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# Typology of realism and Kazakh literary studies

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## Abstract

The article examines the scientific concept of theoretical problems of realism in Kazakh literature. It carries out typological analysis of realism as a method in the theoretical works of Kazakh literature and the works of foreign scientists. The works of individual scholars were analyzed, the object of the research which has become the common understanding of realism as a method. Identifies new research problems philosophical outlook of nature of the Kazakh people. Set connection in the new methodical approaches of Kazakh and Russian literature.

**Keywords:** Kazakh literature, The theory of realism, Artistic method, Methodology of research, Literary directions.

# Tipología del realismo y estudios literarios kazajos

## Resumen

El artículo examina el concepto científico de los problemas teóricos del realismo en la literatura kazaja. Lleva a cabo análisis tipológicos del realismo como método en los trabajos teóricos de la literatura kazaja y los trabajos de científicos extranjeros. Se analizaron los trabajos de académicos individuales; el objeto de la investigación que se ha convertido en la comprensión común del realismo como método. Identifica nuevos problemas de investigación con perspectiva filosófica de la naturaleza del pueblo kazajo. Establecer conexión en los nuevos enfoques metódicos de la literatura kazaja y rusa.

**Palabras clave:** Literatura kazaja, Teoría del realismo, Método artístico, Metodología de la investigación, Direcciones literarias.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding of development of the literary process reveals a special role of impact of aesthetics of romanticism on formation of a literary method of realism. Referring to models of any national literature it can be noted that romanticism school had ever-increasing influence on the birth of classical realism fictions. On the contemporary stage there are literary fictions combining both principals of aesthetics of romanticism and canonical demands of realism. From the perspective of historical development, romanticism anticipated the birth of realism, delving deeply into genuineness and truthfulness of reflecting surrounding reality. The most crucial moment is that romanticism is capable of delving into the inner world of a hero, realizing value of a human individuality which proceeded in realism.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

In the world literature, romanticism and classicism are understood a priori as completely opposite approaches, as far as realism is concerned, there is no such an absolute controversy. Realism manifested more intensely a defining attribute of romanticism - artistic and aesthetic perception of the concept of a human individuality and surrounding reality.

Main principals reflecting peculiar traits of romanticism and realism can be distinguished. Firstly, romanticists did not intend to study truth of life from historical perspective. However, realism represented analytical investigation of the epoch in a historical, philosophical and tendentious context.

Secondly, a romantic hero - a hero individualist, rebellious and absorbed in his spiritual inner world; a hero of a realistic fiction – a public figure, an actively working individual, whose intentions completely comply with the demands of society (social medium). Thirdly, birth of romantic art and romanticism led to refutation and rejection of reality. Endeavour to philosophically comprehend phenomena of reality enabled a transition to realistic determinism – to human analysis in a social context.

Fourthly, aesthetics of romanticism put in the forefront a subjective factor. According to romanticists, the purpose of literature is

not imitating surrounding reality but development of a subjective icon as opposed to existing reality. Subjectivism, in highlighting the truth of life, was the main principle of a romantic way of thinking. Such subjectivism manifested itself in creating images, in using expressive details, in language peculiarities which shaped stylistic unity of romantic fictions. Realism paid more attention to objective laws of development of the society, considering an individual as a tool of influencing on social relationships. Subjectivism of romanticists, particularly, considering surrounding reality from a subjective icon's perspective, during formation and maturity of realism was expressed in defining an author's point of view.

Fifthly, specific peculiarities of understanding reality by writers enable discovering factors and principles of that literary method to which they are inclined.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Literary concept of romanticism is based on the idea of primacy of spirit. Philosophy of subjective idealism of Fichte, objective idealism of Schelling and Hegel accelerate birth of utopian tendencies about instant transformations and a resolution of controversies of the social structure, about a role of one human in history. While reconsidering and gaining of the new, an idealistic point of view loses its priority, which gave a place to materialistic knowledge triggering

development of a realistic attitude to the world. Nevertheless, on the modern stage, existence of tendencies of idealistic perception in realistic fictions cannot be entirely (absolutely) denied.

All of the above mentioned, reflect, first of all, main borders of differences between two methods. Not only did romanticism prepare development of realism, but also was an antecessor of a number of literary and artistic tendencies and trends. Romantic fundamentals in neo-romanticism, expressionism, symbolism and surrealism can be named. In this context a well-known scholar, academician R. Nurgali notes that

On the modern stage it is not unexpected that emergence of controversial discussions on the issue of defining an artistic method of realism and its fundamental principles. However, in order to understand the essence of the issue it is necessary to activate the process of historical and theoretical analysis of preceding literary methods of classicism, sentimentalism and romanticism (NURGALI, 2005).

