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**Travelogue in the Russian literary tradition**

The travelogue genre occupies a special position in the literary process. Until now, in Russian literary criticism there is no single view not only on the essence of this term (i.e. there is no single idea of the ontology of the phenomenon under consideration), but also not all modern literary scholars accept the very fact of the existence of the “travelogue” as a genre: “In the form of travel, it can a work of heroic content, a great epic satire, a utopia, and a novel can be written”<sup>1</sup>.

In modern travel science there is no established view of genre-forming principles and laws; the question of the pre – Sternean stage of development of literary travel in Russian literature has not yet been clearly resolved. In Russian literary criticism, the terminology of travel literature exists, so to speak, in a syncretic form. The word “travelogue” is equally applied to the trips that writers made and to the texts that they created based on the materials of their trips. Having pointed out the origin of this genre in Western Europe, we will try to assess its role in the history of Russian literature<sup>2</sup>. Since this study is not a historical survey of all the significant works of travel that have appeared in Russia, we will omit such early pioneer travelers as Abbot Daniel, who visited Palestine in the early twelfth century and wrote down detailed descriptions of the holy places for his countrymen, or merchant Afanasy Nikitin, whose travel notes about a trip to India were preserved in a chronicle of the fifteenth century.

The travelogue genre in Russian literature has gone through several stages of evolution, acquiring its own characteristics and functions.

The first stage is the 18<sup>th</sup> century. At this stage, travelogues were mainly descriptions of travel around Russia and were written mainly by foreign authors. The purpose of these travelogues was to get acquainted with Russian lands, their nature, customs and culture.

The second stage falls on the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> – first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During this period, the first Russian travelogues appeared, and their authors were often Russian noble travelers. They describe their travels through the Europe, Asia, America, as well as through the Russian provinces. Travelogues become a means of cul-

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<sup>1</sup> *Wędrowka, podróż, migracja w języku i kulturze*, red. E. Białas-Pleszak, J. Przyklenk, A. Rejter, K. Sujkowska-Sobisz, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2018.

<sup>2</sup> А.А. Бондарева, *Литература скитаний*, «Октябрь» 2012, № 7, с. 277—281, <http://magazines.russ.ru/october/2012/7/bo18.htm> [accessed: 21.12.2023].

tural self-education, allowing you to get acquainted with other countries and enrich your life experience.

The third stage is the mid-19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century. At this stage, travelogues acquire a deeper philosophical and research character. The authors strive to understand the socio-economic problems and political characteristics of the countries visited. Travelogues become a means of enlightening and expanding the reader's horizons.

The specificity of the functioning of a travelogue is that this work describes the author's journey, his observations, impressions and thoughts about the places visited. A travelogue allows the reader to feel the atmosphere of a trip, feel its emotional coloring and get acquainted with interesting facts about the places the author has visited.

Regarding the poetics of travelogue, the following general features can be distinguished:

1. Descriptiveness – the author describes the places visited, nature, architecture, local customs and life in detail.
2. Brightness and imagery – travel writers often use bright and expressive images to convey the impressions and emotions of the author.
3. Travel as an experience – the authors of travelogues set themselves the goal of gaining new knowledge, broadening their horizons and understanding themselves in the context of the countries they visit.
4. Subjectivity – travelogues are often subjective works that reflect the views and worldview of the authors.

Thus, the evolution of the travelogue genre in Russian literature has gone through several stages, acquiring the specifics of functioning and general features of poetics aimed at describing the journey, broadening the reader's horizons and conveying the emotional coloring and impressions of the author.

The genre of travel, which became extremely popular in Western Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was skillfully used by Fonvizin, Radishchev and Karamzin to explain to the Russian reading public some important concepts about the theory of literature, about society (foreign and domestic), about themselves and about nature. The travel genre – then as now, a flexible tool for conveying, through a diary-style narrative, information about distant, often exotic people and places – was adapted by Stern and others to topics that had little to do with ordinary travel. The Russians quickly understood both the literary and polemical potential of the genre, and, influenced by the Western model, they too used it to convey theoretical statements on a range of issues<sup>3</sup>.

