

# THE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER CREATION MEANS IN THE NOVEL BY M. STEL'MAH “THE THOUGHT ABOUT YOU”

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## Abstract

In the world thought and practice the scientific paradigm is anthropocentrism. In the aspect of these philosophical ideas the epic canvases by M. Stel'mah gain the qualitatively new interpretation. For today it is obvious that the works of verbal art must be considered not only as a reflection of socio-political, economic or cultural-educational life of certain society but first of all we must make the acquaintance with personages of the work, to cognize their human essence, to elucidate personal characteristics of personages as creators of own and general story. Such an approach will favor the realization of esthetic, educative and hedonistic function of the literature. Recipients cognize the essence of philosophical categories through the means of character creation of human images: “sense of being”, “happiness”, “self-cognition and self-realization”, “ugly and beautiful”, “comic-tragic and heroic”, “personal development” and so on.

The system of images-personages of soviet epoch in their open description is considered in the article. The esthetics of social realism, its influence on the formation of the author's idiosyncrasy was discovered. The scientific novelty of the received results is in the detailed elucidation and analysis of the originality of the means of character creation of personages in socio-psychological novel by M. Stel'mah “The thought about you”. The materials and results of the study will be the valuable acquisition of literary criticism and the practice of teaching literature.

**Keywords:** Autobiographical novel, author style, poetics of the novels by M. Stel'mah, psychologism, originality of art reproduction of the life flow, the system of images of art work, social realism, Stel'mah studies, newest Ukrainian literature, character creation of personages.

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## 1. Introduction

For today human is in the center of socio-political, cultural-educative, scientific being. Obviously, the topicality of such accent is absolute. That is why theoretical-literary problems also must be studied through the prism of esthetic-humanistic approach. From our point of view, the novel by M. Stel'mah “The thought about you” and exactly the persons in it, is worthy of special scientific study. The author succeeded in transfer of the personages' essence in interconnection of space and time of art reality. The writer demonstrates the chronotope of his epoch through the average figures. That is why the consideration of character creation of the images-personages in the novel by M. Stel'mah “The thought about you” is topical and important not only for science (literary criticism, Stel'mah studies) but also for education (the study of Stel'mah's creative work).

## 2. The analysis of researches and publications that began to solve this problem

The art word of M. Stel'mah attracts attention of many critics, specialists in literature, scientists and ordinary readers. In XX century the prose of social realist was studied by: L. Bondar (the techniques of images creation in novels) [1], I. Duz' (poetics of dramatic works) [2], Y. Lukin (esthetic value of creative work) [3], I. Semenchuk (elements of the form of novels) [4], G. Shton' (originality of M. Stel'mah's novels) [5] and other and in XXI century – A. Adamovych (interpretation of the novel “Human blood is not a water”) [6], V. Zagorodniuk (psychologism of novels) [7], Y. Marynenko (style features of M. Stel'mah's prose) [8], A. Pikalova (concept-image of the person) [9] and other.

Despite the significant studies of M. Stel'mah's epic works, certain aspects are not elucidated. That is why there is a necessity of deepened theoretical study of the means of creation of dominating art images of M. Stel'mah's epic canvas. The topicality of topic, its insufficient theoretical elucidation determined the problem field of our research.

### 3. Aim and tasks of research

*Aim of research* – to open the originality of creation of the characters of images-personages in socio-psychological novel by M. Stel'mah “The thought about you”.

The following tasks were formed for attaining the set aim:

1. To consider the originality of art reproduction of life flow in the work M. Stel'mah “The thought about you”.
2. To elucidate the poetics of novel.
3. To study the system of images-personages of epic canvas.
4. To analyze in details the means of creation of characters of dominating personages.

### 4. Results of research

Obviously, the novel by M. Stel'mah “The thought about you” elucidates the social problems of its epoch, but the main base of the work is the images of ordinary people, whose characters are considered in connection with historical circumstances and events of private life. The author assiduously painted the personages. It is worth to be noted, that such accuracy and attentiveness is manifested not only in the main personages but also in secondary and episodic ones.

