

Genre Transformation of a Short-Story in the Late XX – Early XXI Centuries in Russian and Uzbek Literature

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of genre transformation in contemporary Russian and Uzbek short-stories. On the example of the analysis of a small prose by Russian writers D. Galkovskiy, D. Pritula, A. Eppel and Uzbek authors M. Ali, U. Khamdam, one of the active tendencies of this process, the process of hybridization, defining the features of a novel in a text field of a short-story was revealed.

Keywords: short-story, genre, transformation, hybridization, novel features, minimization

As literary studies indicate, in historical crucial moments, as a rule, the interpenetration of genre forms and formation of new genres of literature occur. Suffice it to mention the history of genre development in Russian and Uzbek literature at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries.ⁱThe character of genre system change during every new cultural epoch is distinguished by originality and depends on external and internal factors. The specificity of historical epoch, aesthetic and cultural traditions of people, the peculiarities of consciousness can be reckoned among the first ones. The internal factors are conditioned by a literary method; aesthetic conception of surrounding reality, the character of world perception of modern writer aspired to renovation of form for expressing new content. The late XX – early XXI centuries as a transitional period in the development of humanitarian (but not only!) ideas also caused the formation of genre transformations, change of the “code” of classic genres, renovation of formal criteria.

The change of the triad “author-narrator-character” and variety of types of the author’s “self” conditioned an active transformation of a short-story genre. Exactly the author category became the leading category of short-story poetics as a genre. Besides, as M.Zvyagin reasonably affirms, “... the activation of genre changes is closely connected to the intensification of author’s “power” over the genre, shifting the dominant in the tandem “genre-author” to the author’s side. The author does will generate different shifts, changes of established genre models in the process of which new genre or intra specific formations appear”.ⁱⁱ Another modern scientist T.Markova notes that, “... in contemporary prose the genre movement is accomplished primary in two directions: to the broadening of limits, crossing with others, this is the way to the hybridization or to the narrowing of semantic field, reduction, this is the way to minimization”.ⁱⁱⁱ Besides, it should be noted that a short-story as a “sign-form of transitional period” (N.Leiderman) by virtue of its flexibility and mobility is mostly perceptive to the transformations on the form level conceding boundary genre formations. The process of active modification of short-story flows under the synthesis of the features of epic genres, both small and large. Let’s analyze the interpretation of characteristic features of other epic genres in modern short stories. First of all, the actualization of novel genre features in text field of modern short story should be noted. Here we may mention that both a short story and a novel have common features from the point of view of content. Thus, a short story have “truly novel thematic breadth, originating to the traditions of biography description and allowing to make an object of aesthetic attention practically any part of individual human life”.^{iv}

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In this case, discussing novel characteristics interpreted in the short story text field, we mean those formational dominant features of a novel which are not characteristic for short-story genre, demonstrating contradiction, or, in other words, concentrating, revealing, and bringing the opposite bases together "immediately".^v Besides, it should be mentioned, that the premise of active appearing of structural features of a novel in small genres was conditioned by the fact that in the 1960s-1980s, besides the domination of large genre forms on the literature arena of that time, the tendency connected with the strengthening of lyrical basis in a short story, intensification of psychologism, and "novelization of short prose"^{vi} appeared.

In modern short stories the movement on the way of hybridization is observed with the combination of characteristics of novel mentality "not in quantitative, but in qualitative ratio."^{vii} The process of short-story transformation appears on such genre structure levels as a plot, the way of material coverage, and the way of expression and compositional principle of finalization. It is revealed in an original technique of "compression", when modern writers in a limited text field compress several subject lines depicting them in fractional, mosaic, and pointed matrix of objective reality. For example, in the stories "Christmas story № 2" by D.Galkovskiy, "Verhovskiy and son" by L.Kostyukov, "Migratory goose" by V.Astafyev, "Sparrow" by A.Ilicheskiy, "In locomotive times" by A.Eppel, "Scone" by M.Ali, "Brier" by U.Khamdam and others, the history of the whole époque was "squeezed" into a small volume, several plots and subject lines are used at a time, there is a big amount of characters, dormancy of exposition, its dispersion over the whole text, and sustainable description of details. Thus, as an initial collision in a story "Christmas story №2" by D.Galkovskiy a name list of the students of N's gymnasium with the indication of their nationalities, class, nicknames was given; the succession of the plot is broken and presents a "puzzle" form. In "Verhovskiy and son" by L.Kostyukov the complete story of three of the Verhovskiys (father, son, and grandson) is represented. Here, each part of the story (with its own system of characters) is oversaturated with the narration of extra scene details. In U.Khamdam's story "Brier" not linear, but three-level lattice structure reveling in rhythm, characters, and plot repetition.

