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## PARADOXES OF GENRE EVOLUTION: THE 19th-CENTURY RUSSIAN NOVEL

The European novel arises from several sources: in ancient times it was closely associated with small narratives, most often with an adventurous plot, in the Middle Ages its existence was based rather on longer epic poems. In general, the novel has always been connected with the epic verse or prose narratives the genre background of which was represented by myths, national epic poetry, fairy tales, the tales depicting everyday life or providing moral, didactic instructions. While the ancient and medieval novel (Apuleius, Héliodoros, Longos - Roman de Brut) tried to permeate the extrinsic adventurous plot with that of the spiritual movements, since the Renaissance period the novel has been divided into two types: the picaresque model producing the adventurous plot and the psychological type ("spiritual adventure"). Since the 18th century the intensification of the novel's development has taken place, and this intensification has had a catalyzing effect on the rise of the novel criticism and theory (Voltaire's philosophical novel, Fielding's theory of the novel). The period of sentimentalism caused the integration of epistolary and emotional strata including fantastic and chronicle elements, the period of pre-Romanticism and Romanticism culminated in the permeation of the Gothic Novel, *roman noir* and *Schauerroman* as well as of the models of the confessional novel. Bakhtin's division of the novel into a monological and a polyphonic type has to be completed by a diachronic analysis of the novel comprising the ancient variety of the *novel of the road*, the *Erziehungsroman* and the novel of the character formation. The baroque novel leads - according to Bakhtin - either to the adventurous heroic novel or to the pathos of sentimentalist psychological novel. The book on the *Erziehungsroman* and *Bildungsroman* which was being prepared by Bakhtin in the 1930s might cover all the problems linked with the spatio-temporal structure of prose,

but the manuscript was lost at the beginning of the Soviet-German war. Grifcov's *Theory of the Novel* (1928) is identical with Bakhtin's conviction of the dominant role of the novel; Grifcov also recognizes the crises of the genre under the impact of shorter lyric narratives or lyric poetry. His typology of the novel based on spatial criteria (extensive and intensive novels) reminds us of the immanent typology drawn by Edwin Muir and Percy Lubbock in the 1920s.

The plurality of the sources of the novel was already mentioned; its evolution represents the continuity and discontinuity at the same time. The whole evolutionary line may be divided into several entities connected freely through the memory of the genre (the ancient novel, the medieval novel, the modern 17th- and 18th-century novel etc.). The Russian novel has also had several sources: the polarity of the foreign and domestic is, however, more evident than in other national literatures. The reason for this goes back to the contradiction of the domestic, rather oral basis of literature and the literary models and paradigms imported mainly from Byzantine culture in Greek originals or in translations into Old Church Slavonic of the East Slavonic version gradually becoming the old Russian language.

Some theorists of the novel assert that the rise of the novel in Russia has been connected with the 18th century; the famous medievalist D. S. Likhachev finds nothing in old Russian literature that would remind him of the novel, though we could not neglect a rich layer of national folk epic poetry (*byliny*), *Igor Tale* (if it is regarded as part of Russian medieval literature), various chronicles, hagiographies, sermons and didactic treatises, war or military tales ("*voinskaya povest*"). It is obvious that the domestic, autochthonous sources of the novel were once weak, later were getting stronger, but they cannot be totally omitted. The term "autochthonous" in the Russian environment does not mean the pure East-Slavonic sources, but also the transformed Byzantine and other genre models imported from both the West (via Germany and Poland) or the East-West space (East and Central Asia via Byzantine Empire, Bulgaria or Serbia). The word "foreign" in connection with the evolution of the novel is, therefore, used for a huge wave of European prose works which has been penetrating into Russia since the 18th century in the frame of Peter's ideological campaign. Russian literature differs from other European literatures by its evolutionary discontinuity consisting in several gaps in its development and in its morphological and generic (genre) structure, and in the poetological continuity modelled by the new Russian literature. The example of Karamzin's

*Letters of a Russian Traveller* and Radishchev's *Journey* shows that in the Russian 18th-century literature the medieval literature permeates with new artifacts and that under the mask of a mere imitation of European currents and styles there are Renaissance paradigms; for this reason, the so-called 18th-century Russian literature represents a conventional term, a transitory zone in which the old and the new literature must be literally deciphered from one work to another: the medieval and the new literature do not form a consequence, but develop in a parallel way, co-exist as the old Russian literature penetrates into the new one. The authentic original Russian novel arises in the 18th-century from various sources under the impact of West European literatures and under their direct influence. At the same time, it is evident that these strong impulses might be accepted because of the epic models functioning in Russian literature which prepared the whole of Russian literature for adopting these impulses: the rise of the Russian novel is, therefore, closely connected with the beginnings of the new Russian literature.

