



## THE ORIGINALITY OF THE HEROES IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE OF THE XXI CENTURY

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### ABSTRACT

*The article discusses the role of Z. Prilepin in the context of modern Russian literature. His views on the formation and development of the literary process in the twenty-first century. Also revealed the main features of the imaging system in the works of Z. Prilepin. The article is devoted to the problem of the evolution of the literary hero and the types of heroes in modern Russian literature of the XXI century. The admiration of the person of the person being described and the desire to redirect this feeling to the reader make the style of the work of Zakhar Prilepin realistic through the prism of modernity (neorealism).*

*The aim of the work is to determine the transformation of modern Russian prose on the example of the works of contemporary Russian writer Zakhar Prilepin. His views on the formation and development of the literary process in the twenty-first century, explores the peculiarities of the hero and the specifics of the writer's artistic world based on the work and literary analyzes. Types of heroes' characteristic of the prose of this neorealist writer: the hero-provincial, the rebellious hero, the intellectual hero and others. The article attempts to analyze the main features of the imaginative system in the works of Z. Prilepin in the context of the traditions of the new realism (neorealism).*

**KEY WORDS:** *Writer; creativity; literature; modern; versatility; specificity; new era; genre; concept; personality; transformation.*

### INTRODUCTION

Zakhar Prilepin is a writer who willingly and openly speaks on topics of concern to the public. One of the essential components of such statement is his reflections on classical and modern Russian literature; showing love or, on the contrary; dislike for the work of this or that author. It is not by chance that Z. Prilepin is known as a compiler of prose and poetry anthologies: "War" («Война» 2008); "Revolution" («Революция» 2009); "Ten" («Десятка» 2011); "Litperron" («Литперрон» 2011); "Lemon in jail" («Лимонка в тюрьму» 2012); "Zakhara Prilepin's Library. Poets of XX century" («Библиотека Захара Прилепина. Поэты XX века» (2015); "Lemon in the war" («Лимонка в войну» 2016); as the author of interviews collection with writers and poets "Named Hearts". "Conversations with Russian literature" («Разговоры с русской литературой» 2009) and Manuals on the latest literature; with lyrical

and sarcastic digressions – "Knigochet" («Книгочёт» 2012).

### RELEVANCE OF THE PROBLEM

A popular writer with international fame; of course; is able to influence the formation of the literary biases of his readership: «Каждый раз я слышу от людей: читать нечего; помогите разобраться; что происходит вообще? Народ растерян: прозы нет; поэзия умерла... Я рассказываю подробно: такой-то пишет про это; вышла такая-то книга; ну и вообще о том; что творится с литературой...» [2, 232].

In Russian literature; from the point of view of Zakhar Prilepin; one can generally find "everything in the world of thought"; since it is "one of; the three world's strongest literatures"; even; in his opinion; is "the strongest"; which is "more expensive than oil and gas". Classical examples of Russian literature for Z.



Prilepin are part of the “Divine” and “his own nature”; while he considers “to compare himself with the Russian classics” incorrect and inappropriate.

Note that “The Hero of Our Time” («Героя нашего времени») and “Anna Karenina” («Анну Каренину») are “two the most beloved” Prilepin novels of the 19th century – he “rereads every five years: and they are getting bigger and more beautiful” [2, 237]. And; despite the fact that the writer is deeply convinced of the viability of the modern Russian literary process; he is not ready to “seriously list the books of his contemporaries; separated by commas after “Divine Comedy” («Божественной комедии»); “Candida” («Кандида»); “Captain’s Daughter” («Капитанской дочки»).

The fact that “many modern writers ... do not read books themselves”; Z. Prilepin is ready to recognize “paradoxical”; because if the writers “were in the time of A.S. Pushkin and N.V. Gogol” just did not read contemporaries; wanting “to waste time” only on “really high-quality product”; then “they would not know the literature of the Golden Age” [3, 106]. The modern Russian literary process can be characterized as extremely heterogeneous; in the words of M.A. Chernyak; “motley; controversial; multifaceted” [3, 40]. Such “versatility”; which inevitably entails the emergence of “new names; genres; concepts”; is not least connected with the natural adaptation of literature to the general socio-cultural situation and to its updated reader. It is curious that this adaptation occurs through the inevitable appeal to the past; to its deepest foundations. Many trends in the 2000s have existed before.

## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Russian literature of “today”; according to Z. Prilepin; is “the surest thermometer”; showing “complete disintegration of values” at a time when “it was just a move to talk about normal things”; and “everything is a logical” [2, 241]. According to Zakhar Prilepin; the “failure” that was formed in literature in the 90s when “a thinking person; a reader ... found himself in some wasteland” was overcome; and “literature began to regain its positions” [2, 242].

According to Zakhar Prilepin; the “failure” that was formed in literature in the 1990s; when “a thinking person; a reader ... found himself in some waste ground”; was overcome; and “literature began to regain its positions again”. However; at the same time “several generations of writers appeared one after another; who allegedly don’t read each other” and if they do; “they don’t say much about these topics” [1, 243].

The writer clearly demonstrates this “breadth” of modern Russian literature in his collections and anthologies. Let us dwell in more detail on the collection “Conversations with Russian Literature” (“Named Hearts”); as well as here; with

the exception of obvious educational functions; the report of which should be another; especially obvious. autopsycholism. Much can be learned from “Name Day of the Heart”; figuring out the degree to which Zakhar Prilepin’s reader’s sympathy for this or that artistic text depends on the manifestation of certain psychologically related features in him or in his author. The appearance of the author of the collection here is quite distinguishable.

The book is a collection of interviews with Prilepin modern authors; the choice of which he calls “deeply subjective”. The writer speaks only with those who are “interested” to him; with whom “fate has confronted him”; therefore the book is “isolated parts of a huge literary mosaic”. At the same time; the author explains that the book contains no interviews with the “living classics” of Russian literature like Valentin Rasputin; “many prose writers and poets of the older generation” and “Prominent critics and editors”; therefore, the collection does not at all claim to “A comprehensive portrait of literature”. In the “Preface”; Prilepin draws the reader’s attention to the fact that the list of questions he selected for “conversations” with different representatives of Russian literature is about the same; and the author of the collection “did not try to argue” with any of the interviewees; but “just listened” to each other; representing “a voice-over”.

From the very beginning of the book; this “voice” is distinguished by a surprisingly respectful; “cautious” tonality; since one of their first Prilepin interviews Leonid Yuzefovich – his “literary teacher”; a person endowed with “impeccable taste and hearing”; “Real master”. Yuzefovich’s texts for Prilepin are somewhat comparable to Leonov’s – they are also “with verandas; add-ins; dead ends; spiers” («с верандами; надстройками; тупиками; шпилями»); in them “the most amazing; rhyming; charming; secret structure of the world is important” («более всего важна удивительная; рифмующаяся; очаровывающая; потайная структура мира»). Yuzefovich-writer; in the opinion of Prilepin; is the creator of accidents that develop into a «kind of divine irony»; with which the author imparts a “hilosophical sound”. Yuzefovich himself does not see a “thinker” in himself; considering that his “understanding of life is dissolved in the details of life itself” («понимание жизни растворено в подробностях самой жизни»). Such a self-characterization is quite consonant with Prilepa’s one: “I definitely don’t have my own philosophy. I am a person; rather; not thinking; but emotionally reacting to some things” («Своей философии у меня точно нет. Я человек; скорее; не размышляющий; а эмоционально реагирующий на какие- то вещи»). It should be noted that there are a lot of similar calls in the text of



this interview; and in the book as a whole; and it will be them who will receive our special attention.

Note that the consonant are also the views of Yuzefovich and Prilepin on the awareness of the significance of the historical past. Leonid Abramovich believes that “the broader historical reality a prose writer operates on; the more he sees coincidences” («чем более широкой исторической реальностью оперирует прозаик; тем больше он видит совпадений»); that “the past is a lot can say ... because it is noticeably eternal” («прошлое многое может сказать; ... потому что в нем заметно вечное»). Zakhar Prilepin; who invariably seeks answers to pressing questions in the 20th and 19th centuries and devoted a whole book to such “historical coincidences”; adheres to the same opinion (“No Stranger’s Troubles” – «Не чужая смута» 2015). It is also obvious to Yuzefovich that the writer should first of all be concerned not with “what stories he chooses” for the narration; but their appearance on paper. “On time”. Prilepin is also thinking in the same direction; stating that “some things need to be read on time”; contrary to the conventional wisdom that in modern Russia “there is absolutely nothing to read” («читать совершенно нечего»).