The prototype of the main hero of the work Bogdan Romanishin is the writer himself. We traced a certain correspondence between the facts from author's life and from the main hero's one. Bogdan Romanishin lived in Podyllya in the same time frames that M. Stel'mah. “The love, diligence, humanism...” [10] and “...not only science, not only mind, but also the heartfulness, because we'll be very poor without it” [10] – the life credo of M. Stel'mah and Romanishin. “The aspiration for activity, for good, for poetry sounded under Bogdan's heart all time, again and again” [10]. The same words concern to the author of the novel. The love to books, desire to cognize the new as the common features of writer and main hero are brightly manifested to us in the following lines of the novel: “I love you, faithful truth of the books, your suns or lamps, your sorrow and your joy. I am bending to you for not to bend to wrong and self-perfected or bawling ignorance” [10]. The following lines of the novel inform about the enthusiasm to Ukrainian folklore: “Probably none country has such folk treasures like our, and we must think more not about the treasures that lay in earth but also about the ones that are kept in national memory. As you will collect the folk creation further, pay attention to the signers, who know a lot...” [10]. The value of aforesaid lines from the work is that they open the internal essence of literary type and its prototype.

The fiction writer successfully used the means of creation of Bogdan Vasilovych Romanishin's image. The literary-art anthroponym of the main hero is oriented on the concrete spatial commonly accepted use of the names and is deprived of attendant semantic or stylistic shades. The author does not deal with its emotional-expressive coloration that is why in the novel this literary-art anthroponym has only nominative-differential function and is related to the nominative ones, according to L. Bebel's classification.

The author does not give the portrait characteristics of this image-personage in the novel. But in the second part we read “... Grey shady eyes, a bit swelled and roughened as if poured with salt, mouth, ordinary face with grain grower' idea, that being anxious takes sorrow from the wind and drought and from cloud, looked at him from the glass. Completely ordinary peasant's face...” [10], “...face nicely baked like a bread...” [10]. The author masterly uses the means of context-synonymic expressiveness of the language for the description of man's face, opening it in new unordinary aspect. The hero himself assesses his appearance as following: “had not only sorrow but also pride and faith that the beauty must unite only with beauty. But where he, the ordinary boy, could take it?!” [10].

In the novel the author-storyteller gives the internal monologues and large descriptions of all that takes place in the soul of personage: “... the fear caught Bogdan again and ringed him worse than snowstorm...” [10], “...boy's voice sounds with sorrow and hope...” [10], “...pain and sorrow stroke him. What if Artemon convinced her?” [10], “Bogdan listened to her voice already without a drop of laugh and scolded himself by the last words. What an ignoramus and idler he was! He finished the institute but this woman understands beauty hundred times more. You lazed even to go to museums. You looked at something in first rooms as mammoth tusks

and broken crocks but had not enough time or patience for the other. He did not visit any master, did not touch the loam that not only crocks but only sides were modeled of. And what did you know about towels? Only that they are embroidered by cross, satin stitch and string...” [10], “...breaking himself, squeezing pain he went blindly from fire, from love, from fern flower that flourished not for him because he could not bedim for somebody this quiet evening or life like wild geese bedimmed the water in quiet Danube”... [10].

The characteristic by other heroes is laconic: “– Children, look at him! It is a philosopher! – undoubtedly said the old Shalamay...” [10], “...in his twenties he did not approach to a girl yet, did not take anyone to the bushes. Buried himself into the library like a mole into earth and forgot that there are black eyebrows in the world... – laughed Ivan” [10], “Clever, very clever is our respected Bogdan Vasilovych...” [10].

M. Stel'mah depicted so called generally human character, typical for his nation and time. It must be noted, that the author puts the positive content just in Bogdan Vasilovych Romanishin.