In this development there are several key-positions occupied by the novels the role of which had a stimulating character. Though even several works belonging to the old Russian literature may be regarded as Russian archetypal patterns of the novel (this view is, however, rejected by D. S. Likhachev; on the contrary, the Scandinavian slavist A. I. Stender-Petersen was convinced of the novel character of *Devgenijevo dejanije*), the first key-positions may be represented by Afanasij Nikitin's travel book *Choždienije za tri morja* going back to the 1460s. If we take into account that the dominant feature of the novel in general is associated with the prevalent tendency towards the synthesis of various, often contradictory elements and morphological and genre strata, this work synthesizes the travel depiction, the didactic morality and the diary notes forming a sort of an administrative and practical business (commercial) language and style.

Even more important is Avvakuma's semisecular autobiography (*Žitije protopopa Avvakuma im samim napisannoje*, 1672-1675) constructed on the basis of an inverted hagiography with deep structures of an autobiography depicting the author's life and martyrdom under the impact of the Russian Orthodox Church reform introduced by Nikon and his followers. As Světlá Mathauserová puts it, the artifact can be divided into two parts on the axiological axis which penetrates even into the style and the language of the narrative, e.g. into the inner structure of verbal tenses (the aorist as the expression of Avvakum's conservatism,

the perfect as a symbol of the provisional vanity of Nikon's theology). The permeation of religious, sacral and secular depictions from theological treatises and sermons up to the emotional descriptions of a little hen the eggs of which saved the life of Avvakum's child, from the serious political talks with the Tsar in Moscow up to the pangs of exorcism and the asketic approach to earthly pleasures (because of the sinful passion he burned his hand in the flame of a candle) represents the first partly successful Russian attempt at the formation of the genuine novel synthesis of the language, style and genre, though its final form reminds us of the colloid solution all parts of which are discernible and separable. The tendency towards the morphological and genre synthesis often leads to new dichotomies or antinomies. While on the level of the language he tries to connect the layers of Old Church Slavonic which are cultivated in religious visions, dreams and sermons, with spoken Russian of his time not avoiding even vulgar expressions, some of the means of language communication are used in a utilitarian and axiological way. This is also associated with the character of Avvakum's style which moves between the abstract and pathetic layer of hagiography (*zhitie*) and sermon (*propoved'*) on one hand, and the depictions of everyday life in which syntactic irregularities and the oral stylization occur on the other. Nevertheless, the tendency towards the plurality of the text is obvious: it appears, above all, in generic (genre) plurality (hagiography, travel book, treatise, didactic prose, exorcist story, autobiography, sermon etc.). The dominant feature of the structure of Avvakum's *Life* is its inner contradiction: the author tries to preserve the medieval vision of the world, but the pluralistic material was destroying his construction. The effort to diversify the originally unified structure brings further attempts at its integration and vice versa. Avvakum's work absorbed the tradition of the Russian folk epic narrative (*Chronicle of Nestor called Povest' vremennykh let*), both the Byzantine and the domestic Russian tradition of hagiography, the elements of religious didactic literature together with popular travel depictions. The novel, however, needs much more communication for its normal life, the reader in the European sense did not exist in Russia of that time (when reading Avvakum's semimedieval writings it seems to be nearly incredible that in that time in royal France there were flourishing literary salons cultivating rococo and neoclassical poetry, drama and criticism – it is, by the way, the time when Nicolas Boileau was writing his famous *L'Art poétique*). Nevertheless, the tendency of the artifact towards the synthesis of various genre strata signals its

importance in the process of evolution of the Russian novel, though its way to the reader was extremely complicated because of the specific position of Avvakum's old believers (*starovery, raskol'niki*) – his work was being banned and for a long time it was spread only in manuscript copies.

The Russian 17th and 18th century secular tales also move on the boundary between medieval and modern literature. They confirm the beginnings of the later partly victorious secularization of culture and reflect, at the same time, the elements of the European tradition of knighthood which was practically absent in Russia, various legends of foreign origin, fairy tales and, moreover, the narratives depicting individual lives, adventurous travels (*pochoždenija*) and picaresque stories. This is the chain of artifacts covering the period from the 13th up to the 18th century reflecting the disintegration of the Kiev Rus, the Mongolian invasion, the new integration of Russian lands ("*sobiraniye russkich zemel'*") from the Central Russia's focus and the gradual secularization of Russian life (e.g. *Povest' o Bruncvike, Povest' o Vasilii, koroleviče zlatovlasom Českija zemli, Povest' o Petre i Fevronii* etc.) A significant shift of emphasis can be seen in a cluster of texts in which emancipation of personality and its conflict with society dominates. In some of them there are still the fragments reflecting the religious and didactic frame, more frequently, however, we can find the dominant principle of adventurous travelling, love stories, the role of money and the utilitarian attitude to life.

