



## Historical and Theoretical Approach To the Problem of Genre in Modern Russian Literature Studies

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published Online: 19 March 2021	The article is devoted to the study of the peculiarities of the genre in Russian literary criticism. A brief overview of the research opinions of prominent scientists on the problem of the genre system and its evolution is given. An attempt is made to investigate the transformation of the genre of the modern story. Particular attention is paid to the change in the genre nature of the story as a result of the artistic interpretation of reality by contemporary Russian postmodernists.
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### INTRODUCTION

The theoretical question of the genre is one of the most pressing topics of modern literary criticism. Long-term disputes and discussions about the genre have been going on for more than a decade and are presented in numerous works and scientific studies of researchers of the past and present.

Speaking about scientists of the early twentieth century who made a significant contribution to the development of the genre issue, it is worth noting Yu Tynyanov, V. Shklovsky ("formal school"), MM Bakhtin. Their scientific activity, based sometimes on mutual agreement, and sometimes on radical confrontation (for example, Yu. Tynyanov assured about the changeability of the system of genres under the influence of different historical eras, focusing on the uniqueness of genre structures in the work of one or another creator, M. Bakhtin, in turn, argued that a genre is a clear set of methods of a collective tendency with an orientation towards completion) determined the foundation of modern genre theory.

In the second half of the twentieth century, M. S. Kagan, in his work "Morphology of Art", examined in detail the systemic and structural characteristics of the genre at the levels of subject matter (love, civilian, military, etc.), cognitive content (story, story, novel), the axiological component (satire, tragedy, comedy, epic, etc.) and the differentiation of genres by the type of models created (from documentary genres to parables). M.S.Kagan noted that the clearer and clearer the genre characterization of a particular work is given, the clearer and more definite its essential features, chosen by the author, are assimilated.

This systematic approach of the scientist is unambiguously logical and constructive, however, with the scheme of M.S. Kagan can be argued, because his concept affirms an equal opportunity for the formation of all genres, although equality cannot be observed in different eras, and the persistence of genre signs and criteria is constantly questioned. Thus, the structure of genres deduced by M.S. Kagan can be considered successful only in the case of a systemic-structural approach. As for a serious study of the process of genesis and development of genres, here it is more appropriate, in our opinion, to consider the historical-theoretical approach, from the point of view of which the principle of defining the genre as a certain specific link is excluded, on the contrary, the genre in the historical-theoretical refraction is a certain side of the study. artistic text.

### THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Today, more and more often there is a discussion about the belonging of the genre to the category of form or content (although traditionally the genre has always been attributed to the form). In our opinion, it is not entirely appropriate to classify the genre into one category or another, since genre is not only a characteristic of a work. It reveals the relationship between the author and the reader, reflects convention, in the prism of which historical reality is revealed. In such a complex and sometimes confused variety of scientific opinions regarding the definition of the genre, we are closer to the definition of VI.A. Lukov "genre is a historically understandable type of form-content unity in literature ...".

The genre has always changed its content depending on the historical situation. Based on the historical-theoretical

approach, it is not the relative, but the actual meaning of the term that is formed and evolves historically that is important. Which gives rise to the question of the genre system. An important role in this relation is given to the activities of Yu. N. Tynyanov, who asserts the need to study not a separate genre, but genre systems. GN Pospelov, in turn, insisted that literary criticism must have its own, objective, historical, legitimate verified standards, criteria in the creation of a conventional genre terminological apparatus. Differentiating terms should exist for the entire genre system, where each definition should have its own niche. This opinion of Pospelov gives rise to some inconsistency, since the scientist speaks of a specific division and genre "place" while emphasizing conventional terminology. Сегодня всё чаще возникает дискуссия о принадлежности жанра к категории формы или содержания (хотя традиционно жанр всегда относили к форме). На наш взгляд, относить жанр к той или иной категории не совсем уместно, т.к. жанр не является лишь характеристикой произведения. В нем проявляются взаимоотношения между автором и читателем, отражается условность, в призме которой выявляется историческая действительность. В столь сложном и порой запутанном многообразии научных мнений, касательно определения жанра, нам ближе определение Вл.А.Лукова «жанр – исторически понятный тип формосодержательного единства в литературе...»<sup>1</sup>.

