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The Genre of Ukrainian Classical Novel as a Problem

Abstract

The article is devoted to the novel genre in Ukrainian literature. The authors offer an answer to the question of why the genre of the novel appeared so late in Ukrainian literature and what genre features the Ukrainian classic novel has. The article examines the historical background of the genre development in 19th-century Ukrainian literature, which developed in the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires. In these empires, there were different conditions for the development of Ukrainian literature: quite liberal in Austria-Hungary and very limited in Russia due to the ban on the Ukrainian language. The article examines and analyzes in more detail three reasons explaining the late emergence and establishment of the Ukrainian novel: 1) language, 2) subject matter, and 3) literary terminology. The novel as a “non-canonical genre” (Bakhtin) requires a direct dialogue with contemporariness, and such a dialogue was impossible in the case of the 19th-century Ukrainian novel because the language of Ukrainian intellectuals at that time was not Ukrainian. In the Russian Empire, it was French or Russian, and in Austria-Hungary, it was German or Polish. Similarly, the subject of both the new Ukrainian literature in general (Ivan Kotlyarevskyi) and the first Ukrainian novels was connected not with contemporariness, but with the heroic past, that is, with the Cossack era of the 17th century (Panteleimon Kulish, Vasyl Doroshenko). The issue of literary terminology is also problematic because Ukrainian authors defined their large prose works not novels, but “opowidannia” or “powiśt,” using in this case the meaning of these terms in the German tradition (Erzählung) or Polish (powieść), respectively.

The history of the Ukrainian novel has not yet been written, even more so, there is no complete study on the late appearance of the novel in Ukrainian literature. The various explanations one may encounter on the issues are mainly reduced to the historical situation of Ukraine's statelessness in the 19th century and the ban on the Ukrainian language in the Russian Empire in the second half of the 19th century (first of all, the Valuev Circular, the Ems Ukaz). But it is clear that the mentioned reasons do not explain the phenomena as a whole, while a detailed study of the development of 19th-century Ukrainian literature reveals other factors that influenced the formation of the system of genres in Ukrainian literature.

When talking about the 19th-century Ukrainian reality or Ukrainian society (community), several terminological problems immediately arise: what does 'Ukrainian reality' mean for that time? Is the life of Ukrainians in St. Petersburg (including Taras Shevchenko) a 'Ukrainian reality' that could be the subject of a Ukrainian novel of the time? Are the Russian-speaking officials of Poltava and Kyiv, Ukrainians by origin, part of the Ukrainian community? In such a perspective, literary research on the genesis of the Ukrainian novel inevitably runs into two problems that are not literary *per se*. It is a problem of the language and a problem of the territory that we are talking about when talking about the community. And then there is a literary problem: who should be considered a Ukrainian author? Examples of Mykola Gogol, Polish romantics who wrote partly in Ukrainian, or bilingual authors, like Yevgen Hrebinka, Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnovianenko, do as much as complicate the question but do not answer it. Such literary context is also connected with the problem of the novel as a genre in Ukrainian literature. It should also be added that if we consider the novel as a so-called state genre (that is, a literary genre that can be established only in such literature, the language of which is a state language), then the situation with the Ukrainian novel becomes even more complicated.

In connection with all of the above, it should be noted that even in 1947, in the middle of the 20th century, the well-known Ukrainian émigré literary critic Ivan Koshelivets (1907–1999) raised the question about the Ukrainian novel claiming that in Ukrainian literature it is necessary "not to talk about the novel, but why it did not exist" (Koshelivets 1947: 48). At the same time, Koshelivets in his text, dedicated to the Ukrainian novel,

asked the rhetorical question “Do we have a novel?” His answer was: “It is difficult to give a detailed answer to this question if you look at Ukrainian literature not only through textbooks on the history of literature but also apply to it the ideas and criteria developed in the great literatures of other nations”¹ (Koshelivets 1947: 45).

