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## Modernists and Traditionalists in the Perspective of Fiction Manifestos of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**Natalia V. Kovtun\***

*Krasnoyarsk State Pedagogical University  
named after V.P. Astafyev*

*89 Ada Lebedeva Str., Krasnoyarsk, 660049, Russia*

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*The article deals with the analysis of contemporary prose in terms of literary manifestos (from postmodernists' declarations to the New Realists and Symposium group). Under conditions of the cultural paradigm breakup, disappointment in the perspective of globalism and loss of the principle of literary centrism by Russian culture, the comparative analysis of manifestos acquires a special urgency; it allows presenting the activities of the key associations and directions with possible clarity and declarative exposure. We acknowledge the historical and typological proximity of the situations of the early 20th and 21st centuries with their cult of manifestos and similar antinomies: Modernism and Traditionalism, Modernism and Realism, the Arty and the Bolsheviks (Radical Realism and New Realism). Concerns about the present situation include secondary nature of some manifestos' theses, not supported by the actual fiction texts.*

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### Introduction

The crisis of postmodernism, disappointment in the perspective of globalism, interest in the idea of national identity and religiosity cause today's talks about another change in the cultural paradigm and changing geopolitics as a whole (Corm, 2012). In Russian culture it was manifested in the emphasized interest in the ideology of conservatism (Razuvalova, 2015), ethnic identity, and "in the most diverse and significant forms of contact between artistic creativity and theology, to ontology" (Tsvetova, 2012: 5). In the literature of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century

the aesthetics of traditionalism, the principles of realistic writing and vital values raised on the banners by the newest artistic trends were established.

In the situation of changing epochs, the diversity of literary statements and directions is striking: from *Neo-Traditionalism* to *Radical* and *New Realism*, from *Non-Sentimentalism* to *New Hermeneutics*, which L. Ulitskaya opposes to postmodernism: "Irony, after all, is not more than a device as well. <...> Irony will work itself out and then something next will come, a kind of hermeneutics, for example. Or cultural ciphers of

a different kind” (Ulitskaya, 2000: 234). Some of the proclaimed statements and manifestos turned out to be temporary, but they created a sense of “reorganization” of literary life indicative of the turn of the century.

Today’s literary studies and criticism draw parallels between the literary groups of the 1920s and the 2000s on the basis of their typological and historical similarity. The diversity of manifestos in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: from the declarations of the Symbolists and the Futurists to the Biocosmists, the Nichevoks, the Constructivists, etc. (Literary Manifestos, 2001) reflected the search for the language of the new epoch, the model of the world and the hero, however, already in the mid-1920s the reign of the aesthetic passions would end with the utter defeat and affirmation of a single national state policy, including in the field of art. Within the framework of this approach to the analysis of fiction creativity, all associations and directions were divided into “bourgeois”, “decadent”, “outmoded” and those who were ready to “enter the arena of building the life of new social forces” (proletarian poets). In 1932, when the RPWA was dissolved, there were no other directions than Socialist Realism.

Without going deep into the analysis of the possible roll-calls of various directions of the turns of the centuries, the foundation of which is laid (Chernyak, 2016: 317-330), the major directions of the actual literature of the early of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the manifestos that reflected their aesthetics are to be named. Let us emphasize that at the level of poetics the influence of postmodernism remains quite appreciable, but already in the mid-1990s an active search for a different language, an ideal, a sacred one starts, “they seek for a way out in the holy, it is taken seriously today”, states T. Goricheva (Goricheva, 1991: 9). The current literature is nostalgic for the authenticity of the image, puzzled by the search for a brutal character capable of withdrawing

from the “secular hell of modernity”, gravitating towards genre purity, corresponding to a new orderly worldview.

### Statement of the problem

Among a rather fragmented set of directions in contemporary prose, *Non-Traditionalism*, which appeals to the authority of the “village prose” and represented by the names of B. Ekimov, M. Varlamov, partly V. Makanin, E. Vodolazkin and A. Chudakov (Bagration-Mukhranelli, 2016: 299-317); *New Realism* literally formed by the authorities and “hatched” in the Moscow area region Lipki (Kovaleva, 2010:115-117), *Neo-Sentimentalism* or *Transsentimentalism* (Man’kovskaya, 2000: 326) and *Modernism* itself (Ivanova, 2011: 11-21) are emphasized most often. A special feature of the literary situation of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century became the accentuated indifference of writers of various directions and groups to the works of each other. Traditionalists do not read Postmodernists who, in their opinion, captured the market in the early 1990s, infernalising and corrupting it, the Postmodernists, accordingly, sneer at the teachers’ literature, affirming the freedom of literature from any manifestations of didactics that distinguished its existence in a literary-centric environment (Kovtun, 2014: 5-7). The works of both are read by a few representatives of the “elected circle” of co-religionists, critics unanimously testify that while preserving the literary process itself, both in the formal (language) and in the content plan actual literature does not demonstrate bright phenomena (Remizova, 2007: 11).

