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Epistolary Novel as a Scientific Problem

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ANNOTATION: The article deals with the study of the epistolary text as a special type of narration, which leads to the problem of the interaction of the author's personal correspondence and his appeal to the epistolary form as an artistic form at the initial, early stages of his creative path, when the autobiographical beginning in his works is extremely active. It explains the concept of epistolary genre in literature, the study and analysis of the language of the epistolary work, the artistic features of epistolary techniques, the application of the epistolary style. At the same time, the attitude of scholars to the language of the epistolary work, their views on the means to make the style fluent and effective, and their theoretical views are presented.

KEYWORD: epistolary discourse, epistolary text, communication, genre, style, invariant model of the text, literary letter, novel in letters, tradition.

Introduction. "An epistolary novel is a fiction, a literary phantom. The fact that Pamela, Dangerous Liaisons, or Poor People are written in the form of letters. Letters are a dialogue, but here it's just a story, broken into conveniently short segments and for some reason sometimes stated by different characters. This rather provocative statement, published on the Internet in the Fussky Journal, is symptomatic and actualizes one of the key problems that arise when studying such an artistic structure as a novel in letters. It can be formulated as follows: what is the nature of writing and correspondence as part of an artistic whole, is it only a form that can accommodate different content through which any type of conflict can be expressed? The question arises about the originality of the artistic world and the text in the epistolary novel, its universal, invariant characteristics.

Methodology and literature review. In addition, there is a need to identify the logic of genre modifications, patterns of development and transformation of the genre in the history of literature, to consider the epistolary novel in the context of the theory and history of the novel genre as a whole, and also to distinguish between works of the epistolary genre that continue the tradition of the novel in letters, from epistolary texts, which this tradition is not followed. The answers to these questions will enable us to speak of the epistolary novel either as just a "literary phantom", a compositional-speech form, or as a special variety of the novel genre. The epistolary novel belongs to the type of genres that arose historically (in contrast to the genres that appeared in the history of literature as a result of the theoretical constructions of researchers). Already the authors of the novels in their letters (starting with Richardson) were clearly aware of and fixed the genre tradition that they formed or within which they created their works.

The Result. The corresponding genre designation (novel in letters, letters, correspondence, etc.) becomes a necessary almost obligatory attribute of the title complex of such works, marking the genre tradition in the

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context of which they are created. Often the epigraph acts as such a marker. A characteristic feature of the heroes is their reading of various epistolary novels. From the realm of traditional, historically established genre designations, the phrase "epistolary novel" is automatically transferred to the realm of the history and theory of literature. At the same time, there is practically no clear definition of this concept, definition of one hundred volume (of the body of texts in relation to which it is applied) and place in the literary and, more broadly, sociocultural process.

Analysis. An analysis of the corresponding dictionary entries in literary criticism and cyclopedic and reference publications allows us to state that, despite the prevalence of the concept of epistolary novel "and its apparent obviousness and certainty, in reality it refers to a number of diverse phenomena, it is mentioned either:

- 1) in articles about epistolary literature, epistolography or epistolary form", and then it is described as one of the varieties of epistolary literature in general,
- 2) in articles about the novel, and then it appears as one of the forms of existence of the novel in the 18th century, but not as a special novel genre (different novels written in the form of letters can be classified as social, psychological, sentimental, **novel of conduct and sentiment**, **novel of manners**, gallantly adventurous, comic epic novel, etc.").

The same two approaches to the study of the epistolary novel can also be distinguished in the analysis of scientific literature: the novel in letters is considered within the framework of epistolary literature and within the framework of the theory and history of the novel. The thematic and genre diversity of literary facts, which are traditionally referred to as epistolary novels, leads to the need to structure heterogeneous texts with different artistic nature that fall under this designation. The problem of identifying the boundaries of the genre comes to the fore.

Discussion. We are faced with the problem of limiting the scope of the concept under consideration, fixing those phenomena that will relate to it. Actually, this is a question about the status of correspondence in a literary text: is it just an epistolary form, capable of accommodating a wide range of semantic and plot possibilities, or is it a genre-forming feature. It is impossible not to note the terminological uncertainty that characterizes the study of letters and correspondence. You can find the following options for designating the subject of research: epistolary narratives, epistolary heritage, epistolary literature, epistolary genre, epistolary, epistolary discourse, epistolography, epistolary works, epistolary fiction, epistolary form...

Accordingly, the epistolary novel falls into the composition of most of the concepts listed above. There is a need to distinguish between artistic and non-artistic epistolary structures, to consider the semantic and at the same time formal opposition of the genuine fictional, which is key for the novel in letters.

Conclusion. It is required to comprehend the effect of documentary, which occurs in such texts, to consider the principles of functioning of a "everyday document", in particular, writing, in a literary text. In the field of view of the researcher of the novel in letters, there is a huge number of texts that are united by a common epistolary form for all of them. However, this easily identifiable commonality should not obscure their essential typological differences. So, it is necessary to isolate the concept of an epistolary novel from more general concepts that include it.

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