In the novel “The thought about you” the writer presents one more character – the women image of Yarina Bescorovaynaya. The description of the personage's appearance is given by the author in exposition in one fragment of the novel: “...in fifteen years she became the most beautiful girl in the village. No one could look without surprise at these cornflower eyes that unusually lightened the swarthy face, at these eyelashes that timidly kept the evening mystery, at these eyebrows that surprisingly roughly fled away to the temples, at these dimples that breathed in such a way that invoked somebody's kind laugh or sigh...” [10], “...eyes kept the morning and unequal dewdrops of fresh sun under the evening eyelashes...” [10]. M. Stel'mah intently depicted the features of face that strengthens the role of art detail. The characteristic of hero by other personages is given in the novel for more full and deep description of the portrait: “...girl like evening star...” [10], “...unattainable Yarina's beauty thrashed Bogdan's soul by flails” [10], “...and she was like vesnyanka...” [10], “...Oh my God, what a pleasant young woman...” [10]. “...what eyes she has? Ask for coming in heart. And she gave the same ones to her son...” [10]. It becomes obvious that the author and other personages sympathize with the main heroine and in the reader's imagination is formed a pleasant, positive image. The originality of portrait characteristics of the main heroine is that there are no portrait characteristics as such in the novel at all but there is an impression made by the hero's appearance on the other and the comparison of human beauty with the world of nature.

Obviously, the author gives to Yarina Bescorovayna the positive features, the beauty of soul and body but unenviable destiny. The psychic state of heroine is given in emotions that specifically color her feelings and activity: “...bridesmaids and bridesmen singed, the bride cried...” [10], “...she sings near the norm and cries near Vasyuta...” [10], “...fear like a predacious bird seats on Yarina's shoulders, immerses claws deeper and deeper in her soul...” [10].

The one more mean of character creation is the actions and deeds of Yarina. The girl was the first who rushed to help a boy, who injured his leg at break: “...rapidly held his hanky from the shop, the one in whole school, torn it in two parts and started to wrap his finger...” [10]. The motives of her deed are noble.

It is understood, that the author gives to Bogdan and Yarina a chance for happy life for their kind hearts and strong spirit: “...sprinkled with seeds of old bee-master, they went their way – in the groan of forests, in roar of eternal wind, in fury of snowstorm, because each person must overcome and come through the own snowstorms...” [10].

From our point of view, it is expedient to qualify the secondary personage by their essence. That is why they can be divided in positive and negative ones. To the first ones are related: Turovets Maxim Pavlovych, Sokolyanenko Ivan Olexandrovyeh, Snigurska Sophya Petrivna, Litvinchuk Tetyana Salivonivna, Finenko Severin, Solomia Gromishina, Nina Pavlivna. The negative personages are: Hvorostenko Kostyantyn Procopovych, Vasyuta Artemon Davidovych, David Vasyuta, Omelyan Bescorovayniy, Shinkaruk Mercuriy Yuhimovych, Pasikevych Anton Antonovych.

The base of prototype interpretation was an algorithm, offered by V. Paharenko in his learning-methodical issue “The base of the theory of literature” [11]. And taking into account the aim of

our study, we'll consider in details the means of creation of character of the secondary personages, through which the author opens his idea-esthetic intention.

Turovets Maxim Pavlovych is a hero of civic war, the head of collective farm in Ozerne on Podyllya: "...when he was not a leader, he could listen more to the bird and steppe, to the water and forest. And now there is so much worry, useful and useless, that there is already a thought not about the beauty of nature but about its economic usefulness: about the rain or the nice weather for haying ..." [10]. The man's portrait "...under his dark grey eyes appeared the fans of premature wrinkles... a little swelled and cracked mouth, behind which corner two tiny dimples breath..." [10], "...the autumn disturbance covered his kind face, baked as a bread..." [10], "...the summer coating stopped on his long face, hair fell on forehead like treated mature rye ..." [10]. Turovets is characterized by the following words of other heroes: "The good person we have!" [10], "...he is very kind and clever person..." [10], "When the gebietscommissar gives two hectares or house or cow for a head of average partisan, it could be a farmstead for Turovets. But he is sly and very strong" [10].

In the image of Maxim Turovets M. Stel'mah shows a person, who diligently performs its duties on occupied post and thinks about wellbeing of fellow villagers and also the author gives his personal impressions: "...what nice and signing children will grow in rye for them..." [10] and "...she [Solomya Gromishina] felt herself a mother for the first time before the war. Spring gave them a great gift..." [10]. It is a proof that the work is socio-psychological novel, written in the spirit of social realism.