The status of the Realists in this situation is even more vulnerable, as, unlike the Postmodernists, their texts can be compared with something else. The tradition of high realism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to which they appeal, obliges to this. Contemporary authors intricately balance on the verge of didactics, sermons and national

mythology, moreover, mythological images often receive existential status. In this respect the work of late V. Rasputin, who discovered a character-trickster in the texts of the 1990s, who was much more appropriate to the aesthetics of Postmodernism than Classical Realism, capable of unexpected solutions and nontrivial ways and to overcome the world of chaos as a result, is of great interest (Kovtun, Stepanova, 2014: 7-14).

The Manifesto of Radical Realism (2000) and Methods of RADical REALism (2001) by D. Cherny, New Realism (2001) by S. Shargunov, EPS Teaching (2002) by Vic. Erofeev, and The Horizon, Where Science Converges with Religion (2013) by M. Epstein became the most discussed manifestos of the day. Serious passions, which caused a much greater resonance than the actual fiction texts, flared around the field of literature. In this situation, a comparative analysis of literary manifestoes acquires a particular relevance; it allows presenting the activity of key associations and directions with the possible clarity and declarative exposure, demonstrating a contradictory palette of today's literature (Kovtun, 2016: 52-65). If we admit that "the fundamental difference between art schools and styles is in relation to God, to the world and to man" (Kaznacheev, 2011: 91-95), the talk about manifestos can not but take this into account.

### **EPS Teaching and the aesthetics of Postmodernism**

It is reasonable to begin the review of the manifestos with the declaration by Vic. Erofeev EPS Teaching, in which an original result of the underground of the 1980s is summed up. The author rejects the world cultural heritage and insists: "Literally, EPS didn't have traditions in Russian literature, except for some kindred cousins and pseudo-relatives, which resemblance reminded name similarity. However, foreign literature did not have EPS-analogues as well"

(Erofeev, 2002: 8). This statement is a deliberate cultural gesture that is easy to challenge, the prose by Vic. Erofeev is deliberately metaliterate (references to V. Rozanov, I. Bunin, I. Babel, Ven. Erofeev, V. Krivulin, et al are obvious in the text of the Teaching), which does not cancel the significance of the manifesto.

A specific prologue to the Teaching was the article "The Commemoration of Soviet Literature", published in the Literaturnaya Gazeta (1990), in which the writer reads a funeral service and buried orthodox Soviet literature, "village" and liberal at once, calling them literally the literature of Tukhlandia (The Rotten Land), which lost its own landmarks in the period of changing cultural paradigm. The authors of the "village prose", whose works with their hypermoralism were used by the official authorities, were particularly criticized. The author is harsh in his accusations, the text is full of picturesque gestures, curses and banal statements about the exhaustion of Soviet problematics, but it is perceived as the manifesto of the new literature, "which is opposed to the old literature, first of all, by readiness for the dialogue with any, even the most distant in time and space culture, the culture for creation polysemantic and polystylistic structure" (Erofeev, 1990: 80). V. Erofeev insists on the rejection of monologue, didactic and "speculative publicistic" nature, asserting the need for literature to return to the aesthetic tasks and openness to the world fiction practices.

EPS Teaching (2002) is typologically and intonationally close to "The Commemoration ...", and it is an introduction to the collection of prose and poetry by Vic. Erofeev, D. Prigov and V. Sorokin, who made up the classics of the Russian Postmodernism. In fact, the texts of the authors transferred stylistics and the language of European Postmodernism to the domestic soil, but this required extreme humiliation and reverse of the humanistic values (in EPS

Teaching the Humanists are directly equated with scoundrels) and the principles of realistic writing (through the motives of the collection – sleep, hysteria, violence, vomiting, excrement), to introduce taboo lexis, to pun the symbolism of the infernal (chthonic character, howling like a fright, D.A. Prigov), to deprive literature of its “literary nature”. Moreover, the very images of the infernal bottom and corporeality, unlike modern Sentimentalism, are conditional here. Thus, V. Sorokin’s characters are devoid of bodies, there is embodiment of the functions of the language of power (from the canon of the Russian classics to Socialist Realism), which the author exposes. In D. Prigov’s works, the archetypes of mythological thinking as one of the constants of the Russian official worldview are punned, the myths of Soviet culture are profaned. Creativity as a game frees the former ideas and utopias that are subjected to deconstruction from power; the reward is freedom, intellectual above all.

