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"Turkmen Cycle" by Yuri Trifonov: in search of a literatureof fact

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Annotation

The article is devoted to the "Turkmen cycle" of the early prose of Yuri Trifonov. The purpose of this article is to analyze the role and functions of the documentary and factual literature in Y. Trifonov's prose of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, when the writer's ideological and aesthetic creed took its shape. The trip to Central Asia turned out to be fruitful: for many years the Turkmen material became the subject of images in Y. Trifonov's prose. The cycle of short stories Pod Solntsem (Under the Sun) marked a certain stage in the development of the writer's skills. Despite the abundance of exotic themes, the local colour, the "Turkmen cycle" stories are not limited to them: the texts solve the problems of the purpose of life, show the conflict between the old and the new, the transience of time. In the novel *Utolenie Zhazhdy (Quemching the Thirst)* Trifonov used the pattern of an industrial novel). The study allows the author to distinguish four important functions of the historical fact in Trifonov's prose: 1) everyday life description (associated with "local colour" and credibility); 2) chronotopic (associated with the contrasts of place and time); 3) psychological (fulfilling the tasks of psychological characteristics); 4) symbolic (the detail becomes a symbol, a philosophical generalization). The appeal to the new, exotic Turkmen theme for Y. Trifonov marked a deviation from the regular way of life, an appeal to a new reality. At the same time, the analysis of the Turkmen text of the writer shows, that the new material enabled him to draw general conclusions about the universality of many topics for different worlds: psychological regularities, the role and flow of time, etc.

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Keywords

Yuri Trifonov, prose, industrial novel, exotic, psychological analysis, short stories, novel, documentary, philosophical prose.

Introduction

According to Yurii Trifonov, since the mid-50s he himself and the literature of the USSR as a whole experienced a crisis because of the uncertainty of landmarks - political, ideological, stylistic: "Nothing was written. Everyone talked endlessly. To write in the old way wasn't interesting, they were still afraid of writing in the new way, could not and did not know where it would turn..." [Trifonov, 1987, vol. 4, 684].

Here to the author's help came the literature of fact. In his search for material for new work, the writer came a long way both geographically (Turkmen cycle) and chronologically (reference to the history of the revolution, access to historiosophical problems). According to O. Trifonova, at that time "Trifonov attracted reading Russia with a story about the real life, the fact that the life of his characters coincided with the life of the reader" [Trifonov, 1999, www].

The purpose of this article is to analyze the role and functions of the documentary-factual beginning in prose of Y. Trifonov of the 1950s - beginning of the 1960s, when the ideological and aesthetic credo of the writer was formed (the second and beginning of the third stage of the writer's creative evolution according to the periodization by A. Bocharova, or a period of "tough reflection" in C. Maegd-Soëp's terminology). The goal requires the following research tasks: research of formation of "literature of the word" in the Turkmen cycle of prose of the writer.

Cycle Pod Solntsem (Under the Sun) in the creative evolution of the writer

In spring, 1952, Trifonov went to Turkmenistan on a business trip from the magazine "*Novyi Mir*" (*The New World*). The official purpose of the trip was to collect material about the construction of the Turkmen canal. However, the real reason for the trip of Trifonov became the search for new experiences. As the writer himself admitted, "I wanted to go far away. See life, not like the one I'd written about before" [Trifonov, 1978, vol. 2, 526].

In carrying out this broadly formulated task, the writer was engaged in complex studying of the material. As Trifonov himself wrote, he "rushed about the Kara-Kum Desert on cross-country vehicles, camels, small airplanes, met, learned, recorded. <...> Wrote all autumn, winter – the work was slow, the material was distant, uninhabited, not worked up. And how was it possible to experience and work up for a month gallop through the desert. But I used to write only about what I know thoroughly. The

[&]quot;Turkmen Cycle" by Yuri Trifonov: in search of a literatureof fact

work had no progress. Great trifles of life distracted» [ibid.]. The material was being chosen; it was not so easy to determine the genre and style of the future book. In addition to that, the political situation made its own adjustments.

The started by Y. Trifonov story about the explorers of the Turkmen cannel was abandoned when Stalin died, and the construction site was closed as an unprofitable one. The writer decided to seek help from Tvardovskii, but received neither contract nor advanced payment for the future work. Tvardovskii advised him to start with stories, and Trifonov continued regular trips to Turkmenistan.