The study of travel literature is such a popular and diverse humanitarian direction of our time that attempts are constantly being made to generalize both the material and these studies themselves. In this case, any aspect is considered: thematic groups of travel (by type of route, movement, author), the practice of travel and un-

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<sup>3</sup> С.Ю. Каменский, *Травелог как форма конструирования музейных экспозиций (на примере археологических выставок)*, [в:] *Дискурс травелога*, авт.-сост.: О.Ф. Русакова, В.М. Русаков, Издательский дом «Дискурс-Пи», Екатеринбург 2008, [http://u6935.netangels.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=112&Itemid=10](http://u6935.netangels.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=112&Itemid=10) [accessed: 21.12.2023].

derstanding of this phenomenon in a certain era, the methodological foundations of research. In the Russian literary scientific tradition, until recently, the problem seemed almost unstudied: there were several serious works devoted to circulation in ancient Russian literature and travel in the literature of the Peter the Great era; In Russian literature of modern times, travel has been practically not studied (several works by Soviet and Russian authors, essential for describing the genre history of travel, are considered in a general scientific context). The situation has changed somewhat in recent years. A large group of researchers began to seriously study Soviet travel in the 1920–1930s to different parts of the world, travel throughout the USSR, as well as the travel of Russian emigrants.

Under the influence of Western culture, the travelogue genre also appeared in other literatures. Some of them include:

1. English Literature: Great Britain played a key role in the development of travel writing. The works of authors such as Mark Twain, Charles Dickens and Ryujuro Nakamish have become classics of the genre.
2. American Literature: In the United States, travelogues gained particular popularity, especially during the Gold Rush and the Great Depression. The works of John Steinbeck, Jack Kerouac and Ernest Hemingway have become famous examples of American travelogue.
3. French Literature: French writers also contributed to the development of the travelogue genre. Balzac, Jules Verne and Alexandre Dumas created fascinating travel stories that still enjoy popularity today.
4. Italian Literature: Italian authors such as Dante Alighieri and Umberto Eco also used travelogue elements in their works. Their works reflect the heroes' journeys to different countries and cultures.
5. Japanese literature: In Japan, the travelogue genre has also gained recognition. The Edo period classic *The Uji Surroundings* is an early example of Japanese travelogue.
6. Polish literature: on the basis of Polish culture, in relation to travel literature, the terms *reportaż podróżniczy* / *reportaż z podróży* are used, lit. "travel report / report about travel" (due to the non-distinction between the genres of report and essay), which corresponds to the designations travel essay and travelogue. Arthur Reiter, in a book devoted to the formation and evolution of this genre, draws attention to how the subject is manifested in texts of this kind, what constitutes the subject of the description, how relationships are formed along the addressee-recipient line. Also, of interest is the modification of the distribution of functions – cognitive, mimetic, redundant, aesthetic – depending on the author's attitudes and the time of writing the text<sup>4</sup>. The researcher emphasizes that in Poland, travel report as a separate genre was formed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but its beginnings in the form of a description and story go back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, taking on the form of a travel diary or a letter from a trip in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, developments on the topic of travel literature also point out the

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<sup>4</sup> С. Кржижановский, *Литературная энциклопедия. Словарь литературных терминов: в 2-х т.*, под ред. Н. Бродского, А. Лаврецкого, Э. Лунина, В. Львова-Рогачевского, М. Розанова, В. Чешихина-Ветринского, т. 2, Издательство Л.Д. Френкель, Москва–Ленинград 1925, <http://feb-web.ru/feb/slt/abc/lt2/lt2-7053.htm> [accessed: 21.12.2023].

blurring of its genre boundaries, the conceptualization of travel, their types and ways of writing about them<sup>5</sup>.