*Povest' o Gore-Zločastii* (17th century) is written in verse with elements of hagiography constructed as a parable of human way from sin to salvation. *Povest' o Savve Grudcyne* and *Povest' o Frole Skobejeve* – though they did not completely lose their didactic basis, underwent a gradual transformation into the picaresque genre which also contained certain didactic elements. They are characteristic – like other genres cultivated by Eastern Slavs – of the integration of the magic and fairy tale. The genres of secular literature connected with adventurous travelling have been permeated with those based on the depiction of pilgrimages. The undercurrent of this synthesis runs from the Russian 17th- and 18th-century tales to the Russian variety of the picaresque novel (V. T. Narezchny's novel *Rossijskij Žil-Blaz*, 1814) to F. Bulgarin's "moral satire" *Ivan Vyžigin* (1829) and to Gogol's lyric-epic narrative *Mertvyje duši* (1842).

The most important accelerating process which became a catalyzer of the new rise of the Russian novel was associated with the clash of

utilitarian and anti-utilitarian 18th-century poetics embodied, among others, by Mikhail Lomonosov and Alexander Sumarokov. The various models of utilitarianism inspired by British philosophy, especially by John Locke, and the anti-utopian reaction formed the spiritual basis of the Russian literature of that time obviously influenced its genre form: the picaresque or adventurous novel – the idyllic or elegiac sentimental novel, the chronicle and descriptive novels corresponding to Jane Austen's domestic novel. The autochthonous roots of the genre might be completed by the didactic *Domostroj* (16th century) and by the novel imitations of the French rococo novels by Fyodor Emin (*Besčastnoj Floridor*, 1763), Mikhail Chulkov (*Prigožaja povaricha ili Pochoždenija razvratnoj ženščiny*, 1770) and Nikolai Emin (*Igra sud'by*, 1789).

The impact of sentimentalism in the second half of the 18th century caused the rise of a new type of the novel based on the depiction of sentimental travelling and epistolary form. Alexander Radishchev in his *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (1790) expressed the protest of the ideals of the Enlightenment against Russian serfdom, but though he mentions the experience of the American War of Independence and George Washington in his poem *Vol'nost'* (1783) his *Journey* belongs rather to the past (archaic style and the prevalent influence of Old Church Slavonic).

The key-role in the formation of the modern Russian novel was played by *Pis'ma russkogo putešestvennika* (1791-1792, completely 1801) the author of which Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin became famous as short-story writer in the sentimentalist code and as a young philosopher and historian. While Radishchev's novel is rather a political pamphlet covered by the layer of sentimental depiction of a journey, pervaded by bitter irony and poignant remarks concerning the pseudoliberal policy of Catherine the Great, Karamzin's novel represents the synthesis of a typical sentimental structure containing an epistolary novel and a depiction of a journey.

Moreover, Karamzin's peculiar book of travels – rather a philosophical and a literary treatise – is a valuable document of the historical events and the mentality of the last decades of the Age of Reason. Substantial parts of his *Letters of a Russian Traveller* are devoted to England and English literature. A young Russian intellectual was a passionate reader of English sentimentalist writings (Thomas Gray, Samuel Richardson, Edward Young, Lawrence Sterne) and an admirer of all rococo, neoclassicist and pre-romantic literature and philosophy represented by S. Gessner, Ch. Wieland, J.-J. Rousseau, G. E. Lessing,

E. Ch. Kleist, G. J. Herder, I. Kant, J. W. Goethe. He uses the names of famous heroes of that time, e.g. Yorick (from Sterne's *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*) and Werther; his epistolary book of travels is rather a fascinating guidebook dealing with the 18th-century spirit and with the cultural atmosphere which was to become part of Russian literature in the future. Many pages of his book are devoted to English sensual philosophy (D. Hume). England is to him a country of mild climate, beautiful women, natural philosophy and sensitive literature. He saw the beginnings of the French Revolution in Paris. The young Russian is surprised at the beauty of English women; he has just met the first English people and received their addresses. Everything confirms his love of the country; on the other hand, he observes all the striking differences in behaviour and food.