A business trip to Central Asia turned to be fruitful: for many years the Turkmen material became the subject of the representation in prose of Y. Trifonov. This seemingly unexpected deviation from the "youth" theme of "Students" was natural and associated with the search for a fundamentally new material.

As a result, the "great trifles of life" formed "a large-scale canvas about the confrontation between the civilization and the desert, as well as, within the framework of this conflict, about the people of the new generation, thirsty for truth, and the defenders of the repressive regime, preventing the quenching of this thirst" [Selemeneva, 2008, 187]. The work started with the creation of the stories which were included in the cycle *Pod Solntsem (Under the Sun)* (1959), and ended with the novel *Utolenie Zhazhdy (Quemching the Thirst)* (1959-1962).

Probably, in the Turkmen cycle for the first time in Trifonov's creative work there was expressed the regularity that "each new stage began with stories and ended with a novel <...> in the stories new realia and layers of life were mastered as approaches to the novel" [Sukhanov, 2001, 25]. The first example of this type of cyclization was the formation of multi-genre unity, including the novel *Utolenie Zhazhdy* (Quemching the Thirst) (1962) and the cycle of stories *Pod Solntsem* (Under the Sun) (1959).

The cycle *Pod Solntsem* (*Under the Sun*) (1959) includes 13 stories: *Polet* (*Flight*), *Ochki* (*Glasses*), *Maki* (*Poppies*), *Beseda s Gerpetologami* (*Conversation with Herpetologists*), *Bako* (*Bako*), *Odinochestvo Klycha Durdy* (*Loneliness of Durda Klych*), *O Ljubvi* (*About Love*), *Pesochnye Chasy* (*Hourglass*), *Odnazhdy Dushnoj Noch'ju* (*Once at Stuffy Night*), *Poslednjaja Ohota* (*The Last Hunt*), *Staraja Pesnja* (*Old Song*), *Doktor*, *Student i Mitja* (*Doctor*, *Student and Mitya*), *Kepka s Bol'shim Kozyr'kom* (*A Cap with a Big Peak*).

The history of their publication is connected with Trifonov's leaving the *Novyi Mir (New World)*: when in 1958 he brought ten short stories to the magazine, they were not accepted, and the writer published them in the magazine *Znamya (Banner)*, which was edited by Vadim Kozhevnikov. Stories of the Turkmen cycle have become not only "steps to the writer's way to the novel" (D. Gillespie), but also have their own aesthetic value. Within the framework of the problems of interest to us, the most

important are the principles of using the salient texture in their literary structure, looking for which the young writer went to Turkmenistan.

The cycle of stories *Pod Solntsem (Under the Sun)* marked a certain stage in the development of skills of Trifonov- prose writer. In this series of short stories "begin to be manifested the traits of actually Trifonov style – the use of "symbolic" items which organize subtext in the stories", the pursuit of voluminous, visible, clearly to visualize image, parable-like manner" [Sharavin, 1990, 10]. N. Ivanova notes: "...he entered the material carefully, attentively and thoroughlystudying the realities of Turkmen life " [Ivanova, 1984, 54].

Trifonov himself wrote in his article "The Never-Ending Beginning" (1973) about the stories of the "Turkmen Cycle" as about a new type of prose: "Perhaps it is only during the final years of my study in the Literary Institute, when a lot of notebooks were scribbled, when important books were read, when I had heard enough of the abuse and vilification at the seminars, a guess started to glimmer that it was not so hard to find a plot, as to write it on paper. ... It seems to me and I began to write differently. Anyway, one thing I know for sure: when this understanding became more profound, it turned to be a hundred times more difficult to write. For a few years I did not write at all, that is, I wrote, of course, but nothing good came out, I rejected it as defective, destroyed. Finally, came out something looking like good stuff and different from I'd written before: the cycle of stories *Pod Solntsem (Under the Sun)*. Here the load on every word was far more significant, than in the first novel. Sometimes even came across words with a double load. All this was evident to me only, and two or three people close to me" [Trifonov, 1978, vol. 2, 495-496].

The themes of the stories are different, and the principles of using life material are different, but "there is no paragraph in the stories that is not weighed down by a rare expressive detail" [Ivanova, 1984, 54].