If Traditionalism, which received its justification in the manifesto by V. Rasputin appeals to the national ideals and the Dukhobor tradition (Rasputin, 2007: 85-89), the members of the EPS group turn to the European landmarks, if the “village prose” authors revive the values of faith, judgment and the fear of God, Vic. Erofeev’s supporters meet the spirit of stylized naive, gay drinking binges and heresy, it is no accident that Pushkin’s context turns out to be so in demand (Bogdanova, 2009). The destruction of the aristocratic culture allows to introduce divine, satanic and human into a single context, access to the sacred is opened through a trivial phone call: “Sorokin in Tibet was given the phone number of God, but when he called from the phone booth God’s line was busy” (Erofeev, 2002: 7). Religions “change like gloves”, sacred commandments appear alongside other power discourses (from shamanism to the power of

the KGB, Tibet and the Pope of Rome), they are subjected to intellectual expertise.

Instead of creativity as a vocation, a mission comes to its understanding as a rational way to achieve success, a technology, which value is in the variety of ways to move toward the goal, but not the goal itself. From the ministry literature turns into an object of commerce, its creators are represented as “greedy scums, maniacs, slime, half-fall, perverts” (Erofeev, 2002: 7), the victims of their own texts. The word (as God) is denied in the function of transfiguration. For D. Prigov, any authoritative statement (by Dostoevsky, Akhmatova or Egor Isaev) is equally dangerous, monstrous. The bearers of spiritual ideals are given the role of spiritual “monsters”. Sincerity and confessional style are laughed at, postmodernist substitution of the lyrical subject with a kaleidoscope of masks takes place (in EPS Teaching “blue faces are commissioned by the Ministry of Communication”, the author’s face lying on his knees”, etc.). Fiction and life practices do not intersect (the author’s mask of Chthonic, punned by poet D.A. Prigov, and a very serious attitude towards person-Prigov’s baptizing into the Orthodox faith), in this way the project DAP – Dmitry Aleksandrovich Prigov, uniting poems, novels, installations, graphics and performances is implemented... Moreover, the principles and the concept of the project are not pronounced (Plekhanova, 2016: 152-159).

In EPS Teaching the group’s existence is inscribed into the “double underground”, the first level of which actualizes the images of the literary underground (from the “naked man”, the Decembrists and the “underground man” to the banned figures of the “latest Soviet history”), the second one is related to the birth of the “new Art”, the attributes of which are shock, fighting, vomiting, aggression, gross sexuality and a “special light” coming from the participants: “EPS was like a ball lightning, which our public

still remembers well. Or plane hijacking: I have never experienced such a shock and howl. I will say more: people could not stand it, they vomited right in the hall” (Erofeev, 2002: 7). Educational literature (Socialist Realism and Traditionalism) was replaced by the “howling” literature, the replacement of the mentoring word with the howl of a chthonic creature (the image of D.A. Prigov’s fright) is an evidence of the apocalyptic times. A sign of the new literature is the “naked bulb overhead”, symbolizing a “naked”, ridiculous man, deprived of all gods, myths, utopias of the past, right up to the language itself, locked in the absolute bottom (the image of the cellar on Liteiny).

*Genetic ecology* and *liquid fascism* aimed at “evaporation of souls through language manipulation” were declared the strategies of the new art, *gnosticism* and *medieval culture* were named as possible analogues. The very presence of soul is recognized only belonging to the free intellectuals. Liquid fascism is associated with the idea of “corrupting the crowd by indulging its instincts and squeezing out the vices of the crowd to the surface” (Erofeev, 2002: 10). The core idea of J. Kristeva about the night power of literature, which is like vomiting, liberates the human body from rot, releases the subconscious from fears and the disgust of life, transforming the disgusting into the joy of the text (Kristeva, 2003: 36-67) is punned. Here also appears the iconic image of a student of Literary Institute Sonechka, who is not at all burdened with the Wisdom of Sophia, but is sexually satisfied with fantasy stories. The Norm by V. Sorokin, The Policeman by D. Prigov and the Last Judgment by Vic. Erofeev were called stage works implementing this strategy. It is interesting that the bright features of the underground existence of the members of the group and diverse reactions to their work of the domestic intelligentsia, the powers that be, the fellow writers and the European connoisseurs

of the Russian underground, recorded in the statements and interviews, are carefully selected and given in the book after the text of the Teaching. With all the “rebelliousness” of the direction, factographic evidence of life’s vicissitudes and artistic actions are important for its representatives.

