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## NATURE AND PECULIARITIES OF THE NOVEL GENRE

*There is as yet no holistic theory of the novel, though representatives of various schools of literary criticism try hard to develop such a theory. In any case, we still have a lot of unsolved problems to be debated, such as the inner essence and the nature of the novel, its origin and definition.*

*Some literary critics believe that it is hardly possible to define the genre of the novel. They believe that the principles which serve the basis for determining the novel as a literary genre are rather vague.*

*The representatives of the formalistic trend in literary criticism regarded this problem in particularly straightforward and simple way. For them, the only criterion which helps to distinguish the novel from other narrative forms, is a mere volume of a work of art.*

*Another extreme of the novel theory, is the statement that it is impossible to define the novel genre at all due to “essential but unspecified element of extension, as well as due to the fact that it embraces so many types and varieties.*

*Finally, some scholars are not inclined to grant the novel the status of a genre on the ground that the novel is not at all a genre but a specific genus of literature.*

*Extremely complex is the problem of classification of novel forms (types). There is no agreement on this matter in modern literary criticism. By its genre nature the novel is classified on various principles: according to its conceptual and thematic content (social, domestic, novels on public morality, historical, etc.); according to the way of representation of reality or according to its main pathos (philosophical, fantasy, intellectual, satirical); according to its structure (a novel in short stories, chronicle novel, confession novel, novel in letters, etc.). Sometimes, a certain plot situation and character that is found in the novel (for example, the “Don Quixote” situation in a “Cervantes” type novel) lies in the heart of genre classification of the novel. The type of the novel can sometimes be determined by the typological nature of the main hero (a picaresque novel), and so on. This is mainly due to the fact that there is no one single principle, a universally accepted criterion which could serve as a basis for the classification of all novel forms known to us. Many literary critics are involved in the process of searching such criteria but without much success.*

*None of the above mentioned principles, if taken separately can provide typological characteristics of an extremely complex in its ideological and structural nature artistic system, as the novel is. For this we need to use all the most essential for each particular case classification criteria. As a result of their intersection we can obtain more or less complete data on the genre characteristic of this or that particular novel as the foundation for assigning it to this or that type of the novel.*

**Key words:** *Genre, novel, genealogy of the novel, narrative forms, prose, classification of novel types, typology.*

**Stating the problem.** There is as yet no holistic theory of the novel, though representatives of various schools of literary criticism try hard to develop such a theory. In any case, we still have a lot of unsolved problems to be debated, such as the inner essence and the nature of the novel, its origin and definition.

**Purpose of the research.** The purpose of the research is to give a critical review

of the peculiarities and nature of the novel genre in the historical perspective.

**The analysis of the existing views on the problem and exposition of the main material.** Some literary critics believe that it is hardly possible to define the genre of the novel because the genre canon is only needed for the purpose of demonstrating the overcoming of this canon and for showing the rotation of ideas in space where there are no limits of cognition [12].

As for “the age” of the novel genre, there are most contradictory opinions in this respect. Some scholars believe that the first novels appeared in antiquity [16]. Others begin the “genealogy of the novel” from the XVIII century [6], and still others give it only about two centuries. Another point of view states that the countdown of the novel genre existence has begun with the appearance of “Don Quixote” by Cervantes, fairly acknowledged to be the archetype of all further novel forms [6, p. 22–23].

Not less divergent are the statements about the principles which are to serve the base of the definition of the novel as a literary genre. The representatives of the formalistic trend in literary criticism regarded this problem in particularly straightforward and simple way. For them, the only criterion which helps to distinguish the novel from other narrative forms, is a mere volume of a work of art. E.M. Forster established even the minimum of 50 thousand words which he believed to be enough to consider this or that narrative form to be a novel [5, p. 160].

Another extreme of the novel theory, is the statement that it is impossible to define the novel genre at all due to “essential but unspecified element of extension, as well as due to the fact that it embraces so many types and varieties” [11, p. 318].

Finally, some scholars are not inclined to grant the novel the status of a genre on the ground that the novel is not at all a genre but a specific genus of literature.

“The novel belongs to neither epos, lyrics or drama but it is the fourth, unknown before the XIX century genus of poetry” [17].

This point of view did not find support among literary critics. The great majority of the scholars see the novel as an epic genre, moreover, as an “epos of modern times”, possessing its special, specific qualities.