The story *Odinochestvo Klycha Durdy (Loneliness of Durda Klych)* became one of the works combining sports and ethnographic realities. Scene of the national wrestling khuresh (güreş) becomes the material for the sketch of fate of a small family, a father-champion and a son. The author paints a vivid picture of the people's struggle: "The fighters begin to circle on the carpet. Heads down, legs are set far back, and the hands clutched the belts so tight that the knuckles turned white. One can hear heavy breathing of a Turkman from Kalinin. The young man grunts furiously and presses hard. His opponent retreats, moves away all farther. His countrymen are cheering him up, but it seems he has lost. And suddenly – an instantaneous jerk, a close fight, yellow heels of the young guy are up in air, for a moment he touches the ground by his knee and immediately jumps up. But it is late, already late! The judge blows the whistle. The lean won " [Trifonov, 1979, 344]. Trifonov unobtrusively opposes

[&]quot;Turkmen Cycle" by Yuri Trifonov: in search of a literatureof fact

the old and new life, emphasizing the change of realities: "Kurban is greedily drinking from the bottle, then rinses his mouth and noisily and far, like from a hose, spits out the water onto the sand. Klych Durda, too, is drinking water. In the old days wrestlers used to drink tea in the intervals: they would sit on the carpet and slowly enjoy the tea, and the audience was waiting patiently. Now the Physical Education Committee has put things in order: breaks are strictly limited" [ibid., 347]. Such everyday life details as drunkenness of wrestlers and their performance for money on holidays, to'ys, are also shown as symbols of the new time and, partly, as decay of both the person Klych Durda and traditional culture.

The story Poslednjaja Ohota (The Last Hunt) is about the subject of poaching committed by officials: "Sapar Meredovich considered hunting to be the best remedy for service trouble" [Trifonov, 1979, 316]. The inhabitant of office buildings, the official stood out with his "pale dark skin which is inherent in the big bosses who spend their days in offices" [ibid.], however, at some point he feels as part of the strong people of his and is proud of it: "Let them hide from the sun pampered the Mari or The Ärsarylar of Chardzhou who are spoiled with water, and he is a Turkman, his grandparents were "Kumly" – the people of sand, tough as lizards" [ibid, 317]. During the first pages of the story the realities of the Turkmen nature symbolize the change of mood and the social identity of the character: the official feels himself to be again a settler of the desert: "He greedily inhaled hot and bitter smell of the desert, the smell of dying in the sun grass. The healing powers of the sands started to act " [ibid, 317-318]. At the same time his concerns are the concerns of a low level official mired in corruption and concerned about the safety of the mutual protection of the local governments: "Three days ago he purposely went to the regional center to check whether there were any changes in the administrating organizations. There was none, everywhere there were still familiar people: Chary Muradovich, Devlet Kurbanovich, Ivan Vasilievich... And if they all were on their positions, then there was nothing to worry about" [ibid., 318].

In the story a series of deaths of animals is escalated: a squashed gerbil gives way to a chase and shooting of two gazelles, then to a night hunt and two more killings... The juxtaposition of ruthless technology and the world of nature is obvious: "The iron rumbling machine with a petrol heart and tender, pale yellow, small, light-limbed creatures were running next to each other now, as if in a fair competition" [ibid: 319]. The official-hunter fusses and hurries which leads to unnecessary casualties: "And knees of Sapar Meredovich were incessantly trembling, and he felt the need to sit down all the time. That's why he missed. ... And again Sapar Meredovich did not have enough tolerance and he hurried to shoot. ... Sapar Meredovich fussed, shot and, of course, missed" [ibid., 319-320]. And at night – gazelles don't run away, they are not ready for an attack: "The hair of the gazelle visible to the

slightest hair seemed to be gray under electric light; its slender and thin as a reed legs were wide apart, and it looked strikingly calm. Its gracefully raised muzzle and round unblinking eyes expressed naive amazement - and nothing else. And from under its belly with his head bowed to one side looked out a long-legged like a spider lamb. ... Sapar Meredovich raised the shotgun and fired at the gazelles at close range. In the same way Sapar Meredovich shot two more gazelles before dawn" [ibid, 322]. According to a fair remark of N.B. Ivanova, "Trifonov shows the cruelty towards living things in general, to nature, using a casual scene of hunting, making the cruelty even a symbol" [Ivanova, 1984, 51].

The realities of Turkmen life are also reflected: features of national cuisine: "Without waiting for Redjep, he had a good swallow of cognac and greedily set to mutton generously salted, sticky from the frozen fat; he barely finished chewing the meat when he popped a radish into his mouth, dipping it instead of salt in a jar of caviar, and with a sigh of relief again overturned cognac into his mouth, feeling the encouraging heat filling his body" [Trifonov, 1979, 320], patriarchal family relations: " the wife of Sapar Meredovich begged him with the names of their children not to hunt at night ... And to listen to women talking about men's things, he said, was a great folly" [ibid, 321].

