

THE PROBLEM OF GENRE: TRANSFORMATION OF GENRES IN
CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

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Abstract: The article examines the problem of literary genre and its transformation in contemporary literature. It argues that traditional generic boundaries have become increasingly fluid under the influence of postmodernism, digital technologies, and globalization. Through the analysis of hybrid forms such as autofiction, graphic novels, fanfiction, and digital literature, the study demonstrates how the concept of genre is being redefined in the 21st century. The paper concludes that the genre remains a relevant but dynamic category that reflects cultural, social, and technological changes in the literary field.

Keywords: literary genre; genre transformation; contemporary literary processes; postmodernism; digital technologies; globalization; hybrid forms; autofiction; graphic novel; fanfiction; digital literature; rethinking of genre; 21st century; cultural, social and technological changes.

Аннотация: В статье рассматривается проблема литературного жанра и его трансформация в современной литературе. Утверждается, что традиционные жанровые границы становятся всё более размытыми под влиянием постмодернизма, цифровых технологий и глобализации. Анализируя гибридные формы, такие как автофикшн, графические романы, фанфикшн и цифровая литература, исследование демонстрирует, как понятие жанра переосмысливается в XXI веке. В статье делается вывод о том, что жанр остаётся актуальной и динамичной категорией, отражающей культурные, социальные и технологические изменения в литературном поле.

Ключевые слова: литературный жанр; трансформация жанра; современные литературные процессы; постмодернизм; цифровые технологии; глобализация; гибридные формы; автофикшн; графический роман; фанфикшн; цифровая литература; переосмысление жанра; XXI век; культурные, социальные и технологические изменения.

Annotatsiya: Maqolada adabiy janr muammosi va uning zamonaviy adabiyotdagi o'zgarishi ko'rib chiqiladi. Unda ta'kidlanishicha, an'anaviy umumiy chegaralar postmodernizm, raqamli texnologiyalar va globallashuv ta'sirida tobora o'zgaruvchan bo'lib bormoqda. Avtofikr, grafik romanlar, fantastika va raqamli adabiyot kabi gibril shakllarni tahlil qilish orqali tadqiqot 21-asrda janr tushunchasi qanday qayta belgilanayotganini ko'rsatadi. Maqolaning xulosasiga ko'ra, janr adabiy sohadagi madaniy, ijtimoiy va texnologik o'zgarishlarni aks ettiruvchi dolzarb, ammo dinamik kategoriya bo'lib qolmoqda.

Kalit so'zlar: adabiy janr; janrni o'zgartirish; zamonaviy adabiy jarayonlar; postmodernizm; raqamli texnologiyalar; globallashuv; gibril shakllar; avtofikrlash; grafik roman; fantastika; raqamli adabiyot; janrni qayta ko'rib chiqish; 21-asr; madaniy, ijtimoiy va texnologik o'zgarishlar.

Introduction

The problem of literary genre has always been central to literary theory. From Aristotle's *Poetics* to the works of M. M. Bakhtin, genre has been regarded as both a structural and cultural category. For centuries, genres were understood as relatively stable frameworks that organized literary production. However, in contemporary literature, the traditional understanding of genre as a fixed form is increasingly challenged.

The emergence of hybrid literary practices, the influence of digital media, and the shift toward intertextuality and metafiction have resulted in a new stage of genre transformation. As scholars such as Gérard Genette (1992) and Tzvetan Todorov (1973) emphasized, genre is not only a classificatory tool but also a discourse shaped by history, ideology, and cultural interaction. In this regard, the study of contemporary genre transformations allows us to understand how literature adapts to global cultural and technological shifts.

This article aims to analyze the current transformations of genre in contemporary literature, with particular focus on the blending of forms, the rise of new narrative practices, and the impact of digital culture.

Theoretical Framework

Classical literary theory considered genre as a stable category that organizes texts according to formal and thematic principles. Aristotle distinguished between epic, lyric, and dramatic genres, while later critics expanded this classification to include the novel and its subgenres.

In the 20th century, structuralist and poststructuralist theories questioned the stability of genre. Gérard Genette, in *The Architext* (1992), proposed that genres function as interpretive frameworks, guiding both writers and readers. Tzvetan Todorov emphasized that genres emerge historically and evolve in response to cultural needs.

M. M. Bakhtin, meanwhile, stressed the dialogic and open nature of genre, especially the novel, which he regarded as uniquely capable of absorbing new discourses and reflecting the multiplicity of voices in society. His perspective provides a useful foundation for the analysis of contemporary transformations, since it highlights the dynamic and mutable character of genre.

Contemporary theorists such as Franco Moretti (*Graphs, Maps, Trees*, 2005) and David Damrosch (*What is World Literature?*, 2003) expand the discussion to a global dimension, stressing that genre also functions as a transnational and intercultural phenomenon. Thus, the study of genre in the 21st century requires a multidimensional approach that considers historical tradition, cultural interaction, and technological innovation.

Analysis: Transformation of Genres in Contemporary Literature

Hybridization of Genres

One of the defining features of contemporary literature is the merging of previously distinct genres. For instance, autofiction (as in the works of Karl Ove Knausgård and Rachel Cusk) blurs the boundary between autobiography and novel, creating a hybrid form that challenges traditional notions of fictional representation. Similarly, the graphic novel combines elements of literature and visual art, resulting in a multimodal narrative that transcends conventional literary categories.

The same phenomenon can be observed in post-Soviet and Asian literatures. Chingiz Aitmatov's prose combines folklore, myth, and modern narrative techniques,

while Haruki Murakami mixes magical realism, detective fiction, and psychological narrative, demonstrating how cultural hybridity contributes to new genre formations.

Postmodernism and the Deconstruction of Genre

Postmodernist literature questions the very stability of genre. Authors such as Margaret Atwood and Thomas Pynchon employ parody, pastiche, and intertextuality, often mixing science fiction, historical novel, and metafiction within a single work. This strategy demonstrates that genre is no longer a prescriptive framework but a flexible tool for experimentation.

Linda Hutcheon (1988) described postmodernism as a poetics of irony and parody, where the borders between high and popular culture are blurred. The novel becomes a site of playful experimentation, where genres are constantly deconstructed and recombined.

Digital Literature and New Media

The digital age has significantly expanded the boundaries of genre. Hypertext fiction, online storytelling, and interactive narratives (for example, Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl* or projects on platforms like Wattpad) demonstrate how literature interacts with technology. In these cases, the very definition of genre becomes problematic, as texts integrate multimedia, interactivity, and non-linear structures.

Moreover, fanfiction communities, blogs, and even TikTok-literature illustrate how literary creativity migrates to new platforms, where traditional genre distinctions are redefined by participatory culture. These practices show that genres are no longer exclusively defined by literary institutions but are co-created by readers, writers, and digital communities.

Conclusion

The transformation of genres in contemporary literature reflects broader cultural and technological changes. While genre has historically been viewed as a stable category, the postmodern and digital eras have revealed its fluidity and adaptability. Hybrid forms such as autofiction, graphic novels, and digital literature demonstrate that the boundaries of genre are continuously negotiated and reshaped.

In the 21st century, genre functions not only as a literary category but also as a cultural bridge that mediates between tradition and innovation, between national literatures and global cultural flows. Thus, the genre remains a vital concept in literary studies, not as a rigid classification, but as a dynamic process that both shapes and is shaped by cultural evolution.

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