The first serious attempt to explain the genre nature of the novel was made by Hegel who defined the novel as a “modern bourgeois epos”, trying to emphasise his idea that it was the bourgeois civilisation that spawned the novel genre. By its inner nature, it differs from a heroic era epos. For Hegel, the origin of the novel should be searched in the state of the world so different from the “Heroic Age” which he defines as a “prosaically ordered reality”. He points out that it can be characterized by inner contradictions between the personality and the society, the conflict situations “of the dissonance between the prose of life and the poetry of the heart”. By Hegel “wealth and variety of interests, states, characters, relationships, come to the fore against the vast background of the immense world and poetic picturing of events” [15, p. 270–274].

Hegel’s view of the novel as a “modern bourgeois epos” was later taken literally and mistreated by G. Lukatch. In his well-known scholarly paper “Problems of the Novel Theory” G. Lukach regards the novel as a certain “flawed”, specifically bourgeois genre form, deprived of its further development, and, so therefore, future. This report and the discussions about its main issues was published in 1934 (№ 3 and № 4) in the periodical “The Literary Critic”.

Particularly relevant the problems of the novel theory became in the 20th century, having acquired paramount importance in modern literary criticism. In Western literature study, at the very beginning of the last century V. Dibelius took great interest in the novel theory. He published a lengthy two-volume monograph about the art of novel-writing [4]. It was built on the analysis of the English literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Later it was translated into other European languages, and among them, partially, into Russian. Rich in valuable factual material and interesting observations concerning the “techniques” of novel-writing (types of narration, methods of presentation of characters, composition of the plot, the main differences between satirical and comic depiction, etc.), this work by V. Dibelius still does not give an answer to the main question about the nature and peculiarities of the novel genre.

We cannot avoid mentioning scholars who studied the novel theory and whose works are of considerable interest – E. Muir [8], W. Allen [1], W. Kayser [7], E. Brown [2], A. Burgess [3], F. Stanzel [9] and some others. These publications evidence the great interest in the problem under consideration. With all originality of their theoretical views expressed in their works, we can speak about common, rather formalistic approach inherent of the western literary criticism of the middle of the last century. Although they do not reject the importance of the idea and artistic expression of the novel altogether, they regard this side as secondary for stating the internal nature of the novel genre. They see it in the formal aspect of the problem. For them, the most important task of a novel theory is not so much to reveal the genre nature of the novel (however, this aspect is also paid certain attention) as to find and substantiate criteria for typological classification of novel forms.

Views of W. Kayser can serve a typical example of this approach to solving the problem of creation a novel theory. The novel is seen by this scholar as nothing but “an insular verbal entity”, a peculiar story of the world, “narrated by a fictitious storyteller and intended for a personalized reader” wherein the story is complete as far as this world “can be

comprehensible as a result of a personal experience". But the significance of this world, its moral and social issues, its problems and pathos are least interesting to the researcher. He is concentrated on stating "the factors to which he attributes a character of the hero, space (peculiarities of the place of action and the action itself)". These factors serve as a basis for W. Kayser's typological classification of the novel forms, while these forms (types of novels) are regarded by him as merely structural [7, p. 112].

The special character of the novel genre received the most comprehensive conceptualization in the works of M. Bakhtin [13, p. 8], B. Shklovsky [26], V. Kozhinov [19], D. Zatonsky [18], M. Khraptchenko [25], V. Lukov [20] and others. They took great interest in the theory of the novel. We can say that it was the main focus of their theoretical research. It was in the works of these scholars that the questions of the peculiarities of the novel genre and its typology received the most complete and convincing coverage.

While characterizing the novel as a literary genre, the scholars, first of all, point out such its qualities as affiliation to the epic genus and attraction to a large and extensive form. The former requires a plot (system of events) and narration as the main way of telling the story, which is particularly complex and dynamic, while the latter creates opportunities for comprehensive coverage of life material. It is a combination of these characteristics that gives the novel the truly unlimited possibilities of the artistic exploration of the world, which enabled it to become the leading genre of the modern literature. One of the most important peculiarities of the novel is its ability of self-renewal throughout its existence in literature which is confirmed by numerous parodies to one or the other exemplar which tends to be canonical [21]. But, as D. Zatonsky sees it, "the most remarkable, and, by extension, the most "doubtful", are the forms not borrowed but generated by the literature of the current epoch albeit altering and modifying, albeit developing. Such forms which, maybe, not reflecting the epoch as a whole, not giving a full picture of it, feel, however, its nerve, a certain specificity of social, ideological, psychological phenomena inherent only to it [18, p. 3]. It was the novel that became such form in the literature of the new and more recent times. The novel for the contemporary literature is an actual means of artistic conceptualizing of the more and more complicated processes of life. The novel is capable of absorbing a wide range of life phenomena, of putting forward crucial, dramatic social, ideological and moral problems and solving them,