A huge amount of information and its redundancy is joined in a fanciful way with aphoristic character and laconism of author's word. For example, V.Astafyev ("Migratory goose") just in several sentences "retells" the complete biography of his characters: "*Soldiers-brothers go home except Danila who doesn't have any shelter. He grew in the family of a convicted uncle who, according to his wife's, Darya Fominichna, words, died in the war; the kids (and there were many) had to be given to an orphan house by the hapless woman who, it seemed, also disappeared in a war whirlpool or moved somewhere. Whenever Danila tried to write to her, there was no answer.*" Practically the same technique is used by M.Ali in the story "Scone": "*Jannatoy saw much in her lifetime. Her husband, a well-known baker Mirzaahmad aka was slandered and killed as a "public enemy" in 1937th. Despite it, shortly before the war she was able to marry her two daughters off successfully, one by one. Both of them, thanks God, are in good hands. A year before the war, Jannatoy married her only beloved son Tursunboydjon off. . .*"

It is known that one of the novel features is "concentration on the destiny of a single personality in the process of his/her formation and development, displayed in a fictional space and time, sufficient for rendering of the "organization" of personality."^{viii} The same feature can be extracted in several Russian and Uzbek stories marked by critiques as "story – destiny" ("Verhovskiy and son" by L.Kostyukov, "Migratory goose" by V.Astafyev, , "In locomotive times" by A.Eppel, "Happy day" by D.Pritula, "Bekar" by A.Mamedov, "Brier" by U.Khamdam, "Scone" by M.Ali, "Ghost" by Z.Kurolboy kizi, etc.). Each of these stories show human fate through the prism of history of the XX century or phenomena of recent past under maximal density of events reproduced with minimal conciseness. The authors are interested in "small people", revealing of their own truth connected with their emotional sufferings and pain. The authors resort to brevity and abrupt minimal comments, aloof-narrative manner of writing, and interjectional addressing to the reader. Thus, in the story "Happy day" by D.Pritula^{ix} the most intricate and tragic life peripetia of Larisa Grigoryevna are stated with a telegraph style: divorce, constant lack of money, exhausted work with extra work, daughter's death, granddaughter's birth, hypertensive crisis, forced "selling" of granddaughter to America.

It is possible to reveal the time out of fragmentary but meaningful details; it was a post-perestroika epoch: "*prices are always rising*", "*Larisa Grigoryevna was an accountant in a private shop*", "*Natasha is going to enter the institute next summer (wants to be an economist, it's just in time now)*", "*...her close friend's fiancé returned from Chechnya ...alive, even with a medal*", "*No, it's like nowadays is not the end of the XX century, but some other times*".

The author's interest isn't turned to detailed analysis of reality, but to the "soul dialectics" where "the deep motives and primeval particulars made the personality be the representative of not any surrounding, but society".^x Every "scaring" event in the character's life is somehow strung together on the same pivot. In addition, this pivot is a spirit of the character. Larisa Grigoryevna simply lives; and through the shroud of troubles and illness she is astonished: "Life is still wonderful!"

In the story "In locomotive times" by A.Eppel^{xi} everything is in a different way: the author's attention is concentrated on "versatile description of society which thoroughly motivate the evolution of a main character (...), detailed, widely representing external, objective, and first of all social conditions".^{xii} It is achieved with the help of author's digressions, figurative epithets, similes, and metaphors. Thus, while description of a locomotive, the author uses double description: an outward description of the locomotive, as a symbol of a great idea giving the freedom to the people, cultivating during the centuries by the grand intellects and practically elaborated in the XIX century (the metaphor isn't accidental here: "... with a whistle he emitted steam into sides as exalted side-whiskers and became looking like *Turgenev at once*") as well as the description of interior of the locomotive is similar to the Soviet life-style, "all-metal", as might and power of the state; "... day coach looks like a prison barrack" as an allusion of innumerable repressions and political prisons; "... dirty heels, unclean feet of the passengers on the UPPER berth" as immorality of "the top". The character of the conductor who doesn't want to rasp the dirt off the floor, brings the tea in dirty glasses and "... raises (and on dispatching drops) a heavy, as an old tractor grinder, rod". Thus, briefly but extensively the Soviet Union is represented, where a locomotive spark causes the tragedy of the main character who symbolizes the tragedy of Russia.

Depending on the author's artistic goals, the stories-destiny present different fundamental basis of a personality which help to survive despite anything (Larisa Grigoryevna in "Happy days" by D.Pritula, Dmitriy and Mariush in "Verhovskiy and son" by L.Kostyukov, Akulina in "Sparrow" by A.Ilicheskiy, Jannatoy in "Scone" by M.Ali, Moriko in "Where are you, Moriko?" by A.Yakubov) or die having become pious martyrs or victims (spouses Solodnikovs in "Migratory goose" by V.Astafyev, the main character in "In locomotive times" by A.Eppel, Ivan in "Sparrow" by A.Ilicheskiy, Egamberdi Djakipov in "Ice-cream" by A.Yakubov, mathematician in "Poincare" by A.Yuldashev, etc.).

