

"LITTLE MAN" IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE**Mirzayeva F.,***Lecturer of the Nakhchivan State University***Aliyev S.***Lecturer of the Nakhchivan State University*<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11199385>**Abstract**

This article explores the literary motif of the "Little Man" in Russian literature, particularly through the works of Alexander Pushkin and Fyodor Dostoevsky. The "Little Man" represents individuals of lower social standing and limited ambitions, grappling with societal pressures and personal morality. Pushkin, one of the early adopters of this theme, portrays these characters with a romantic idealism, highlighting their dignity and resilience amidst life's challenges in works like "The Station Warden" and "Eugene Onegin." Conversely, Dostoevsky offers a darker, more introspective look into the psychological and moral complexities of such individuals in his novels "Crime and Punishment" and "The Brothers Karamazov." Both authors use the "Little Man" to address the social and moral issues of their times, providing profound insights into human nature and societal structures. Their narratives underscore the enduring relevance of this motif, reflecting the universal human struggle for justice and integrity.

Keywords: Literary Motif, Little Man, Pushkin, Dostoevsky.

The literary construct known as the "Little Man" boasts an extensive lineage, tracing its origins back to the lore of ancient civilizations and demonstrating substantial development across various cultural narratives throughout history. This scholarly article delves into the genesis, progression, and pervasive influence of this archetype, with a particular emphasis on its portrayal in the corpus of Russian literature, as exemplified by the seminal works of Alexander Pushkin and Fyodor Dostoevsky.

From its early representations in mythological contexts, where it often emerged as an archetype embodying the existential plight of humanity, the "Little Man" has evolved into a nuanced symbol in literary discourse. Typically depicted as an anti-hero or a quintessential everyman besieged by overwhelming societal forces, this character epitomizes the quintessential struggles of the average individual against oppressive structures of authority and power. The "Little Man" serves as a potent emblem of the ordinary person's struggle for autonomy and dignity in the face of daunting systemic obstacles. [2]

This figure not only encapsulates the common man's adversities but also symbolizes universal human anxieties, desires, and the inherent quest for justice and freedom. Throughout literary history, the "Little Man" has been strategically employed by writers to critique prevailing social injustices and to illuminate the resilience and enduring spirit of humanity. In this capacity, the character often challenges the status quo, prompting readers to reconsider the dynamics of power and the impact of societal constraints on individual lives. [1]

In the rich tapestry of Russian literature, the "Little Man" assumes a critical role, providing insight into the social and moral fabric of the times. The works of Pushkin and Dostoevsky, two titans of Russian letters, offer profound explorations of this motif. Through their narratives, these authors present a vivid tableau of the "Lit-

tle Man's" encounters with existential dilemmas and societal challenges, thereby enriching our understanding of the human condition. [8]

Thus, the "Little Man" not only reflects the trials and tribulations of the everyday person but also serves as a mirror reflecting societal norms, injustices, and the ongoing human struggle for equity and recognition. Through the lens of Russian literary masters, this archetype is imbued with rich symbolism and deep philosophical inquiry, making it an indispensable element in the study of literature and its sociocultural implications. The enduring relevance of the "Little Man" in literature underscores its universal appeal and its ability to resonate across different epochs and societies, providing a robust framework for examining the interplay between individual aspirations and societal constraints. [4]

In the annals of Russian literary history, the archetype of the "Little Man" gained prominence in the early decades of the 19th century. This figure is typically characterized by a modest socio-economic status and constrained ambitions, reflective of a broader societal underclass. The literary critic Vissarion Belinsky is credited with first employing this term in a formal literary critique in the year 1840, marking a significant moment in the recognition and analysis of this motif within Russian literature. [1]

Alexander Pushkin, one of Russia's preeminent literary figures, was instrumental in introducing and developing the theme of the "Little Man" in Russian narrative arts. His short story "The Station Warden," part of the collection titled "Belkin's Tales," is pivotal in this regard. Through the character of Samson Vyrin, a minor official confronted with profound personal tragedy, Pushkin offers a deeply sympathetic portrayal of the vulnerabilities and existential challenges faced by individuals at the lower rungs of society. Vyrin's story poignantly underscores the impact of personal losses that resonate with the theme of social and emotional marginalization, thereby bringing to light the poignant

struggles associated with feelings of societal insignificance. [6]