of creating a comprehensive pictures of life in all its complexity and controversial character, of exploring human characters profoundly and fully, of showing formation, development of personages and their complex interrelationships, and social environment. In modern literature appear new and new types of the novel, such as a "mobile novel".

This, however, does not identify all intricacies and diversity of the novel genre. We believe that an exceptionally important point, among other things is its particularly emphasized and unique contextual aspect. Firstly, being the chronicles of contemporary life, the novel, according to M. Bachtin, almost exclusively deals with the so-called "unprepared" reality which undergoes the process of its formation, constant rethinking and re-evaluation [14, p. 121], and secondly, the main element of the novel is the "private life", that is, the life of a "private person" with all his (her) big or small concerns, everyday routine trifles common for every individual. Diverse and manifold life material is being arranged around "individual" events. In other words, the story of the big socio-historical world is refracted in focus of an individual destiny of the personages.

More than that, the novel entails peculiar aesthetic atmosphere. Its characteristic feature is a prose picture of the world in the novel, as well as the prose character of its imagery and its speech. V. Kozhinov states quite fairly that "the narrator's manner is as though cleared of pronounced aesthetic colouring", and it is this type of narration creates special novel charm and endows it with its inherent artistic possibilities [19, p. 336–338]. Thus, the prose of life acquires aesthetic conceptualization, while "the narrator cannot achieve poetry without coming through prosaic routine" [17, p. 87].

Here is another important issue. The novel easily "integrates" with other genres and kinds of literature. It "allows" not only all kinds of insert short stories, pieces of drama, philosophical tracts, scholarly researches, pieces of poetry, but also widely uses such types of storytelling as diaries, letters, confessions, memoirs, etc. "Assimilated organically" by the novel, they become its integral and extensive part of the artistic whole.

The peculiar features of the novel structure are determined by the factors mentioned above. The directive on wide scope of life phenomena and thorough exploration of human characters conditioned the importance of branchy, multifaceted plot, elaborate composition, extensive use of various descriptions (portraits, landscapes, items of material culture and so on and so forth). Significant is also

the fact that the novel has no well-established canon. In comparison with other literary genres it can boast the most “free” form both in selection and distribution of the material and in the choice of the narrator and means of characterization, etc. All this allows the novel to minimize the distance between the real life and its artistic depiction creating an illusion of the real life itself.

Extremely complex is the problem of classification of novel forms (types). There is no agreement on this matter in modern literary criticism. By its genre nature the novel is classified on various principles: according to its conceptual and thematic content (social, domestic, novels on public morality, historical, etc.); according to the way of representation of reality or according to its main pathos (philosophical, fantasy, intellectual, satirical); according to its structure (a novel in short stories, chronicle novel, confession novel, novel in letters, etc.). Sometimes, a certain plot situation and character that is found in the novel (for example, the “Don Quixote” situation in a “Cervantes” type novel) lies in the heart of genre classification of the novel. This type can sometimes be determined by the typological nature of the main hero (a picaresque novel), and so on. This is mainly due to the fact that there is no one single principle, a universally accepted criterion which could serve as a basis for the classification of all novel forms known to us. Many literary critics are involved in the process of searching such criteria but without much success.

M. Sokolyansky, who paid special attention to this problem, speaks about several main tendencies in search of solving the problem of the novel typology [24, p. 6–16]. Firstly, it is the trend, which he conditionally calls “empirical”. The typological constructions of the representatives of this direction – B. Tomashevsky [24], and others – are based on the practical experience of the historical development of the novel, the evidence of this is the terminology they used. B. Tomashevsky, for instance, in his “Theory of Literature” distinguishes seven novel types: adventurous, historical,

psychological, satirical parody, fantasy, publicistic, and non-narrative (plotless) [24].

