

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN «NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC» MATERIALS

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In the context of the modern transformation of genres and types of journalism, the half-literary and half-journalistic genre, the genre of narrative journalism, is becoming increasingly popular. Therefore, in the article the author defines the concept of «narrative multimedia journalism» and finds the main characteristics of this trend in the materials of «National Geographic». The article describes three journalistic works and proves that they are examples of the phenomenon under consideration.

Key words: story; narrative; «National Geographic»; multimedia journalism; narrative multimedia journalism.

Philosophers J-F. Lyotard and F. Jameson claimed that «a person learns the world through a story about it, that is, a narrative» [1]. This statement echoes the most important function of the media – the shaping of an information picture of the world. Narrative, on the other hand, doesn't reproduce the described events, but it rather shows in a which direction one might think about the events, and giving this a certain emotional coloring. In Western culture, the development of this concept is associated with the advent of the branch of journalism called «new journalism».

Today, the concept of journalistic narrative has several meanings, the broadest of which is according to D. Chandler «a story in any media, which is a chain of real or fictional events between which there are connections that make it possible to single out the beginning, middle and end in the story» [2]. It should be emphasized that a journalistic text can be called narrative if it contains most of the following elements: plot (eventfulness, the presence of a story), characters, circumstances of place and time (that is, fiction, a fictional world), a narrator and aesthetics. At the same time, adhering to D. Ryabov's statement, «narratives are understood as literary genres, as biographies, reports, and everyday stories; as well as advertising, music and photography» [3]. Multimedia (convergent) journalism projects have all the features that allow them to be described as narrative structures, as they often offer a combination of text, photographs, video, audio, graphics and an interactive interface.

The official website of «National Geographic» turned out to be very interesting because I found a lot of materials there, where narratives, «live» human stories are used to draw attention to complex, scientific things.

One such example is a biography text titled «Eleanor Roosevelt broke the mold of what a First Lady could be». This material should be classified as narrative due to the content of the plot, character, aesthetics and viewpoint of the author-narrator. The plot is built sequentially from information about the birth of a famous woman, her studies, marriage, being the first lady, her activities as a diplomat, a UN delegate, and up to the moment of death and even the influence she had after that. The author's point of view is clearly seen when he speaks about Eleanor, for example, «She had long been an icon and a divisive figure – an inspiration for advocates of marginalized groups and a scapegoat for those who opposed her causes. But when Eleanor died in 1962 at age 78, tributes poured in from both sides of the aisle» [4]. The approval and admiration of the author can be traced even at the very beginning, from the lead, «A fierce advocate for the downtrodden during her husband's presidency, Roosevelt spent her later years pushing for human rights – pioneering work that still resounds today» [4].

The author characterizes the protagonist by selecting certain quotes. The journalist clearly wants to show the temperament of a historical personality as very strong-willed and purposeful: «You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face», she wrote in 1960. «You must do the thing you think you cannot do» [4]. Also, achieving the effect of a strong personality that develops in the minds of readers is greatly helped by the visual series – archival photographs that show Eleanor Roosevelt as an active person who is interested in the problems of representatives of different races, professions and social strata (for example, a photo of Eleanor, where she checks the working conditions in a mine or gives an assessment of the living conditions of a poor area in Puerto Rico).

Another example is the feature story under the heading «This doctor braves mountains by horseback and on foot to make house calls» which tells the story of 80-year-old doctor Irakli Khvedaguridze, who is the only doctor in the Tusheti region in northeastern Georgia. This material has clear signs of a narrative thanks to the huge number of picturesque photographs which without a doubt convey the aesthetics of the place of the narrative, and to, for example, a clearly defined appearance and quotes from the character: «Khvedaguridze, a muscular man with milky blue eyes and a shock of white hair that protrudes from underneath a navy-blue baseball cap he is rarely seen without», «For me, there's no night or day», he says. «If they call me to help someone, no matter the circumstances, no matter

the rain, snow, day or night, I have to go. Even if I'm as old as 90, should there be people who need me, I will go to help them. It's my duty» [5].

The plot is built around events that form different time periods. At the beginning, the narrator focuses on the early 2000s, when Khvedaguridze saved a boy's leg after he stepped on an unexploded mine. Later, the author tells about a Czech who was mutilated a year earlier by shepherd dogs. Smoothly, the author of the feature moves on to current events and patients whom the doctor is treating at the moment.

Many lines emphasize what kind of person the author of the text is, who also acts as a narrator. The text clearly reflects his position as a person, he clearly sympathizes with the main character and empathizes with him. Here is one of the lines confirming this: «An easier life would be possible elsewhere, but leaving Tusheti would sever Khvedaguridze's connection to his ancestors' land – and to his patients» [5]. Thereby, narrativity in this case is achieved by the author by including character, aesthetics, plot and the presence of the narrator's opinion in the canvas of the text.

Another fascinating material was created by three journalists at once based on their functions: Megan Janetsky wrote the text, Saul Martinez photographed, and James Rodriguez captured the event on video. This feature story under the headline «How Holy Week unites Guatemala» gives the reader an idea of the role that the celebration of Semana Santa plays in shaping the country's national identity in a country characterized by deep inequalities and cultural differences. This material can also be called narrative due to the presence of a narrator, aesthetics, plot and characters in it.

This narrative is especially noteworthy for its multimedia component that forms the aesthetics of the material, since in addition to the expressive words in the text there are many vivid portrait photos and even two mini-videos taken in flight to show the scale of the celebration. It is also unusual that the author's position, the position of the narrator, can be traced most clearly from two speaking sides – the photographer and the author of the text. Here are the photographer's impressions: «You just see the look on their faces and see that nothing else matters that week or that moment», Martinez says. «The people are what make the images beautiful because they're so dedicated to this. Crime goes down, you can walk the streets, which you often can't do in the [capital] city, for example», Martinez adds. «That week is just very festive. It's an escape for everyone. [Guatemala is] a country with so many problems, but that week, everyone forgets». The author of the text also reveals his position when she talks about the tension of the persons participating in the process during their imitation of the funeral: «It encapsulates the strength of their faith and provides a respite from the harsh realities of the country» [6].

The key moment around which the plot is formed is the story of a 59-year-old Guatemalan named Cristy Toj who remembers how the feast was in his childhood and how it is now: «Toj has fond memories of the intricate alfombras, carpets made of flowers, sawdust and fruit, stretching along the streets of her hometown. Each alfombra, sometimes as big as a house, depicts scenes from the Bible and Mayan traditions, as well as animals, fruits, and other designs in vivid color» [6]. From the memoirs of the protagonist, the journalist masterfully proceeds to a story about the traditions inherent not only in the region of character. The author manages to tell about the peculiarities of the national cuisine, types of festive dresses and even a legend.

Thus, we can say that the materials of the «National Geographic» have all the characteristics (It means plot, characters, fiction, narrator and aesthetics) that are now commonly referred to as the characteristics of narrative multimedia journalism. This trend was found in all the materials studied by me. Of course, using these techniques, the journalists of a popular science magazine set a good example of how to make the material more thrilling and richer, as well as to achieve greater involvement and interest among their readers and viewers.

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