In the prism of the historical-theoretical approach, it is not possible to consider the genre system outside of the genres that have actually emerged. the system is a characteristic of literature in a specific historical context. A separate era, a literary direction, the author form their own full-fledged system of genres. The study of those patterns that influenced the formation and development of genre systems is the task of the historical and theoretical study of literature. Considering this issue, one cannot fail to mention such a prominent foreign researcher as V. Kaiser, who made a huge contribution to the study of the poetic world of the work. His view on the problem of the genre system was based on its negation, since each work is a world closed in itself, the study of which is determined by the motive, plot, sound writing, etc. In other words, the scientist chooses such elements as the components of the "poetic world", the conglomerate of which is unique. Based on this, the existence of a single genre system, in his opinion, is impossible.

However, the majority of theorists strove for systematization, explaining and proving its significance and role. Let's turn to the 18th century, because it was during this period that a strict canonical genre system was formed for Russian literature. The classicists created a logical and convincing system of genres, subordinating it to the laws of the literary direction. But the classicist genre "drove" the

work into a clear framework (the principle of hierarchy and the purity of the genre), not allowing to reflect the diversity of the artistic world. The romantics of the 19th century redistribute genre possibilities within the world of art, while realists penetrate beyond this world to reality. Now the choice of the genre is determined not by literary conditions and demands, not by various forms of needs, but by the vital material of the depicted reality. In view of this, realists consider the subject of the image to be the main genre-forming factor, i.e. reality determines the laws for the genre. Considering the system of genres of the twentieth century, it is necessary to reverse the tendency of destruction of genre boundaries at the beginning of the century (the role of literary experiments of modernism is also important). Philosophical, psychological, documentary and other "generalized characteristics of the genre situation in the literature of the paradigm of artistic creativity of the twentieth century, which can be conditionally defined as the literature of "cultural inquiry" ("conceptual\_author's")" come to the place of blurred genre structures as the center-forming ones. There is a certain process of unification, concentration of genres, sometimes even related to different kinds and types of art (A. Bely's symphony), to create a common non-genre principle.

In the 21st century, the concept of "genre" and its system have become even more changeable: we can talk about the macrolevel of the genre aspect of art: genre - genre system - genre transformations. In the age of ICT and mass culture, where the role and significance of genre differences are in many ways no longer important, the phenomenon of a kaleidoscope, fragmentation, clip-like nature of new consciousness appears, and therefore its reflection in the text (conditioned by the artistic world of postmodernism). Modern researchers (VD Skvoznikov, M. Epshtein, I. Smirnov, V. Grigoriev) urge to abandon the concept of "genre system", motivating their position by an all-level modification of the genre, genre interpenetration and destruction of the genre in general. However, in our opinion, the statement about the elimination of the genre is incorrect, because it does not disappear, but is transformed, transformed, decanonizing its features.

Separately, I would like to note the changes in the genre nature of the story as a result of the artistic interpretation of reality by modern postmodernists. Study of the artistic picture of the world, aesthetics, value orientations of postmodern writers of the late XX - early XXI centuries. seems to be a very difficult, but urgent and necessary task for modern science. This need is explained by the assessment of their work as a phenomenon of a cultural and philosophical structure aimed at solving ontological issues. Despite the fact that modern short prose is constantly evolving, however, today one can try to determine the specifics of poetics and the main trends in its development over the past twenty years.

<sup>1</sup> Луков Вл. А. Жанры и жанровые генерализации// Проблемы филологии и культурологии. 2006 –С.148

A key feature of the sensations of contemporary postmodernists is a new vision of human consciousness, its ontological core in time and space of the Universe. Almost all literature at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries. Can be considered as a continuous coded intertext, which has its own “zest” for each of the creators. This text, with the help of games, quotations and various kinds of references to the original source, is not distinguished by the active development of action, it does not set itself the task of showing the reader a rapidly developing event, it leads to a gradual comprehension of human existence.

The end of the twentieth century is marked by a huge number of different aesthetic systems, and the author's definitions of different genres are based on the transformation of the essence of the literary text. Such a change in the genre nature is caused by the intentions of the author, whose work presents a special semantic complexity, expressed in narrative polyplanarity, focused on the level of maximum concentration of the meaning of the work. In the new organization of the text, the playful principle is obvious, focusing on the dialogical feature that requires decoding.

The stories of the early 2000s are distinguished by a clear mystification and mythologization of the surrounding reality (V. Kharchenko "Where did the Russian land come from", A. V. Ilichevsky "Dacha", I. Abuzyarov "Reading lesson" and others), as well as non-standard use of vocabulary, figurative system, with the help of which there is a comprehension of the deep meaning of a small story.