Karamzin regards England as the first industrial country with the new sensibility. The author is fascinated; he has seen the real modern society of consumers. There are many things he does not like; at the same time he admires the welfare, order and activity. Karamzin finds himself in a country which has preserved much of its late Renaissance character in behaviour – modified, however, by the industrial and financial revolution. Karamzin also admires the love of the English for their own language (they do not speak French though they learn it at school or at home) and compares them with the Russian aristocratic society obstinately using its imperfect French. He is much impressed by the English legal system – especially by the *Habeas Corpus Act*. The religious freedom is also the object of the author's admiration.

England, its culture, sentimental literature, its rising industry, coalmines, streets, its extreme love of business, trade and money evoke in him the new world reflected in the structure of his novel. It is England and everything connected with this kingdom that made Karamzin's travel notes a complicated artifact full of thousands of sensual details. It was not only English sentimental literature, but, above all, the whole atmosphere of the cradle of the modern novel that created this original prose work: the plurality of life and opinions, the dominant position of man's individuality, the speed of business, the power of money, the utility and functionalism of everything, the wealth and many new words. I do not want to exaggerate, but I am convinced that it was England and the experience of the English life of the period of the first industrial revolution that created the substantial parts of Karamzin's literary work.

At first the Russian intellectual made his European journey, above all, as a cultural excursion: he wants to meet famous writers and

philosophers (he met I. Kant in Königsberg, he spoke to Herder and Wieland) and see the places connected with the scenery of famous and fashionable literary works of his time (Switzerland, the scenery of the idylls of S. Gessner and of J. -J. Rousseau's famous novel, foggy Germany of Romantic thinkers, France of proud and rich noblemen etc.). At the end of his journey he is confronted with real people and real life: his ideal is shattered – in France he saw the destruction of monarchy, in England – instead of Richardson's virtues – the real, utilitarian life of mass production and consumption. He lives near Oxford Street and speaks to young girls there: they make fun of his views of English literary heroines. The conflict between ideals and impressive reality influenced Karamzin's work a great deal: his Russian was quite modern, but he was forced to modernize it even more and to borrow many new words: there is no other chapter in his book where he is under stronger impact of rushing reality than in that depicting his life in England: roastbeef, beefsteak, spleen, industry, coalmines, pavement – all these phenomena, the English words or their Russian equivalents (at that time they were pure neologisms) have gradually become an integral part of modern Russian. English scenes, e. g. that with flower girls, are reflected in his *Bednaja Liza* (Poor Liza, 1792). The phenomenon of England with its incredible plurality created through Karamzin's work the decisive shift of Russian literature towards a more modern genre, stylistic and language model. Though Karamzin's impressions were a peculiar mixture of positive and negative experiences, the prevalent majority of what he saw in England is indisputably positive: since Karamzin's European journey (and I would say it was mainly his English journey) Russian literature has begun to lose its dependence on traditional Old Church Slavonic, on religious genres and even on the imitation of European literary models; under the impact of the impressive English reality in Karamzin's *Journey* it declared its independence, originality and its own quality and autonomous value. A simple comparison of Radishchev and Karamzin is quite a sufficient confirmation of this fact. The main aim of Karamzin's *Letters*, however, consists in the development of Russian culture itself, even in the support of the process of the formation of Russia as a great world power. The construction of Russian historical consciousness is dominant in his book: in the information published in French in *Spectateur du Nord* in Hamburg a few years later Karamzin mentions the *Igor Tale* as the original Russian epic composed on the adequate artistic level as Germanic and Romance *sagas* and *chansons*. Karamzin's career of a

Tzarist historiographer was a logical conclusion of all the author's intentions strikingly expressed in his early novel.

Karamzin's innovation of the language and style as well as his attempts at the unification of heterogeneous genre strata show his *Letters* a heroic gesture which tries to bridge spiritual gaps between traditional and industrial society. The novel gradually overcomes the boundaries of sentimental, epistolary travel depiction tending towards the ideological basis of future Russia. Karamzin's novel is not only the crucial point in the development of the Russian novel, but also the beginning of new Russian literature. The imitation of European models of the novel was over, the innovated artifact arose; it represents a peculiar genre construction, a textual mixture tending to permeation and integration. Karamzin's novel demonstrates, at the same time, the difficulties the Russian novel had to overcome because of the unfinished process of secularization: the novel in Russia was understood as something strange and unnatural. The greatest paradox of the Russian novel consists in the fact that it was regarded as an inimical element which had to be integrated in spite of the uppreparedness of the artistic and genre basis. The Russian *Hassliebe* for the novel caused its experimental character and - paradoxically - led Russian literature in general to its world fame.