The writer uses the realities of Turkmen life to create figures of speech: "from behind the dark barchan-like belly of Sapar Meredovich stars crawled up to the twilight sky" [ibid.] (here the point of view of the narrator follows the point of view of the driver Redjep, and it is interesting to note the peculiar poetry of the epithet); "a watery green, like a poorly brewed coca-tea rose above the desert Monday dawn " [ibid, 323].

In addition to that in the story the worldviews of the Turkman driver and the official are contrasted. Redjep the driver has his own troubles and claims: "And here he was lying ... and thinking of all kinds of things. He was thinking about that the fan belt had been worn out: it had to be replaced, damn it, and about that it was time to send his children to a camp to Chuli, and today it would have been necessary to go to the regional center to buy summer footwear for the children as well as some underwear that they weren't worse than the other, and instead of that he was spending the Sunday in useless entertainments. With bitterness he thought that his fellow drivers were asleep in their warm homes, and he after working hard all day long, as if it were not Sunday but a weekday, had to freeze on the takyr... And how Satan came up with the idea of hunting gazelles? It is right that it was banned by law. Very right, damn it all!... And so he was thinking about different things until the night cold struck through him" [ibid., 321].

Sapar Meredovich sees the situation quite differently, it seems to him that Redjep is quite favorably settled, and he is concerned about quite different "industrial problems": "To be fair one gazelle should be given to the driver. Only Redjep's not worth it. First, he talked me into going back home, which

[&]quot;Turkmen Cycle" by Yuri Trifonov: in search of a literatureof fact

means he's not interested in the bag. Second, his life is not so bad anyway. He should be happy to have a clean job instead of jolting in a truck along bumpy rural roads and carrying rocks from the quarry. ... Some work should be done. It is necessary to raise the activists. To read a couple of lectures personally at enterprises and collective farms. What can be done! Life does not consist of pleasures alone" [ibid., 323].

The corruption of the Soviet bureaucracy is a recognizable reality. As if it goes without saying the law is violated by the regional inspector for hunting, "the boss of all gazelles, pheasants and sand cats, old basmach Aga Niyaz»: "that's really who will appreciate the little gazelles!"[ibid.] The change of the old order to the new one is marked by the appointment of a new inspector ("With a diploma. And I think, he has a hand in Ashgabat" [ibid, 326], – says the former inspector), promising to deal with poaching. This replacement of the official becomes for the author the basis for a Trifonov style ruthless and inconsolable psychological conclusion: "Sapar Meredovich felt something like sympathy to Aga Niyaz, but in reality it was an instinctive, immediate self-pity" [ibid].

The story ends with the theme of change: "Aga Niyaz is no longer an inspector. So, not everything is still the same. And familiar humiliating feeling of anxiety again swept Sapar Meredovich with sudden force..."[ibid.] This conclusion, disappointing for the hero, gives the reader some hope for the change of the order established for decades, when the official was not cotrolled by the law. As one can see, the theme of the change of the times, which is important for Trifonov, is also actualized through the everyday life of Soviet Turkmenistan.

In the story *Staraja Pesnja* (*Old Song*), the plot about the singing of folk singers – bakhshi on the trains is played up; this singing bothers "a man in a tussore jacket" – a narrow-minded bureaucrat, but it is clear to a young couple; bakhshi's songs are not only about "how they are building a channel. How the desert is dying ... " [ibid., 329], but also about the eternal - about love: "I want to be the tea in your bowl to burn your lips" [ibid.].

The story *Beseda s Gerpetologami* (*Conversation with Herpetologists*), being by its formal features an example of industrial prose with special terminology and details of the characteristics of the animal world of Turkmenistan, however, is devoted to the limitations of people with their own world, "the shell of professionalism", in this case – of the herpetologists with their subject. The narrator - "I", after listening to the stories of the experts about snakes and spiders of Turkmenistan, tries to make them talk on more general topics, he quotes poems and prose about turtles, but finds no response. Limited by their knowledge, the herpetologists do not notice the beauty and humor in the literature, but only correct the actual inaccuracies. The story ends with a sarcastic comment: "Oh, they are nice people, these herpetologists! This is how I've always imagined herpetologists" [ibid, 332]. An interesting twist takes

place: the "industrial" story with a local flavor becomes a parable of human narrow-mindedness, by its brevity and sarcasm reminiscent of Chekhov's style.