However, by the mid-1990s, the dependence of postmodern practices on the subject of deconstruction was obvious, the only criterion for evaluating creative work was the sequence of denial, the sophistication of the author’s game, which straightened the horizon of expectations. Art is dehumanized, becomes self-contained and entropic, demonstrating only the technique of acceptance. Criticism and the reader are disappointed in this literature, and no provocations or punning the strategies of the classics or Soviet mythology change the situation. A mass exodus from the limits of culture under the sign of “post-” started to outline. It was the tightness of postmodernism and renunciation of reality that was sharply criticized by the *Radialists* and the *New Realists* who claimed about themselves in the early 1990s. In literary criticism the attempts to define a new type of realistic poetics, which replaced postmodernism were made. *Post-Realism* is characterized as a synthesis of a realistic, traditionally ideological view of the world with a subjective view characteristic of modernism (Leiderman, Lipovetsky, 1993: 201-224).

### **Strategies of the Bolsheviks:**

#### **Radical Realism and New Realism**

In the manifesto by D. Cherny Radical Realism, the need to define a new vector of creative literature that will push away from postmodernism, “overhang Russian self-consciousness as a heavy cloud” was specified (Cherny, 2000). The latter like a “fungus” engrafted upon the “reality-free” soil, when

literature was moving away from socialist realism, and now “the art of compilation was supposed to be replaced by the art of ascertaining, but already in withdrawal, higher, at a new turn” (Cherny, 2000). However, sophisticated artistic tools and optical means of tracking reality, offered for use in “peaceful purposes” are recognized behind the culture with the sign “post-”. It is about the principle of addressing to reality (found poetry) without intermediaries (the author or the character) by a direct quote of the moment of perception, the moment of the writers’ existence between the texts. The author of the manifesto is confident that “the newest, immeasurably superior to its predecessors (Realism and Postmodernism) method of re- and production of reality built on maximum attention to specifications and details (Cherny, 2000), when the *primacy of perception* over all other mental functions is obvious, starts with this.

Crossing with the pathos of the avant-garde (especially *budetliane* (the Future People)), the Radical Realists complain about the alien conglomerations of the “experience of generations” in contemporary culture, closing the way for new *eidos* (in the Aristotelian sense). D. Cherny partly reproduces the dispute between the Symbolists and Acmeists, pointing the latter to the impossibility of manifesting open, genuine emotions outside the symbolist, textological contexts, without “referring each other to the libraries’ volumes”. In this conception text is recognized as a “refuge, shrinking the event of the author and Reality with every second”, *diaries* and the *chronicle* that recorded “live attention to Reality” are named the chosen genres (Cherny, 2000). *Syllogistic black verse* is prioritized in poetry, its sound is the closest to the *inner form of speech* (in L. Vygotsky’s understanding). The text is not equal to it, the proportion of symbolism and conventionality still remains in this case, but it is kept to a minimum – such speech works

with short words in the inconsistent rhythm of perception, the value of the work is in the ability to convey the second, the moment of reality.

The Radical Realists renounce both the legacy of the Russian classical literature and Postmodernism (the “typically bourgeois trend of art”) on the basis of the fact that they are equally inadequate to reality: “Postmodernism is obsessed with citing and combining secondary (alien) realities (i.e. texts), and the classics wander around It with drunken beats of rhymes, reflections and metaphors” (Cherny, 2000). D.A. Prigov and V. Pelevin, whose creative work is the most destructive, are detached among the postmodern authors: “The gulf of Prigov yawned at our feet of the modern authors and readers: the gulf of possible combinations (on the principle of compilation) of elements constituted by modernity and realism. This is a bad infinity, from which there is no way back”; “Pelevin’s conceptual centaurs walk along Bolshaya Dmitrovka, even a declaration of love has the tinge of compilation” (Cherny, 2000). Postmodernism is equated with a black hole that absorbs existence, the author and the reader; it is accused of profaning the great Russian history, identified with the cold war unleashed by the means of literature.