The title of Pushkin's "novel in verse" represents an oxymoron - at that time the novel was regarded as prose. The poetics of the title signals the contradiction between the longing for a genuine novel and the tendency to preserve the verse. It is paradoxical that Pushkin's way to the novel is usually symbolized by *Eugene Onegin* though he wrote several prose works which could be regarded as novels, e.g. *Captain's Daughter* written after Walter Scott's models (the ambivalent role of the title, the main character and the narrator: Masha Mironova, Emelyan Pugachev and Peter Grinev: compare with *Ivanhoe*). *Eugene Onegin* demonstrates how Pushkin expresses the process of the opening of the world in contemporary language though he did not avoid older language layers including Old Church Slavonic. The "novel in verse" is a heterogeneous, intrinsically differentiated text based on pairs of mirror images: town - village, Lensky - Onegin, Olga - Tatyana. *Eugene Onegin* was once named "the encyclopedia of Russian life" which accentuated its heterogeneous and, at the same time, integrated and complex structure.

The structure of the longer lyric narrative is a many-sided textual complex consisting of the layers of the metatext oriented on the

problems of artistic creation (the novel about writing novels) linked with the situation of the Russian literature of that time. The paradox of its structure consists in the contradiction between the confessional, lyric character of the narrative (the Italian slavist Ettore Lo Gatto used to speak of the "diario lirico") and the extrinsic character of the novel as an objective narration, the tension between the author, the auctorial narrator and the hero of the poem; the poet trying to become a novelist attempts at the integration of the novel structure depicting the panoramic vision of the world into a narrow longer lyric narrative ("poema") and the strict verse structure (Elizabethan Wyatt's variety of the sonnet - *Pushkin's* or *Onegin's stanza*).

*Eugene Onegin* is a symbol of the tragic disappearance of poetry and its transformation into the prose work, the "work in progress" in which not only the main characters, but also the author himself came into existence and development. While for some romantics (Byron) the characters of their poems were bearers of ideas which the author identified himself with though the artifacts themselves sometimes had an obvious existential dimension penetrating into the depth of the poetic language in the form of oxymora and metaphorical chains which make, for example, the Czech poet Karel Hynek Mácha one of the predecessors of modern 20th-century poetry, in Pushkin's "novel in verse" there is a more detailed differentiation. The term "psychological Romanticism" used for Pushkin's lyric creations might also define his paradoxical "novel in verse". Pushkin - leaving the orthodox Romanticism - gathered concrete facts of his material world, but he also tended to transcendental phenomena, to the fatal predestination of human life and to the tragic way of man to death. Though he continues the romantic depiction of loneliness of man among people and the contradiction of a thinking poet in the middle of the crowd, his approach to the artifact is also connected with the sense of transitory psychological zones, the sensibility for the peculiarities of human soul as if he anticipated "the face of the other" from the philosophy of Emanuel Lévinas. Pushkin's novel gradually leaving the verse structure is an artifact depicting man's disillusion - the only refuge is creative work. The heterogeneity and polygeneric character of Pushkin's text comprising the features of several aesthetic currents (neoclassicism, sentimentalism and realism - but often in an ironizing and parodic context). A specific place in the structure of the novel is occupied by the two anonymous letters presenting the epistolary culture of the period of sentimentalism, by a dream which in a romantic way anticipates further

events and by tens of lyric digressions (liričeskije otstuplenija) continuing Lawrence Sterne's models. The most important is the gnome of Napoleons for whom human beings are just a footstool. In this Pushkin anticipated the crucial problem of modern times: the growing importance of the rights of man and, at the same time, the growth of authoritarian and totalitarian tendencies - both phenomena are the result of man's efforts.

The genre of the novel arises in *Eugen Onegin* from the paradoxical verse structure which had to be overcome, from the polymorphous and polygeneric structure, from the narrative strategy (the ambivalent distance between the hero and the auctorial narrator), from the mirror composition (North - South, Onegin - Lensky, Olga - Tatyana, Petersburg - village - Moscow), from the temporal synthesis (the historical reminiscences of the Russian past associated with Napoleon's unsuccessful invasion in 1812, the love plot and the reflections of Russia's future) and from the undercurrent of the model of man's life from birth to death.