The story *Bako* (*Bako*), too, as if starting from the Turkmen everyday life: "Who has not been to small oil towns of Western Turkmenistan, which grew up among the sand and takyrs, has a difficulty in understanding their harsh exciting originality" [ibid, 335] - is a story about a man who was left by his wife: "She, a fool, lacked trees!"[ibid.]. However, not only climate reality has power over human destinies: "Lisa did not return even when the trees appeared in the city" [ibid.].

The story *Maki (Poppies)* is also full of realities of Turkmen life, sometimes unexpected: "I raised five children. And what else to do in the sands? There is time ..." [ibid., 338], depicted through landscape sketches: "The dunes around the station were covered by red foam, millions of flowering poppies" [ibid.]. At the same time, through parallelism with natural changes: "There have never been poppies or green grass here, nothing but sand and heat" [ibid, 342] – the story is about the tumult and transience of feelings, revealing the influence of Bunin's stories. The same theme is in the two novels *O Ljubvi (About Love)*.

The stories with a developed plot – *Ochki (Glasses)*, *Kepka s Bol'shim Kozyr'kom (A Cap with a Big Peak)*, *Doktor, Student i Mitja (Doctor, Student and Mitya)* - also reveal the eternal themes of Russian classical literature on the material of Turkmen realities: shortsightedness and narrow-mindedness of people around, the tragedy of the fate of the" little man", the wisdom of the chance.

The most prominent contrast between the outgoing time and arrival of the historical and present reality is in the story *Pesochnye Chasy (Hourglass)*, which is considered to be one of the most important in the cycle. Here the transition to philosophical generalizations is also carried out through the realities of Turkmen life. A young Turkman cannot give an answer to the question of who is buried in an ancient grave; he is a child of the modern times, "an excavator operator, ... he is concerned with the repair of his car" [ibid., 349]. The question of the hero of the story, the alter ego of the author, can be answered by an old man who "guards the grave." However, the old man to a request to give the reference about "Kizilch-Baba" buried there, bursts out with the full of rage speech - as it turns out, about the reference which he needs from the collective farm for his pension.

D. Gillespie concludes that the plot of the story is totally built around such a phenomenon of Soviet life as a reference: "Play on the discrepancy of semantics of different meanings of the most Soviet of the words demonstrates the gap in understanding between the Moscow intellectual and the Turkmen peasant" [Gillespie, 1992, 30]. However, probably, reference is just a symbol of the change of epochs, only the signalling light of the coming of the new times, because "until recently, the old shepherd did not have those worries. There was no canal, no concrete well, no pensions" [Trifonov, 1979, 351].

[&]quot;Turkmen Cycle" by Yuri Trifonov: in search of a literatureof fact

And the grave itself, which once used to be a sacred place, "reigned over the whole area, attracted nomads and pious merchants, forcing them to make a detour on the long way to Bukhara from Merv", now became "a small, insignificant detail of the desert" [ibid, 350].

The most prominent reality of the Turkmen desert – sand - becomes a symbol of the flow and change of times: when walking in the desert "it seems as if I plunge into eternity, swim in the sand of a huge hourglass" [ibid.]. The image unfolds to global generalizations: "Civilizations and kingdoms, hordes of conquerors, peoples innumerable, like grains of sand, – everything was ground by the time, everything turned into quietly rustling, white, silent sand..." [ibid]. And at the end of the story the image of sand is again actualized in the individual psychological aspect: "Sand rustles and pours in the hourglass of eternity, and we do not notice it, as we do not notice, for example, the rotation of the earth. But sometimes time becomes strikingly tangible, and suddenly we hear it, as our blood, pulsing in the temples" [ibid., 351]. Reality – metaphor-symbol-psychological generalization: this is how one can roughly describe the successive filling of the actual details (sand) with new literary and philosophical semantics.

The analysis of the development of the image of sand from the exotic reality ("when you walk down the dune, your feet sink into the sand up to the ankles") to the philosophical symbol (sand as an allegory of the flow of time) confirms the multilevel semantic richness of the "Turkmen" prose of Trifonov. Despite the abundance of graphic material, the use of local colour, the stories of the Turkmen theme are not subjected or limited to it: the texts address the problems of the meaning of life, the conflict between the old and the new, the transience of time. Trifonov himself wrote that the rejection of his stories by the Noviy Mir (New World) was accompanied by a significant review: "I gave the first stories to Zaks. He quickly read them and rejected. The sentence was laconic: "Some universal themes!"[Trifonov, 1978, vol. 2, 530]. "Universal values" of the themes really characterise the stories in this series, showing the growing philosophical prose of Trifonov.