It was about a typological comparison of Ukrainian literature with “great literature of other nations” within the ideological and formal requirements that were applied to the novel’s genre (the author mainly meant French, English, Germans, and Spaniards, but also Russians). The most surprising, however, was the conclusion of the literary critic, who claimed that “the Ukrainian novel has still not passed the embryonic stage”² (Koshelivets 1947: 55). That is, from a certain point of view, which Koshelivets represented as a scholar, Ukrainian literature did not have the genre of the novel in its full scope even in 1947. Although, according to Koshelivets himself, “from Kvitka-Osnovianenko to Ulas Samchuk, you can count several dozen prose writers and several dozen works — novels and short stories” but these were, as he writes further, only “separate phenomena, which do not make a continuous process” and even the novels of Ukrainian modernists did not radically change the situation (Koshelivets 1947: 45).

At the end of the 20th century, the well-known literary critic Solomiya Pavlychko approached the problem of the origin of the Ukrainian novel somewhat differently. In her article with a symbolic title *The novel as an intellectual provocation* (the text was devoted to the novels of V. Domontovych — Viktor Petrov, 1894–1969) she wrote:

At the end of the 1920s, Ukrainian literature experienced a radical event, compared only with the appearance of *Kateryna* [a poem by Taras Shevchenko — L.M., R.M.]. In the 19th century, Ukrainian poetry was born, and in the 20th century in its third decade, after long sufferings, the Ukrainian novel was finally born.³ (Pavlychko 2002: 641)

Thus, unlike Koshelivets, Pavlychko believed that the genre of the novel in Ukrainian literature was created during the era of late Ukrainian modernism and the same era finally consolidated its existence: it was no longer an embryo, as Koshelivets wrote, but a fully-fledged phenomenon. In connection with the thoughts of Pavlychko, it is worth noting one more thing: in the context of the ideas of this researcher, the Ukrainian novel was born when the European theory of genres (including the theory of the novel) experienced the so-called anthropological turn, which researchers very often discuss today (*Handbuch* 2010: 174–177). Its essence was the adaptation by literature (or rather, extrapolation into literary works) of Wilhelm Dilthey’s ideas on the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*), which are the studies of all possible manifestations of the human spirit. In the concept of Wilhelm Dilthey, a special place was occupied by the category of worldview (*Weltanschauung*), which the

¹ All the quotations from Ukrainian are translated by Ludmiła Mnich, Roman Mnich, see also original: “Na ce pytannia wazko daty dokladnu widpowid’, jakszczo na ukrajins’ku literaturu hlanuty ne til’ky czerez pidrucznyky z istoriji literatury, ale j pryklady do neji ujawnienia i kryteriji, wyrobieni u welykych literaturach inszych narodiw” (Koshelivets 1947: 45).

² In original: “ukrajins’kyj roman taky j dosi ne wyszow z embrional’noji stadiji” (Koshelivets 1947: 55).

³ In original: “Naprykinci 20-ch rokiv ukrajins’ka literatura pereżyła radykal’nu podiju, porivniuwanu lyszze z pojawoju *Kateryny*. W XIX stolitti narodylasia ukrajins’ka poezija, w XX, w tretij joho dekadi, pisla dowhych muk narezsti narodywsia ukrajins’kyj roman” (Pavlychko 2002: 641).

philosopher Max Wundt (son of the famous psychologist and philosopher Wilhelm Wundt) in 1930 directly connected with the theory of genres in a special study *Literaturwissenschaft und Weltanschauung* (*Handbuch* 2010: 175). Such a new theory of genres was reflected in literary practice and, unlike the 19th-century classic novels, in the first decades of the 20th century in European novels the problem of the worldview (of an author or character) is represented in quite specific forms: from the stream of consciousness in Marcel Proust to mythologization in Thomas Mann. The ideological construction of such a novel becomes extremely complicated; this construction, as the researchers write, absorbs not only widely presented mythologization, but also idyllic or elegiac discourse, for example, in a chronicle novel (Pospíšil 2005: 157–163).

Returning to the problem of the Ukrainian novel, we note that Ivan Koshelivets and Solomiya Pavlychko represent different points of view and at the same time different answers to questions about when the genre of the novel appears in Ukrainian literature. It is important to emphasize, however, that in the context of the Ukrainian literary process as a whole, these two different views have one thing in common: both, Koshelivets and Pavlychko do not take into account the novels of Ukrainian authors of the 19th century at all. But such novels, of course, were, and they will be discussed below. We can agree with the thoughts of Koshelivets that these novels were only isolated examples that did not create the phenomenon itself, i.e., the genre of the novel in Ukrainian literature. But in any case, these isolated phenomena must be taken into account when we want to clarify the question of the genesis of the novel genre in Ukrainian literature.