In addition to artistic tasks, the Radical Realists aspire to life creation, change of the person’s attitude to his/her destiny and existence as a whole: “Radical Realism brings detail to the fore – as a further indivisible evidence of the relationship between the subject and Reality” (Cherny, 2000). “The main purpose of art from the point of view of Radical Realism is a *f f i r m a t i o n* (as precise as possible, as detailed as possible)” (Cherny, 2000), hence the authority of Antonioni and Tarkovsky, who shoot one shot without editing and documentary film directing are “all consecutive and conscious camera men’s attempts to “capture time” (but not the storyline) that are valuable for the theory of Radical



Realism” (Cherny, 2001). The great aesthetes – Goethe, Wilde, Proust, Nabokov who called for “vita brevis, ars longa” and “details are God” are mentioned in the same paradigm. In the very process of artistic reproduction, observation and citation of reality the stimuli of different modalities are put in a single chain: visible, audible, tangible, smells ... “The author is the touch, smell, ears and eyes of the reader”, “Adam, giving names to things” (Cherny, 2001).

As a result, Radical Realism is proclaimed not only as a new art, but also as a “method of interpreting any text for the Reality contained in it or for the subject expressed by the text of the subreality of the author’s existence” (Cherny, 2000), the reader is called upon to perceive and capture the reality with the text. Being the heir of the avant-garde and Socialist Realism, Radical Realism not only observes and perceives reality, but is ready “to change the Reality itself in an avant-garde and revolutionary way”. The author’s task is to become a revolutionary, the creator of a new Reality, an aesthetic dictator, creating new trees, houses and cities, like Peter the Great, Lenin and Stalin. Getting back today to the analysis of his own manifestos, D. Cherny calls Z. Prilepin, R. Senchin and S. Shargunov among the representatives of the Radical Realism who are already inscribed into the representation of *New Realism* or *Pure Realism* by criticism (Chelebi, 2015: 493).

In the late 1990s, a group of writers (S. Shargunov, R. Senchin, A. Babchenko, G. Sadulaev, Z. Prilepin, M. Elizarov, A. Snegirev and others) proclaimed a detailed, scrupulous description of the “new reality” as the most important principle of their creative work, “without idealization, without symbolism, without generalization, at the level of physiological essays, they describe the dirty real world of the today’s youth” (Bondarenko, 2003). Regarding the prose of these writers, A. Ganiev defines the

phenomenon of New Realism as a whole: “New Realism is a literary direction that marks a crisis of a parodic attitude toward reality and combines the markings of *Postmodernism* (“the world as chaos”, “the crisis of authorities”, emphasis on corporality), *Realism* (typical character, typical circumstances) and *Romanticism* (the discord of the ideal and reality, the opposition of “I” and society) with an orientation to *existential impasse*, alienation, searching, dissatisfaction and a tragic gesture. It is not so much even a direction as a unity of writers’ individualities, but a universal attitude, which is reflected in the works that are so different in their artistic and style decisions” (Ganieva, 2010: 140). If in Cherny’s manifestos it is poetry that is emphasized, then a New Realist mostly work with prose.

The origin of the direction is associated with the projects “Debut” and the Forum of Young Writers in Moscow Region Lipki (2001), the latter was opened with the assistance of leading literary magazines, famous prose writers and literary critics. According to I. Kovaleva, one of the forum’s organizers, the “first “unwhipped” generation that did not experience the birth pangs of gaining freedom” entered literature, which “with the youngest passion started exploring the most secret movements of one’s soul, the most untouchable events, without fear of opposing one’s own “I” to everything and everybody” (Kovaleva, 2010: 116). A literary environment of “zero years”, an emphatically controversial, eccentric and “risky” one started its establishment in Lipki, the names of “village” authors A. Prokhanov and E. Limonov were mentioned among its “authorities”. Thus, S. Shargunov acknowledges the aesthetic continuity with the latter: “Of course, a significant part of the new authors came from the Limonov’s Overcoat. Romantic autobiography, rudeness of texture, experience of parties, lovesickness, participation in war or in fights – all this abundantly poured

into literature” (Shargunov, 2013). Z. Prilepin issues a collection *Limonka to a Prison* (2012), which contains texts about the prison, written by the National Bolsheviks who were imprisoned at different times. Genetic and aesthetic connection with National Bolshevism is recognizable in the pathos of the works of New Realism. In the same paradigm the ability inherited from A. Prokhanov’s arsenal to seriously rely on literature as an effective force, to appeal to high lexis without embarrassment, easily resort to patriotic rhetoric, is worth mentioning.