However; there is a noticeable discrepancy in the Yuzefovich – Prilepin coordinate system; which is no less important for identifying certain autopsychological dominants in the text “Name Day of the Heart”. So; Leonid Yuzefovich is convinced that “a writer should not have political views” because “political engagement requires truncation of reality” whereas for Zakhar Prilepin it is obvious that the creator “would be foolish and despicable to ignore politics and sociology in our day” («было бы глупо и подло игнорировать политику и социологию в наши дни») otherwise; “FIG then need this writer? ...” («на фиг тогда нужен этот писатель? ... »). We see that it is much more important for Prilepin not to convince his interlocutors and readers that he is right; but to receive comprehensive answers to his questions concerning Russia and Russian literature; their past; present and future.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Zakhar Prilepin suggests the same topics for reflection “Literary peers”; representatives of the “new era” – “the next tectonic shift” («очередного тектонического сдвига») [1, 245]. With each of the “young” authors; Prilepin talks about relatives; writers of interest to him; and is interested in the degree of everyone’s involvement in the modern literary process.

So; the opinion of Andrei Rubanov about Eduard Limonov; one of the favorite artists of the word Zakhar Prilepin; as a “whole” person; “able to keep the word”; clearly consonant with Prilepin’s perception. Rubanov notes the quality of Limonov’s

prose; which; of course; appeals to Prilepin: “His personal experience is put at the forefront of his experience” («Во главу угла у него поставлен пережитый личный опыт») [2, 261]. Note that this characteristic is characteristic of both Prilepin and Rubanov texts. And the opinion of Rubanov that is not worth “To publicly discuss the work of others”; and his desire to treat the literary process “rather as an attentive consumer than as a participant” («скорее как внимательный потребитель; нежели как участник») (2, 262); Prilepin is not ready to share.

German Sadulayev’s statement that he doesn’t have time to read his contemporaries to litter them with garbage is also not close to him. Prilepin himself is of the opinion that writers should “delight in language and culture; politics and religion; and the nation” and a book written by another should be “perceived ... as another coin thrown into a common piggy bank”. At the same time; Sadulayev’s view of the war in Chechnya Prilepin is so clear and close that “all the horror created by the Russians in Chechnya” was “much more clearly understood not from what he saw or from communication with dozens of Chechens; but from the book of German Sadulayev” («куда более ясно понят не из увиденного и не из общения с десятками чеченцев; но из книги Германа Садулаева») [2, 265]. Of course; here we can talk about a certain psychological relationship between the two authors; since they were physically on different sides of the barricades during the Chechen events; and it is impossible to call the events experienced by them biographically close. In a conversation with Sergei Shargunov; Prilepin’s interest in women’s prose is clearly visible; namely; the distinctive features that exist between her and men’s prose. Shargunov’s statement that “female physiology; the female nature of glamor by definition”; Prilepin will quote in an interview with Anna Kozlova; Tatyana Nabatnikova; Vasilina Orlova; apparently; with the aim of determining as accurately as possible her own attitude towards him and this issue in general. At the same time; it is impossible to state unequivocally that Prilepin fully shares the position expressed by Shargunov.

Curious is the fact that; despite the extremely poor representation of female writers in “Name Day of the Heart”; Zakhar Prilepin notes with particular feeling that among all of his interlocutors; only two women “pronounced those clear and sensitive thoughts”; “I would like to formulate myself; first; before them”. This recognition precedes the conversation with Tatyana Nabatnikova; in whose work Prilepin particularly emphasizes the “goodwill” and “restraint” of the submission. At the same time; the writer’s judgments are distinguished by their rigor and peremptoryness (which; of course; reveals the very psychological relationship of which Prilepin speaks).



So; Tatyana Nabatnikova is sure that “it is senseless to lay claim to someone else’s place”; but even her; “the one and only; nobody can take”. Zakhar Prilepin; in turn; declares: “I do not envy anyone. He was not jealous of either success or strangers' biographies. I have everything – Motherland; children; readers; friends. And if something is not enough for me; I will take it away” («Никому не завидую. Не завидовал ни чужому успеху; ни чужим биографиям. У меня всё есть – Родина; дети; читатели; друзья. А если чего-то мне не хватит; то я заберу») [1, 266].

Both Prilepin and Nabatnikova are ready to argue with the truths; which the majority think of as capitals. The writer; for example; does not like the adage “a thin world is better than a good quarrel”; («худой мир лучше доброй ссоры»); since “the notorious political correctness often pushes the sore into the depths; and then it breaks through with a purulent boil” («пресловутая политкорректность часто загоняет болячку в глубину; и она потом прорывается гнойным нарывом») [1, 267]; and “a good quarrel aggravates the relationship and helps eliminate latent mistakes” («хорошая ссора обостряет отношения и помогает устранить подспудные ошибки»).

