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**THE RENAISSANCE TRANSITION FROM
ROMANCE TO NOVEL: THE
THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL
PROBLEMS OF THE HISTORICAL-
LITERARY RETROSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

The article reveals the actual scope of comprehension of the patterns of narrative identification demarcating the epoch of romance and the era of novel; the study analyzes the epistemological premises of elaborating the valid model of the historical-genetic reconstruction of the Renaissance renewal of the genre-forming principle of traditionalism; the author substantiates the methodological approach providing the retrospective of the transition from the traditionalist to the modern form of expressing the novelness on the base of revealing the ethic-aesthetic preconditions and poetological transformations ensuring this change of the matrix of the genre identity.

Keywords: narrative identity, transitivity, genre transformation, mimesis, imitation, demiurgia, genesis, communication.

At the background of the shift of the epicenter of problematizing the personal identity into the sphere of establishing the narrative forms of the self-manifestation of the subjectivity which has occurred in the late twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries denoting the departure of the post-traditionalist mind from the critical revision of the cultural “meta-narrations” (J. - F. Lyotard) the urgent issue of the disciplinary history and the theory of literature raised by stating the break between the epoch of romance and the era of novel develops into the topical problem of all the humanities consolidating the efforts to reveal the dialog framework of the narration ensuring the holisticity of perceiving the personhood.

Such renewal of the intentionality of the humanitarian studies was predetermined by the turn of the post-non-classical thought from the deconstruction to the communication inspired by grasping the ultimate communicative experience as the only way of the person's self-realization, factually excluded from the classical definitions of the subjective arch-form objectivizing it as the impersonal cognitive core. Resulting in the establishment of the focus of the after-postmodernist philosophical reflection re-discovering non-classical vision of the interpersonal relationship on the holistic patterns of human self-knowledge revealing the irreducibility of the personhood throughout the history of humanity, the denoted change of the contemporary epistemological disposition was predicted by the configuration of the post-modernist review of the impersonal modes of thinking stated by the classical rationalism. Initiated in the heterogeneous and multicultural post-modern reality by post-structuralist and post-phenomenologic practices of deconstructing the ratiocentric foundations of the personal-subjective self-definition laid by metaphysics and phenomenology, the search for the recourse from the deadlock of the objectivized matrix of the subjectivity was reduced in the interdiscursive space of postmodernism to substantiating the anti-form of the ontological argument for God's existence intended to prove the absence of the Absolutely Personal Source of being in an individual's life either by defining the depersonalized Transcendent Absolute as the absent "transcendental signified" (J. Derrida) or by affirming non-verbalization of Creator's Absolute Personhood (E. Levinas) [1; 2]. Eliminating the absolute criterion of verity from the field of the person's self-reflection, these initiatives of revising the rationalist indicator of the subjective authenticity have not overcome the inertia of rationalizing the "constitutive transcendence" [3] of the human personality. But actualizing the negative proofs of the transcendently experienced communion of both the Self and the Other with God, such intentions of the post-modernist critics of ratiocentrism have broken the soil for transcending the "immanent frame" [4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10] of the secular worldview in the course of realizing the sense-generating resource of communication not exhausted by the rational cognition. Marking the rise of the post-secular thought, the appeal to reunite rationality and spirituality dissociated by the secularized mind has given the main impulse for developing the communicative-dialogic interaction of theological, philosophical and humanitarian discourses aimed at expounding the holisticity of perceiving the personal principle of being as the only mode of becoming the self-identical person. Opposed to the trajectory of avoiding the ratiocentric cognitive aporia, indicated by the self-definition of post-metaphysics as "an agnostic position"[11], such a way out of the emerging crisis of the self-identification caused by denying its rationalist landmarks in the space of the postmodern culture presupposes the realization of the sense-producing potential of the narration sprung from the holistic perception of the

interpersonal relations and withstanding the separation of the mind from its spiritual origins occurred in the cultural meta-narratives.

This perspective of reuniting horizontal and vertical of communication in the interdiscursive cultural area of post-traditionalism presupposes the rethinking of the priorities in all the humanitarian spheres predicting the initial accent on the resource of forming the narrative identity revealed by the aesthetic-poetological transformations of dialog structure performed in the course of the Renaissance transition from romance to novel and using the arsenal of the genre dialogicity to express and transcend the limitations of the personal self-identification established at the turn of the reflective consciousness from theocentrism to anthropocentrism.