Realism was believed to be the highest level of maturity of literature until recent times, and it was thought that romanticism could not describe the truth of life of reality truthfully and objectively enough. Actually, realism as an artistic method enabled a human analysis in his social context. Meanwhile, it is inadequate to consider one of the methods superior than another one, since each of them enables to comprehend a sophisticated and controversial surrounding world of existing reality. This idea is approved by the statement of a

well-known theorist N.A. Gulyaev: “Nevertheless, there are particular areas of life where romantic art achieves more artistic effect than realistic one” (GULIAEV, 1977).

Realism and romanticism were developing in organic synthesis and adhesion. It is undeniable that a special role of realism as a method, which aimed at artistic-aesthetic acquisition of a human and surrounding reality, gained importance due to the fracture of the problem through wholesome impact of aesthetics of romanticism.

Realism principles reinforced their positions in the world process. Even just comprehension of this term “realism” caused plenty of controversial discussions. Currently we have to state undiminishing disputes around eligibility of this term and debates around defining its main characteristics. Some scholars believe that this term is Soviet-era holdover, while others accept this notion. For instance, an American scholar D. Fanger argues against defining realism as an artistic method and suggests the concept “romantic realism” (Fanger). However, debates around this notion do not diminish the priority of realism in the epoch, when new forms of development of literature keep being searched.

A depicted range of questions does not settle the defined problem, in this context, it is appropriate to identify typological peculiarities of realism as a literary school and method. Confirming realism as a separate school is based on thematic, stylistic, ideological

and program principles. Truthful depiction of reality from the historical perspective and social analysis in describing public events in the oeuvre of such outstanding West-European writers at the first term of XIX century as Balzac, Stendhal, Merimee, Flaubert and Dickens indicate about beginning of formation of realism schools. Some scholars refer the stage of formation of realism schools to the ancient world. This statement is absolutely incorrect because rudiments of appearance of realism elements do not depict the whole picture of realistic aesthetic norms.

It is important to highlight, that literary researches of Kazakh literature, revealing creative pursuit of individual writers, the peculiarity of the literary epoch, do not provide a scientific and theoretic rational of the method issue.

One of the first scholars, who conducted pioneer methodological research, was a well-known public figure A. Baitursynov, anticipating in his work “Theory of philology” an attempt of theoretic comprehension of realism method in Kazakh literature. His classification of written literature into two periods is widely known: “the epoch of canonical art” and “the epoch of aphoristic nature”. The researcher claims that the initial cause of the origin of literature in these periods is not triviality of development of folk literature, but it is connected with fruitful outer literary impact.

For example, literature of “the epoch of cannons” had Arabian and Persian artistic traditions. Literature of “the epoch of aphoristic nature” was born under the influence of Russian literature (BAITURSYNOV, 1965). Further, the scholar depicts the period of “cannons” and defines leading genre types. The scholar completes with the description of the period of “criticism”.

The grounds, for differentiating the periods in Kazakh literature and identifying its main patterns of development, is the criteria of identifying various genres. On the genre level, common literary laws and rules for creating a particular fiction combine and interact; correspondingly, a genre research becomes an intermediating element from a single fiction to more general conclusions about laws of literary development. It is noted that, for example, in “the epoch of cannons” the following genres existed: kissa, tales, praise-oration to God, eulogy (accolade), apology-words, aitys, tolgau, terme (BAITURSYNOV, 1965).

The scholars describe characteristics of systems of the mentioned genres and reveal national peculiarity of each. Division of the literary process into the periods, suggested by Akhmet Baitursynov, originated from artistic searches of genre types related to the type of thinking and principles of life reflexion by writers. Particularly, he pays a great attention to the problems of interrelation between a literary school and an artistic method. (TAJVIDI & ARJANI, 2017).

In the European and Russian literary studies, division of stages (periods) in the world literary process, was based on defining a method of a literary school and trends (for example, periods of classicism, sentimentalism, romanticism, realism). We assume that the period of “criticism literature” (rendering by A.B.) should not include only literature of critical realism. The researcher draws theoretical conclusions about fundamental principles of classical realism regardless the level of development of any form.

According to him, the notion “criticism” (“censoriousness”) does not imply a relation to the features of any epoch and social medium, but shows an author’s ability, as a master of a word, to achieve an objective description of reality with the help of “critical words”, because a word, being the primary element of art, can carry any function: moral, aesthetic, evaluative.

Study of realism as a historical-literary method, initiated from A.BAITURSYNOV’S “Theory of philology” was continued by K.ZHUMALIYEV’S “Theory of literature” (1938), E.ISMAILOV’S “Issues of literature theory” (1940), Z.KABDOLOV’S “Bases of literature theory” (1970), whose works reveal typological peculiarities of the method. M.KARATAIEV in his monograph “Formation of socialistic realism in Kazakh prose” (1965) defines socialistic realism as the highest stage of evolutionary development of realism. A retrospective attitude to the theory of Kazakh literary studies proves that there was a process of accumulating new and gaining what

becomes a long-lasting base. Recent achievements in Kazakh literary studies significantly advanced development of a scientific idea. The issue of realism typology was constantly a subject of study not only of works on literature theory but also of works on historiographic, historical-literary and historical-genetic character.