Widely spread are classifications of such famous scholars as V. Dibelius, A. Muir, V. Keyser W, mentioned by us more than once. They are built on the principle of highlighting of a certain dominant, which, in their opinion, characterizes “the inner reality” of this or that type of the novel. V. Keizer, as earlier stated, classifies an event, space, a character of a personage to such dominants, and, conversely, singles out “novels of events”, “novels of space”, “novels of characters”. In the classification system of A. Muir, alongside with “novels of characters”, which makes it close to the classification of V. Keizer we can find also “drama novels” and “chronicle novels”.

Such factors as the point of view of the narrator, and, consequently, the manner of narration are also used as criteria of the novel typological classifications. They lie in the basis of the classifications by O. Steiger [10] and F. Stanzel [9].

There are also other classification systems in the modern novel typology based on the kind of the conflict which lies at the heart of the literary work. Based on this criterion, we can single out, for example, novels with “open” (extensive) and “closed” (intensive) plot [22, p. 32–41; p. 112; p. 122, p. 202–204;], as well as “centripetal” and “centrifugal” novels [18, p. 342–382]. Well-known is the principle of “chronotope” suggested by M. Bakhtin, in which such factor as the system of special and chronological characteristics of a literary work serves the main criterion of genre identification.

**Conclusions.** None of the above mentioned principles, if taken separately can provide typological characteristics of an extremely complex in its ideological and structural nature artistic system, as the novel is. For this we need to use all the most essential for each particular case classification criteria. As a result of their intersection we can obtain more or less complete data on the genre characteristic of this or that particular novel as the foundation for assigning it to this or that type of the novel.

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#### **Жаборюк І. А., Геркерова О. М., Мілова М. М. ПРИРОДА ТА ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ЖАНРУ РОМАНУ**

*На жаль, і досі не існує цілісної теорії роману, хоча представники різних літературознавчих шкіл намагаються створити таку теорію. Кожного разу ми ще маємо дуже багато проблем, які потребують розв'язання, як, наприклад, внутрішня сутність роману, його походження та визначення.*

*Деякі літературознавці стверджують, що визначити поняття романного жанру майже неможливо. Вони вважають, що принципи, які слугують базою для визначення роману як літературного жанру, є децю розмитими. Представники формалістичного напрямку в літературознавстві розглядали цю проблему просто і прямолінійно. Для них єдиним критерієм, який допомагає відрізнити роман від інших форм оповіді, є самий об'єкт літературного твору.*

*Інша крайність у теорії роману полягає у твердженні, що дати визначення жанрові роману взагалі неможливо, як через істотний, але нечіткий елемент розширення, так і через велику кількість його типів та різновидів.*

*Нарешті, деякі вчені не схильні надавати романові статус жанру на тій підставі, що роман – це взагалі не жанр, а особливий рід літератури. Надзвичайно складною є проблема класифікації романних форм (типів). Немає згоди щодо цього в сучасному літературознавстві. Роман класифікують за різними принципами: відповідно до його концепції та теми (соціальний, побутовий, моралізаторський, історичний тощо); відповідно до способу зображення дійсності чи відповідно до його пафосу (філософський, фантастичний, інтелектуальний, сатиричний і т.д.); відповідно до його побудови (роман у новелах, роман-хроніка, роман у листах і т. д.) Іноді певна сюжетна ситуація та образи-персонажі (наприклад, «дон-кіхотівська» ситуація в «сервантесівському» типі роману) лежить в основі жанрової класифікації роману. Тип роману іноді може визначатися типологічною природою головного героя (шахрайський роман) тощо. Все це головню завдяки тому, що не існує жодного принципу, жодного загальновизнаного критерію, який міг би слугувати підставою для класифікації всіх відомих нам романних форм. Велика кількість літературознавців залучені в цей процес, але без особливого успіху.*

*Жоден із вищезгаданих принципів, взятий окремо, не може забезпечити типологічну характеристику такої надзвичайно складної за своєю ідеологічною та структурною природою системи, якою є роман. Для цього ми повинні використовувати критерії, найістотніші для кожного окремого випадку. У результаті їх перетину ми можемо отримати більш-менш повні дані щодо жанрової характеристики того чи іншого конкретного роману, як підставу до віднесення його до того чи іншого типу роману.*

**Ключові слова:** жанр, роман, генеалогія роману, форми оповіді, проза, класифікація типів роману, типологія.