Examples of Polish travel literature are such texts as *Peregrynacja albo pielgrzymowanie do Ziemi Świętej* by Nicholas Christopher Radziwill (1628) about the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, *Podróże historyczne po ziemiach polskich między rokiem 1811 a 1828 odbyte* by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1858) about traveling through Polish lands, *Wspomnienia Wołynia, Polesia i Litwy* (1840) by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski – memories of Volyn, Polesie and Lithuania, *Listy z podróży do Ameryki* by Henryk Sienkiewicz (1880), eight travel essays about Italy *Podróże do Włoch* (1977) by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, books by contemporary travel writers, for example, Andrzej Stasiuk, Mariusz Szczygieł, Hugo Bader, Mariusz Wilk, Beata Pawlikowska, Martyna Wojciechowska.

These are just some examples of how Western culture influences the development of the travelogue genre and how it is reflected in other literatures.

These studies are clearly insufficient to fully cover the topic (it can still be considered poorly studied), however, the trend of steady growth in works on travel literature in Russian literature cannot but rejoice. The presented article is an attempt to summarize what has already been done over the past few years, to offer our point of view on a number of controversial or unexplained problems and to create a typology of Soviet literary travel.

Discussion and observation. The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was a time of uncertainty and transition for many literary genres. Satire, ode, epic, tragedy – all genres championed by the classicists – became outdated imitations of past models, while the sentimental school developed new, more personal forms of expression. During this period, travelogue becomes a hybrid genre, including elements of poetry, prose and drama<sup>6</sup>. Writers such as Radishchev and Karamzin, influenced by sentimentalism, found travelogue ideal for expressing their own inner feelings along with a sensitivity to nature and simple “primitive” life. This genre, hitherto outside the boundaries of classical literary aesthetics, allowed them to convey at least the illusion of spontaneous inspiration. Although the travelogue allows for the mixing of literary genres, it imposes some important technical restrictions on the author.

The narrative must be told in the first person, and the material must somehow relate to the journey (which, however, the author is free to define in his own terms). Like a literary diary, a “journey” usually implies an autobiographical account of the narrator’s experiences – an apparently spontaneous recording of everyday observations and sensations. The “spontaneity” of storytelling is, of course, often a purely literary device or convention used to dramatize a fictional character who is telling a fictional story, and may not be based on the author’s actual experiences<sup>7</sup>. A fictional travel diary or memoir usually retains, for the sake of verisimilitude, many of

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<sup>5</sup> О.В. Мамуркина, *Травелог в русской литературной традиции: стратегия текстопорождения*. «Филологические науки. Вопросы теории и практики» 2013, № 9, ч. 2, с. 110–113.

<sup>6</sup> Н.А. Никитина, Н.А. Тулякова, *Жанр травелога: когнитивная модель*, <https://publications.hse.ru/pubs/share/folder/snuji42noa/104507663.pdf> [accessed: 21.12.2023].

<sup>7</sup> Т.И. Печерская, *Литература путешествий: культурно-семиотические и дискурсивные аспекты*, «Гаудеамус», Новосибирск 2013.