This combination of Turkmen color and eternal themes also marks the writer's second major work, the novel *Utolenie Zhazhdy (Quemching the Thirst)*.

Utolenie Zhazhdy (Quemching the Thirst) in the context of Trifonov's creative activity

The history of writing, editing and publishing the novel *Utolenie Zhazhdy (Quemching the Thirst)* is quite dramatic. Trifonov started the story about the construction of the Turkmen canal when Stalin was still alive; however, after the death of the leader, the construction site was shut down, which means that the theme became irrelevant. After a series of trips to Turkmenistan, writing a cycle of stories, Trifonov nevertheless returns to a major form.

The written novel was not accepted in the *Znamya (Banner)* (which published the stories of the Turkmen cycle) or in the *Noviy Mir (New World)*, where he had been published previously. Again turning to the *Znamya (Banner)*, Trifonov was forced to subject the novel to multiple editing.

Here is a letter of Trifonov to the magazine *Znamya* (*Banner*), with which he accompanied the fourth version of his novel: "After three months of work with the editor, I submit the final version of my novel *Utolenie Zhazhdy* (*Quemching the Thirst*) to the editorial staff of *Znamya* (*Banner*) magazine. This is the fourth version of the novel, the fourth thorough alteration of the book of 20 printed pages. <...> I consider the novel finished. All comments made by members of the editorial Board of the magazine *Znamya* (*Banner*) have been taken into account. The largest alterations are related to the newspaper editorship and the image of the main character – Koryshev, what caused the strongest objections. The image of Koryshev has been ideologically and literary reinterpreted. Now it is a person with a certain destiny, with a firm and valid character. The pathos of his life, his actions: fighting the consequences of the cult of personality. <...> New scenes have been written, but something has been removed from the text for a more vivid display of consciousness of the leading workers of the construction. <...> The novel is optimistic, it has obtained an accurate political orientation: it is directed against the consequences of the cult of personality, against double-checking and dogmatism, which still take place in both the construction and editorial business" (January 13, 1963) [CIT. on: Shitov, 1997, 307-308].

Obviously the editors demanded from Trifonov more "positive certainty" of the image of the main character; demonstration of consciousness of the leading workers; optimism and more accurate political orientation. "In order to see his novel published, Trifonov was forced to "play by the rules", even to speak the appropriate official language" [Leiderman, Lipovetsky, 2003, 658].

In the end the novel was received by the ruling circles pretty well: he was nominated for the Lenin Prize in 1965 (did not receive the prize); performances were staged in various theaters of the country, as well as a feature film was made.

As a rule the criticism repeats the opinion that the novel *Utolenie Zhazhdy (Quemching the Thirst)* is of a "hybrid genre structure" (N. L. Leiderman, M. N. Lipovetsky), composed of a combination of genre properties of the industrial novel and the confessional story: "One novel includes as if two novels with a common plot outline" [Orlianski, 1987, 65].

However, the actual aesthetic reasons that caused the literary features of *Utolenie Zhazhdy* (*Quemching the Thirst*) were not investigated" in the critique [Sukhanov, 2001, 21]. However, the given above words of Y. Trifonov about the editing done by him according to the demand of "*Znamya*" (Banner) suggest that the "industrial" topic with its struggle between the conservatives and innovators, with its polarization of the characters, did not have significant weight in the original literary intent of

[&]quot;Turkmen Cycle" by Yuri Trifonov: in search of a literatureof fact

the writer. The "uncertainty" of the attitude of the main character and the views of the workers Trifonov was blamed for prove that in this novel the writer was already occupied with the search for his own hero, his environment and mood; however, this search was reduced to a minimum because of editorial censorship.

In the final, published version of the novel, Trifonov used in many ways the pattern of the industrial novel which was very well mastered by the Soviet prose. First of all, the novel *Utolenie Zhazhdy* (*Quemching the Thirst*) is related to this genre by the material used – construction of the canal in the sands of Turkmenistan, industrial environment, workers and engineers, as well as the traditional conflict: the confrontation between the conservatives and innovators.