The image of Salomya Gromishina is discovered by the following means: description of appearance, author characteristic and characteristics by the other personages. M. Stel'mah gives a short portrait, accenting attention on the eyes and eyebrows again: "...has the spacious brows and marvelously seducing glance: between her eyelids quietly lays the shaggy dream or half-dream that at once remind of early spring or the spreading pasqueflower ..." [10], "...actually there is something from the witch in her primitive eyes, in spacious eyebrows that jumped on the temples for men's doom..." [10], "...female sorrow and timidity stopped in eyes..." [10]. The author demonstrates the internal world of personage in following lines: "... But honesty of this woman was such that it would not allow her hide from husband even in thought something that is hidden by the other, who have more happiness than she and do not understand it, disperse it for fugacious stuff, for feelings-ephemeras. With all her sanctity she considered herself as a sinner and can't forget her sorrow about that hungry year when she had boiled even tubers of dahlias. Can anybody understand it? But everyone can laugh at..." [10]. The short but expressive is a hero's characteristic by other personages: "Oh, how many pepper is in you!" [10], "At husband she proudly carried the beautiful head with hard tress to the village with people and to the church with gods. But the timber killed the brown-eyed Gromishin in the forest and bent Solomya's head and shoulders. Several years passed from this moment, her shoulders have been straightened a little and the aspiration for motherhood ripened in her breast..." [10]. M. Stel'mah created one more image of beautiful woman with severe destiny but with positive character. That is why Solomya Gromishina overcomes trials that the author gives her and finds her happiness with Turovets that she'll "...love as a soul..." [10].

The positive image in the novel is the teacher Sophya Petrivna Snigurska, reminded by the main heroes as: "... the world of remote fairy tale and the blossom of fern on Ivana Kupala and magic of hearty word blown from her..." [10], "...she always came to them, schoolchildren, as if she did not part with the sun itself... always with smile as if she didn't know the sorrow..." [10]. And the author's characteristic adds the image: "...Sophya was so excited, when they said that she is a partisan that began to cry out her joy. Thus have been going towards all trials, this woman was glad to have confidence in hardest days for her land..." [10].

Sokolyanenko Ivan Olexandrovyeh – kind and faithful friend of Bogdan Romanishin that Bogdan said about: "...what happiness, when such a stork is near you. You can go to the marriage or to the combat with him..." [10]. The means of creation of Ivan's image: external look "...gipsy head with faggot of curls... in boy's black eyes slyness and fun were slightly shimmied like on the scales..." [10], "...the nose of Sirano de Berzerak ..." [10]; characteristics of the hero by other personages: "...this mocker, joker and boaster wonderfully weaved so much humanity in him..."

[10]; self-characteristics – “I obviously not belong to the ones, who can love disparately. If I did not find a girl in mill, I would search behind it. But I think, my happiness was found in mill!.. You understand, I love how she [Nina Pavlivna – miller’s daughter] goes about the earth, I love how her legs carefully examine the anxiety on corduroy, I love how her tresses are interspersed by the wind, how the smile comes from the corners of her mouth, love how she puts head on my breast and will love more when our offspring is placed near her breast. And it will be placed after all! All this is the love for me; I even do not want another one...” [10].

Litvinchuk Tetyana Salivonivna – the fellow village of Bogdan, M. Stel’mah makes the portrait-comparison in his novel: “...she is a bud now but her eyes sprinkle like stars and eyelashes around them like mills – blow the evil away, attracts the good... plays by eyes and tresses, rake swings on shoulders, and in hand – the white small knot with crocks-twins. What a hostess!...” [10]; “...she borrowed tresses from the sun and took the eyes from dusk...” [10]; “...slender, beautiful, slight in going...” [10]; “...where such beauty is taken from? Where was gathered that fog in the eyes, that anyone can not escape forever? And who outlined these half-opened lips that included half-child confidence and presentiment of love? Even several sprinkled freckles did not shade but touchingly accented the girl’s beauty. Somebody even dying will think about you, the quiet star of Podyllya steppes...” [10].