Depending upon the theoretically generalized vision of the historical logic of changing the forms of narration, the actual scope of comprehension of the patterns of narrative identification demarcating “two epochs” ((P. A. Grintser) of the trans-historically dialogic genre reveals the methodological controversy of reconstructing the process of its genesis. Therefore to denote both the ethic-aesthetic preconditions of the Renaissance transition from romance to novel and the potential of the poetological variety, providing this change of the matrix of “the genre identity” (Zh.-M. Sheffer), the historical-literary retrospective of the most discursive transitive period of the romance/novel history should be predicted by the analytical review of the theoretical-methodological problems of reconstructing this manifestation of the genre transitivity intended to find the ways of solving the indicated questions. Predetermining **the aim** of the investigation in this article, such indication of the introductory stage of defining the modes of the late-traditionalist transformation of the genre epistemologically directs the elaboration of the appropriate **model of the historical-genetic reconstruction** towards the dialogic frame of the personal-subjective self-manifestation grasping both vertical and horizontal orientations of communicative-dialogic interaction.

At the background of the divergence of the historical-theoretical definitions of both the genre space and the starting-point of its genesis the literary historians' views on the late-traditionalist stage of this process coincide in reducing the multitude of the vectors of founding the novel aesthetics to the mainstream of denying the romance poetics.

In general this idea was implied by M. M. Bakhtin in the differentiation of two stylistic lines of the genre performed in the context of grounding his conception of “the word in the novel”. Denoting the kernel characteristics of the genre-forming utterance as the dialogicity the great thinker of the twentieth century in the course of revealing its rhetorical arch-textual foundations established the divergent horizons of perceiving the communicative-dialogic intentionality of the rhetoric and the source of the novel dialogism aroused by it. The indicated delimitation is considered to be the

result of the reduction of the discursive-rhetorical arsenal of dialogizing of both speech and mentality predetermined by the rhetorical modal dominant and accepted by the novel to the expression of the “private” genre meaning in the “public” form radically strange for it and reflectively restricted to the correlation of the traditional rhetorical topoi monologized in the rhetorical-poetological synthesis of traditionalism. On this base M. M. Bakhtin distinguished the monological mode of novelness, passing away at the threshold of modernity, and its proper dialogical mode developing through out the history of romance/novel [12].

Such meta-logic of the genre rise was specified by E. M. Meletinsky restricting the genealogy of the novel to the *nouvella* [13] and by M. L. Andreev representing the Renaissance self-renewal of the chivalry romance as its self-denial resulting in the establishment of the *picaresca* [14].

The meta-narrative scheme of destroying the genre tradition was supported by A. V. Mikhailov emphasizing the rhetoric word dialogically involved in the late-traditionalist rethinking of the genre-forming models of traditionalism as the main means of expressing monologism constructive for the romance and deconstructed by the novel [15]. “Such perception of the rhetoric led the foundations for defining the novel dialogicity as anti-rhetorical orientation deepening the meta-textually established gap between traditional and post-traditional versions of the genre” [16]. The vision of the rhetoricity as the anti-dialogicity was substantiated by by A. V. Mikhailov in the course of the reconstruction of the rhetorical basis of the novel dialogicity inspired by Bakhtin's aesthetics of the literary creativity. Mikhailov's approach is marked by the obvious contradiction of the reconstructive logic denoting the inner indicator of problematizing the restrictive definition of the rhetoric as the monologic initiating the rise of the novel and transforming in it into the dialogic defining the genre structure. The revision of the reconstructed way of the self-refutation of the rhetorical-discursive order proves that the substantiation of such a form of the self-deconstruction of the rhetoric presupposes the disclosure of the transformation of the rhetorical modality in the course of the novel genesis which does not manifests itself in this context of revealing the roots of the genre dialogism being concealed by the taxonomy *rhetorical/anti-rhetorical* reduced to the traditional rhetorical topics affirmed as monologic by the traditionalist correlation of the categories of reflecting poetic and prose spheres of the literary creative activity.

The limitation of all these retrospectives of the late-traditionalist period of the genre genesis reveals the inertia of contemplating the transitivity of the Renaissance expressions of novelness through the prism of the trans-historically established ways of its self-manifestation not involved into the creative experiments of the European novelists of the late fifteenth – the sixteenth centuries and consequently not realized in their genre-forming innovations.