Trifonov's attention to dates, emphasizing his sharp attention to the flow of time and the change of epochs should also be noted: "there are always two dates in the novel: 1937 and 1956. 1937 is the peak of Great Terror, 1956 is the year of the XXth Congress. And actually the story's events take place in 1957, exactly one year after the XXth Congress. And the atmosphere of the "thaw " surrounds everything that happens in the plot of the novel" [Leiderman, Lipovetsky, 2003, 185]. However, as it is noted by V. Sukhanov, the thaw situation is modeled indirectly [Sukhanov, 2001, 59]. The change of the political course becomes for Trifonov a particular example of the topic he was interested in - the change of epochs, times, generations.

Among other features of the literary world of the novel researchers (K. Chulkova, A. Metchenko, L. Yakimenko. N. Ivanova, K. C. Maegd-Soëp, etc.) distinguished the narrative structure of the novel (the presence of different narrative positions); two-dimensional composition; traditional conflict of innovators and conservatives; originality of literary time.

V. Sukhanov notes that the novel presents three types of reality: natural, social and psychological [ibid., 60]. However, the question of the functioning of the realities, the actual material in the novel is not in fact investigated. Probably, the study of this issue can also help in determining the literary originality of the novel *Utolenie Zhazhdy (Quemching the Thirst)*, which remained in domestic critique an example of a"hybrid genre".

One of the accurate comments on this issue in his manual make N. L. Leiderman, and M. N. Lipovetskiy: "focus on the details of life becomes one of the principles of the new poetics of Trifonov: time should not be determined, it is not necessary to announce verdicts, though it is necessary to give a lot of details of life that the reader personally was able to feel emotional, spiritual, moral and psychological atmosphere of time" [Leiderman, Lipovetsky, 2003, 186]. This adherence to an everyday life detail which is capable of being a philosophical symbol, became one of the principles of the latest prose of Trifonov.

A. Nilin noticed about "the Turkmen novel" that Trifonov deviates from his former obsession with poetics of feeling: "He does not shed tears over fiction, but over reality, which suddenly ceased captivating the writer" [Nilin, 1999, www]. Probably in the process of writing a novel Trifonov already moved away from "literary loaded words" (that he later called "smelled of wet fences") to the literature of thought, which explains his digression from the careful copying of reality.

At the same time, the vital trifles that play the role of symbolic details within the framework of the work become crucial, while "everyday routine in the general structure of reality is not yet considered as primary, so it is reduced" [Sukhanov, 2001, 60]. This period includes Trifonov's remark about the role of the materialistic and the material, the actual, at the beginning of this work: "It is necessary to push off from the shore and jump into the water, but the shore was too marshy. There were not enough details and specifics. Solid ground is the details. And suddenly turned to be useful notes I had made in Firuza four years ago, I pushed off this shore and swam. A quick, trifling entry in an old book, something like: "Our shirts are dotted with black dots. Greenflies sit on white. Annadurdy says that the winter was warm, all those things did not freeze off", — it becomes extremely useful and loaded with meaning. One cannot think of such a detail while sitting at the table. This can only be seen, noticed, remembered or written down. There is nothing more precious than the finest, homeopathic details. That is why the notebooks, which I do not have, are so important" [Trifonov, 1987, vol. 4].

Let's consider the types of documentary and factual material in the novel by Trifonov and its functions in the architectonics of the work.

The novel begins with the words: "The ride was painful, we were sitting in briefs and undershirts on wet with sweat mattresses and were fanning ourselves with waffle-cloth towels provided on the train. The burning-hot air, filled with dust and bitterness, was flowing into the open windows and blowing at us heat, as if from the oven". This way begins the characteristic of the chronotope of the novel, the place and time of action, which is widely related to the plot. The realities of Turkmenistan begin from the place where the writer himself acquainted with the land alien to him. Already here one of the meanings of the title lying on the surface is actualized: *Utolenie Zhazhdy (Quemching the Thirst)* - a natural human desire in a stuffy and sultry climate.

It should be noted that the first realities – stuffy air, exotic landscape ("on the left crawled naked, sun-polished mountains of Iran, on the right spread the desert. Tents of the shepherds were showing black rarely, camels were standing watching the train lazily, their small heads half-turned") is estimated by the narrator from four points of view, which are expressed in the remarks of the neighbors of the hero in the compartment and in the opinion of the hero himself: "We were talking about the

[&]quot;Turkmen Cycle" by Yuri Trifonov: in search of a literatureof fact

desert. Everyone saw it in his own way. – For me it's millions of cubic meters of granular soils, – the senior builder, a gray-haired little man said, who was suffering from shortness of breath. - I am thinking about the bulldozers that will raise these Himalayas of sand. - For me there is no more valuable place on the entire earth. After all, I was born in the local sands, in the area of Artyk, – said another builder, a Turkman. - I haven't seen this land for sixteen years. Sixteen years, sixteen years! The man who kept consuming beer repeated. And his eyes were red. - Do you understand what sixteen years mean? – I was silent. I was going to the desert because I had no choice. And I didn't love it, and didn't think about it, and didn't have memories of it."

