

THE SYNTHESIS OF THE NARRATOR AND THE ARTISTIC IMAGE AS AN AESTHETIC PRINCIPLE IN THE ESSAY

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Abstract. This article investigates how the fusion of narrator and artistic image functions as an aesthetic principle in the modern essay. Drawing on narrative theory, phenomenology, and stylistic analysis, the study demonstrates that this synthesis blurs the boundary between authorial self-expression and artistic representation. Through close reading of representative essays by Montaigne, Virginia Woolf, and Shukur Kholmirzaev, combined with insights from Bakhtinian dialogism and Genette's focalization theory, the research reveals how the narrator's subjectivity becomes an integral part of the artistic image itself. The findings highlight that such integration invites readers to experience the essay not merely as reportage or argument but as a lived aesthetic event.

Keywords: *narrator, artistic image, essay, aesthetic principle, narrative theory, Bakhtin, Genette*

The essay as a literary form thrives on the tension between personal reflection and crafted artistry. From Michel de Montaigne's *Essais* to contemporary literary nonfiction, the narrator is never a neutral reporter but a shaping consciousness. Modern critics such as Georg Lukács (1971) and Theodor Adorno (1984) have emphasized the essay's "performative subjectivity," where the author's presence is inseparable from the work's artistic texture. This study explores that phenomenon as a distinct aesthetic principle: the synthesis of narrator and artistic image. Rather than treating the narrator as merely a guiding voice, the analysis considers how the narrator becomes an aesthetic construct, merging with characters, symbols, and imagery to form a unified artistic entity.

Scholars have long grappled with the paradoxical nature of the essay. Georg Lukács (1971) famously described the form as the "meeting point of the soul and the world," emphasizing the way personal subjectivity confronts objective reality. Theodor Adorno (1984) went further, characterizing the essay as "heretical" because it rejects rigid systematic thinking and instead "thinks in images." Both theorists highlight a crucial feature: the essay's power resides not merely in the ideas it conveys but in the manner of their presentation, the voice that animates them, and the imaginative texture in which they are embedded. The narrator is not a transparent window but an active shaper of meaning, and this shaping occurs through the creation of artistic images that often mirror, extend, or even become indistinguishable from the narrator's own consciousness.

In Central Asian literature, Shukur Kholmirzaev's essay *U Kishim – Ustoz, Men – Shogird* ("That Person Is a Mentor, and I Am a Disciple") offers a striking example of this principle. Here, the narrator's reverence for his mentor is inseparable from the symbolic portrayal of cultural transmission. Understanding this synthesis enriches our appreciation not only of Kholmirzaev but of the essay as a

His essay *U Kishim – Ustoz, Men – Shogird* ("That Person Is a Mentor, and I Am a Disciple") is not merely a recollection of a teacher-student relationship; it is a work in which the narrator's deep respect and gratitude shape the very portrayal of the mentor. The figure of the mentor transcends individual biography to become a cultural archetype representing the transmission of wisdom and moral values in Uzbek society. Through affectionate detail and lyrical prose, Kholmirzaev turns personal memory

into collective cultural heritage. The narrator's voice, imbued with reverence, merges seamlessly with the artistic image of the mentor, demonstrating the same synthesis found in Montaigne and Woolf, yet in a distinctly Uzbek idiom.

Selected essays including Montaigne's "Of Experience," Virginia Woolf's "The Death of the Moth," and Shukur Kholmiraev's "That Person Is a Mentor, and I Am a Disciple" are examined for narrative voice, figurative language, and structural patterns.

Gérard Genette's concepts of focalization and voice help identify how the narrator's perspective fuses with depicted images.

Bakhtin's notion of dialogism and Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory are used to interpret how this synthesis affects the reader's aesthetic experience.

This triangulation ensures that the argument rests on both formal literary evidence and established critical theory.

Analysis reveals several recurring mechanisms through which narrator and artistic image converge: Montaigne's essays present the author's own consciousness as the primary "character," turning introspection into an artistic tableau.

In Woolf's "The Death of the Moth," the moth's struggle becomes a mirror of the narrator's contemplation of life and death; the observed object is inseparable from the observing self.

Kholmiraev integrates personal reverence for a mentor into a narrative where the mentor-figure is simultaneously real and emblematic of cultural transmission. Here the narrator's devotion shapes the mentor into an artistic archetype rather than a mere biographical figure.

Across these cases, the narrator's inner life permeates imagery and structure, transforming subjective reflection into an autonomous artistic whole.

The synthesis identified can be understood as an aesthetic principle for several reasons:

Following Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, the essay becomes a "polyphonic" space where the author's voice interacts with the world's voices, collapsing the divide between subject and object. As Wolfgang Iser argues, the reader co-creates meaning. When narrator and image are fused, readers experience a dynamic "double consciousness," perceiving both a personal confession and an aesthetic artifact.

In Kholmiraev's Uzbek context, this fusion also functions as cultural memory work, where the narrator's reverence turns lived experience into a collective artistic symbol.

This analysis suggests that the essay's enduring power lies in precisely this merger of self and art, which distinguishes it from other nonfiction forms such as reportage or memoir.

The essay's vitality as a literary genre stems from its ability to present thought as art. The synthesis of narrator and artistic image elevates personal reflection to an aesthetic principle, allowing lived experience to become a shared artistic reality. Recognizing this fusion enriches our understanding of both classical and contemporary essays and invites further cross-cultural studies especially of writers like Shukur Kholmiraev, whose works exemplify how the narrator's very presence is inseparable from the beauty of the artistic image.

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