The negative personage is Artemon Vasyuta, who hurt not only Solomya and Yarina but all fellow villagers, including his own father. Creating the image of Artemon Davidovych Vasyuta, the writer uses portrait, characteristics by other people and description of conditions where this personage lives. According to the tradition, M. Stel’mah describes the negative personage unpleasantly: “...with large jaws...” [10], “...salient jaws and uneven knots of muscles under them... such smile streamed on his jaws that everyone wanted to puddle it by fists...” [10]. The author accurately paints the Artemon’s mediocrity by the art detail: “...deep, narrow eyes...” [10]. Fellow-villagers and relatives talk about Vasyuta in the following words: “...to the devil’s Vasyuta...” [10], “...it was something ugly, humiliating that lessened human...” [10], “...cemetery soul...” [10], “...he needs not woman but hireling...” [10], “...Artemon, who could not neither create nor give joy to anyone...” [10], “dishonest... merciless” [10], “...devil’s monster...” [10], “...presented her the precious ear-rings before marriage and now is trying to take them away. And sure he will. He does not lose even a single straw...” [10], “...this purulent creature will do all that Hvorostenko talks him. He will build socialism for himself and his brood in stockrooms and will transfer people on grams...” [10], “...I painted him overbearing with rigid heart...” [10], “...own son, own child, own hope, who became not son, not child, not hope, but a torturer...” [10].

The fiction writer uses the description of conditions and place, where Vasyutas live to transfer the features of their internal world: “Vasyutas lived under the very cemetery. Maybe because the shade of crosses fell in the morning and in the evening on their old house, because the spacious apples took juices from the graves, because the cemetery dwellers always managed the grave garden or because many crosses and coffins flowed through their eyes, the cemetery heaviness shaded on the expressive faces of old and young Vasyuta. The large-jawed, deep-eyed Vasyutas even liked it: villagers were afraid of them and they had profit from the human fear – caught the land near cemetery for a kitchen garden and even penetrated to the very cemetery; razed to the ground the ancient graves and potato began to blossom instead of blue periwinkle. Masters had a lot of fuel: wooden crosses generously heated the ribbed dwelling, cut of oak” [10].

Although it was late, David Vasyuta understood that “...the main thing in life is to have a pot on shoulders and not a wealth that makes poorer ...” [10]; that “...in one black cast-iron pot, like in the coffin, was buried whole his youth, all his mature years and the edge of inconsolable old age. He did not sale his soul to the devil for money, but became a devil himself near them and did not noticed, how he gave his son to the devil’s paws...” [10]; “...who only now, having become grey, understood that he is a fool, who passed through the fingers his whole life for nothing, for the scabby cast-iron pot” [10]. He lost also his beloved green-eyed Tetyana, whose “...mouth had a smell of African marigold and naked legs – of hieracium, honey fungi and dew...” [10]; she “...breathed with smells of autumn, honey fungi and good hop...” [10]. “Oh God, why he, the lout, had listened to his creaky farther and did not married her?” [10].

Omelyan Bescorovayniy – Yarina's elder brother that author talks about: "...on murderous horse he scattered, lost his youth, in murderous dens mislaid laugh and smile, run for his destiny till the other's boundaries and when understood that it is not there, came back to his woods, lived like a wolf for several time, then came to the district and gave himself up, then became a church regent at the village, because had a voice of saint at sinner's body..." [10]. In creation of portrait characteristic the fiction writer stops on the face zones again: "He meets Omelyan in house, with dry gipsy face... In his mollusk-like eyelids expressively lay the dark eyes, heated by suspicion and closed mouth under seven locks keeps smile..." [10], "...crooked hand..." [10], "...his running eyes reminded of tadpoles..." [10]. M. Stel'mah demonstrates his attitude to the own sister through the actions and deeds: "...he thrown her [Yarina] from the school desk by his claw merciless hands, disturbed the world of hope and fairy tale because it was time for girl to manage near the furnace, near hoe, near the cow, time to know how much is the pond of butter and sixty eggs. But she new from this science only how much is a pound of sorrow..." [10]. If it would be his will, he "tortures even the sun" [10], "seller of sister" [10], "hidden killer" [10].

