

**A SMALL PERSON'S VALUE ORIENTATIONS  
IN "THE ANTI-LEADER" STORY BY V.S. MAKANIN**

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Value orientations have always been a relevant research object in various sciences: literary criticism, sociology, philosophy, cultural studies, etc. This is due to the fact, that the axiological aspect is able to directly and fully reflect the picture of the world of a particular society within the cultural and historical context.

"The analytical principle, which became stronger in Russian and Belarusian prose of the 1970s–1980s, led writers to strive for an in-depth, conceptual understanding of the world and the person in it. Not only the actions and actions of the characters are subjected to a detailed analysis, but also the internal, deep movements of the soul that determine the behavior of the characters" [2, p. 113].

Vladimir Semenovitch Makanin is one of the most famous Russian-speaking prose writers who extensively comprehended the existential aspects of being in the paradigm of postmodernism. Makanin's work is largely focused on the fate of "small people", and is also characterized by a detailed description and reverent attention to the social situation and value orientations, black humor, while simultaneously revealing deeply rooted social problems, the absurdity and cruelty of the reality of his era. The relevance of this study is determined by the insufficient study of the character type "the small person" in Russian literature of the last third of the 20th century. The purpose of this work is to characterize the axiological orientation of "small people" in V.S. Makanin's prose.

**Material and methods.** To achieve this goal, we reviewed the story "Anti-leader" by V.S. Makanin, which tells about the fate of the plumber Anatoly Kurenkov, as well as his inner circle. From our point of view, this story in detail and reliably conveys the life, the surrounding reality of the "middle" representatives of the Brezhnev era of stagnation of the 70-80s, which contributes to the most accurate literary analysis of the character type "the small person", as a typical representative of his era. The work will use descriptive-analytical and comparative methods.

**Findings and their discussion.** The value orientations of literary heroes are very diverse and multifaceted. The idea to focus on the fate of the "the small person" as a product of certain social conditions carries the goal of revealing and comprehending the moral and existential values of the vast majority of the era.

Gogol's Akaky Akakievich, being the archetype of the "the small person", introduced "rebellion" and "predestination of failure" of the main character as the main plot-forming elements. We can also observe the continuity of tradition in Makanin's work. The protagonist Tolik Kurenkov "is a meek, calm person, but sometimes (once a year, once every two years) he seems to be jealous and suddenly begins to accumulate evil towards a person who stands out too much" [3, p. 399]. Kurenkov is, though comical, but a classic anti-hero. The caricature image of the central character, the comical nature of the situations, the abundance of humor create a deceptive impression of the frivolity of conflicts, but behind this screen lies a full-fledged social protest and conflict between the "significant person" and the "the small person". Makanin, in a characteristic manner of the postmodern trend, deconstructs the very concept of

"significant person". Here, the "significant people" are caricature characters (Bolshakov, Tyurin, Syropevtsev), who are in one sense or another the antipodes of the main character, causing him a deep sense of hostility and the impossibility of a peaceful resolution of the situation. At first, it may seem that Kurenkov is simply envious or jealous, as a number of secondary characters suggest, but later it becomes clear that the actions of the main character are irrational. Fights, verbal insults from Kurenkov towards people unpleasant to him are a satirical depiction of the challenge of reality and social inequality. The hero is aware of the destructive distortion of his personality, the illogicality of his actions, the destruction of his own life (Kurenkov gets a prison term for a fight), but he cannot help himself. An attempt at allegorical resistance to the rules of reality leads the protagonist to a tragic end.

Kurenkov's friends, Shurochka (his wife) are a caricature of the passivity of society, its inability or unwillingness to realize and discern the destruction of the individual and the existential crisis of the neighbor. Kurenkov's aggression, his fights and hatred towards people are perceived by his friends and wife as quirks, something frivolous and fleeting. Shurochka is cheating on Kurenkov, treats him like a child, and therefore considers her own actions to be quite justified. The carnival scenes (the New Year's scene) emphasize the indifference of those around him to Kurenkov's internal conflict. In the company of close people, he feels alienated. Makanin periodically reminds the reader about the inability of his characters to reflect: "They did not know how to delve into psychology – into this or that act. They would have called in, they would have said: "spit on everything" and put out a bottle of vodka" [3, p. 413]. Secondary characters are mired in everyday vanity, routine. The main topics of conversation are shopping, gossip. Their main entertainment is drinking alcohol. The deteriorating physical condition of the protagonist, periodically occurring violence, betrayal become something ordinary, day-to-day, and trivial for them. Through the crisis and tragedy of the protagonist, Makanin, as it were, contrasts two paths of development of the "the small person" – a deliberately tragic attempt at rebellion against reality or adaptation to reality, with a refusal to see and perceive the growing problems.

**Conclusion.** Thus, Makanin in his story "The Anti-leader" proceeds with the continuity of the traditions of stories about the "the small person", touching on the theme of rebellion and disagreement with the rules of the surrounding reality, ending tragically. Through the axiological orientation of his characters, the author touches upon the actual existential flaws of society: the detachment of the vast majority of people from the growing problems, their inability to understand their neighbor and indifference to what is happening. Through the fate and experiences of the main character, Makinin reveals the theme of the destruction of personality and loneliness within the framework of the surrounding reality.

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