Dehumanization in the Novel of Socialist Realism  
by Lirim Sulko, PhD

Abstract

Yuri Lotman affirms that the concept of the text is not absolute, but makes sense in a relationship with a historical, cultural and psychological structure that accompanies it. He considers every text "... determined by those socio-historical, national and psycho-anthropological reasons, which form the artistic models of life” So in a totalitarian regime, in other words dehumanized, the novel of socialist realism not only avoids the modern literary tendency, but manages to show dehumanization even in its formal-narrative aspect. Thus, in the conditions when the totalitarian regime aims at installing a 'new man', the novel of socialist realism also through censorship aims its promotion ('the new man’). In the formal-narrative aspect, the novel of Socialist realism emphasizes the authoritative mode of confession, in the sense of full submission of the character (meaning the reader, who is identified with the character throughout the reading process) to the total information within the literary work owned by the author in cooperation with the narrator, but at the same time proclaims as 'heretic' the narrative ways that liberated the character from the submission without glory of the pair author-narrator. As such, it (the novel of socialist realism) is/becomes thus a direct expression of dehumanization.

Key words: dehumanization, social realism, formal-narrative aspects.
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1. Totalitarian reality and literary fiction in the novel of socialist realism

Dehumanization, as a manipulation scheme in the novel of socialist realism, is based on total submission to the knowledge in circulation, Marxist-Leninist ideology, in alliance with the absolute power of the party and its leader, a symbiosis according to which the reason of ideology (in the function of knowledge) was to promote and legitimize the monopartian power, balanced by the reason of this power to preserve, defend and spread Marxism-Leninism. Consequently, all kinds and levels of knowledge should be integrated into the Marxist-Leninist ideology, and knowledge holders should be integrated by being identified with the power to serve it, otherwise they are considered enemies of the power to the extent that it is considered natural that the power mistreats, isolates or eliminates them.

Such a relationship between Marxist-Leninist ideology (in the function of knowledge) and the monopartian power (party-state) hardened knowledge, placing it in the function of maintaining the unity of all the society through the application of common truths in the form of quotations and slogans the veracity of which was considered indisputable, absolute. Also such a relationship (between knowledge and power) monopolized knowledge in the hands of the power, thus, in the hands of the party-state and its leader, giving them an indisputable authority, regardless of the veracity of such statements in quotes or slogans. This made for most members of the society the observation of real and the search for truth to be impossible, undoubtedly unmanageable.

So, massively, the society is oriented to have common truths where the role of its institutions (in fact, the party's levers) is to avoid, preserve, neutralize individual engagements in serving the truth and at the same time to attribute all the determination of the credibility to the criterion of authority, to the party-state, with the aim of maintaining unity (party-people). The attainment and preservation of this unity serves as a criterion of credibility and imposes an obligation that only what serves this unity and which coincides with the 'high' interests of building socialism must be true. And that is what guarantees the conditions for people to live together, but now with the big sacrifice of the truth.
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As a result of the defense of this structure, it was made available the attempt to impose Marxist-Leninist knowledge to all the society, not through argument and conviction, which in fact constitutes the true nature of knowledge, but through confrontation and violence, including the novel art, through censorship. In the context of socialist realism, it can easily happen, in fact it is impossible for it not to happen, as long as the fictional worlds of novels are conceived (through the mimesis) as a sequel of the world of reality, thus the boundaries between the worlds are opened and we consider naturally their penetrations and melting to one another. Violence (torture, exile, surveillance), indoctrination, aimed for the truth to be in one version, total (designed according to Marxist-Leninist ideology) and the identities to be automated (designed in the new man), totally observed (said otherwise enslaved) and in such conditions the totalitarianism results as identical to the world of fabrication. As such, the truth, whether in the totalitarian reality, or in the literary work, ceases of having as its values the correction and improvement of the individuals and the society where they live, and the spiritual solidarity between them, but as it is specific it makes inevitably the observation within identity, in addition to external observation.

This accordance between totalitarian truth and literary fiction in literary work is accomplished through its narrative techniques. The External observation in the worlds of literary fiction (specifically novels) is accomplished by subject events and dialogues and the internal observation through psychological analysis and internal monologues. As a specific feature of the novel of socialist realism is the fact that both the events (actions) and the dialogues (words) are exaggerated, while the parties that circulate the observed information may try to use this information in their favor and to the detriment of others. In this way, the novels of socialist realism dominated by authorial interventions, with the above mentioned pact to serve the power, realize this alliance with the narrator who self-corrupts, manipulates the characters by taking advantage of their unconsciousness (characters).
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It is quite different in the social-psychological novel, where external observation (of events, dialogues) is performed collectively, while the narrative has no other possibility than to be performed individually by the narrator or by the character himself, who is forbidden in advance to narrate the event without being consulted with the characters participating in the event. The only difference is this: when the narrator narrates the character observes (or the characters participating in the event) when the character narrates he/she narrates something observed by himself/herself, with the help of the narrator and other characters participating in the event. That means that the participants in the event require a minimum time, necessary to standardize the information obtained from observation performed collectively and the narrator or the character in the role of the narrator, is obliged to confess this minimum package of information to which they agreed as long as the value of this information and the time of its announcement are jointly defined: - the narrator (or the person in the case of narration in the first person or in the case of the replies during the dialogues) is obliged to announce this information immediately, after the arrival of the consensus for it.

