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POST-SOVIET MILITARY PROSE IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE OF THE CIS COUNTRIES

Annotation

The article is devoted to the study of post-Soviet military prose in contemporary literature of the CIS countries, viewed as a particular form of artistic discourse that reflects the historical, social, and cultural transformations of the region following the collapse of the USSR. The focus of the analysis is on how authors interpret military experience, the memory of conflicts, and issues of national identity through literary texts.

Key words

military prose, Chechen war, CIS countries, contemporary literature, historical, cultural, and sociopolitical realities.

Post-Soviet military prose reflects the unique historical, cultural, and sociopolitical realities of the CIS countries in the period following the collapse of the Soviet Union. It developed in the context of local conflicts, interventions, and wars on the territory of the former USSR, such as the Afghan campaign (1979–1989), the Chechen wars (1994–1996, 1999–2009), the Georgian-Abkhaz and Tajik conflicts, as well as peacekeeping missions and operations in the post-Soviet space. A distinctive feature of this prose is the combination of artistic narration with documentary and memoir elements, creating a specific military discourse oriented both toward conveying individual experiences and shaping collective memory.

Post-Soviet military prose often focuses on the personal experiences of soldiers and officers, the psychological and moral dilemmas of war, the socio-ethical consequences of conflict, and the complexity of interactions between the state, society, and the individual. Researchers such as A. Kulik and S. Plotnikov note that prose about the Chechen wars and the Afghan campaign is built around narratives of trauma, loss, and heroism, and that the language of these works actively employs military terminology, emotionally charged battle descriptions, and metaphors of war, making it a rich object for the analysis of military discourse and the ideological representation of conflict.

Post-Soviet military prose occupies a significant place in contemporary literature of the CIS, reflecting different stages and types of local conflicts at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries. One of the most prominent themes remains the depiction of the Afghan war, which has been the subject of numerous works of both fiction and journalism. This theme was developed in Russian prose by writers returning from Afghanistan, such as Oleg

Khandus, whose creative output includes numerous stories and novellas about combat and the psychological experiences of war participants. His work is considered an example of the representation of the Afghan conflict in post-Soviet prose.

In fiction, the novel Two Steps from Paradise is also widely known, in which the fate of a group of paratroopers illustrates the horrors of war, personal traumatization, and the complexity of intercultural contact in the Afghan context. These works demonstrate how authors strive to move away from the official Soviet narrative of war toward a more subjective, psychologically nuanced interpretation of actual combat experience.

The Chechen wars also became a central theme in post-Soviet Russian literature, generating a large body of texts that are the subject of philological study. In L. M. Dovletkireeva's dissertation, it is emphasized that contemporary Chechen "military" prose of the late 20th–early 21st centuries is formed as a distinct cultural-historical phenomenon, where authors seek to comprehend the tragedy of the conflict through both individual and collective experiences. The genre palette includes novellas, short stories, and novels addressing eternal questions of life and death, duty, ethics, and cultural belonging. Notable works in this context include M. Akhmadov's novel And the River Flowed into the Night, the novella So That the Candle Is Not Extinguished by the Wind, and M. Beksultanov's Distant Shores of the River of Life, where authors use the artistic space of war to explore psychological and philosophical aspects of human existence in extreme conditions. According to researchers, these works create a unique "military prose" in which language and poetics reflect both the brutality of conflict and the deep cultural and moral questions faced by the characters and their communities.

In late 20th–early 21st century Russian literature, authors considered representatives of the "new military prose" also play a significant role. Key figures of contemporary military prose include writers such as Arkady Babchenko, Alexander Karasyov, Zakhar Prilepin, and German Sadulaev, whose works address the Chechen war and local conflicts in the Caucasus. Their texts often combine artistic and journalistic discourse, blending literary techniques with documentary accuracy and personal perception of events, making them an important subject for the analysis of modern military prose.

Overall, post-Soviet military prose is characterized by the integration of artistic and journalistic elements, allowing researchers to identify the specific features of military discourse in the CIS. It combines functional features of institutional discourse (accurate terminology, tactical descriptions, command interactions) with artistic-aesthetic means (narrative structure, emotional coloring, symbolism of war). This provides a unique opportunity to analyze how war is constructed in literary consciousness, what ideological and value-based messages are conveyed to the reader, and how literature influences the collective memory of society.

Special attention is paid to the linguistic and discursive features of works on local conflicts: lexical choices, the formation of military terminology, narrative strategies, the construction of heroes and enemies, and the use of literary techniques to represent conflict. Scholars such as S. Kuranova and K. Khoma emphasize that these texts create a "hybrid discourse" combining documentary, journalistic, and artistic narrative, which allows for an adequate reflection of the complexity of post-Soviet war as a social and cultural phenomenon.

Post-Soviet military prose is a key source for the analysis of military discourse in the CIS countries. It reflects local conflicts, the Afghan campaign, the Chechen wars, and other post-Soviet military events, forming a rich palette of artistic and journalistic strategies. These texts allow researchers to explore the intersection of individual experience, collective memory, and

socio-cultural interpretation of war, creating a foundation for interdisciplinary analysis in literary studies, cultural studies, and discourse studies.

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