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**THE NOVEL "NEGATION OF THE NEGATION"
BY KONSTANTIN Y. LAGUNOV:
THE PHENOMENON OF GENRE PHILOSOPHIZATION**

SUMMARY. This article for the first time systematically presents the elements of philosophization of the novel genre in the works of the Siberian writer K.Ya. Lagunov. On the basis of his post-Soviet work entitled "Negation of the Negation", considering the lexical field, the structure of the novel, the headline complex and nomination poetics, ideological clashes of the work's characters, analyzing their reasoning as a distinct form of speech, the author traces a transformation of a workplace novel into a philosophical one. The author draws a parallel between the plot of "Negation of the Negation" and the ordonnance of L.M. Leonov's "Russian Forest", makes a number of observations of a comparative character. Ultimately, it is suggested to consider K.Ya. Lagunov's best work as a link in the genre chain of Russian philosophical novels; the author denotes the perspective of analyzing the experiences of regional word painters on the edge of historical epochs as a search for valid and acceptable decisions on the Motherland's fate, clarifies the axiological landmarks for the people.

KEY WORDS. K. Lagunov, L. Leonov, novel, genre, philosophy, "Negation of Negation".

In the analysis of the Russian novel of the Soviet period, philology came to the conclusion that Soviet philosophical realia are embodied in the novels' structure, in the system of juxtapositions, set in their composition, the development of the plot, conflicts, character development and detection of their traits and potencies. Specialists justly see the constructive basis of the philosophical novel in the description of "Struggle of Ideas". The Siberian writer K.Y. Lagunov oriented his creative practice around the traditions of the philosophical-ideological novel, particularly on works by F.M. Dostoyevsky and L.M. Leonov, reflecting actively their genre experience.

In the works of the Post-Soviet writer, the novel "Negation of the Negation" (1987-1995) is, undoubtedly, the apical text, and several times it has been the object of particular philological reflection. According to the diarists' evidence, K.Y. Lagunov called it a philosophical novel both in the process of its creation and in his private talks. Nowadays the materials of the range of reading, typical for the author in the period of the novel's creation, have become public. The author of the article refers to the notes in the book by V.V. Rozanov "The Legend of the Great Inquisitor by F.M. Dostoyevsky" (published in 1991). S.A. Komarov in his comments on this

publication characterizes the notes as the creative laboratory of the novel “Negation of the Negation”, “bridges” to the understanding of this text.

The axis of the novel is the large discussion about the future of the Purovskoe field, in which the main characters of the novel are involved. On the one side are the secretary of the regional Committee Serafim Barduharov, the boss of the central oil board Viktor Vandishev and their followers — those who order to surpass the oil production plan, living according to the principle “we don’t care what will be after us”. The second group of characters is those who are against the system, they, not having as much power as the first group, try to claim that this approach is destructive and will lead to the end of the field — these are the director of the Research Institute Nikolay Karnauhov, writer Petr Zhigulin. Through this collision starts a “complex” philosophical conflict, in which the young generation also takes part. After the problem of the relationship between Humans and Nature, typical for that time, arise questions of morality, responsibility for one’s doings, the problem of traditions, and, finally, the eternal topics of Good and Evil, love and hate, leading to the question of God’s existence.

Developing the plot in such way, the writer continues the line by Leonid Leonov, in whose novel “Russian Forest” “almost for the first time in Soviet (legal) literature the lawfulness and expediency of the revolutionary principles of life refreshment become criticized”. There is also similarity in the system of characters. While in Leonov’s novel the carriers of contrary ideas, scientists Ivan Matveich Vikhrov and Alexander Yakovlevich Graziansky, through the public discussion about the problem of forest use solve inner tasks of conservation (Vikhrov) or destruction (Graziansky) of the “miracle of life”, leading at the same time a hidden struggle for souls of the young generation, in Lagunov’s novel the expressers of the ideas are groups of characters, involved in the sphere of oil production (the same Nature use as in Leonov’s novel).