Thus, broadening the limits of a short story at the expense of novel features which are extensively compressed, shorthanded, reduced, the writers, on one hand, reconsider classical genre structure, on the other hand, they recount personal understanding of a "small person's" fate. Besides, the author's reasoning is not summarized in essence; it's like a peculiar message into eternity. The usage of meaningful novel characteristics (in a formal plan which led to the extension of content) allows the authors to fix under a new visual angle those which is thought the source of authenticity of objective reality in this modern, chaotic, sometimes absurd, and not influenced by an orderly systematization world. In other words, as S.Timina reasonably mentioned "... the author chooses out of historically composed genre spectrum the forms which the most adequately reflect its conception or modeling own genres on the base of traditional genre canons".^{xiii}

Modern short story became the platform for experiment with anti-utopia as exactly short story like a rational micro fragment of objective reality allows (owing to its plasticity and ability to respond to topical problems of modern reality) to experiment on time and space, as well as penetrate into the most concealed parts of human soul. In short stories of the late XX – early XXI century we can find a number of anti-utopia identifiers. Thus, one of the main is a prognostic function aimed at preliminary revelation of certain negative tendencies in modern society. Elaborating the problems of "liveness" of totalitarian consciousness, change of value scale of modern personality, nature of due and sacral, the writers resort to the motives of escape ("New Robinsons" by L.Petrushevskaya, "Adashboy" by R.Rahmat), illness ("Hygiene" by L.Petrushevskaya, "Vanity island" by U.Khamdam), general insanity ("Red Square games", "New-Moscow" by V.Babenko, "Vanity island" by U.Khamdam), objective and social substitution ("Career into nowhere" by M.Veller, "Bulldozer operator's day" by V.Pelevin), fear (series "Sur in Proletarian district" by V.Makanin).

Space and time in these texts was also built according to the anti-utopia laws. As a rule, it is a limited space: house, flat, village, or town, representing the reduced model of modern society. In addition, this space brings both physical and moral threaten for humans, so the final in such stories is, as a rule, unfavorable.

Time, mostly, nearest future, is limited by the frames of inner reflection of an incident, episode, or fact from the individual life. As E.Kopach reasonably indicates, "In anti-utopian short story such types of chronotopos as "adventures of a castaway", "epidemy", (L.Petrushevskaya), "New-Moscow" (V.Babenko), "province" (M.Veller), "outskirts", "communal flat", "multi-storeyed building", "courtyard" (V.Pelevin)"^{xiv}. "Non-existent village", "island" developed by Uzbek writers R.Rakhmatov and U.Khamdam should also be added to the mentioned above.

The central conflict of anti-utopia is the opposition of a personality and governmental system. In the system of contemporary anti-utopian short stories person's severe trials turned out under the pressure of society and life absurd are realized through situations; at the same time substantive human values are exposed to verification which leads to the affirmation of a moral-spiritual drift. Thus, L.Petrushevskaya diagnosis the decay of family values, loss of kindness, mercy, and mutual understanding; V.Makanin creates natures seized by fear as a symbol of total control; V.Babenko investigates the character of suppression of speech liberty in country and moral degradation of contemporaries; M.Veller interprets the authority system, ignorance and servile psychology of an ordinary person; U.Khamdam fixes the threaten of disease of "ambition and arrogance"; R.Rakhmat realizes the conflict "personality versus society" through the characteristics of relationships between individual and crowd. The inner struggle of personality and its result become the source of art prognostics for the authors.

The main characters in the short stories with anti-utopian features are, as a rule, "small people" who are under the power of social system and false stereotypes. In addition, the special stress is laid on the registration of changes in human psychology and personality leveling at that. In abovementioned stories personal vision of problems from the universal-humanistic point of view is represented, which conditioned the peculiarity of triad "author-narrator-character." The base of plot-compositional structure in anti-utopian stories is either metaphor or symbolism, rarer fantasy, which helps to attain wide generalization and reveal timeless problems. Thus, "*anti-utopizm* as a specific quality of "*boundary*" artistic consciousness of the late XX century"^{xv} was vividly revealed in a contemporary short-story genre having generated new frontier genre formation called "anti-utopian short story."