Why did it happen that in the case of Ukrainian literature, the question of the existence of the novel was raised even after the appearance of several Ukrainian modernist novels? We will dwell on the various reasons for this situation, as well as various possible answers, below, but before that, we should note the following. Without going into broad discussions on the history of the novel in each of the great European literatures, as Koshelivets calls them, let us recall that precisely in 19th-century European literature the classical forms of the novel rose and became established. Unlike the chivalric or adventure novel (including utopias and robinsonades), the 19th-century novels presented a fundamentally different genre, primarily due to two important discoveries of the Romantic era. First, it is historicism, which was embodied in literary forms and based on the philosophical experience of Romantics. And secondly, this is the sphere of private life, which becomes practically the main theme in the 19th-century novel with all its aspects: family (Emma Bovary, Anna Karenina, characters in Balzac's novels), parents and children (often this problem is stated in the very title of the novels — *Dombey and Son*, *Parents and Children*, *Father Goriot*), lovers and mistresses (Emma Bovary or Anna Karenina), social career or ideology of the main character, which destroys his/her life (Julien Sorel or Rodion Raskolnikov), etc. Thus, on the one hand, the characters of the novels by Charles Dickens, Honoré Balzac, Stendhal, Gustav Flaubert, Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Victor Hugo represented a very specific period of “historical time” for Europe (Hegel's words) or a particular country, a specific social order, but, at the same time, the reader was exposed to the sphere of characters' private feelings and private life with all its vicissitudes. These two aspects (historicism and the private sphere) were the subject of discussion about the novel as a genre in German and Russian aesthetics in the first half of the 19th century and even later (Mann 1998: 313–329).

The second half of the 19th century was also the heyday of the Russian classical novel (Pospíšil 2005) when numerous translations of the novels by Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy, and Fyodor Dostoevsky into European languages appeared (first of all into French which was the language of the then European elite, but not only, German translations appeared quite quickly as well). The popularization of Russian literature by European intellectuals (such as Georg Brandes) led to a huge number of translations and a significant influence of the Russian novel on European literature. The Russian novel influenced the origin of the Ukrainian novel, because, without a doubt, Panteleimon Kulish, Ivan Nechuy-Levitsky, and Mykhaylo Starytsky read and knew the novels of Ivan Turgenev, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Leo Tolstoy.

But at the same time, it should be noted that the Russian classical novel had a much lesser influence on Ukrainian literature than on European literature since Ukrainian authors faced completely different tasks and the target reader of Ukrainian novels was also fundamentally different from the reader of the novels of Dostoevsky, Turgenev, or Tolstoy. If we are talking about the influence of other literature (besides Russian) on the birth of the Ukrainian novel, then Walter Scott should be mentioned among the first. The issue of the influence of Walter Scott's historical novel on the novels of Panteleimon Kulish has been studied in great detail, both by the researchers of the older generation (Boris Neiman, Viktor Petrov) and several contemporary scholars. However, literary critics usually note the popularity of the Scottish novelist in Russian literature of the 19th century and, through it, the influence on Ukrainian authors. As for Kulish, he valued Walter Scott primarily as an expert on human passions and the author of historical novels (Vladimir Doroshenko wrote about this: 1928: 307–334).

Returning to the genre of Ukrainian classical novels as a problem, it is worth considering the term “classical” in relation to Ukrainian literature. Literary critics usually call the novels of the aforementioned 19th century, for example, the novels of Stendhal or Dostoevsky, classic novels. But in relation to Ukrainian literature of the time, the concept of “classical novel” does not function, although Ukrainian novels appeared at the end of the 19th century and are considered classics from today's perspective. It should also be added that precisely because of the absence of the novel genre, Ukrainian literature of the 19th century was quite often compared typologically with other European literature of this period, especially Slavic literature. As a rule, in such comparative studies, first of all, the themes of literary works related to the issue of a real reader were taken into account. For 19th-century Ukrainian literature, as the literature of a stateless people, the peasant theme was the main one in this regard, and only by the end of the century, the problem of the Ukrainian intelligentsia surfaced in the literature (this issue is analyzed in detail by Dmytro Nalyvaiko: 1993: 81–96). As for the genre features of the 19th-century Ukrainian writers', literary critics most often explained the absence of a novel by historical circumstances.