It is important to say that in the novel by the Siberian author there is no accent on the struggle for the minds of young people: the new generation is more an indicator of the impact of working paradigms. Barhudarov’s children (the son — evidently, and the daughter — in silent agreement with her brother) take positions, contrary to the family’s, struggling for the change of the system, built on hypocrisy (showy equality, falsity of slogans). Elya, on the contrary, grown up in a Karnaukhov workers’ family, denies the loving relatives, committing suicide after betrayal by her husband manqué Gariy Yurievich Barbiek — grandson of the legendary geologist-pioneer Galiy Yulievich. Gariy is his copy, “developed” by age and upbringing in luxury, both characters have arrogance, vanity, a passion for wealth, a lack of moral principles. So it is possible to note the usage of the techniques for formation of the problematic area of the text, already familiar to the reader from the philosophical novel “Russian Forest” by L. Leonov, the writer whose collection of works was in the private library of the author of “Negation of the Negation”.

K. Lagunov uses other techniques, which make the genre more philosophical. For example, it is the identity of images of two Barbieks, fixed by the choice of their

names. People noted that Lagunov worked with the realities, referring to the present time, changing slightly names of well-known characters and "was able to raise his hand, or a feather, against local authorities".

In the novel "Negation of the negation" the writes experiments with the poetics of names, through anthroponomy the reader gets not only understanding of their character, but also their social status or political views. K. Lagunov discovers a new technique: making the novel grotesque by the usage of uncommon character names. These include composite names – artificially created by the author in order to give a particular character to a person (like, for example, Cheboltanov). One of the peculiarities of the anthroponimy in the novel is wide associativity of names and surnames. Having chosen the name, and determined by it the person's character, the writer keeps the image in set semantic frames.

In the title of the novel, K.Y. Lagunov refers to a cultural symbol. Negation of the negation is one of the crucial laws of dialectics — in Hegelian and Marxist philosophy it is understood as the return of the object in the process of its development of the old quality on a higher level. In the novel it is reflected in parallel stories, divided by three hundred years. The life of whacky Gesha Pelymsky, who took death for truth, is repeated in a new turn of history, when the struggler-for-truth writer Petr Zhigulin dies, following the principle "do what you should do".

The novel provokes another understanding of the title. The author describes the events of Perestroika; according to the writer, it was the negation of the country's socialistic history. The reader can see pictures of the expansion of manners, the triumph of individuality, also referring to Siberian natural resources. Some of the characters try to prevent it, denying such a system. So, there is a double negation, which, against the law of logic, doesn't lead to affirmation.

The epigraph of the novel is taken from the appeal by A.I. Gercen (one of the most philosophical Russian writers) to his son in the introduction to the article compilation "From another bank": "Don't seek solutions in this book, there are not any, a modern man does not have them at all. What is solved, ended, and the future overturn is just starting". K.Y. Lagunov understands that "large can be seen only from a distance", so, living in the period of described events, in the conditions of the "open present", he just states negation of the negation.

In the novel, unlike previous works by the writer, we can see the titles of chapters and volumes (the novel is written in two volumes). The first volume is called "Triumph", the second — "Collapse". The reader can refer it to the definition of the condition of such a character as Serafim Barhudarov, who had great influence in Brezhnev's time, but not when Gorbachev came to power. The novel starts with the thoughts of this character and ends with them, but they lead to suicide. Barhudarov is the image of the system that had outlived itself. In the last chapter "The Final Point", Serafim Venediktovich understands his weakness, finds out that he was raised by the system and he helped to perform the rebellion with his silence. At the same time comes the understanding that his life was lived in vain, which leads to its tragic end.

The first volume of the book consists of 26 chapters, the second of 13. Each of them deserves great attention. Let us point out the stylistics of the headings: “Triumvirate”, “God Judged in a Different Way”, “Purovskiy Sufferings”, “On the Altar of the Motherland” etc. K.Y Lagunov was sure that the writer is a tribune, and he was not afraid to make his viewpoint public. The time of pathos struggle, sharp ratings and slogans — all this influenced the writer’s style.

There are no characters who do not think. Each reasoning takes 5 to 10 pages of the book — it is obvious that the writer pays great attention to this compositional form. The writer tries to vary it, using techniques new for his works (letters, talks to characters who died before the described events etc.), there are more author’s commentaries, which are close to so-called author’s retreat.

Apart from new forms, there are new topics for discussion. In the novel, if we compare it with previous works (“Too Steep Bank”, “Bronze Dog” etc.) there is change of accent: now the main topic is not production (though the author does not leave this topic), but the events in the country (The USSR’s Breakdown). It is important to notice that on the pages of “Negation of the Negation” there are thoughts of completely different characters about the soul and God. The author offers the reader to find the way out of this very sphere — the last thoughts and actions by Petr Zhigulin are directed at that. From this point, very characteristic is the scene of meeting between Zhigulin and Gesha in the presence of Christ and the description of Gesha’s soul, which came into the writer’s body.