Scientific research of realism problems can be emphasized on Abay's oeuvre. In this relation, M.Auezov's study about tendencies of critical realism and typological features of realism in Abay's heritage cause interest. One must point out his article "Traditions of Russian realism and Kazakh literature", where emphasis is made on the ability of Kazakh literature to efficiently develop realistic tendencies by generating experience of European and Russian realism (AUEZOV, 1959). Necessity of defining interinfluence and synthesis of national and world literary traditions was the crucial moment from methodological perspective. Taking into consideration the above mentioned, let us consider some works of such character.

In generalized-classified form, theoretical concepts on the theory of formation and development of realism in Kazakh literature are given in scientific works "Ways of formation of realism in Kazakh literature" (1985), "About some issues of realism in Kazakh literature (beginning of XX c.)" (1985), "Realism cradles in the early period of Kazakh literature" (1986), "Typology and forms of realism" (1987) and PhD thesis work "Problems of a literary method in the process of development of Kazakh literature" (1995) by M.KARAYEV.

The theorist and literary scholar notes in his monograph that cradles of realistic description occur also in epic genres of oral literature, however, they can be referred to the elements of primitive realism. The period XV-XVIII, when akyns and zhyraus' oeuvre made an attempt to form mythological and fairy-tale images in describing the concept of an individual, is the beginning of philosophical perception of human individuality in relation to surrounding medium, objective reflexion of conformity of public life, reinforcement of an author's role, according to the scholar, can be defined as the beginning of formation of pre-realistic tendencies. In his work, it has been affirmed, that:

Preliminary rudiments of realism elements, accumulated by oral folk and historical poetry from ancient times, in the XIX century found synthetic implementation in realistic oeuvre of Ibrai Altynsarin and Abai. Therefore, in the history of Kazakh literature critical enlightening realism of XX c. originates from the oeuvre of writers-democrats as Ibrai Altynsarin's and Abai's poetry (KARAIEV, 1995).

Since the work refers to the first monograph researches on the issue of formation of realism in Kazakh literature and is reflexion of ideological demands of that time, there were some neglected points too. Prohibition for studying purged writers' oeuvre, estrangement of authors from literary process – could not help influencing on structural incompleteness of history of development of Kazakh literature, when united heritage subsequence was wrecked in evolutionary movement and development of realism. The researcher made an attempt to

compensate for these neglected points in his doctorate thesis, dedicated to the problem of method typology in gradual historical development of Kazakh literature. One of the advantages of the research is endeavor to reveal chronological borders between romanticism and realism.

M.Karaiev considers organic interrelation between folklore and written literature, dialogue between folklore systems and literature from a method defining perspective in dynamic movement from primitive realism to critical realism. He identified the main periods in evolutionary movement of artistic methods in Kazakh literature: 1) realistic tendencies in oral literature; 2) synthesis period of romantic and realistic elements; 3) pre-romanticism and pre-realism; 4) romanticism and enlightening realism; 5) enlightening, critical realism and “rebellious romanticism” (KARAIEV, 1986; VOLKOV, 1995).

As far as aesthetic principles of realism are concerned, the scholar identifies fundamental principles of this method: ideological content of artistic fiction, national spirit, historicism and objectiveness in depicting public life, psychologism in reflecting the individual’s inner world. It is necessary to note predominance of vicious comprehension of realism as the only method confirming objectiveness of life truth in literature in Kazakh literary studies of XX c. The consequence of such preference was a subjective evaluation of other progressive tendencies from the perspective of realism.

Such ineligibility of evaluation was first noticed by the scholar, and according to him, enabled emergence of three negative concepts in theoretic perception of realism in Kazakh literature: 1) considering the process of realism formation as a method since the epoch of oral folk arts; 2) connection of the history of method formation with akyns' and jyraus' artistic heritage; 3) an attempt to link history of realism development with Abai's poetry, in this relation to consider critical realism (KARAIEV, 1986).

As far as development of literature as a dynamic structure is concerned, it is impossible to deny the epoch of cultural and literary interrelation of nations. National literatures never appear in isolation. Each of them are subject to objective laws of a common-literary level, has national traditions and is able to perceive experience of other literatures and share own experience, i.e. is under the influence of and influences on.

However, as the author notes, tendency to eurocentrism in traditional literary studies and approval of the idea that realism in Kazakh literature is only interinfluence of the West, does not take into account the depth of combination and integration of national traditions with accepted new literary impulses. The thorough analysis defined invalidity of European scheme of literary chronology to Kazakh literature.