The hidden moral as an appeal to the modern society is used not only in anti-utopian short stories, but also in small belles-lettres texts where "parable word" dominates. As it is generally known, a short story "originates from cultural-historic memory of traditions of anecdote or parable"^{xvi}. With the extension of genre potential, a contemporary short story on the way of hybridization soaks in it all the features of archetypal literature forms, such as parable, myth, fairy-tale, anecdote. The most active experiments in this sense can be noted in the process of short story and parable crossing. It can be explained by the fact that in conditions of instability of modern society the writers in their stories try to order their world-view with the help of inclusion of fundamental existence principles characteristic for "didactic-allegorical genre of literature"^{xvii}. Parable word allows the writers to present their own interpretation of understanding of Absolute, to reflect on the substantive basis of objective reality, to invite the reader to the dialogue. And the authors are guided not only by religious culture of the people, but also by Zen philosophy, yin-yang, Taoist and Buddhist parables at that, postulating the variety of interpretations and answers to philosophic questions of objective reality. Thus, I.Abuzyarov in short stories "Post Office" and "Moor" appeals to oriental parables as forms of spontaneous reflection, and I.Sultan in the story "Sophia" addresses to Zoroastrian parables to understand the nature of human spirit.

Contemporary researches distinguish several formal-factual features of a parable, such as "sacral field, movement form particular to general, symbolic and archetypal figurativeness, intension of understanding"^{xviii}. Besides, as philologist T.Markova notes, "Parable word is anecdotal in essence, it is exhorted to illustrate transcendent conformity of objective reality. As a rhetoric figure the parable is differed by sensory obviousness, "*pictureness*", as well as simultaneous rationalness and abstraction"^{xix}. It should be mentioned that in modern short stories we can define stories-parable and stories with parable exposition. Such differentiation is essential for us as stories-parable, as a rule, have the features of canonical parable while small belles-lettres texts with parable exposition have some features of parable characterized in modern philology as "a style phenomenon strongly attracted by cultural symbolism in settlement of metaphysical contradictions of objective reality"^{xx}. So, the features of parable as a specific quality of modern short stories drawn towards philosophy, generalization, and attempts to understand the roughness of human being revealed on the level of author's adages, symbolic images, cultural flashback include not only the new style phenomenon, but also a special way of thinking.

The stories "Mikeshka" by N.Kononov, "In locomotive times" by A.Eppel, "Sparrow" by A.Ilicheskiy, "Lieutenant Osugi: poet and aviator" by S.Ivanov, "Basileus" by O.Slavnikova, "Pointer" by I.Vasilkova, "Tulips" by U.Khamdam, "Kuldirghich" by M.Sharif, "Bahoutdin's dog" by N.Eshonkul, and others can be referred to such works. Parable features from the point of view of fruitfulness and semantics is actualized in the process of synthesis of a short story with such archaic genres as tale, fable, Menippeah.

"Rabbits and boas" by F.Iskander, fairy tales and stories by T.Tolstaya, tales by L.Petrushevskaya and her stories "Where I was", "Black coat", "In gardens of other chances", etc, as well as small prose by V.Pelevin of the 1990s^{xxi} can be referred to these genres. Contemporary writers, depending on their creative individuality and writing manner, choose this or that indication of anachronistic form in order to fix metaphysical problems of being in a new way, to show their ambiguity and diversity declining all claims for being an absolute truth. M.Lipovetskiy distinguishes Menippean play as genre-style dominant of modern prose where "Menippeah exposes conditionality, illusiveness of any cultural order, destroys moral stereotypes imposed in time"^{xxii}. In these terms, the story by O.Slavnikova "Basileus"^{xxiii} is rather interesting.

Here we can find a number of identifiers of Menippeah: the description of hidden, still unidentified parts of human soul and world, conditionality, diffusion of real and metaphysical, "generating a special, free from any conditionality and prejudice type characters' behavior"^{xxiv}. The theme of life and death was revealed in "Basileus" in close connection with objective reality and invisible world. The invisible world is Vacuum which is a world-modeling category of fictional world. The Vacuum as an element of content is created with the help of opposition of Existence-vacuum and Nonexistence-vacuum. Thus, the main character of the story Elisaveta Nikolayevna Rakitina lives in nonexistence: dusty uncomfortable flat with "old-fashioned interior", decrepit things and objects, old cat Basileus. Her whole world is included into the limits of this abode and poor life while outside there is hostile reality which she is afraid of and cannot accept. The habit of main character is illusory: "With a closer consideration it became clear that Elisaveta Nikolayevna is not an old woman at all, but wonderful and amazing woman without age". The main device of creating her portrait is bifurcation: "...the distinguished olds ... vaguely felt that they were placed into the center of incredibly and carefully arranged toy"; "Elisaveta Nikolayevna was the genius of helplessness. This genius made her irresistibly seducing"; "... small old woman with shambling gait"; "... pale beauty of about thirty".