In this context, the issue of the genesis of the Ukrainian novel, the “classical” examples which appear only in modernism, remains the most difficult and highly debatable. As we have already mentioned, researchers used in such discussions not only literary material but primarily historical ones, explaining the absence of the novel in 19th-century Ukrainian literature to the historical circumstances of statelessness, censorship (primarily Russian), and the ban on the Ukrainian language. But such an approach does not explain the absence of a Ukrainian novel in Galicia, where the Ukrainian language was not banned, and the

potential readers were not limited to the peasantry, they could well be the family members of the Uniate priests, and even some of the officials who knew the Ukrainian and Polish languages (sometimes even German).

It should also be emphasized that the situation is not entirely clear even with the first novels by Ukrainian authors written in Russian. When researchers claim that the first Ukrainian novels were written in Russian, they usually cite two texts: the novel *Mr. Khalyavsky* (1839) by Hryhoriy Kvitka-Osnovianenko and the novel *Tchaikovsky* (1843) by Yevhen Hrebinka. The first novel is a critique of Ukrainian landowners' way of life, while the second, written partly in the tradition of Nikolai Gogol, is dedicated to Ukrainian Cossacks. These are to some extent polar works in terms of the genre: one is about everyday life (a social novel), and the other is about the historical past (a historical novel). The problem, however, is that with such a view, Ukrainian novels can include the novels by Vasyl Narizhnyi (1780–1825), which are thematically related to Ukraine (not mentioning other authors of Ukrainian origin here). After all, even Panteleimon Kulish, the author of the first historical novel in the Ukrainian language, began to write novels in Russian. In 1843, he wrote the historical novel *Mykhailo Charnyshenko*, or *Little Russia Eighty Years Ago*, then in the 1850s, he wrote a utopian novel *Petr Ivanovich Berezyn*, banned by censorship (a revised version of it was published only in 1903 under the title *Seekers of Happiness*). The historical novels of Mykhailo Starytskyi can also be added to this list since they are all also written in Russian.

Taking into consideration the historical and literary facts in the context of the stated issue, it is of course, necessary to name the first novels in Ukrainian (these are four works). In chronological order, they are Panteleimon Kulish's historical novel *Black Council. The Chronicle of 1663* (1857), and another historical novel *In Ukraine* (1863) by Vasyl Doroshenko (1843–1918). Since the novel was published in Russia (Ivan Bochkarev's printing house in the city of Ostashkovo, near the Russian town Tver), today it is completely forgotten, practically not mentioned in any history of Ukrainian literature. Neither Vasyl Doroshenko as an author nor his novel ever attracted the attention of literary critics. The third novel appeared in Geneva in 1880 with the assistance of Mykhailo Drahomanov; it was the novel by Panas Myrny and Ivan Bilyk *Do the Oxen Bellow When Their Mangers Are Full?* (written in 1875). Finally, in Galicia in 1886, Anatoly Svidnytskyi's novel *Lyuboratski. Family Chronicle* (written in 1861–1862) was published in the magazine "Zorya." To complete the picture, it is also necessary to add the historical novels of Ivan Nechuy-Levytsky, but they appeared only at the end of the 19th century. This is what a Ukrainian novel looked like in the 19th century.

Summing up all these facts and elements of literary discussions about the reasons for such a late appearance of the Ukrainian novel, we can identify at least three reasons. The first reason is the language. As Mikhail Bakhtin convincingly showed in his studies, the novel requires a direct dialogue with contemporariness, such a dialogue can only be conducted in modern language, and Ukrainian intellectuals in the 19th century spoke Russian or French in the Russian Empire, and Polish or German in Galicia. The problem of the novel's reader is directly related to the language problem. Therefore, the first Ukrainian novels, although thematically designed to portray the life of Ukrainians, were written in Russian. In a novel, the characters must speak the language they speak in everyday life (for example, the characters of Leo Tolstoy's novels often speak French). That is why the themes of Ukrainian

prose in the first half of the 19th century, according to Koshelivets, “did not go beyond the scope of ethnography and everyday life” (Koshelivets 1947: 50): the Ukrainian language was spoken almost exclusively by peasants, and, therefore, almost all the heroes of Ukrainian literature of that time can be named “lost forces.”