In the world literary process there are such literary schools as classicism, romanticism, realistic tendencies of the Renaissance epoch. Having understood the problems of evolutionary development of schools, the following typological features of realism can be revealed. Ending up on literary researches on this matter, the scholar notes that their authors prefer, as the main principle of realism, to define a human's image as an actively operating, socially-dependant individual.

Moreover, "rebellious romanticism" and "critical realism" are defined as the highest cycles of realism development by them (KARAIEV, 1986). Such statements demonstrate one-dimensional perception of typological peculiarities of realism. M.Karaiev, confirming his thought, notes an on-going process of evolutionary dynamic search of new stylistic patterns, artistic searches in the modern literature, therefore, inability to identify realism borders.

In addition, it is necessary to name lack of argumentative definitional clarification of the terms "pre-realism" and "pre-romanticism". As it has been noted, the scholar finds rudiments of these methods in oral poetry and poetry of XV-XVIII c.

During the first term of XX c. none of the artistic methods can be clearly highlighted as a dominant in the development of Kazakh literature, but integration of elements from different methods prevails, there is stylistic polyphony. Artistic experience of Kazakh literature, its ability to master versatile material of reality enables a conclusion

that this distinctive feature of national literature was a creative factor of progressive advance in literary process.

B. Mamyraiev in his monograph “Main tendencies of development of Kazakh literature in the first term of XX c.” considers realism rudiments in Kazakh literature from the perspective of historical changes and the ups and downs of life of Kazakh nation.

When speaking about social-economic modification, related to penetration of capitalistic relationships into the life of Kazakh nation, which became a subject of artistic image, the scholar shows stages of realism formation, underlines pursuit of writers for revealing psychology of a human from historical, social and critically tendentious aspects.

All in all, realistic literature of the beginning of the century was an artistic memorial of social-political upheavals, destruction of public consciousness and psychology, individual’s drama. Besides, it depicted spiritual demands of society, raised to a higher power common national problems of human individuality, a problem of humanism (MAMRAIEV, 1998).

Emerging realistic principles are realized in integration of various figurative-expressive forms and means.

Utmost proximity of historical and artistic truth (for example, poetry about national-emancipatory movement of 1916), wide application of metaphoric art of a word (fictions created in the genre *tolgau*), use of allegorical forms of influencing on readers

(tales of Baitursynov, Donentaiev), dominant idea of symbolism and searches of new methods of self-expression (m. Zhumabaiev, B. Kuleiev) (MAMRAIEV, 1998).

Realism gains national “face”, its expressiveness as truthful reflexion of nation life, nation in ethnographic, generalized-philosophical artistic interpretation. Realistic literature character – output of its epoch, its period, incoherence of public medium is reflected in depicting spiritual controversies of his individuality. Therefore, the main factor of national traditions in realism is reflection of close bond of character’s destiny with social-political upheaval, influence of social controversies on public consciousness, revealing of individual’s drama.

Comprehension of typological peculiarities of realism in the world literature builds on principles of confirmation of individual value of human individual, revealing of inner spiritual wealth and pursuits. In this relation, I.Ph.Volkov defined two directions of realism:

One of them focuses on consequences of historical development and understands their social moral negatively, critically, and sarcastically. In another direction, emphasis is put on personal human evaluation, artistic revealing of inner spiritual wealth of a human, his pursuits, own opportunities (in this case romantic, dramatic and tragic types of artistic content prevail) (VOLKOV, 1995; TAJVIDI & ARJANI, 2017).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Finally, while revealing principles of realistic method, it is necessary to pay a lot of attention to the peculiarities and methods of creating an image. As it has been mentioned, realism does not represent an imitation of reality as it is. Realistic fictions contain elements of fantastic depiction, mythological-symbolic and grotesque elements. A subject of realistic depiction is not only a human with his behavioural dependence, but social reasons of formation of human character have top priority.

A distinctive principle of realism is depiction of evolution of unparalleled spiritual-moral world of a character in historical and social inseparability. Literary styles of realism direct their energy towards thorough expression of life edges, inner world of a human.

Considering typological peculiarities of realism, B. Mamraiev draws a conclusion:

Discussions about such realism is an eternal process. In addition, one who defines realism and its peculiarities is accompanied by conventionality of any ideas. Certainly, a dominant principle while defining realism is a criteria of realistic depiction of reality. However, every person feels this reality in his own way. It is built on empiric experience of a human. In addition, knowledge of human psychology cannot be neglected, which is also reality but not always visible and expressed. Therefore, literary texts are read differently, i.e. a

reader-researcher sees what he is able to see and what he wants (MAMRAIEV, 1998).

Referring to the scholar's statements, it can be particularly noted, that continuous efficient updates and active enrichment of forms of realistic literature are being made currently, and it has influence on variety of theoretical concepts, defining realism typology.

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