Elisaveta Nikolayevna's contact with Vacuum is realized on the level of unexplained thirst for lifeless dilapidation, fragments, dust. The author doesn't introduce the inner world of the character to the reader; her deeds and behavior doesn't have any motivation; it seems that the woman doesn't have soul. She doesn't do anything good or bad, her existence is senseless. Her whole essence is this very vacuum. It is no mere chance that the taxidermist divined her as "something formless, filled with nothing vacuum. Before emptiness where she suddenly allowed to glance having smiled vaguely, he, an adult nobleman, felt himself small and weak as if before elements, in front of disproportionate to a human a natural phenomenon". In addition, when the main character displays her human qualities, i.e. the gleams of soul appear, the Vacuum destroys its matrix as an alien element with the help of a road accident assistant Chaos, which in its turn is the linking part between realities and Vacuum. The devices of compositional intensification and likening obligatory for Menippeah reveal the Vacuum image through the prism of its matrix, the main character.

And if the contact of the main character with Vacuum is on the level of binary oppositions, like authenticity/imagination, time/vacuum of eternity, then another character, taxidermist Ertel, presents another type of contact on the level of death/immortality, order/chaos. It is no coincidence that the personage's profession is connected with "dead material" in which he tries to imprint living. Ertel's attitude to the cat Basileus as well as to Elisaveta Nikolayevna is the same: they are "rare exemplar, collection exemplar" for him. The profession of anti-creator left its mark on his appearance: "In his forties Ertel was a lean gentleman pointedly neat, rather colorless, as if water and lotion washed the natural colors off his face". Ertel's family life, psychological discomfort, and estrangement from other people generate character's feeling of existence vacuum and understanding; all his attempts to fill it with traditional values don't give him any moral satisfaction, so they are senseless: "We all exist conditionally. Every morning ten thousand "Mercedeses" must be driven into Moscow streets and somebody must be in. We are under the state, and the aim of the government is to exist itself. The government implements social programs, but cannot help a certain citizen as it would be ghost's help. You cannot catch it. So we have to elaborate this ghost nature in ourselves."

Thus, as a result of social crisis, the Vacuum is cannot be unnoticed by a human being and seems to be not only the way to assert themselves as a personality, but also to declare the hopelessness of human existence. In plot structure of the story spatial and psychological experiment is represented which is characteristic of Menippeah genre.

Thus, intricate and severe reality provokes the meeting of characters with the Vacuum and this meeting is the central in the short story. Other characters, Mr.K. and Mr.T., were also fascinated by the meeting with the Vacuum as their life was illusion, life of mannequins. The author's metaphors and symbols allow to percept clearly the characters' soul devastation on the background of overfilled exterior (family, home, work, etc.).

The cat Basileus is the only personage who has "*double citizenship*". He equally feels himself in both close space of Nonexistence and surrounding reality. The name Basileus means the ruler. The cat is the personage which helps the author and the reader to interpret the boundaries, the limits of personal existence; to confess the equal rights for the Vacuum and Existence as well as find the way to another level of reality. It is no just a mere chance that cat's portrait looks like human: "*Pure-bred lop-eared Scot; in the evening of his cat's life he strongly resembled a Russian lout inear flapped fur hat and thick, tornin some places sheepskin coat*". It is remarkable that the favorite cat's toy was a plush rat. As it is known, in Menippean satire the rat means soul captor. And Basileus never parts with it only within the limits of the owner's flat as in real life it is alien. The passages from reality to nonexistence occur ordinary; the unreal is hidden in absolutely real things: in brief description of the fates of "*stalinka*" inhabitants, in narrations of domestic life, in morals of modern élite, in political life. Thus, the author actualizes topical-publicistic beginning of Menippean and manifests the concern of the world state where the personality qua personality has disappeared and instead of it global Vacuum appeared.

If we turn our attention to the short story-parables then we can notice that the features of both genre forms are actualized equally. Thus, the story "Moor" by I.Abuzarov is a modern parable about human values containing both traditions of Russian classical literature (gamblers in works by A.Pushkin and F.Dostoyevsky) and tendencies of adventure prose. Besides, the author tried to implant poetics of oriental tale into contemporary reality. First-person narration allows rendering inner emotions and ideas of the main character who tried the role of "modern pirate" on himself. The author's appeal to the psychology of a modern young man, a student in particular, allows including the motives of truth search, way to self-awareness and opposition typical for parable genre. In the basis of compositional structure of a short story, the mode of a dream as a form of conditionality is used that is also typical for parable poetics. A dream, as a form of development of the main plot, includes illogical actions and phenomena. Thus, Moor is both a university teacher and oriental sage, who master the book of Fates, as well as the Divine Principle. Multi-layeredness of dream world gives the chance not only to display the world as an endless labyrinth but also to depict the pictures of modern life, imprint the process of moral maturation, parting the illusion of "easy money", "experiencing of initiation in its way", that is obtaining a life strategy. The main character acts as a subject of an ethic choice which can also can be referred to the attribution of canonic parables.