The unfinished process of secularization in Russian literature led to the unpreparedness to adopt European novel models: the Russian way to the novel was, therefore, more complicated, there were many inner barriers which had to be overcome. The Russians did not accept the Western types of the novel also because of the **pre-post effect (paradox)** which seems to be one of the dominant features of the evolutionary paradigm of Russian literature in general: the imperfect imitation of foreign genre models (**pre**) seems to represent a genre innovation (**post**); therefore since the 18th century the Russian novel has had an experimental character, has been regarded as strange, peculiar, unnatural, paradoxical and absurd. Its huge, amorphous composition (compare Karamzin's *Letters* or Tolstoy's *War and Peace*) has always surprised and astonished a European reader.

The European models of the novel have often been radically transformed in Russia: it also concerned the confessional novel of the period of sentimentalism, pre-Romanticism and Romanticism cultivated, for example, by Benjamin Constant (1767-1830) and Alfred de Musset (1810-1857). While the composition of their works is one-sided, monographical in the sense of an individual confessional narration, Mikhail Lermontov (1814-1841) in his cyclic novel *Hero of Our Time* (*Geroj našego vremeni*, 1839-1840) creates the hierarchy of narrators and a complicated narrative structure in which Boris Eichenbaum once demonstrated the tension between the story (fabula) and the plot (sjuzet)

when he deciphered the chronological order of the original work (*Bela, Maxim Maximyč, Žurnal Pečorina, Predisloviје, Taman', Okončaniје Žurnala Pečorina, Knjažna Meri, Fatalist*). The formation of the novel from short stories or novellas will be repeated in the development of the Russian novel many times, e.g. in N. S. Leskov's chronicle novels, I. S. Turgenev's *Sportsman's Sketches* built on the principle of physiologies - in the 20th century Issac Babel constructs his *Red Cavalry* (Konarmija, 1928) on this very principle. The romantic confession becomes the psychological novel and the formation of the hierarchy leading from animal to superman in which Lermontov might be one of Nietzsche's predecessors, transformed the model into the philosophical artifact standing very close to German *Erziehungsroman*.

At the same time the Russians did not give up adventurous plots based more or less on the picaresque structure on one hand (Vasily Narezchny's *Rossijskij Žilblaz ili Pochoždenija knjazja Gavrily Simonoviča Čistjakova*, 1814) and the Gothic novel, *roman noir* or *Schauerroman* (Alexander Veltman, Alexander Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, Osip Senkovsky) on the other. The synthesis of the moral and satiric principle was created by one of many Poles in Russian literature Faddej Bulgarin (1789-1859), the author of the term "natural'naja škola" and the holder of the copyright of Alexander Griboedov's *Gore ot uma*. His moral satiric novel (nравstvenno-satiričeskij roman) *Ivan Vyžigin* (1829) is based on the picaresque plot transformed into a didactic, neoclassicist morality connected with utilitarian principles reminding of Jeremy Bentham's philosophy (*Deontology or the Science of Morality*, 1834). The description of the provincial seclusion (zacholust'je) became the model for the poetics of the Natural School, which Bulgarin sharply criticized, and for the famous depiction in Gogol's *Dead Souls*.

The key position in the development of the 19th-century Russian literature was occupied by the synthesizing role of the Natural School and its *physiologies* which *Dead Souls* were based on. This artifact reminding us of the huge, abnormal Russian literary works like Karamzin's *Letters* is a heterogeneous structure expressing the tension between the comic, the grotesque, the absurd and the ridiculous moving from the pole of the romantic longer lyric narrative ("poema") up to the comic epopée. Gogol's novel reminding of the poetic character of *Eugene Onegin* and of the ideological efforts of Karamzin's *Letters* tends to the new myth of the powerful Russia which will save the world.

Also Dostoevsky's way to the novel was rather complicated: he began to write short stories and novellas (povesti) with the intensive structure

expressing, at the same time, his protest against the one-sidedness of the poetics of the Natural School and Gogol's narrative models. Towards the end of the 1840s Dostoevsky attempts at longer, more extensive epic narratives, such as *Čestnyj vor* (1848), *Belyje noči* (1848), *Netočka Nezvanova* (1849) in which he practices various genres ("sobytija", "zapiski", vospominanija", "roman"). Dostoevsky's way led from small epic intensive narratives through a narrow zone of extensive, chronicle and panoramic prose works of the 1850-1860s up to the intensive-extensive "cosmic novels" of the 1860-1880s while Ivan Turgenev creates his novels out of *physiologies* (*Rudin*, 1856, *Otcy i deti*, 1862) and Ivan Goncharov, protesting against the energetic, capitalist entrepreneurs, arrived at the structure of the neoclassicist novel (*Obyknovennaja istorija*, 1847, *Oblomov*, 1859). Also Leo Tolstoy based his novel writing upon the poetics of the Natural School, but, at the same time, continued the psychological depiction which arose from sentimentalist, Sternian poetics (*Detstvo*, 1852, *Otročestvo*, 1854, *Junost'*, 1857, *Istorija včerašnego dnja* 1851, *Nabeg*, 1853, *Rubka lesa*, 1855, *Ljucern*, 1857).