the autobiographical or descriptive elements found in its “real” counterpart. This applies even to the most fantastic examples of the genre, such as Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*. When travelogue is used for aesthetic purposes, and not just to convey information, it becomes “literary”. Like its distant ancestor, the picaresque novel, the fictional travelogue does not have a single plot. Since the narrator must move from one place to another, any single plot involving one set of characters becomes virtually impossible. Consequently, the action must consist of a series of episodes or miniature plots. Skillful authors illustrate their ideas about human nature, national characters, social injustice, freedom, art with the help of such seemingly unrelated episodes. The unity of travelogues is not based on the dramatic resolution of conflicts that arise between characters, but rather on the author’s ability to generalize eloquently and convincingly. Even in its most subjective and lyrical form, literary travelogue retains a didactic, moralizing tone. Perhaps such didacticism is inevitable, since travel, real or imagined, provides the traveler with an almost irresistible opportunity to re-evaluate his own society and his own values. When faced with an alien environment, we tend to compare and contrast the strange with the familiar; geographic displacement inspires detachment, which in turn forces us to make radical value judgments. Travel not only stimulates comparisons, but can also influence changes within a person. Dramatizing the emotional and intellectual changes experienced by the narrator remains an important function of the literary travelogue. After all, since the Middle Ages, sea or land travel has been a common allegory for the soul’s journey through life, toward ultimate salvation or damnation. Pushkin and Griboedov both wrote true travelogues related to military campaigns in the Caucasus. And both works refute the romantic myths about the wars that were fought in this distant and exotic territory<sup>8</sup>.

Consider Pushkin’s journey to Erzurum – a prosaic response to the sentimental journey that came into fashion in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The travel letters of Griboedov, on the other hand, were not written for publication, they lack a consistent topic or thesis. Because their interest is mostly biographical, we won’t include them here. The local “internal” travelogue, used as a platform for criticizing the social and political situation in Russia, plays a significant role in Russian literature. Although there are few examples of critical or satirical travel “per se” due to the threat of censorship, related works such as *Dead Souls* and *Athlete Sketches* have been read as accusations or at least negative depictions of the society they describe. Seeing your country as if you were a foreigner can be an effective means of showing readers the flaws in their own society. Montesquieu’s *Letters of Men* is a celebrated example of a satirical travel diary used for such didactic purposes. Radishchev in *The Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* and Chekhov on Sakhalin Island (written more than a hundred years later) sought reforms, describing a clear injustice in their society. Their goal was to educate rather than entertain the reader.

The emergence of literary travel itself is associated with the design of fiction as a self-sustaining aesthetic category of travelogue. Andreas Shënle in a detailed study *Authenticity and fiction in the author’s identity of Russian travel literature 1790–1840* (2004) establishes the boundaries of the relationship between the plan of reality

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<sup>8</sup> A. Rejter, *Kształtowanie się gatunku reportażu podróżniczego w perspektywie stylistycznej i pragmatycznej*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2000.

and its aesthetic transformations in literary travels of K. XVIII – the first third of the XIX century: *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (1790) A.N. Radishchev and the proper paradigm; *Letters of the Russian Traveler* (1791–1792) by N.M. Karamzin as constructing himself in the space of the “other”; “travelogue as a ritual of social integration” (*Journey to Little Russia* [1803], *Another trip to Little Russia* [1804], *Journey to Taganrog, Odessa and Crimea* [1812] P.I. Shalikov); history in the present (*Journey to Middy Russia* [1800, rev. and additional in 1805] V.V. Izmailova); “travelogue as a ritual of spiritual elevation” (*Letters of V.A. Zhukovskago to Grand Duchess Alexandra Fedorovna from his first trip abroad in 1821*); *Excerpt from the letters of a Russian officer in Finland* (publ. in 1859) K.N. Batyushkov and the naive paradox, *Trip to Revel* (1821) by A.A. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky and the idea of utopia; *Paradox 112 Publishing House Literacy* “www.gramota.net sentimental” – *Journey through Tavrid in 1820* by I.M. Muravyov-Apostol, resources of irony (*Journey to Arzrum* [1829] by A.S. Pushkin, *Wanderer* [1832] by A.F. Veltman, *Fantastic Travels of Baron Brambeus* [1833] O.I. Senkovsky)<sup>9</sup>.