The work is saturated with symbolic details, signs, objects. Thus, a cinema, where there are arcade machines, is called "Mirage" which points to futility of all attempts of the main character, his being in captivity of illusions; and the subject which the student isn't able to pass out is logistics, i.e. philosophic trend in mathematics validating the possibility of bringing mathematics in whole to mathematical logics. The character wanted to estimate his way to success, to imaginary success, but something went wrong. The author rigorously analyses a terrible disease of gambling: "*It is scaring power-stream; first it slightly fed my ambitions, but in the end it drove me crazy*"^{xxv}, displaying the plot plan and subordinating the story to the main idea of the story with it. The introduction of the episode with a mad gambler with "*excessively fanatic gaze*" into the narration of the story strengthens the effect of naive hope, belief in absolute miracle in complete loss of sense of reality. Linearity of dynamic plot of nearly detective story is interrupted by author's meditations and rather didactic hints which help to single out hidden passions and vices of modern society. The author, following Moor, leads his character to the recognition of the fact that the desire to "*to hit the jackpot*", "*without any efforts*" in real life turns out to be Sisyphean toil. In this way, I.Abuzarov in the story "Moor" uses several elements of genre content of a parable: didactics, the character as a subject of ethic choice, symbolism, compression of fictional space, conditionality of time, composition of the work as an argument of a certain idea.

And if in the story "Moor" by I.Abuzarov the events occur in the conditions of contemporary reality with the whole set of the signs of the late 1990s life, then in the short story "A cup of water" by Uzbek prosaist U.Khamdam several dominating parable features (edifying quality, allegory, specificity of character description, high level of philosophic generalization, collision of two opposite principles) irrespective to real context were used.

In the short story, "A cup of water" by U.Khamdam a human's way of life that initially had the aim in allegorical form is represented. The method of representing the truth through allegory saves the author from direct edification. The whole attribution of the story (details, symbols, landscape) is subordinated to the general idea: the necessity to perform the sacred mission of a human being, realization of their predestination in this world. Thus, a bullock cart identifies the attribute of human's inborn potential which needs developing; a cup of water reflect pleasure, temptation; thirst displays trials, the desire to have happiness and wealth as quick as possible; an endless queue is atonement, etc.

The characters of the short story are deprived of portrait characteristics and character. They represent the objects of ethic choice or provided with a single quality symbolizing their attitude to life: "*Having glanced back I saw another group of people at some distance in the corner; they were standing sedately queued up. Their faces didn't express any joy of satisfaction. Their gloomy faces didn't conform to greatness, luxury, cheerful mood of the others who partook the relish and seemed rather happy*"; "*Simultaneously I observe with an interest the people sitting and standing in the queue: some eyes are shining with joy and hope, others are full of disappointment and regret*"^{xxvi}. In the text there is only one portrayal characteristics, but then only one portrayal detail (cherry red lips) as a symbol of temptation: "*At the door I was met by a slender beauty with big black eyes and smiling half-opened cherry red lips*"^{xxvii}.

In the short story the space and time are maximally seized up to the single philosophic nuclei. Thus, the day means human youth, the evening implies old age, the road that the bullock cart is ridden identifies human's way of life. The struggle between thirst and destination is in the soul of the main character. Such mode can also be referred to the features of canonical parable: "*Place of destination!.. Oh-oh, it is so far, like an unattainable horizon. Then, calm down! I begin remembering that when I was leaving somebody explained me that if went straight, without turning, I would reach the place before dusk was falling, and this road would lead me to the right place. I believed in it. My belief would be much stronger unless thirst. The desire to drink captured me more and more intensive and inexorably. It seemed that inside of me hot sand dunes like camel's humps were moving*". As we can notice, this short story takes intermediate position between philosophic story proper and parable.

In modern short stories, we can also track the synthesis of fictional and publicistic ^{xxviii} as a feature of transformationality. Contemporary writers' publicistic perception of world was formed under the influence of the literature of "the 1960s", fascination with social and political problems of modern life as well as popularization of individual's priority and independence of a separate personality. Publicistic dominant is revealed not only on the level of the choice of social meaningful problematic, suggestion, raised emotionality, but also the originality of author's "self" as the organizer of the center of the story. Exactly the specificity of author's "self" allowed embodying the features of essay, feuilleton, and sketch in the text field of modern short story that, in its turn, is harmonically included in "the process of mutual enhancement of generic essences"^{xxix} on one hand, and to express today's topical problems as well as author's attitude to them more vividly, on the other.