The paradoxical rise and the development of the Russian novel as if against the partly secularized genre basis culminated in the models of the novel which flourished in the so-called Golden Age in the second half of the 19th century. Tolstoy's model based on the panoramic poetics and on the Russian Natural School ("physiologies") represents the transformation of the traditional French novel and draws nearer the conception of the ancient epopée which is, however, connected with the importance of "random factors", the hidden events, phenomena and semantic strata ("hidden in plain view") which have a great emblematic character (G. S. Morson). Tolstoy often exploits older genre models: *War and Peace* (1864-1866) was formed as an epopée combined with the layers of the French novel of the love intrigue, *Anna Karenina* (1873-1877) is a chronicle of two localities, *Resurrection* (1899) is based on the model of Christian morality of a converted sinner. They all, however, transcend these structures attempting at the formation of new genre models: the sense of human life and history in *War and Peace*, the rejection of industrial society and technology in *Anna Karenina*, and the inevitable coup d'état and the formation of new man and new society in *Resurrection*.

Dostoevsky's transition towards the epic extensity after his return from the Siberian penitentiary was mentioned above. The lover of life intensity expressed in the language and style of his early works ("vdrug", "vnezapno") becomes - for a time - the author of static,

*descriptive chronicles* (*Selo Stepančikovo i jeho obitateli*, 1859, *Zapiski iz Mertvogo doma*, 1860). The development of the spatial pole of the narratives leads to the decondensation of the novel, to its disintegration, to a looser plasma of the narrative chain. The chronicle interregnum represents Dostoevsky's crossroads on the way towards the complex, "cosmic" novel in the 1870s and the 1880s integrating European philosophy and socialist and Christian tradition as a point of intersection which has had autobiographical roots (Dostoevsky as a utopian socialist and an orthodox Christian). Dostoevsky uses the novel as a huge structure representing the way to the substance of the world which opens and re-opens the horrible mystery of the world's rise and decline. The tendency towards the absolute also leads to the extreme boundaries of the genre, tries to stretch its structure and its artistic potentials. Dostoevsky's novel is an extreme model of the genre after which the return must follow in the search of new intrinsic (psychoanalysis) or extrinsic (documentary novel) models.

There is, however, another possibility: the concentration on the language and style of the narrator's utterances, the composition of the skaz and its integration into a wider epic structure. It was the domain of the author who created the third most significant type of the Russian novel of the Golden Age – Nikolai Semenovich Leskov (1831–1895). The psychological structure of Leskov's personality, his childhood between an emotional mother and a rationalistic father, the religious influence of his granny, his unfinished secondary education, his peculiar, rather introverted character, his knowledge of Polish and Ukrainian in a society speaking Russian and French, his interest in minor Slavonic nations, his contacts with Czech writers in Prague and Paris, his detailed knowledge of the Orthodox Church, protestantism and judaism and various religious teachings, sects and heresies demonstrated that in the 19th-century context he represents an exceptional character. In his youth there were several mysterious events linked with revolutionary activities at the beginning of the 1860s including his famous article on St. Petersburg fires. Leskov's work represents the total rejection of the genre system dominating in the Russian literature in the second half of the 19th century: Leskov's literary criticism, his nonfiction and fiction show that his vision of the world consisted in the method of microscopic analysis, of the division of reality into minute parts not linked by the principle of causality.

Leskov entered Russian literature in the period of transition of the whole society of Tzarist Russia at the end of the 1850s. The way to the

Golden Age of Russian literature began in the 1830s and the 1840s in the work of the Natural School. The shift towards the prosaic genres, especially to the short story, the novella and the novel was realised in the prevalent model of the dramatic novel with love intrigue, but at the same time in the typical Russian static models such as the ethnographical short story, *physiologie*, with columns and features of strong moralistic bias. Leskov confirms the reputation of an outsider of Russian literature. The specific character of his personality and his peculiar position were the main reason for the genre shift which was realised after his first literary attempts.

