: 09].

Epithet: "Generous love"—derived from the word "generous"—adds vitality and enthusiasm to reading. It refers to a strong, unconditional love that overshadows all principles of life.

5. "Mother, shedding yellow tears, hastily hemmed the diapers." [Ulitskaya 2018: 31].

Epithet: The yellow tear symbol conveys pain and sadness, indicating the bitter tears of an intimate separation. The color yellow often symbolizes separation.

6. "He was a man of legend, but this legend, thanks to its suddenness and, as friends believed,..." [Ulitskaya 2018: 14].

Epithet: "Man of Legend"—a person very well known in certain circles, celebrated for their activities. This work refers to the well-known artist-character, "Robert Viktorovich."

Note the unusual metaphors:

- ✓ "Immersed in reading"
- ✓ "Doubtful Abyss of Dostoevsky"
- ✓ "A Giant Sea of Books"
- ✓ "Precious fruit of the spirit."
- ✓ "Soul wrapped in a cocoon of uniformity."
- ✓ "Book," and so on.

Examples:

1. "It is unclear whether it was a tradition, firmly rooted from ancient times in our homeland, to place the precious fruits of the spirit, like the fruits of the earth,

necessarily in a cold cellar—or whether it was a preventative inoculation for the upcoming decade of Sonechka's life, which she would spend with a man from the underground, her future husband, who appeared during that relentlessly grim first year of evacuation." [Ulitskaya 2018: 11].

Metaphor: "Precious fruits of the spirit"—the author compares spiritual and profound reflections to earthly fruits.

2. "Over the years, she learned to independently distinguish in the vast ocean of books the large waves from the small ones and the small ones from the coastal foam, which almost entirely filled the ascetic shelves of the modern literature section." [Ulitskaya 2018: 10].

Metaphor: The writer uses "vast ocean of books" to signify a large number of read works of literature. "Large waves" represent world-renowned classics; "small waves" refer to the works of lesser-known authors; and "coastal foam" embodies the less substantial literature among this "giant sea of books."

3. "...wrapped in a cocoon of thousands of read volumes, lulled by the smoky murmur of Greek myths..." [Ulitskaya 2018: 15].

Metaphor: "Cocoon of thousands of read volumes" symbolizes an isolated, impenetrable world of literary works, unaffected by external factors. "Smoky murmur of Greek myths" refers to the ambiguous, mysterious realm of ancient tales.

The writer's arsenal always contains apt and original comparisons. The sharp contrasts make the language of the story especially vivid and unique.

"She fell into reading as if she lost consciousness."

"His voice was like the blue light on cold wood,".

When describing characters, we use expressive details. Depending on the character's role in the text, we may use clear, though typically not offensive, sarcasm, distinct smiles, and in exceptional cases, sharp sarcasm.

Examples:

1. "Sonechka, lanky, broad-shouldered, with dry legs and a bony, flattened backside."
[Sonechka 2018: 05].

Irony: The author employs subtle irony to portray the unappealing and unattractive image of the main character, emphasizing her lack of conventional beauty.

2. "He was an old man, and he died on top of a woman. "It was a young woman, at that," one person said. [Ulitskaya 2018: 119].

Ironic Expression: The meaning here is that a very old man lives with a young woman, and his passionate love for her ultimately leads to his death. The term "baba" is a colloquial collective term for women, adding a humorous or dismissive tone to the description.

3. "Plague! Plague, all of these authorities, from Gamaliel to Marx... And your... Gorky..." [Ulitskaya 2018: 29].

Ironic Expression: The main character's statement implies that these influential figures' ideological activities are as dangerous to humanity as an infectious

Ludmila Ulitskaya narrates Sonechka's uncomplicated yet profound existence, characterized by conflict, destruction, destitution, and exile. Sonechka's figure invites the reader's imagination and constructs a dwelling imbued with affection and joy. Her mild disposition sharply contrasts with the numerous tragedies of her day. The author employs figurative language in stylistic constructs to vividly express and describe these phenomena and events.

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