Thus, in the story "Nusya and cop Artem"^{xxx} by N.Gorlanova and V.Bukur the features of feuilleton are distinctly displayed. The main idea of the story is based on the "feuilleton" fact of the epoch of the 1990s when civilized and educated people had to re-qualify into sellers, security officers, and entrepreneurs: "*Nusya's father will tell tonight that he has personally met three philosophers with dealer's eye in Perm; they all have their own booths and shop girls!.. And all of them are decent people that is very considerable, that is quite all...".* Behind the external unpretentiousness of narration, all witticism and curious incidents the authors were able to give a subtle portrayal of time tendencies, to fix the psychology of modern people. In the story satirical sketches of portraits of philosopher, philologist, policeman, prospective student of the institute of culture who are trying to adapt to the conditions of market economy are given. The nature of conflict is reflected by the publicistic richness adding the character of discrepancy of way of life engendering psychology of new distorted world-view. The realities of the 1990s are presented in ironical context as complication and cruelty of life, according to the authors, can be endured only through laughter. The authors of the story make their conclusion through contradiction which is also a feature of feuilleton. This contradiction is highlighted through the prism of perception of young Nusya who is trying to make a good match as well as through the assertions of the policeman Artem, the dreamer, and fibber, whose all dreams are based on material prosperity and sufficiency.

In another short story by N.Gorlanova and V.Bukur "An incident on Radonitsa"^{xxxi} the features of feuilleton are also actualized. Linear increasing development of the plot directed at the final, witty ending, absurdity of situation, topicality, facts arguing in favor of satirical typification ^{xxxii}- all these genre features of feuilleton as a genre of fiction-publicistic are successfully used by the authors.

The precise domestic details of new human relations and hidden social motives allow the reader to imagine a picture of post-perestroika time. Compositional device of contrast based on antithesis of contrasting images, points of view, situations allows not only to make a colored mosaic of epoch of the late 1990s, but also to imprint the changing psychology of a modern person. And factual material is the "dough" for "baking" the images reflecting hidden sense of facts and their metaphysics at that.

Thus, the relationship between sexes are substituted for profit, compliments are used not for enticing but for "getting the letters of gratitude from the neighbors"; a stolen TV set and five kilos of meat become the grief which prevailed over Paternal Saturday.

The female characters were puzzled in the situation of the choice: having seen a stranger at the entrance and defined him as a robber, the women, nevertheless, decided to go to the cemetery on that holy day. The price of the visit is the loss of material values. The contradiction of material and spiritual is the key to the understanding of the main idea of the story. The authors ask themselves the question: "What will be in Russia if there is both money and spirituality?". The main characters of the story are also antipodes. Svetlana Fotina (pay attention to the characteristic detail of the name and surname: Fotina means "light") thinks that modern life though is difficult but rather better than the Soviet one, while Iskra Danilovna (Iskra is "a small flash of light, spark") blames all her troubles on modern authorities: "In the time of communists I was young, but with democrats I grew older, they do everything they want!".

There are a lot of details and symbols of the epoch of the 1990s in the short story. They are sneakers, nationalists, democrats, Easter, Victory Day, war in Yugoslavia, "Sharp" TV set, "New Russians", Marinina's novels. But it doesn't overload the text, it helps to display visually all the problems of social existence and life marginality in all their outrageous absurdity to the reader.

In the short story by the Uzbek prosaist A.Yuldashev "Any problems?"^{xxxiii} there is also the fact from modern Uzbekistan life: "Ikrom ... won in the computer programs contest and was awarded with a tourist voucher to a European country. A round ticket, food, in a word, all the expenses were paid by the organizers." The author, combining the features of problematic feuilleton with the features of short story in the text, describes in hypertrophied form the features typical for modern Uzbek society. Fixing the negative facts of reality (boorishness, hostility, rudeness) the feuilleton features are more a satirical signal than analysis. The strategy allows creating a bright image of a modern citizen perceiving any demonstrations of benevolence as a threat verging on danger: "Ikrom as a mannered person smiled to a young woman to show that he was the last in the queue (...). In response to his smiling she squinted furiously at him and resented (...). Ikrom felt how he blushed with shame, but trying to put a brave face on a sorry business from the force of habit acquired abroad, he smiled again... But ... the young woman for some reason was frightened and stepped back, and even hostilely answered...".

The main thesis of the story, assumed as a basis of the work, is sustained by the title in interrogative form "Any problems?" which is asked several times throughout the whole acts. This is also one of the features of feuilleton, emotional influence on the reader based on documentation and facts. And, gradually the main sense presented as a question at the very beginning of the story is changing into assertion or statement that there are problems in modern society and there are many of them. It is achieved not only with the help of contrast, exaggeration, irony, but also by means of unexpected dénouement: the woman who smiled back to the main character appeared to be a thief in the end: "Here, two strangers greeted each other with a smile. That's all. That's enough. We may say that an ordinary human duty was done (...) Feeling certain awkwardness towards the woman who was so kind to hold his backpack, Ikrom, amid hot greetings and embraces with his colleagues without suppressing happiness and gratitude, turned round meanwhile. There was neither backpack... Nor woman...". Thus, the singular fact is widened to the socially meaningful phenomenon that allows us to talk about author's generalization.