Postmodernist writers declare with their creativity a special kind of storytelling and genre thinking, their favorite genre of the story is undergoing dramatic changes ("A Story in Stories" by V.A. explained by the layering and depth of the narrative. In this mixture of incompatible parts, through remarks and quotations, one can find the presence of the author. The story itself is focused not so much on the plot as on the theory of knowledge of the surrounding reality. The genre of the story itself is transformed in an unexpected way. For example, in some stories ("Donkey's Jaw" by A. V. Ilichevsky," Poems in Prose" by V. A. Gubailovsky, "Wooden Sun" by N. L. Klyucharyova), a poetic beginning suddenly appears, which sets the specifics of the genre of the miniatures themselves. The traditional Christmastide story changes in an interesting way among postmodernists. For example, in L. Ye. Ulitskaya, everything ordinary and everyday is endowed with wondrousness and miracles (the story "A ladder", where a common everyday occurrence takes on an existential scale, and the ideological core is in the image of a temple, than what). In the work of D. Ye. Galkovsky (story "The Nineteenth Century: Christmas Story No. 13"), the surrounding reality is rethought in a philosophical and ideological way from the position of the concept of a religious structure.

The non-standard presentation of modern Christmastide stories in their semantic orientation is a rethinking of reality in the prism of Christian values, from

which modern postmodern literature concludes about the inevitable death of humanity, which has lost its natural essence, natural and religious origin. With their creativity, the writers try to "reach out" to the "led astray of humanity", actively using the form of a Christmas story that refers to Orthodoxy.

Contemporary postmodern prose is replete with archetypes and playing with cultural codes. The prototypes express themselves as the psychological center of the modern hero, unable to occupy his niche in the everyday world. Examples include such works as: the story "A Family Case" (AV Gelasimov), which is based on an associative game that reveals, with the help of the mother's archetype, complex connections between everything that happens in Alexander's life; the story "Hoch Deutsch" (A. V. Kormashov) shows a different perception of the war through the consciousness of the shell-shocked peasant Pchelkin, who refuses to perceive what is happening as an epic event that entails death, fear, and loss; the story "Russian Zen: Endless Stop" (D. Kuderin) is filled with a large amount of spatial detailing, with the help of which the text acquires a universal discourse; the story "The Transition" (IN Polyanskaya), which raises the problem of the transience of human life, is also as detailed as possible; the ontological concept "life" is clearly manifested in the collection of stories by L. Ye. Ulitskaya "People of our Tsar", depicting a model of the surrounding disturbing reality filled with a sense of catastrophe in the spiritlessness of the world; the collection of stories "The Life of Remarkable People" (V. A. Petsukh) is built on the theme of the carnival (the situation of substitution, dressing up), explaining the specifics of the mentality of the peoples of Russia. The model of the world of postmodern writers often becomes "the core of their philosophical concept of the meaning of life, explaining the hidden essence of being."

A special language of detail is presented in the work of T.N. Tolstoy, acting as a dyadic principle of expressive means. The opposite versatility of the writer's prose, claiming a multilevel reality, is aimed at the problem of the destruction of humanistic ideals and reveals the precarious and dubious existence of man in the Universe.

The metaphoric nature of T.N. Tolstoy's prose proves the contradictory nature of the spirit of life also by means of detailing, which helps to expose the violation of harmony between the individual and society, existence according to a ready-made cliché, a formula that contains a specific social adaptation of a person in a closed space. A metaphorical detail helps T.N. Tolstoy to reveal her model of the universe, where reason and absurdity, primitive and sublimity are intertwined in a bizarre way. Metaphorization of the surrounding reality through detailing is the only way for the heroes to perceive the world.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, a modern story, in spite of its small form, is endowed with the deepest philosophical potential, achieved through a

special author's play, detailing, intertext, metaphysics, etc., which allows one to study various forms of human existence, his ontological consciousness. In the “new” story, the reader can observe unique ways of cultural identification of a person, which reflect the internal paradoxes of a person's life in society and outside it.

The line of development of the modern story is connected with acute critical events in the history of Russian culture at the turn of the century and expresses the value orientations of modern word creators to the current state of spirituality, as well as to the understanding of “life / existence”. The existential nature of the absurd reality, depicted in the small prose of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, speaks of social and cultural change and the destruction of cultural concepts. The ideological and aesthetic potential of the postmodern story realizes itself through the growth of the semantic content of the motive, image, plot elements, etc. The modern writer more and more often brings to the fore the problem of an ineffectual search for a “different” reality and a lost culture.

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