V. Pustovaya became one of the critical “mouthpieces” of young people from Lipki, and a lot of her articles were perceived as *manifestos*: “We were brought up by three grandmothers: thick magazines, intelligentsia and Russian classics. And they raised us to remember. In the early 2000s we raved about the revival of the country as a personal mission, in the language of the literary and social mythology of the past, trying to express the clear and demanding impulse of renewal that inspired us” (Pustovaya, 2011: 187). “The literary generation perceived creative life salvation of the country, the newest then, at the early 2000s, as its cultural mission. Physical youth was realized mythologically – as a cultural force gathering the children’s trek to the decrepit, dilapidated world of the fathers”, thus the critic defines the strategic tasks of the New Realists (Pustovaya, 2011: 345).

In 2001, the *Novy Mir* journal published a widely debated article-manifesto by S. Shargunov *The Denial of Mourning*, in which the most important postulates of the direction were identified. Contrary to the established opinion, young people do not protest against the power of mass culture and the market (Rotai, 2013: 5), on the contrary, they initially rely upon the success of their own texts, are guided by the social commissioning. This combines the role of the writer as an opinion maker, known since the era

of Enlightenment: “Ideally, the writer is entitled to govern the state. The writer possesses the main thing – the power of description” (Shargunov, 2001: 180). S. Shargunov advocates for the inculcation of literature, which is the basis of Russian nationhood: “People belong to art. This is the solution of Russia”, hence the most daring writer’s claims. Postmodernism as the preceding link is not denied, but, on the whole, it is realized to be alien to the present and outdated: “In terms of modern realities it is a chuckle from outside, a reaction of those who didn’t “fit in” (Shargunov, 2001: 181).

A “circus act, a trick” is at the heart of Postmodernism, its character is a trickster, but the ubiquity of laughter is tedious and entropic. The beginning of a new millennium, on the contrary, requires responsibility, a perspective, an ideal that steadily leads to the actualization of the realistic principle of writing: “Through the layers of parodies a new man (even a barbarian – so much the better) reveals a firm fundamental principle, rediscovers the literary tradition” (Shargunov, 2001: 183). It should be noted that such openness towards a man-barbarian, free from the dogmatics of the old, outdated culture is consonant both with the Soviet texts of the 1920s (Kovtun N., Kovtun V., 2009: 174-181), and the aesthetics of Radical Realism. Today’s sympathies of the majority to the strong political power, stable statehood and patriotic rhetoric are in the same paradigm. New Realism is not accidentally called not only a philological, but also a *political project*. It was influenced by serious financial and administrative resources: in February 2007, the representatives of the direction were invited to a meeting with the President of the Russian Federation, who voiced the idea of a state order in literature, evoking an analogy with the situation of the 1920s, when the authorities solved the problem of forming a new proletarian literature.



In his manifesto S. Shargunov strives to restore the hierarchy, the division of literature into high and mass, insists that the modern reader, tired of the game strategy of Postmodernism, sympathizes with the literature of the fact, the distinct civic position of the character, his “personality energy”. The return to life-building strategies is declared important – the master of New Realism is created not only and not so much by fictional text, but mostly by *a text of life*, they argue, manifest and participate in the political life of the country. Hence the popularity of the genre of *autobiography*: “More autobiography! More ‘I’ - less ‘them’! More sprinkling, less being silent” (Ivanova, 2011), this is a kind of strategy for young writers. If the Traditionalists are guided by a high sample of the ancient *chronicler* or *hagiographer*, the Postmodernists, on the contrary, *renounce the biography* (the author is equal to the character, which is partly dictated by the laws of the market and mass culture), then the representatives of New Realism create a *personal myth*: “Z. Prilepin, S. Shargunov and M. Elizarov are well-matched, you can immediately put them into the album. All of them are vivid, each in his own way, and each one chooses identification feature and signs” (Ivanova, 2011). They called themselves the “generation of action”, “special forces soldiers of the spirit”: the military past of Z. Prilepin, D. Gutsko, A. Babchenko and A. Karasev; S. Shargunov and Z. Prilepin’s participation in politics, etc. However, N. Ivanova, indicating the inconsistency in compliance of the image and the author’s text, is right. The critic emphasizes: “The near glamour of the image and the flamboyance of the habit do not really correspond to what was shown on paper. Either one or the other, and in this way, hesitating and overlapping each other, the image and the text call each other into question” (Ivanova, 2011), which entails a simplified perception of both the personality and the text.