The genre of short story is broadening its borders, absorbing in its field the features of essay also. The genetic relationship of essay and short story allows adopting each other's features creating syncretic forms of small prose to help the writers to react efficiently to quickly changing events of modern reality in a briefer form. Let's consider the short stories, where under general domination of story features, the features of essay are mostly actualized. Thus, in the story by Moshe Shanin "House number 3, or Black day"^{xxxiv} the features of portrait and moral description essay are combined. Here we can see the gallery of typical images of provincial inhabitants of "perestroika epoch" reflecting the problems of moral condition of the "environment" that, in its turn, is one of the features of essay genre.

Structurally the story is divided into four parts. Each part has its own title and the character. In the first chapter "Flat 1, Polushkin" a vivid personage named Polushkin is presented. This personality includes typical features of his social environment but at the same time represents a very original image. The semantics of the surname is very interesting: it originates from the Russian word "polushka" that means a quarter-copeck piece. A very poor person was called in this manner. Polushkin is "an old bachelor", "experienced romantic", "with stone corns on four fingers", boozier and provincial philosopher.

As A. Tertichniy reasonably stated, "in a portrait essay the character of a personage, as a rule, is presented in an uncommon situation"^{xxxv}. The only non-typical feature, the liberty which he allows for himself, is socks laundering on every second Friday of a month. This very strangeness reflects the identity of the personage merged with his machine tools: "half-automatic movement of the body to the left to the right with an interval of three and a half seconds". The character's reasoning is of allegorical character, reflections lead to the estrangement and despondency. The disbalance of form and content of Polushkin's ideas leads to tragicomism, but the final (the scene near the bear stall) metaphorically represents the inner character of such people like Polushkin who are sure that "everything is not so bad, moreover, everything is pretty well, it's possible to live".

The second part "Flat 2, Soykin" tells about Kolya Soykin who managed to sell a bear glass of 1908. All his ideas and actions are directed towards this profitable venture. The dénouement is novelistic: the personage, having achieved the desired, unexpectedly for him cooks a big basin of porridge and feeds the homeless every Saturday. This "strangeness" of the character surprises him, but at the same time, it reveals the characteristics of Russian soul.

The third part "Flat 3, Voytek" is about a blissful boy who wasn't cured up to the end. His "story" is the shortest, but exactly here we can follow the features of problematic essay which help "to take the temperature of society and governmental system"^{xxxvi}. The author marks out the indications of the epoch of the 1990s with stern and laconic traits: "cured perfectly: he is again calm, sluggish, and inert". However, the strongest detail in this part is the present from a charitable trust: a dictaphone. Needless and useless of such "gift" is screaming about indifference of the government. All three parts of the story are united with not only a communal bunk house and life conditions, but also common secret disclosed in the last part "En masse". In fifteen years the neighbours dug out a bronze monument of Kirov put by for a rainy day, without noticing that the most difficult time, the 1990s, has already endured. Secluded loneliness forms mental degeneration, but the author extracts some inner potential out of these people with just several traits and it makes the story more optimistic. Behind the grotesque and hyperbolization it can be noticed the author's intention to represent metaphorically the problems of existence of a provincial person: the problem of ethics, the problem of correlation of consciousness of subconsciousness, culture and vulgarity.

On the whole, the story is differed not only by subtle wit, author's observation, laconism and language neatness, but also the adoption of essay features, description of reality^{xxxvii}, free grouping of material based on complicated associative links and figurative generalizations, absence of an integrated plot (separate episodes, there is neither exposition, nor dénouement, but only their dependence is outlined generally); it is either describing an uncommon situation or a feature revealing the essence of a small provincial person and generally depicting the moral situation of modern provincials, which is brought to apogee. Thus, a modern short story in Russian and Uzbek literature undergoes qualitative changes on a genre level. Genre changes occur at the expense of synthesis on both intrageneric and intergeneric features of epos. Short story transformation is directed in two ways: hybridization and minimization which allow combining the features of epic-documentary, folklore, lyrical, dramatic, and publicistic discourses. The special role in the process of short-story transformation is played by the category of the author with a special world-view conditioned by the situation of permanent uncertainty and pluralism, crisis of hierarchies, "risk society."

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- ^{xxxvii} The author claims that all the characters of the story are his real neighbours. Official web-site of the author is <http://www.mosheshan.in/>