Thus, the definition of the modes of transition from romance to novel presumes the substantiation of the methodological approach providing the reconstruction of the transitive forms of manifesting the narrative identity not fixed in the genre modifications of the durable epochs, but predicting both direction and dynamics of the historical transformation of the dialog structures intended to restore the holistic character of the personal self-reflection performed by means of narration against the background of the historically changing correlation of rationality and spirituality problematized by the discursive thinking.

To explicate the disposition of the Renaissance renewal of the genre-forming principles of traditionalist literature, the method of reconstructing the ways of the late-traditionalist reception of its arch-text should be verified by the dilemma of novelness denoted in the area of the meta-narrative manifestations of the genre universality (F. Chr. Fr. von Blankenburg, F. Schlegel, G. W. Fr. Hegel, M. M. Bakhtin, A.V. Mikhailov) as the polarization of the interdiscursive area of the narrative self-identification predetermined by affirming the negation of the final character of the aesthetic expressions of the interpersonal relationship as the premise of finalizing the person's poetical fulfillment. Arguing for the impossibility of expounding the trans-historical foundations of the genre aesthetic by defining any historical variant of its poetics as the exhaustive for manifestation the genre resource of varying, such explication of the intentional core of the romance/novel formation presumes the distinction of its pre-constructive and constructive aspects on the base of correlating the concept of "the aesthetic object" defined by M. M. Bakhtin [12] with the historical typology of the artistic consciousness elaborated by S. S. Averintsev, M. L. Andreev, M. L. Gasparov, P. A. Grintser and A. V. Mikhailov [17], the definition of the structure of the literary genre proposed by N. D. Tamarchenko [18] and the theory of arch-text substantiated by G. Genette [19].

Perceived through the prism of coordinating the characteristics of the narrative identity introduced in these spheres of reflecting the literature for the Self and the Other, the genesis of the romance/novel is realized as the two-dimensional – "dialogic" - process that combines the substantiation of the genre generative models correlated with revealing the intentions of the literary creativity and the establishment of its structural matrix aimed at organizing the fictional reality. Diverging in the space of becoming the subjective defined by the author as the internal and the external relations of the Self and the Other, the indicated aspects of the genre formation are reunited in the objectivized areas of the literary-historical process by equalizing modal and topic genre-constructive parameters in the "open" form of narration ensuring both the author's self-manifestation presupposing the finalization of the local-historical genre-forming principles and the trans-historical development of the

intersubjective dialog permanently transforming the structure of romance/novel and implying the idea of the genre “infinity”.

The dimensions of the romance genesis predicting the ways of its genesis were established in the course of the communicative-dialogic interaction of traditionalist poetics and rhetoric. Therefore to reveal the lines of the genre transformation inspiring the rise of the novel the study should reconstruct the ways of reflective and creative coordination of modality and topics predetermining the transitivity of the Renaissance romance/novel modifications at the background of retrospectively both the late-traditionalist configuration of establishing the literature of traditionalism as “the realized poetic-rhetorical unity” (S. S. Averintsev) and the forms of expressing the novelty determining by perceiving the rhetorical arch-text characterized by the dominance of the modal parameters of the genre construction over its thematic parameters.

Performed to clarify the transitive forms of the narration predicting the self-manifestation of heroes and author in the individualized genre versions created at the edge of traditionalism, the reflection of the Renaissance romance/novel acceptance of the dominating modality of rhetoric should define the potential of transforming it into the core of novelty accumulated by the rhetorical topology formed in the epoch of antiquity as a logic of the singular providing the coordinated relation of modal and thematic genre-constructive parameters characteristic of the trans-historically dialogic genre.

As a generalized marker of singularity the basic topos matrix (developing the literal meaning of this word - “place”) was actualized by the antique rhetoric. Aristotle in his rhetorical doctrine characterized topoi as arguments selected in advance and applicable to every situation of speaking as general models of singular phenomena connecting “places” of narrative with that of reality. According to the philosopher's thought the topos realizes rhetoric logic of thinking which confirms the priority of individual, particular, personal existence as opposed to universals of being prioritized by metaphysics [20].

The inner logic of the topos was revealed by the great philosopher of the twentieth century A. Ph. Losev, the initiator of substantiating “the eidetic dialectic of part and whole” [21, p.346]. The first sketch of the thinker's dialectical system was provided in the book “Philosophy of the Name” [21], written in 1923 and published in 1927. A. Ph. Losev formulates his intention in such a way: “I understand the dialectic as the logical elaboration (i.e., the elaboration in logos) of being considered in its eidos” [21, p. 147]. Thus, an eidetic dialectic of part and whole based on a contemplatively anagogical form of cognition was, in A. Ph. Losev's eyes, a force capable of challenging both negative reductionism and nihilism of the contemporary philosophy.