Kostyantyn Prokopovych Hovorostenko – the head of district consumer community. The author demonstrates through his image the typical features of officials of Soviet times. Obviously, it is an image-type but at the same type the individual with its specific features. The portrait of this image: "its round face, like a sieve was a cemetery of freckles: they died in winter leaving after them the pale destruction of indistinct hieroglyphs... [10]. Author demonstrates his internal essence with sarcasm: "Having used to deal with the trade knavery and jugglery, Hovorostenko saw the hidden criminal in almost each person and did not trust even his wife neither in costs, nor in love. His practicality did not trust spirit because certain writers earn easy money and only disturb soul by their art stuff. If he could transfer them on the norm! On the norm! It would be immediately less of different criticism, love and different humanism-liberalism, but the socially useful efficiency would come instead of them" [10]; "...he had two animals in breast" suspicion and self-confidence. He saw all to the core except the own primitivism... bring in house his shiny boots, green suspicious slyness in eyes and self-respect on the face that was like a large and inflated "o" [10].

The characteristic of Hovorostenko by other personage is rather volume and expressive: "he is stone image... And what is alive in him? Only shout and stomach. Just the same image was on the grave in steppe, the same round face and belly. But it just kept silence; did not hinder people. Is it possible to put him on the grave? Just as a guard? It would be more seed and more idea... Idea it is a rightness, heartfulness to the people and to the seed and even to the cattle or bird but not a knock by the fist and bang by the door" Even a poppy can knock and bang. But there is not a harvest of bread after knock and bang" [10]; "...but it is a demon, I am afraid of him, – sincerely told Ivan Vasiliyovych. – Energetic fool on the post is a disaster. But he has hand also in the region ..." [10]; "...the plan can be constructed but the state cannot be built on the base of hvosostenkoship" [10], "...it is a fear for the mind of the country that primitivists such as Hovorostenko can catch and mutilate..." [10]; "...Hovorostenko strikes us by fear, writes in the paper each disagreeable person. And the paper in his hands became terrible like the Lucifer's signet..." [10]. From our point of view, the author's aim is to satirize and to prevent.

The author creates the image of Anton Antonovych Pasikevych with mockery and dislike: "the director of four-year school in the neighbor village. Picturesque figure. He could go far, but at revolution married a noblewoman ... Evil tongues told – for benefit. He thought, that the whites would win, and the peasant's son would be a noble man, owner of thousand of dessiatines..." [10]. It is worth underlying, that M. Stel'mah gives a static portrait of this personage: "Anton Antonovych Pasikevych was lower than middle height, had shortened neck and completely round head with rare coat felt itself rather free on it. His tanned face boasted of bestial cunning eyes, pear-like nose, convex lips and magnificent moustaches that classically repeated the form of oven fork; probably having seen them each hostess thought about how comfortably must this oven fork keep the small pots..." [10]. Pasikevych is negatively characterized by the other personages: "He is not only cynic, he also intrigued [10], "...Formerly you were the church superintendant and damaged the peasant's canvas by horse hoofs. And now you are damaging the peasant's son by the roofs of suspicion..." [10], "...he is small as a goose but harmful as a polecat" [10].

We find in the text the portrait of director of educational department Mercuriy Yuhimovych Shinkaruk: "...man of near forty years old, with rather flat face and excessively compliant expression on it... eyes were like multitude ice chits that did not know how they must be: cold-grey or cold-blue. But ingratiating sparkles a bit decreased their cold..." [10]. M. Stel'mah described the appearance with few traits but recipient received the information about this personage.

## 5. Conclusions

The system analysis of art work gave a ground to state that the characters of M. Stel'mah's personages are given in the development, in the fight of contradictory tendencies, using the diverse means of character creation. In the result of internal fight, the final personage's position and our positive or negative attitude to them is crystallized.

It is worth noting, that the eyes are the art detail, through which the master gives the human essence, the features of world understanding and world perception and thus gives reader a possibility to penetrate in the internal world of personages. The materials and results of our study will enrich and widen the scientific-theoretical Stel'mah studies. In further studies we'll elucidate the esthetics of works for children by M. Stel'mah.

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