Pushing off from postmodernism and the so-called “quality literature” presented for the Russian Booker prize, as boring and devoid of artistry, S. Shargunov, however, does not make usual for the contemporary manifestos conclusions about the death of the author and literature, on the contrary, he is convinced that “literature is inevitable” and “nothing will happen with literature”. And even the loss of the former status of “opinion maker” is associated with the degradation of the reader rather than the actual literature, the revival of the significance of which (in order to “breathe in a new spirit to the old traditional literature”) involves the renewal of society. The prose of New Realism is designed to reconcile Soviet and anti-Soviet discourses, to search for “avant-gardism in conservatism”, where conservatism is a treasury of images of Russian classics, and avant-garde is innovations that reflect current public realities. The New Russian Renaissance prepared in this way, according to S. Shargunov, will provide leadership in the “avant-garde of the new process” for Russian literature.

For the sake of fairness, it is worth noting that the author himself ironically perceived the manifested statements in a few years: “I want to express this point of view, I do not know how true it is, but I believe that the realism I mentioned above was a response to the blooming complexity of the 1990s, an echo, and now in the sterile space I want to laugh juicy and inventively compose again, to cry out unprecedented turns” (Shargunov, 2008). This declaration is rather in the tone of the avant-garde than traditionalism, which, however, does not deny the significance of New Realism as a transitional art aimed at seeking for a different style, an active character capable of action, an act, and finally, a true sense of overcoming the *model of negative world perception* historically established in Russia.

### Manifestos of the group Symposium

Manifesto of the culturologist M. Epstein “The Horizon, Where Science Converges with Religion” most fully represents the *aesthetic program of the group Symposium*, which, in addition to the manifesto author, includes the conductor and philosopher M. Arkadiev (manifesto On Miracles) and physicists A. Tselvik and A. Burov (manifesto Faith and Reason that Save Each Other). The group is of a debating nature, it was initially opened for discussions, and therefore it is called Symposium (feast, literally translated from Greek “co-drinking”). The abovementioned manifestoes can not be called strictly literary, they are interesting by discussing the problem of the relationship between rational and mystical in science. Today’s attention to the problem of Orthodox literary studies (I. Esaulov, V. Zakharov, A. Lubomudrov, etc.), ideology and aesthetics of traditionalism evidence the relevance of the stated problematics.

The main pathos of manifestos is justification of the unity of *scientific and technical* and *religious-humanitarian thought*, as “the attitude of faith and reason is a fundamental issue of the European civilization in general and Russia in particular” (Burov, 2013). Classical values of the “old” Europe, which have a huge impact on the development of national culture, are threatened with complete erosion and death. The problem of faith and reason, according to the manifesto authors, “should become the most important topic of public discourse as a means of understanding history and reaching a new understanding of the old values” (Burov, 2013). The imbalance of these ideological guidelines turned today into religious fundamentalism and New Atheism (Scientism), which virtually leaves no room for genuine science. Overcoming this crisis of values requires awareness of the origins of European civilization, of which Russia is a part, in their historical interconnection and contradictions. The time

of liberalization of the country’s history and politics, initiated by the reforms of Catherine the Great that opened the way to the formation of the national culture of the 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which initiated works of art, world-class scientific schools and deep religious philosophy, was called an outstanding period of Russia’s heyday. The result of Alexander the Liberator’s reforms was a comprehensive modernization of the country, the apex of which the manifestos’ authors call the publication of the Bible in the Russian language in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Russia had become one of the great European powers with a powerful culture. And today it is important to bring together the vectors of Christianity and rational knowledge of the world in order to respond to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century adequately.

Creation of an integral scientific and religious discourse is based on the authority of Teilhard de Chardin, P. Florensky, physicist and mathematician F. Tipler, **geneticist** F. Collins, physicist Paul Davis, et al. Contemporary science, according to the group’s representatives, has touched fantastic heights, turned to “the inside” of the universe, went into the field of “insane ideas”, “bordering with the enlightenment of the poets and visionists” (Epstein, 2013). The new experience that the group is ready to share is the experience of dialogue “between science and religion primarily through themselves, through the personality of believing and inquiring scientists, their self-reflection, cognitive passion and scientific conscience” (Epstein, 2013). Such individual self-questioning also has a universal horizon – the belief that “there are supersensory and supernatural bases and higher goals that determine the spiritual life of a person”, which allow the dialogue between religions and confessions (Epstein, 2013). For the thinker, the author, the outlined perspective opens in religious and scientific work.

It is interesting that in order to substantiate their own observations and conclusions, the group turns not only to strictly mathematical logic and natural-science arguments that are professionally close to them, but also to poetry, to the lines by A.S. Pushkin about the amazing secrets of the universe (albeit in a fairy-tale manner):

«Что тут дивного? Ну, вот!  
Белка камушки грызет,  
Мечет золото и в груды  
Загребает изумруды;  
Этим нас не удивишь,  
Правду ль, нет ли говоришь.  
В свете есть иное диво...»<sup>1</sup>.