In “History of Ancient Aesthetics” [22] the philosopher develops his theory of topology revealing the topological character of Aristotle's conception

of poesy. This idea takes its origins in realizing the rhetorical topos as an universal form of indicating the singular fact aimed at the principle of verisimilitude and revealing the limits of rationalistic thinking.

Therefore “the topological aesthetics” (A. Ph. Losev) conceptualized in reflecting the logic of rhetoric argumentation should be taken into consideration in the course of reconstructing the trajectory of transition from romance to novel.

The Renaissance mainstream of transforming the genre models was determined by the shift of the poetological dominant of the artistic consciousness manifesting itself as the transition from the style canon to the genre law. Defining the frames of the dialogization of the creative matrix of traditionalism the samples of the late-traditionalist literary reflection intended to deconstruct the hierarchy of styles (Dante Alighieri, F. Petrarca, G. Boccaccio, M.-G. Vida, J. Fracastoro, J. du Bellay, A. Foclin, T. Wilson, G. Puttenham) and initiate the decanonization of genres (F. Robortello, G. Giraldi Cinzio, G. B. Pigna, L. Castelvetro, A. Minturno, Ph. Sidney, T. Tasso), aesthetically grounded the kernel poetological vector of equalizing the positions of the Self and the Other revealed as disengaging the modalities of literary creativity from the dictate of topoi monologized in the traditionalist rhetorical-poetological synthesis. This review of the correlation of the modal and topic genre parameters dominating in the era of traditionalism was initiated by the dialog of rhetoric with Horacio’s poetics marking the completion of the traditionalist rhetoric-poetological synthesis in the course of spreading the categories established by it into the domain of the literature written in new languages. The concept of coordinating modalities and topics as the components of the genre formation inspired the dialogization of Aristotle’s conception of poesy leading to the renewal of the initial dichotomy of poetics and rhetoric on the base of varying the mimetic model of the literary creativity. The Manneristic change of the object of imitation from *natura naturata* to *natura naturans* laid the foundations for the further revision of the traditionalist forms of the narrative self-identification confirming the Renaissance-humanistic idea of involving the created personality in the establishment of Universe performed by Creator on the base of transcending the Renaissance matrix of the author’s self-definition. Detaching the creative capacity accentuated by the *studia humanitatis* in the human similitude of God from the personal orientation to the world as the “fine example of creation” (G. Vasari) predetermined by the convergence of the semantic fields of the humanistic concepts of *varieta* and *varizione*, the late Renaissance substantiation of the priority of *manner* over *nature* resulted in the definition of the author as imitator-demiurg. By such extension of the dichotomy of *imitation/mimesis* formed in the Renaissance dialogical correlation of Horatio’s and Aristotle’s theories of poetic creativity Mannerism detached itself from the initiatives of the variable reproduction of the unity of

the world in its diversity which limited the artist's imagination by the natural logic. Inspired by Neo-Platonism the Manneristic opposition of the subjective author's image and the laws of nature testified awakening the demiurgic principle of the late-traditionalist literature [23].

The transition from romance to novel was predicted by the Renaissance-humanist reception of the antique rhetorical model of the text *genesis* inspiring the return to the correlation of modal and topical parameters initial for the arch-text of rhetoric in the course of the rethinking of the poetic *mimesis* performed by Mannerism. Marked with developing the rhetorical subordination of topics to modality into the coordination of these genre components decisive for the self-manifestation of the novelness such interaction of poetics and rhetoric resulted in the establishment of the dialogicity of the novel beyond the romance matrix of dialogism characterized by the external dominance of the genre-modifying topoi internally coordinated with the modal predetermination of revealing the narrative identity [24].

Presupposing the explication of both the resource of the arch-textual rhetorical priority of modality used in the course of the Renaissance renewal of the genre tradition and the potential of genre-transformations ensured by both the reinterpretation of the romance topics and the detachment from it the substantiated model of the historical-genetic reconstruction provides the definition of the late-traditional modes of transforming the traditional generative patterns and structural matrix of the genre as the ways of the transition from the traditionalist to the modern form of expressing the novelness.

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