As many pages of the novel are devoted to thoughts about sense and the truth of life, world creation and human nature, it is logical that these abstract lexemes are common in the novel. To illustrate the universality of modern processes in the novel, there is a parallel story of whacky Gesha Pelimskiy, which happened on the same northern territory: “After two and a half centuries the world had changed only externally, many prophecies by the author of the “Apocalypse” John the Evangelist have come true, but the height of creation — HUMANITY — remained the same as two hundred, three hundred, five hundred, a thousand years ago. Even in familiar people I find characters and fates, suitable to be actors in this old tragedy with Gesha Pelimskiy in the main role.” The writes compares the writer Petr Zhigulin, who “climbed Golgotha”, who knew about the mafia, was outraged in a small northern town and decided to deliver this truth to people, with Gesha, in the frames of this plot outline there are such abstract lexemes as *path, struggle, search, life, death, faith, doubt, unexplainable, fate, truth, law, meanness, hypocrisy, creation, etc.* which create the effect of metaphysical narration.

The concept “future” is crucial for the novel’s understanding. All the main characters of the novel are involved in the understanding of political events (Perestroika) and closely connected with its production sphere, with thoughts about the country’s history (imperial times, the years of Lenin’s, Stalin’s, Kruschev’s, Brezhnev’s power) and its fate. The crucial abstract lexemes, used in this context in the characters’ thoughts, are: *terror, violence, cowardice, power, brevity, will, reality,*

fate, fatal course, interests, new thinking, wellbeing, Perestroika, breakage, collapse, dominate, intrude, graft, experience etc.

When in "Too Steep Bank" (1978), a novel crucial in the writer's fate and rewarded by the USSR Writers Council in the 1980, the characters' thoughts mainly concern production, and important words about the meaning of life are spoken by a driller, in "Negation of the Negation", on the contrary, the carrier of the main idea is the man who is not involved in production — the writer. The topics of the characters' discussions spread to the critics of the country's course, man's place in the state system, clearer understanding of the basis of human existence. Almost all the characters touch on philosophical problems.

According to M.M. Bakhtin, the novel is "a multi-style, discordant event", including "straight author's literary and artistic narration", oral and written narration, literary, but "not artistic author's narration", "stylistically individualized speech by the characters", but where the author holds, fuses together this "discordance". Especially clearly, the "discordance" of the novel is seen in "hybrid constructions"; the most common type of which is unmarked inclusion in the text of the "voices", "zones" of characters. So it is important to describe the peculiarities of the narrator's words in this "discordance" of the novel.

In this novel by Lagunov there are characters' and narrator's conclusions both in direct and improperly-direct speech, and in so-called double-subject thoughts about out-of-time categories, which was not typical for characters in previous works by this author.

The speech in the novel is held by two narrators: the objective narrator, talking as the third person and one of the characters (Karnaukhov), talking in the first person. The main narrator does not bear open evaluations and fulfils a mainly descriptive and narrative function (though philosophical thoughts can be found in his speech), while in Karnaukhov's speech the author includes thoughts about problems of different levels. These are production questions — struggle for the life of the field, problems of the state system ("Do the pilots of the country believe in the aim, towards which they lead us? — This is the nail in my head. A thousand times — No, they do not!"). He also addresses existential questions: "What is life? And God? Is He earth of universal? There is so much absurdity, stupidity, meanness around, so many accidental, unexplainable things, that there are doubts about the existence of a world order, a divine law, which every being on Earth obeys." All these problems are interconnected in Karnaukhov's thoughts: in the example of the small we can see the universal pace of life. The character is the carrier of the author's ideas. This is confirmed by the lexical fields, typical for both narrators, among which there are many religious terms. Gesha's story is introduced through Karnaukhov.

So, in the novel "Negation of the Negation" by K. Y. Lagunov, on different levels of text organization, starting from the poetics of heading-final complex and plot development, ending with the system of characters, their description, lexical fields, functionally intensified by discussion and complication of subjective structure, there is a tendency of genre philosophization.

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