This instant proclamation makes everyone equal to this information, possessing the same information and all at the same time. In other words, at the moment when the characters collectively observe together with the narrator, it is impossible for the narrator to narrate himself what he has observed himself, without being consulted with the other participants at the event. With the exception of the novel of misunderstandings and parodies, where each character observes himself, the narrator also independently narrates what he observes, and as such, the existence of the subject would be an endless solution to these misunderstandings. In fact, this kind of novel in the form of a labyrinth is developed in the postmodern context and is not part of the corpus of works we are addressing in this treatise.
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I. Narrative aspects in the novel's poetry of social realism

In the novel of socialist realism, the differences in the amount of information and the time of its possession are immediately reflected as a cause for favor or disfavor between the pair: author-narrator and the characters. Within the limits of mimesis, the subject events come from the totalitarian reality observed in advance by the author (as a real-world resident) and then they are recounted by the narrator where the characters are only in the décor role of this pair relationship (author-narrator). So the characters lose the opportunity for prior access and consensus in the later narrated information. So to those (characters) it remains merely the dedication to participate in such subject events, observed by the author and narrated by the narrator, without affecting the subject at all, being functionalized according to the preliminary information modeled by the pair author-narrator.

This pair does not hesitate to penetrate even in defining the way in which the heroes feel and think through psychological analysis (inner observation) in the novels of socialist realism. According to the scheme in the novels of socialist realism, they (the characters) are direct images of the new man, who has to face the negative characters, triumph over them, and get tempered on the ever-present challenges for building the socialism. Thus, the triumph of positive characters or the failure of negative characters occurs depending on the laws of the society (the new, the progressive triumphs, the old, the reactionary is punished) and in this case, the measure of observation that goes into confession is defined by the author and it is narrated by the narrator, as in the subject events.

Such an application makes the hero extremely artificial, so the censorship continually asked from the writers that the characters were more real, more plausible, that they also had their dilemmas.
In such conditions, the events that they receive directly from the reality undergo some specific fictional development, in order to individualize the characters. By making this preset of the circumstances, and then engaging the character to be functionalized according to them, through the reactions in his interval appearances - disappearances, where in fact he (the character) has no choice but to adapt to the next circumstance. As such dilemmas that reveal the characters through inner monologues, paradoxically are foreseen by the circumstances that the narrator feigns to enable (read) their inner discourse. And in this case, in such conditions, the measure of observation that goes into narration is defined by the narrator and it is narrated by the character in the first person (technically the words of the character are given in quotation marks).

It is a fact that in both cases the one who observes within the characters is the author or narrator, but at least along the inner monologue, the narrator's individual observation seeks to be homologated, although formally, by the character, since it is the latter who narrates. Whereas in the psychological analysis there is no possibility of this formal involvement of the character, because the author observes within the character and the narrator narrates it. As such, it is very clear that the consequence of the presence of psychological analysis and the monologue, the so-called internal, in the novel of the socialist realism is the consumption of the model of mutual service of knowledge (Marxist-Leninist ideology) and the power (the party-state) thus, the guaranteeing of the continued power of the pair author-narrator over the characters. At both observation levels, internal and external, thus in all four observation techniques (subject event, dialogue, monologue, and psychological analysis), the strategy of the pair author-narrator is essentially the same, so to avoid compromising his gift as an information administrator (in the role of knowledge) in the novel of socialist realism.
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Conclusion

Dehumanism in the novel of socialist realism is an expression of the fact that how the pair author-narrator intervenes in advance to the ability of characters’ observation by usurping this flair by diverting or routinizing it. Realizing this control, then authorial interventions from the world of truth and the gift of the narrator in the administration of information within the world of the novel is inviolable at any moment, as long as case by case the narrator in a preliminary alliance with the author knows the next information before the character knows it himself. As such, the characters are characterized by the lack of devotion and knowledge acquisition, which in fact is an absolute feature in the typical novels of socialist realism. This is due to the controlled mode of information dissemination within the literary work by the pair author-narrator, the total exclusion of the characters from the truth not only of the world of the literary work, but also of their own worlds, having no external or internal motive to motivate the dissemination of information within the literary work.

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