Results. These works do not exhaust the circle of Russian travelogues of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, continue to develop the traditions of sentimentalism of P.I. Sumarokov (*Journey throughout the Crimea and Bessarabia in 1799* [1800], *Leisure of the Crimean judge, or the Second trip to Taurida* [1803]) and M.I. Nevzorov (*Journey to Kazan, Vyatka and Orenburg in 1800* [1803]); the travelogue N.V. Gogol in the poem *Dead Souls* (1842), fictionalizes the documentary form of the magazine M.Yu. Lermontov (*Hero of Our Time* [1840]). It is important that the work of Gogol and Lermontov enshrines in the literary tradition, in fact, the novel a journey (Reise-Roman, according to S. Krzhizhanovsky), the prototype of which, however, is also created by F. Emin in one of his most famous novels *Fickle Fortune, or The Adventure of Miramond* (1763). The genre and ideological resources of the travel novel and forms close to it are further explored by N.A. Nekrasov (the poem *To Whom to Live Well in Russia* (1866–1876) undoubtedly has a romance nature), I.A. Goncharov (the cycle of travel notes *Frigate Pallas* [1855–1857]), N.G. Chernyshevsky (the novel *What to do?* [1862–1863]), N.S. Leskov (the story *The Enchanted Wanderer* [1872–1873]), etc. In the late XIX – early XX centuries, the travelogue reiterated itself as a universal structure for translating the meaning of any kind. The authors of the collection of articles *Fugitive Views: A New Reading of Russian Travelogues of the First Third of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (2010) emphasize that the feeling of precariousness of reality pushed writers to a special view of the world: the view of the fugitive, the view opened in eternity (in early travelogues, the dichotomy “own/alien” determined the limb of space, the presence of the final “return point, travelogue of the beginning XX century”)<sup>10</sup>.

The eschatological attitude is characteristic of the travelogues of “runaway Art Nouveau”: *Sakhalin Island* (1891–1894) by A.P. Chekhov, *Fleeting. 1915* (1915)

<sup>9</sup> Е.Ю. Сафатова, *Паломнический сюжет в «Путешествии ко Святым местам в 1830 году» и «Путешествии по Святым местам русским» А.Н. Муравьева*: дисс. ... канд. филол. наук, Кемерово 2008.

<sup>10</sup> А. Шенле, *Подлинность и вымысел в авторском самосознании русской литературы путешествий, 1790–1840*, пер. с англ. Д. Соловьева, «Академический проект», Санкт-Петербург 2004.

V.V. Rozanova; the study of the place of personality within the boundaries of the collapsing empire is subordinated to the plan of the *Sentimental Journey* (1923) by V.V. Shklovsky (an autobiographical novel, already at the level of the name of the travesty of sentimentalism of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century), *Travels to Armenia* (1931–1932) O. Mandelstam and essays *Wind from the Caucasus. Impressions and Armenia* (1928) by A. Bely. It is also curious to contrast two more directions of development of travelogues, highlighted by researchers of the genre: the construction of an ideologically proper space of a new empire (*According to the Union of Soviets* by M. Gorky, 1929; *Desert, In the East* (1936) P. Pavlenko; *The Road to the Ocean* (1935) by L. Leonov) and *The Exile's Gaze (Journey to an Unknown Land* (1946) by Yu.K. Therapiano; *In Europe by Car* (1933) by G. Ivanov). The idea of wandering and updating the motive of the trip is characteristic of the works of I.A. Bunin, B.K. Zaitsev, I.S. Shmelev, V.V. Nabokov, M.A. Bulgakov, A.T. Tvardovsky. The latest Russian literature, the ways of development of which are still completely beyond comprehension, also resorts to bullying as a scheme for organizing a text, playing out genre forms and nominations; postmodernism literature, which updates the idea of utopia/dystopia, uses a path metaphor, a cyclical motive, closing motion vectors: *Spelling* (2003), *Railway* (2006) by D. L. Bykov, *Metro 2033* by D. Glukhovskiy, *2017* by O. Slavnikova and others. Curious and researched by Sh. G. Umerov are the “travels of the people of the bottom”: *Lessons of Europe* (2002) by M. Arbatova, *Three Hells: an anti-culture novel* by A. Ryasov, *More than Ben* (2002) by S. Sakin, *Paris, Moscow, love...* (2007) M. Aznavour et al<sup>11</sup>. The journalistic nature of these texts brings them closer to travel journalism, the main format of which remains the travelogue magazine (“Around the World”, “GEO”, “National Geographic” etc.).