The situation changed only at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries when the intelligentsia consciously turned to the Ukrainian language, which was well described in Yuriy Shevelyov’s studies, in particular in the book *The Ukrainian Language in the First Half of the Twentieth Century (1900–1941)*, published in New York in 1987.

In connection with the issue of the Ukrainian literary language, the following should also be noted. Ukrainian scholars and intellectuals very often discussed the role of Ivan Kotliarevsky in the formation of the Ukrainian literary language taking into account his choice of the vernacular for *Eneida* and his rejection of the literary language of the Ukrainian Baroque with its scientific terminology as well as its established tradition of political and philosophical and theological concepts (Nakhlik 2015: 21). However, one must understand that if Kotliarevsky had written *Eneida* in another language, the question is whether it would have been such a success among Ukrainians: there were many works written in the Baroque language, and there was only one *Eneida*. It is quite possible that in that case, the development of the Ukrainian literary tradition (including Shevchenko) would have gone in a completely different direction, resulting in a huge gap between the literary language, on the one hand, and the spoken language of the then Ukrainians, on the other. But with such speculations, we again face the problem of the reader. Kotliarevsky’s *Eneida* was understandable not only for the Ukrainian elite of that time in the Russian Empire (if there was such at all), who spoke Russian or French. The *Eneida* was understandable primarily for the representatives of the lower strata of society, especially the peasants and the impoverished Ukrainian nobles, for whom the language of the poem was the language of household use.

The second important issue is the theme of the novel as a genre. Mikhail Bakhtin called the novel a non-canonical genre, in which the world of the characters was directly correlated with modernity/their time in its incompleteness (in contrast to the subject of the epic, directed to the image of a completed event in the past). The Russian literary critic especially emphasized: “For modernity (the present) to take its place at the center of literature (so that, consequently, the projection of images into the past ends), it was necessary to feel one’s modernity as a kind of new beginning” (Bakhtin 2012: 584).

In Europe, a new beginning was determined by the Renaissance (as M. Bakhtin writes), but Ukrainian literature of the first half of the 19th century (as, after all, Ukrainian history, and culture of that time in general) sought its beginning in the past, i.e., in the Cossack era. Hence, two important conclusions: firstly, the subject of Ukrainian literature was connected not with modernity, but with the heroic past, and secondly, novels like European or Russian were aimed at depicting the problems of modernity (as novels by Balzac or a novel-in-verse *Eugene Onegin* by Pushkin) could not appear in Ukrainian literature.

The described situation explains the subject of the first work of new Ukrainian literature: *Eneida* is a poem about the heroic past of the Cossacks. Moreover, the heroic past in the text (despite its travesty discourse) is given at once in two dimensions: both, as the classical “Roman” past and as the “classical” (Cossack) Ukrainian past. All of the above also explains the fact that the first Ukrainian novel was a historical novel that reflected the

heroic past, albeit in its tragic perspective. The issue of the birth of new Ukrainian literature is directly related to these problems. Without going into disputes and discussions around the legacy of Ivan Kotliarevsky, it is worth noting that the situation of Ukrainian Sentimentalism and Romanticism developed in such a way that the genre system of these two movements in the new Ukrainian literature did not provide a novel.