The novel *Nekuda* was published in 1864, but Leskov did not avoid the love intrigue in this novel trying to fuse intimate and social problems in one entity. On one hand, censorship damaged the work in many places, and the author could not even recognize his own passages, on the other hand the novel and its author were attacked in the revolutionary press. The novel is based on the dramatic principle with dozens of characters including love and social intrigues. Its complex form, however, demonstrates the disintegration of the causal structure. Its three parts are autonomous, connected only by their characters. The chronicle structure is revealed especially in the first part (*V provincii*), the other two have a dramatic structure. The dominant point is represented neither by social nor by intimate dramas, but by the course of human life: Leskov's characters move from one place to another, from province to Moscow and then to St. Petersburg forming three juxtapositional structures. The oral genre (*rečevoj žanr*) has not disappeared: the Leskovian narrator has a chronicle, moral-depicting character. The contradictions in Leskov's novels in which he tried to create a traditional dramatic novel of Western type demonstrate the unbearable impact of oral structures Leskov has always tended to. As late as the 1880s and the 1890s he wrote the fragments of the novels *Sokolij perelet* (1883) and *Čertovy kukly* (1890) – two long short stories based on the linear, juxtapositional structures.

His first genre turning point began in the 1860s and had two different results: one of them is *skaz mosaic*, the other tends to *chronicle structure*. The plot of Leskov's chronicles consists of the three following lines: the dominant one containing fundamental ideas, themes and basic morphological principles, the formative one forming the plot according to the model of the dramatic novel and the catenary one containing the endless chains of stories. Leskov's chronicle reconstruction began with three versions of *Soborjane* (1872), *Staryje gody v*

*sele Plodomasove* (1869), *Smech i gore* (1871) and *Zachudalyj rod* (1874). Leskov's way towards the genre shift and the genre system he cultivated, the linear composition, the dominant role of the chronicle, the skaz and the skaz short story and their integration and disintegration demonstrate the role of oral structures in literature under many different impacts as the anticipation of the substantial changes of the fin de siècle. He anticipates the first great crisis of the novel in general and that of the Russian novel in particular.

This tendency was continued by Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin (1826-1889) and Gleb Uspensky (1843-1902) who also constructed the panoramic novel linked with the poetics of the spatial pulsation (the polarization between the locality and the great world) and with the artistic detail which led to the formation of the documentary novel in Anton Chekhov's *Sakhalin* (1893-1894) and Alexander Kuprin's *Jama* (1909-1915). The transitory period symbolized by the frequent occurrence of chronicle structures (see Maxim Gorky's *Gorodok Okurov*, 1909, and *Žitije Matveja Kožemjakina*, 1910-1911) was followed by the rise of a new form in Dmitry Merezhkovsky's historical novels and Andrei Bely experimental novel (*Peterburg*, 1916) up to the crucial Russian 20th-century novels written by Leonid Leonov, Konstantin Fedin, Mikhail Sholokhov, Mikhail Bulgakov and Boris Pasternak. The paradoxical development of the Russian novel as an unwanted, but beloved child seems to go on.

#### Note:

The original Russian titles have been transcribed according to the rules of the special Eastern transliteration.

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## PARADOKSY EWOLUCJI PEWNEGO GATUNKU: DZIEWIĘTNASTOWIECZNA POWIEŚĆ ROSYJSKA

### Streszczenie

Autor śledzi rozwój powieści rosyjskiej od jej początków po współczesność, dowodząc, że w Rosji zachodnie modele powieści nie przyjmowały się bądź bywały radykalnie przekształcane. Jedną z przyczyn tych tendencji był – wedle autora – nie ukończony jeszcze w Rosji osiemnastowiecznej proces sekularyzacji literatury, w wyniku czego kraj ten był nieprzygotowany na przyjęcie zachodnich wzorców powieściowych. Autor wyróżnia także ewolucyjny paradygmat powieści rosyjskiej, będący jego zdaniem dominantą ewolucyjną rosyjskiej literatury powszechnej, i twierdzi, że ułomne naśladownictwo zagranicznych wzorców gatunkowych doprowadziło na gruncie literatury rosyjskiej do wprowadzenia innowacji gatunkowych. Autor podkreśla, że stąd wynika eksperymentalny charakter powieści rosyjskiej, od XVIII wieku poczynając, i że bywała ona uważana za twór dziwaczny i nienaturalny, ponieważ oparty na paradoksie i absurdzie.

Autor analizuje bliżej twórczość Karamzina, Dostojewskiego i Leskowa, konkludując, że paradoksalny rozwój powieści rosyjskiej wciąż trwa.