Prilepin also abhorred the expression “start with yourself”: “Start with yourself – one of the most disgusting phrases for me ... I will eat bread; love my wife; and if I need to punish a villain; I will start with him; not with myself” («Начни с себя – одна из самых отвратительных для меня фраз... Я буду есть хлеб; любить жену; а если мне нужно будет наказать негодяя; я начну с него; а не с себя») because «if I start with myself; he will run faraway” («если я начну с себя; он далеко убежит») [2, 268]. Zahara Prilepin; the writer Anna Kozlova; is also related to the rejection of “half tones in life and in prose”. The writer notes that the writer works “with taste and without false tact; with amazing energy; with cynicism; and sometimes with passion demonstrating amazing honesty” («со вкусом и без ложного такта; с поразительной энергетикой; с цинизмом; а порой и со страстью демонстрируя удивительную честность») [2, 268]. Certainly; some features of the writer's style; indicated here by Prilepin; can also be attributed to him. For the uncompromising Anna Kozlova; it is obvious that “the only way to keep one's mind is to treat what you are doing is not quite serious” («единственный способ сохранить рассудок – относиться к тому; что ты делаешь; не вполне серьезно»); since “there is nothing more terrible than someone who was wrapped in a scarf with pills; drunk with fake vodka; a graduate of the Literary Institute; who has been telling for two hours present about their genius” («нет ничего страшнее какого-

нибудь замотанного в шарф с катышками; упившегося паленой водкой выпускника Литинститута; два часа рассказывающего присутствующим о своей гениальности») [2, 269].

Zakhar Prilepin also believes that a writer who treats himself as “the best Russian writer of the last ten years”; risks becoming a “patient of a hospital for schizophrenics”. It is curious that; in this case; male prose; according to Kozlova; differs from female prose precisely in the fact that «a man rarely has enough spirit to treat himself skeptically as the author» («у мужчины редко хватает духу отнестись со скепсисом к себе как к автору») [2, 270]. It is worth noting here that in some Prilepin texts; we once already noted signs of combining different gender consciousnesses – male and female when trying to find some literary inconsistencies in the works of Zakhar Prilepin and Vera Polozkova.

The choice of these names was not accidental; and it was determined primarily by the fact that the authors at the beginning of the creative path were really interested in each other's work. Prilepin called Polozkov “the first poetess of Russia” Polozkova; in turn; was inclined to see in Prilepin not only an interesting writer; but also the embodiment of a truly masculine view of the world: “He is cool; he is victorious” [4, 28].

Certainly; the author’s personality is reflected in different ways in the epos and lyrics: each kind of literature has its own specific features. Therefore; we will focus; first of all; on the titles; where the seal of the author’s personality manifests itself most clearly where the distinction is made “Male” and “female” literature in the modern world.

## CONCLUSION

The analytical development of these authors makes it clear that the vast majority of their works are autopsychological; that they do not just recreate abstract images of a man with female traits in the first case; and women with a male feature set in the second; but combine these two oxymoronic principles. Trying to make sense of it; Polozkova will note: “I think that there is no female or male poetry. If you are talking to people as you are with your peers; it doesn't matter if you have more – male or female”. («Я думаю; что не существует женской или мужской поэзии. Если говоришь с людьми; как с равными себе – не важно; чего в тебе больше – мужского или женского») [2, 272]. All this makes it possible to understand that in this case the prose writer and the poetess tend to combine in themselves a polar incompatible. In addition; Prilepin is interested in observing such personality traits in other writers.

As a result; “hierarchies in modern literature have developed with minimal participation of the



writers themselves” whereas “traditionally ... literature was perceived as a field of general work” [4, 102]. Not trying to idealize the modern literary process; Z. Prilepin nevertheless comes to an unequivocal conclusion: “There is good literature in Russia. Do not think that all of it consists of what is heard. Russian literature is much wider” [2, 242].

Z.Prilepin offers themes for reflection to his «literary peers»; representatives of the “new era” – “the next tectonic shift” [3, 106]. With each of the “young” authors; he talks about relatives; writers of interest to him; and is interested in the degree of involvement of everyone in the modern literary process.

Certainly; the author’s personality is reflected in different ways in the epos and lyrics: each kind of literature has its own specific features. All this makes it possible to understand that in this case the prose writer and the poet tend to combine in themselves a polar incompatible. In addition; such features of Z. Prilepin are interesting to observe in contemporary writers and poets.

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