

THE STRUCTURE OF THE HERO'S IMAGE IN THE STORY "BIRYUK" BY I. S. TURGENEV

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Annotation: This article presents information about the protagonist, Biryuk, in I.V. Turgenev's short story. Biryuk is a remarkably coherent, unshakable image of an honest, deeply decent, and principled man. However, the author also reveals his other sides, namely, his compassion.

Keywords: Metamorphosis, retrospective attitude, impenetrable armor, structural features, character evolution.

Аннотация: В этой статье представлена информация о главном герое, об образе Бирюка рассказа И.В. Тургенева. Бирюк — это удивительно цельный, несокрушимый образ честного, глубоко порядочного и принципиального человека. Однако автор показывает и другие его стороны, а именно милосердие.

Ключевые слова: Метаморфоза, ретроспективное отношение, непробиваемая броня, структурные особенности, эволюция характера.

The Russian literature curriculum for Uzbek and other national schools widely features the short story genre, which is most accessible to non-Russian students. The short story has a minimum of characters, events, conflicts, and problems. It often avoids depicting the evolution of the character. The law of economy and concentration of expressive means requires emphasizing the character's dominant trait. This revelation sometimes occurs "at the end," unexpectedly.

These principles are also reflected in the development of the characters in some stories included in the school curriculum. Thus, Biryuk undergoes a metamorphosis unexpectedly for both the hunter and the reader (Turgenev's story "Biryuk"), and Ivan Vasilyevich's outlook on life suddenly changes (Leo Tolstoy's story "After the Ball").

Of course, the structural features noted above should not be considered mandatory for all stories. At the same time, they do require the reader to pay close attention to the episode where the character's personality is most clearly revealed.

In the character of Biryuk, the author embodied the best qualities of the common Russian people: honesty, incorruptibility, compassion, hard work, diligence, and simplicity. However, the hero also possesses traits that separate him from ordinary peasants, creating a wall of misunderstanding and hostility.

Among the local population, Biryuk is known as a physically strong, unsociable, and lonely man, an exceptionally principled forester who doesn't let anyone off the hook. It's precisely because of his integrity that the hero is unpopular with the villagers.

Foma Kuzmich is ready to set out to search for the trespasser in the middle of the night, as soon as he hears the distant sound of an axe. And no amount of persuasion or bribery can change his

firm stance. For the hero, the concept of duty is not an empty phrase, and he fulfills his duties impeccably.

Biryuk is a remarkably complete, unshakable image of an honest, deeply decent, and principled man. However, the author also reveals his other sides, namely his compassion. The story of the poor woodcutter reveals that Biryuk's impenetrable armor conceals a kind, compassionate heart, capable of empathy.

Foma Kuzmich is a forester whose sullen and unsociable nature earned him the nickname Biryuk, meaning "lone wolf." He lives in a hut on the edge of the forest and spends his days guarding the master's woods.

Biryuk mercilessly deals with those who disobey the law—those who secretly attempt to cut down trees or gather firewood in the master's forest. Biryuk faithfully carries out his duties, but this does not bring him financial well-being: he lives in extreme poverty, and his house often lacks even adequate food.

Biryuk is a married man, but his wife abandoned him and their two children for a passing tradesman. Following this betrayal, he is forced to raise his 12-year-old daughter, Ulita, and their newborn child alone.

It's important to summarize students' impressions of the story's hero before moving on to the episode that most deeply reveals their character.

For example, before reading Biryuk's encounter with the peasant, you might ask the following questions: "What do we know about Biryuk? What do people think and say about him? How will he treat the peasant?"

Then, after the teacher reads the passage, you might ask:
"Tell me, is this change in Biryuk unexpected for you?"

This question will naturally require a retrospective review of already familiar events, taking into account the narrator's assessment. It should be noted that there is also a traditional way to study a story, where the work is read in its entirety and students have some understanding of the logic of the hero's actions.

Analyzing the perception of Biryuk in a number of national schools, we noted that students idealize the character, whom they largely admire, and fail to see him as a serf, a man under duress. This perception undoubtedly hinders a deeper understanding of the hero's dramatic life and the moral and social significance of this story.