It is also necessary to emphasize the fact that the absence of a novel in early 19th-century Ukrainian literature cannot be explained solely by the absence of statehood. For example, the first Slovak novel also appeared at a time when Slovakia as a separate state did not exist. It was a work written in the spirit of Enlightenment by Jozef Ignác Bajza (1755–1836) *René mládenca prihodi a skusenosti*. It is worth reminding that the first Polish novel appeared after the first partition of Poland (1772), at a time of extreme state crisis when the existence of Poland as an independent state was under threat. Its author was Ignacy Krasicki (1736–1801), a bishop, famous philosopher, politician, writer, and playwright. His novel *The Adventures of Mr. Nicholas Wisdom (Mikolaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadku)* was published in 1776. This work combined various genre features, like robinsonade, utopia, and Bildungsroman. However, the most important is the fact that the first Polish and Slovak novels described such life adventures of the protagonists, which belonged to that particular time. Instead, in Ukrainian literature (either by Kotliarevsky or later by Kulish), the action was set in the past. Of course, Ukrainian literature also knew travelogues, the most famous work of which is *Voyages to the Holy Places of the East from 1723 to 1747* by Vasyl Hryhorovych-Barskyi. But firstly, this text was written in Russian, and secondly, and this is the main thing, *Voyages* was not a work of fiction, but a documentary work.

Regarding the theme of a novel, one more thing should be noted. By the end of the 19th century, Ukrainian literature was partially fascinated by themes and problems relevant to Russian and European literature. This also applied to the novel, although such attempts were isolated. For example, we can name the issue of women in society, women's fate and love, women's psychology, and partly, perhaps, feminism. In the context of such a theme, it is enough to compare *The Loose Woman* (1883) by Panas Myrny and *Anna Karenina* (1878) by Leo Tolstoy (both novels were written almost at the same time). But in this case, obviously, again we face the problem of the reader. In the above-mentioned article, Ivan Koshelivets especially emphasized that in Ukrainian society, along with the growth of cities, there was no growth of townspeople, which could be the main consumer of the novel. As the scholar notes, the main spiritual forces of the Ukrainian community were directed toward the national liberation struggle, not artistic creativity.

In his essay, Koshelivets wrote that “for the development of great literature, in particular, novels and short stories, not only printing houses, publishing houses, and large commercial establishments are needed,” but also, most importantly, “a mass consumer of literary products”⁴ (Koshelivets 1947: 50). Such a consumer (reader) not only shapes the tastes and requirements of the author but also ensures his financial existence in society by buying books. This is how the novel industry emerged in European culture at the end of the 19th, and especially in the 20th century.

⁴ In original: „dla rozwytku welykoji literatury, zokrema romanu j powisty, potrebnii ne tilky drukarni, wydawnictwa, welyki torhiwelni zakłady, a j holowne masowyj spożywacz literaturnoji produkciji” (Koshelivets 1947: 50).

Finally, the third important problem, which until today has been practically ignored by literary critics, is the problem of literary terminology, which directly concerns the novel as a genre. The fact is that the Ukrainian authors of Galicia and Bukovyna very often used different literary terms in comparison to their contemporaries who lived on the territory of the Russian Empire. This, on the one hand, concerned such a term as “novel,” which did not function in the Polish tradition: in Polish, the novel is called *powieść* (Izdebska, Szajnert 2006). And, on the other hand, the term “story” (*opowidannia*) in the German tradition (*Erzählung*) has not only a wider meaning but also a different meaning in terms of genre than in the Ukrainian or Russian tradition. Such a situation explains why in late 19th-century Ukrainian literature, large literary works that fully corresponded to novels in terms of the genre were called *opowidannia* or *powiść*. In the case of Olha Kobylanska, who was oriented toward the German tradition, even her contemporaries noticed this problem. Agatangel Krymsky in his review of *The Princess* wrote:

I don't know why the author called her writing a story. A story is, of course, something short and episodic, and the large work *The Princess* (424 pages), which describes the entire history of several people in great detail and depicts the surrounding society in no fewer detail, *should be called a novel* or, as we and Russians call it, the novella. (Krymsky 1972: 479)⁵

Similarly, Ivan Franko, in the article about Ukrainian literature written in Russian for the Brockhaus and Efron dictionary, called Olha Kobylanska's novella *Land* a novel, noting that the author was brought up under the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche and she presents a strong and original female talent, preaches freedom of life and individualism, and in the “great novel from peasant life” *Land* the “shocking drama of fratricide is depicted” (Franko 1984: 159–160). The example of Olha Kobylanska as an author of novels is also important because she was declared “the first symbolist in Ukrainian literature” (Pelenskyj 1942: 3), that is, her stories/novellas/novels should be compared with novels of other European symbolists, and not only German ones, on the texts of which she was brought up. From this perspective, it is quite clear that her texts should be interpreted in the general paradigm of the European symbolist novel, including the Russian one (for example, the novels of Zinaida Gippius).