Pushkin's exploration of the "Little Man" extends into other works, notably "Eugene Onegin" and "The Captain's Daughter." These narratives provide a canvas to explore the lives of ordinary individuals entangled in the complexities of romantic entanglements, societal norms, and the upheavals of significant historical events. In "Eugene Onegin," characters such as Lensky and Onegin navigate the intricate dance of social expectations and personal desires, reflecting the broader human condition within the framework of Russian social hierarchy. Similarly, in "The Captain's Daughter," Pushkin delves into the turbulent period of the Pugachev Rebellion, using his protagonists to explore themes of loyalty, bravery, and the human spirit in times of societal crisis. [6]

In these works, Pushkin's characters often exhibit a romanticized fortitude and dignity, which serve as a testament to the human capacity to endure and rise above daunting challenges. This portrayal not only emphasizes the resilience inherent in the human spirit but also highlights the nuanced interplay between individual agency and the overarching forces of history and society. Through the lens of the "Little Man," Pushkin not only critiques the social structures of his time but also celebrates the moral and emotional strength of ordinary people, thus providing a multidimensional view of the human experience in the face of adversity. [5]

Overall, the motif of the "Little Man" in Pushkin's oeuvre offers a rich exploration of the tensions and triumphs of the human condition, framed within the context of Russian society and its historical vicissitudes. This thematic exploration not only enriched Russian literature but also provided a foundation for subsequent generations of writers to build upon, ensuring the continued relevance and resonance of this literary theme. [1]

Fyodor Dostoevsky's interpretation of the "Little Man" archetype represents a profound departure into the realms of psychological depth and moral intricacy, particularly evident in seminal works such as "Crime and Punishment" and "The Brothers Karamazov." In these narratives, Dostoevsky's protagonists are often embroiled in intense ethical quandaries and internal turmoil. This deeper, more introspective approach offers a stark contrast to the more surface-level societal critiques often found in other literary treatments of the "Little Man." His characters, such as Rodion Raskolnikov and the Karamazov brothers, are meticulously crafted to explore the darker, more complex aspects of human psychology and morality. [3]

Dostoevsky's portrayal delves into how these individuals contend with the existential pressures and moral decisions that define and often torment their existence. This exploration extends beyond mere narrative function; it serves as a profound inquiry into the human soul, wrestling with questions of redemption, guilt, faith, and the inherent struggle between good and evil. The psychological landscape he paints is one of intense conflict and reflection, providing a vivid depiction of the human condition through the lens of the socially and economically marginalized. [4]

On the other hand, Alexander Pushkin's treatment of the "Little Man" in his literary works often embodies a more romanticized idealism. Pushkin's characters, while also navigating the trials posed by their environments and societal structures, typically display a resilience imbued with a sense of nobility and moral clarity. This is not to suggest a lack of complexity in Pushkin's characters but rather highlights a different stylistic and thematic focus. Pushkin's romanticized approach lends a certain poetic justice to the lives of his characters, often elevating their personal struggles to a level of heroic or tragic dignity.

Despite these differing approaches, both Dostoevsky and Pushkin leverage the "Little Man" to critique and examine the social and moral fabric of their respective times. Each author uses this figure not only to reflect on individual human virtues and vices but also as a mirror reflecting the broader philosophical and societal dilemmas facing the common person in Russia. Dostoevsky's characters often embody the existential angst and moral disquietude that characterize modernist literature, while Pushkin's figures frequently resonate with the themes of fate and personal valor typical of the Romantic era. [8]

Through their distinct literary lenses, both authors contribute richly to the dialogue about the role of the individual in society and the moral challenges they face. This ongoing literary conversation highlights the enduring relevance of the "Little Man" in exploring the depths of human nature and the societal pressures that shape our moral choices. Thus, Dostoevsky's psychologically rich and gritty narrative style, juxtaposed with Pushkin's more idealized and romantic portrayal, provides a comprehensive view of the human condition through the trials and tribulations of the "Little Man."