At the initial stage of work on the work, it was important to determine whether the students, "anticipating" the plot's events, would be able to complete Biryuk's behavior in the key episode. To this end, the teacher's annotated reading of the text was paused after reading the angry and accusatory words of the peasant-thief: "You are a murderer, a beast, there is no end for you... But wait, your reign will not last long! They will tighten your throat, wait!"

The teacher then addressed the class: "What do you think Biryuk will do next? Try to justify and prove your point."

The overwhelming majority of students correctly predicted Biryuk's course of action. Here are a few typical responses: "I think Biryuk will let the peasant go and give him the horse, because the forester should understand the peasant. After all, Biryuk also had no bread and the house was

cold."; "...in my opinion, the forester will let the peasant go. After all, the peasant didn't steal for himself, but to save his family."; "Biryuk will let the peasant go. After all, the forester is a serf too."

There were also other responses: "Biryuk won't let the peasant go because the peasant slandered him; Biryuk's honesty won't allow him to let the peasant go."

Thus, assessing the readers' knowledge revealed that in both the first and second response options, the students relied on a socially simplified understanding of Biryuk's motivations in the key episode. There were no

answers that indicated that the students understood

the determinacy of Biryuk's psychology as a slave, or his understanding of the dramatic nature of a serf's fate.

We strove to ensure that the students' perception of Biryuk's character coincided with the story's plot development and was as close as possible to the narrator's perception of the character.

This goal was expressed in the teacher's comment: "Biryuk's character is unexpectedly and completely different in the story's key episode; but was his behavior so unexpected? Perhaps the author was preparing us for this turn of events? First, let's find out through whose eyes we see Biryuk and evaluate his actions."

The questions presented no particular difficulties. It was only necessary to clarify and expand on the answers, focusing the students' attention on the story's narrative structure, in which the plot breaks down into four relatively complete and sequentially connected scenes. This structure allows the author to develop a deeper psychological understanding of Biryuk's character, illuminating his hero's life from different perspectives, gradually bringing him closer to the reader. At first, Biryuk is merely a stranger to us,

who has rendered a service to the hunter. The next scene, and the reader learns of the forester's appalling poverty. Finally, there is the hunter's conversation with Biryuk. In this scene, as in all the others, Biryuk is assessed by the narrator. In the key episode, the author shows the characters in close-up.

We turned to a sequential analysis of each scene, seeing in this approach the opportunity to explore the protagonist's character in a multifaceted way.

We will demonstrate this with a fragment from the work on the final scene. First, the students recalled that it was in this episode that Biryuk's character was unexpectedly revealed. Next, the students were led to understand that the oppression of serfdom had an impact on the psychology of both Biryuk and the peasant. People of the same social standing experience hostility toward each other. However, the outcome of the confrontation between the peasant and Biryuk ultimately expressed their social commonality.

First, the students were asked to recall, using the text as a reference, how the events unfolded in the forester's house. Particular attention was paid to those lines of dialogue between the participants that revealed the motivations for their actions.

- What drove the peasant to steal the landowner's timber? Read the lines that reveal his poverty and lack of rights.

Students refer to the text: "Let him go... out of hunger... the clerk...

ruined... Yours, you know, will eat you to death... out of hunger... the children are crying..."

How does Biryuk initially behave? Do the peasant's requests have any effect on him? How does he explain his refusal to let the peasant go? Read this line.

The students quote this line: "I, too, am a slave:

they will hold me accountable. You, too, are not to be spoiled."

All these observations should have led the students to the conclusion that serfdom is the cause of the conflict.

It's important to avoid understanding the peasant's rebellion as some kind of domestic squabble:

"...you won't reign for long, they'll tie it to your throat, just wait!"

What happened to Biryuk? What compelled a strong and unyielding man to let the thief who insulted him go?

By posing the question this way, we wanted to warn the students against a definitive and categorical answer. The teacher's commentary shifted the emphasis to the moral aspect of Biryuk's actions:

It's difficult to say exactly what happened in Biryuk's soul. Perhaps he genuinely felt sorry for the peasant, perhaps he didn't want his daughter Ulita to witness this quarrel. Perhaps, and this is most likely the case, the peasant's indignation and outright hatred reminded Biryuk that he was as disenfranchised as the peasant thief. And at a critical moment in his life, Biryuk showed his humanity.

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