Thus, travel, whether real or allegorical, has traditionally been seen as a means of self-improvement, a kind of education in itself individual. Both Radishchev and Karamzin will seek to inform and guide their readers by portraying the “education” of their narrators. The travel genre, but formally outside of it, includes travel undertaken within the Russian Empire by many heroes of nineteenth-century Russian literature. The Caucasus was especially attractive to the romantic literary imagination: therefore Pushkin, Marlinsky, Lermontov and Tolstoy show their “civilized” protagonists in conflict with the “primitive” inhabitants of a wild and exciting mountain landscape. The influence of the travel genre is especially noticeable in Lermontov’s novel *Hero of Our Time*. In the first part, *Bela*, the narrator’s descriptions of the nature and vicissitudes of his journey (which belong to the travel note genre) create a “frame” for the story of his fellow traveler Maxim Maksimych. The diary of Pechorin (containing the last three parts: *Taman*, *Princess Mary* and *Fatalist*), moreover, takes the form of a highly melodramatic travel diary, which serves to dispel, revealing the intellectual and spiritual superficiality of Pechorin, the aura of romantic mystery that others perceived in this “hero”. The genesis of the travelogue confirms the relevance of the genre at different stages of the development of literature and literature in general: remaining a convenient form of direct fixation of impressions, path prose became a universal matrix of comprehension of the “other”, creating and consolidat-

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<sup>11</sup> Ш.Г. Умеров, *Пространство и время: заграничное путешествие людей «дна» как протожанр в новейшей русской литературе*, «История и современность» 2011, № 2 (14), [http://www.socionauki.ru/journal/files/iis/2011\\_2/179-193.pdf](http://www.socionauki.ru/journal/files/iis/2011_2/179-193.pdf) [accessed: 21.12.2023].

ing the “image of the other” at different levels of artistic generalization, regardless of the author’s tasks, and therefore his narrative strategy.

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## Travelogue in the Russian literary tradition

### Abstract

The article makes an attempt at specific works of travel literature to trace the main stages of the evolution of the genre of literary travel, the peculiarities of its development, appearance and functioning, to consider the originality of the genre and its poetics. Considering the evolution of the travelogue genre, it should be noted the breadth and variety of views on the essence of the genre. In modern domestic literary criticism, we will meet a wide range of views on the essence of the genre. Numerous travel notes of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and the current century make it possible to raise the problem of the evolution of the genre as a problem of its continued development. Pointing to the origin of this genre in Western Europe, we will try to assess its role in the history of Russian literature, as well as analyze the existence of travelogue in the



Russian literary tradition: sources, genre genetics, main development vectors, texts using the formula for organizing travel prose as a compositional and meaningful invariant.

**Key words:** Russian literature, evolution of the genre, travel prose, travelogue

## Травелог в русской литературной традиции

### Резюме

В статье рассматривается проблематика появления, развития и функционирования жанра травелог, с обращением особого внимания на многообразие взглядов на его сущность. Указывается на происхождение данного типа текста в Западной Европе, а также анализируется его бытование в русской литературной традиции, учитывая источники, генетику жанра, основные векторы развития, тексты, использующие формулу организации путевой прозы в качестве композиционного и содержательного инварианта. Кроме того, совершается попытка дать современное определение дефиниции травелога, выявить его жанрообразующие черты и особенности в конкретные историко-литературные эпохи его развития. Эволюция анализируемого жанра, его поэтика и стилевая специфика прослеживаются на избранных произведениях русской путевой литературы.

**Ключевые слова:** русская литература, эволюция жанра, путевая проза, травелог

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