The literary archetype of the "Little Man" has maintained its prominence as a potent symbol within literature, resonating deeply with audiences and spurring a reflective examination of both personal and collective values. The sustained pertinence of this motif in literature can be attributed to its profound encapsulation of the essential elements of human existence—namely, the perennial struggles faced by individuals, the enduring quest for moral integrity, and the ongoing pursuit of justice. These universal themes are central to the human experience, offering readers not only a mirror reflecting their own lives but also a lens through which broader societal issues can be viewed and critically examined. [2]

The works of Alexander Pushkin and Fyodor Dostoevsky serve as pivotal explorations of this motif, significantly influencing Russian culture as well as the wider realm of global literature. Through the narrative arcs and character developments in their stories, these literary giants provide deep insights into the complexities of the human condition, framed through the experiences of the "Little Man." Their narratives weave a rich fabric of human emotions, interlaced with the varied textures of societal dynamics and conditions. By doing so, they elevate the "Little Man" to a symbol that transcends time and cultural boundaries, offering a timeless emblem that continues to engage and provoke thought across successive generations. [2]

The ongoing exploration of this theme in literary studies not only honors the legacies of Pushkin and Dostoevsky but also underscores the critical role of literary analysis in deepening our understanding of human nature and societal constructs. Through detailed examinations of these authors' works, scholars and readers alike gain insights into the nuanced interplay between individual actions and broader social forces. This scholarly engagement reaffirms the value of the humanities, illustrating how literature acts as a conduit for cultural expression and philosophical inquiry. [4]

In dissecting the portrayal of the "Little Man" by Pushkin and Dostoevsky, one appreciates the broader implications of their narratives in addressing fundamental questions about human aspiration, societal limitations, and the moral conflicts that arise therein. Their literary contributions thus continue to inspire academic discourse and creative explorations, highlighting the enduring relevance of their works in contemporary discussions about identity, morality, and social justice. [5]

In conclusion, the persistent resonance of the "Little Man" in literature is a testament to its profound impact as a vehicle for reflecting on human frailties and strengths, and the inexorable search for meaning and justice in an often indifferent world. Pushkin and Dostoevsky's artistic explorations into the lives of ordinary individuals facing extraordinary challenges illuminate the path to understanding more about ourselves and the society in which we live, bridging past and present, personal and universal. This exploration not only keeps their literary spirits alive but also continues to enrich our collective cultural heritage.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of the "Little Man" in the works of Alexander Pushkin and Fyodor Dostoevsky provides a rich tapestry through which the nuanced interplay between individual agency and overarching societal structures can be examined. Their narratives illuminate the profound struggles and moral questions that characterize the human condition, offering an enduring reflection on themes of justice, integrity, and personal resilience. While Pushkin presents these figures with a romantic idealism that highlights their dignity and struggle against fate, Dostoevsky offers a grittier, more introspective look into the psychological and ethical dilemmas faced by his characters.

Both authors contribute significantly to the discourse on social and moral issues of their time, using the motif of the "Little Man" to offer a critique of their respective societies that remains relevant today. This

enduring relevance underscores the profound capacity of literature to transcend temporal and geographic boundaries, facilitating a deeper understanding of societal dynamics and individual psychology. The academic exploration of these themes not only honors the legacies of Pushkin and Dostoevsky but also enhances our comprehension of the literary mechanisms through which cultural and existential queries are articulated and examined.

Therefore, studying Pushkin and Dostoevsky's portrayal of the "Little Man" offers invaluable insights into the struggle for personal significance within larger societal contexts, providing a mirror in which the eternal conflicts of human existence are reflected. This ongoing relevance highlights the essential role of literary studies in fostering a deeper appreciation of both historical and contemporary human experiences, ultimately enriching our global cultural heritage and enhancing our collective empathy and intellectual breadth.

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