The oeuvre of Ivan Franko is also interesting in terms of literary terminology. The writer never defined his large works as novels, although to this day literary critics argue whether it is possible, for example, to call such a work as *Fateful Crossroads* a novel. Finally, the issue of Ivan Franko's novelistic (genre) thinking is very complex and has not been resolved to this day, taking into account various aspects of the writer's biography and work. But another fact is extremely revealing: Ivan Franko himself called his work *Lelum and Polelum* written at the end of the 19th century in Polish “a contemporary novel” (*powieść współczesna*). It is quite obvious that such a definition should be translated into Ukrainian as “a novel about contemporary life”: the Polish term *powieść*, as we have already noted, is the equivalent of the term “novel” in other literature. Instead, all Ukrainian literary experts, publishers,

⁵ In original: „Ne znaty, czomu awtorka nazwała swoje pysannia opowidanniam. Opowidannia — to, zwyczajno, szczoś' korotke i epizodyczne, a welykyj twir *Cariwna* (424 stor.), de tak dokładno opysano ciľu istoriju dekilkoč osib i ne menš dokładno obmalowano tu suspilniš, jaka jich okružaje, treba nazwaty romanom abo, jak kažuť u nas i w rosijan, powistiu” (Krymsky 1972: 479).

and commentators of Ivan Franko's works write not about the novel, but about the novella *Lelum and Polelum*, equally using this term, which presupposes a different genre in Polish (*powieść*) and Ukrainian (*povist*). This is only one of the aspects of Ivan Franko's genre (novelistic) thinking and the discussion about the genre of the novel in his works. Moreover, for Franko studies, the question of the novelistic thinking of the writer has many dimensions, relating not only to literary texts but also to the social behavior and biography of the writer. And it is clear that in the interpretations of Ivan Franko's large literary works (*Boryslav laughs, For the Home Hearth, Pillars of Society*) there are more such problems: some literary critics write about genre traditions and innovation of Ivan Franko's novels, others write about genre traditions and traits of novellas.

Thus, the named three aspects reflect and partially explain the history of the novel genre in 19th-century Ukrainian literature. As can be seen from the above examples, themes that were relevant for the European or Russian novel of that time were absent not only in the Ukrainian novel but also in Ukrainian literature as a whole. For example, the so-called topoi of boundary situations, which in the European novels were represented primarily by acute psychological conflicts of characters were transferred in Ukrainian literature either from the present to the past (Panteleimon Kulish), or into the sphere of national conflict, as in the poem *Kateryna* by Taras Shevchenko.

The duality of Romantic heroes in Ukrainian literature was also completely different and was determined by social (rich/poor) or national (Ukrainian/Russian, Ukrainian/Polish) contexts. We encounter a completely different type of duality in Russian literature or in European literature, where duality is philosophical and associated, according to D. Chyzhevsky, with "the loss of an ontological place" in the world (Chyzhevsky 1929: 25–38). It is also clear that the Ukrainian historical novel (for example, *Black Council* of Kulish, or even the Russian-language novels of Starytsky) could not, so to speak, "assert" the state narrative because there was no Ukrainian state as such, and the historical narrative of Ukrainian novels was only a projection of a glorious past onto a planned but uncertain future (completely in the spirit of the Romantic tradition of Shevchenko).

These questions and problems today seem speculative because, from a practical point of view, there is not much difference in the genre definition of the literary works of Olha Kobylinska or Ivan Franko. On the other hand, this problem is of great importance for the typological or analogical study of Ukrainian literature and the study of the novelistic thinking of 19th-century Ukrainian writers. As for the history of the Ukrainian novel itself, there are two possibilities for its research. We can, on the one hand, build typologies by comparing Ukrainian literature with other literature (European, but also Russian, regardless of how we today — AD 2022 — treat the Russian language and culture). Or, on the other hand, we can study Ukrainian literature as a cultural phenomenon, original and unique. The problem of novelistic thinking is much more complicated, and there are still many surprises waiting for meticulous researchers.

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