Among the global dangers, the manifestos' authors call the regimes whose ideologies are devoid of moral, ethical and religious grounds for the utopian ideas: these are the times of Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot and Kim Il Sung, where the self-sufficient mind determined the prospects for the "bright future" that turned into a series of crimes against humanity. Note that the same names are welcome, they receive the status of the demiurge of the new Universe in the manifestos of Radical Realism.

On the global stage, in the confrontation of religious fundamentalism and scientism, Man equally loses, and salvation, as insistently expressed by the manifestos' authors, is in the mutual unfolding of faith and reason through their deep inspirational and enlightening dialogue, respectful and critical at the same time, in recognizing the principle of God-manhood as a covenant not only of love, but also comprehensive creativity, a relentless ascent to God at all costs and in every way" (Burov, 2013).

### Conclusion

Thus, the analysis of manifestos of contemporary literature and, more broadly, of

culture as a whole, made it possible to identify a number of trends that characterize modernity. Postmodernism "finishes" its ideas in the epatage declarations by Vic. Erofeev, published in the tenth anniversary of EPS association, the text of the ... Teaching also accomplishes consolidating function, but is no longer able to restore interest in aesthetics under the sign of "post-". The manifestoes of Radical Realism and New Realism appear not as a result of the directions existence, but rather as their announcement: noisy, catchy and provocative. The ironic judgments of their leaders that followed several years later evidence that while the Russian culture is waiting for the demiurge-bogatyr, the trickster remains "the hero of our time" (Abrahamyan, 2005: 68-86). The declarations of the Symposium group are opposed to the Bolshevik slogans of the New Realists, they are designed for the "international" of intellectuals who are able to bring Europe and Russia to the renewed values born from the union of faith and high science.

The secondary nature of a number of ideas expressed in the manifestos for all their expressiveness and eccentricity that meet the criteria of the genre is, however, a bit alarming. D. Cherny's thesis about the mutual influence of avant-garde and Socialist Realism is deeply analyzed in the work by B. Groys (Groys, 2013). The very name Radical Realism makes to recall the theory of Radical Critical Realism of the American philosopher M. Mandelbaum, who develops a critical-realist methodology of historical knowledge (Mandelbaum, 1988). The provisions stated in the manifestos of Symposium group echo with the analytic analysis of the religious issue in the era of post-postmodernity made by G. Corm. The latter is quite critical about the prospect of "the marriage of returning religiosity with the world of scientific and technological achievements" (Corm, 2006: 19). And, finally, let us note the self-sufficient nature of

a number of manifestos, whose authors confined themselves to noisy statements, leaving the issue of literary practice aside; the reflection of writers

about their lot and their role in society replaced today the conversation about the language of fiction as such.

<sup>1</sup> "Wherein lies this wonder, pray?  
Squirrels cracking nuts all day –  
Heaping emeralds, we're told,  
Left and right a-throwing gold!  
Nothing strange in this see I!  
Be this true, or but a lie,  
I know of a better wonder..."

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## **«Модернисты» и «традиционалисты» в перспективе художественных манифестов XXI века**

**Н.В. Ковтун**

*Красноярский государственный педагогический  
университет им. В.П. Астафьева  
Россия, 660049, Красноярск, ул. Ады Лебедевой, 89*

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*Статья посвящена анализу современной прозы через призму литературных манифестов (от деклараций постмодернистов до «новых реалистов» и группы «Симпозион»). В ситуации слома культурной парадигмы, разочарования в перспективе глобализма, утраты русской культурой принципа литературоцентризма сравнительный анализ манифестов приобретает особую актуальность, позволяет представить деятельность ключевых объединений и направлений с возможной ясностью, декларативной обнаженностью. Мы отмечаем историческую и типологическую близость ситуаций начала XX и XXI вв. с их культом манифестов, сходными антиномиями: модернизм и традиционализм, модернизм и реализм, «эстетствующие» и «большевики» («радикальный реализм», «новый реализм»). Опасения, связанные с современной ситуацией, – вторичность ряда положений манифестов, никак не подкрепленных собственно художественными текстами.*

*Ключевые слова: современные манифесты, «радикальный реализм», «новый реализм», «Учение ЁПС», группа «Симпозион».*

*Научная специальность: 10.00.00 – филологические науки.*

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