

THE IMAGE OF THE "LITTLE MAN" IN A.P.CHEKHOV'S SHORT STORY "THE DEATH OF AN OFFICIAL"

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"The Death of an Official" is a story by A. P. Chekhov, which raises the topic of a "new little man" who is very difficult to sympathize with. In his story, the author treats the topic of the "little man" in a different way and transforms it in a new way.

In order to find out with what literary techniques and artistic means Chekhov managed to convey his thoughts and show how a person himself will reach such a state (a state of complete humiliation) from which he eventually dies, a complete analysis of the story is needed.

The story was written in 1883.

There are several variants about the "birth" of the plot of the work, but in each of them real-life cases – "little people" - officials tried to apologize to high-ranking people. "The Death of an official" is a story, the plot of which is a collective of these versions. The story was published under the pseudonym of Antosha Chekhov in the publishing house "Fragments".

The genre is a humorous story.

The direction is realism (critical realism).

The theme is the fear of the "little man" in front of high-ranking people.

The main idea of the story is that the one who forgets about his existence, about his personality, is dead.

The problem is that the "Little man" forgets about his existence, significance and importance. A service function that is very easy to break – that's what the life of a new "little man" is built on.

The beginning of the action (tie) – Worms, when sneezing, sprinkles a high-

ranking person (general): "One fine evening, an equally excellent executor, Ivan Dmitrich Chervyakov, was sitting in the second row of chairs and looking through binoculars at the Kornevil Bells. He looked and felt at the height of bliss. But suddenly... This "but suddenly" is often found in stories. The authors are right: life is so full of surprises! But suddenly his face wrinkled, his eyes rolled up, and his breathing stopped... He took the binoculars away from his eyes, bent down and. Ahhhh!!! Sneezed, as you can see. Sneezing is not forbidden to anyone anywhere. Both men and police officers sneeze, and sometimes even privy councillors. Everyone sneezes. Chervyakov was not at all embarrassed, wiped himself with a handkerchief and, like a polite person, looked around him: Did he bother anyone with his sneezing? But then I had to be embarrassed. He saw that the old man sitting in front of him, in the first row of chairs, was diligently wiping his bald head and neck with a glove and muttering something. In the old man, Chervyakov recognized the state general Brizzhalov, an employee of the Ministry of Railways"[7,pp. 70-71]

The development of the action — a small official will approach the general several times in order to apologize: "The next day, Chervyakov put on a new uniform, got a haircut and went to Brizzhalov to explain... When he entered the general's reception room, he saw many petitioners there, and among the petitioners was the general himself, who had already begun accepting petitions. After interviewing several petitioners, the general raised his eyes to Chervyakov..." [7, pp. 70-72]. "Yesterday in the Arcadia, if you remember, Your majesty," the executor began to report, —I sneezed and... accidentally sprayed ... Izv..." [7, pp. 70-72].

"I came to disturb your majesty yesterday," he muttered, when the general raised inquiring eyes to him, —not to laugh, as you were pleased to say. I was apologizing for splashing while sneezing, sir... but I didn't even think to laugh" [7, pp. 71-72].

The climax is that Chervyakov, with his repeated "apologies", will bring the general to anger, and he shouts at him:

"Get out!! The general suddenly barked, turning blue and shaking.

—What is it?" Chervyakov asked in a whisper, thrilled with horror.

— Get out!! — the general repeated, stamping his feet" [7, pp. 71-72].

The denouement is that after the general "barked", Chervyakov will come home and "die" on his couch: "Something broke off in Chervyakov's stomach. Seeing nothing, hearing nothing, he backed to the door, went outside and trudged... Having come home mechanically, without taking off his uniform, he lay down on the sofa and.. he died" [7, pp. 71-72].

Subject matter:

- 1) a person is not a person, but a set of official functions;
- 2) the vices of self-abasement and reverence;
- 3) social inequality, which reinforces the injustice that results in the stratification of society;
- 4) becoming a spiritual slave as a result of renouncing one's inner freedom.

Problems:

- 1) if a person is not perceived as a person, then he becomes a set of official functions;
- 2) an official should obey his superiors only in a working environment, and not everywhere and in everything;
- 3) if wealth, ranks and honors are perceived as the main values in society, then people from a low social level begin to perceive officials not as people exactly like them, but as gods.
- 4) it is necessary to eliminate inequality in society;
- 5) if an official obeys his superiors not only in a working environment, but everywhere in everything, then he loses himself (his inner freedom) and becomes a spiritual slave. As Chekhov himself said, every person needs to "squeeze a slave out of himself drop by drop all his life."

Characterization of the characters

Chervyakov is a petty official. A "little man" who obeys his superiors not only in the work environment, but everywhere in everything. Therefore, he ceased to exist as a person, but exists as a set of service functions. He buried his inner freedom a long time ago.

General Brizzhalov is a man who "suffered" from a minor official (from his sneezing). Not arrogant, unreliable, but a simple, good-natured person. He tried several times to convince the "little man" that he was not to blame for the incident that happened that day in the theater. But after repeated apologies from a minor official, he breaks down and yells at him. And it is at this moment that Chervyakov finally gets what he originally expected to see.

The wife of a minor official is the one who pushes her husband to go to the general to apologize, which means that husband and wife are two boots in a pair.

Literary techniques and artistic means.

Why does the official have the surname "Chervyakov"?! It is, of course, no coincidence that Chekhov uses the literary device "talking surnames" here. The very name of the official tells us about his insignificance in front of his superiors. With the general's last name, exactly the same technique is used. "Brizzhalov" is the one who was sprayed when sneezing.

The title of the story is also telling. It symbolically suggests that Chervyakov has been dead for a long time, because he is a spiritual slave. I have long forgotten about my inner freedom and my personality.

An artistic detail: he did not die like a man, but "died" like a worm. It's not in his chest, but "something came off in his stomach!".

Conflict

The characters are in complete disagreement in their views: in their worldview, in their views, and in their attitude. The most important thing in life for a "little man" is complete subordination in everything and everywhere and respect for high-ranking people, but for a general this is not important at all.

Based on the above, we can draw the following conclusion:

Chekhov's "Little Man" is very different from other "little people" of other writers (for example, from Bashmachkin). If the "little people" of other writers suffered from high-ranking officials, then after reading the story "The Death of an official", the reader feels a feeling that Chervyakov himself reached such a state, as a result of which "something came off in his stomach" and "died".

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