This multidimensional vision of the chronotope defined at the very beginning of the narrative reflects the traditions of Dostoevsky: literary study of life concerns not only psychology of an individual, but also places of particular importance.

The construction site is a kind of oasis, a piece of life resisting the omnipotence of the desert: "Two booths, five people. And three cars in the mine and two tanks: one with water, another with diesel. And a stray dog Squirrel of Turkmen shepherd dogs breed white and shaggy, like a bear. And around – there were sands, the Karakum Desert deep silence" (Chapter 2). Reflecting the realities of the construction that extended civilization in the middle of the desert, the writer creates a chronotope inside the chronotope, contrasts the work (new, active beginning) to the desert, passive and eternal.

Another type of the chronotope is the settlement of Inche, "twenty kilometers to the East", from where a car shop comes to the construction site, and where they sometimes show a movie. The chronotope is shown from different points of view. Thus, for Nogaev "It was a village, noisy, big village. It smelled like a settlement, like soup, an old dusty tarp, restrooms and chlorine which these toilets were poured with" (Chapter 5).

However, the desert remains a comprehensive and defining place, where "in winter cold and winds pestered, and in spring another torture began. All living in the desert was hiding from the heat, snakes and gophers were dozing in burrows, lizards got buried in the sand. It took five minutes to keep a lizard in the sun for it to be cooked alive" (Chapter 2). The accuracy of the details selected by the writer proves his close acquaintance with the climate of Turkmenistan and helps to convey the extremity of the situation in which the construction of the canal is carried out.

The realities of the climate include "winds everyday, even worse than in winter: scorching, in steep waves coming from the Afghan inferno. So this wind was called - " the Afghan." The sand because of the heat turned light and crumbled into dust, and the "Afghan" carried it over the desert in countless clouds" (Chapter 2). These details characterize not only the chronotope of the desert, but the persistence of the workers and the construction – on spite of everything: "Peoplewereworking. The cab of the

excavator turned burning hot like a pot over the fire, the levers could not be touched by bare hands" (Chapter 2).

In addition, other hazards lie in wait for people on the sands: "It looked like the excavators had invaded some preserved serpentine kingdom. ... For the first two weeks the excavators lived in unceasing fear." However, the construction wins the desert, and in the end snakes "frightened by people and cars, ... moved farther away from the road, deep into the sands. And when in a month a squadron camp was moved to the site, the guys did not find any snakes" (Chapter 3).

At the same time, the upcoming chronotope of the future, closely connected with the canal and the initiative of the line, turns out to be a city – the city growing out of the desert, the city where "the engine was rumbling, electricity was on in houses, a lecture on new Egypt was being read in a club barrack, and after the lecture there were dances to a radio-gramophone, and workers laid out a brick fence around a non – existent vineyard and stuck in the sand skinny rods of acacia" - all this is possible only due to the fact that "far ahead of everyone, abandoned in the thebarchan wilds, a lonely excavator was furiously tearing the ground" and the desert continued its life: "at night there was iron blackness and jackals were howling" (Chapter 2).

Trifonov never misses to mention the details of the Turkmen way of life, which at first glance are purely descriptive in nature, but in the work as a whole they act as symbolic details. For example, the beginning of the second chapter is interspersed with references to hot green tea drinking in the heat – a Turkmen custom associated with the need to increase sweating in the hot weather. "He was sipping hot green tea from a mug"; "These two ... were busily sipping tea from mugs, puffing and crunching with sugar"; "the relief workers continued indifferently drinking tea". However, the first chapter ends with the words of the narrator: "And, moreover, I was tormented by thirst" – the kind of thirst, which, as it turns out, also has allegorical significance in the novel; so references to tea in the second chapter link two episodes, which are not combined by their heroes or topos, into a single unit. The narrator is thirsty, and the construction workers drink tea; the narrative sequence implies that it is here, at the heroic construction site in the sands, the hero will find what he craves for. Then in the second chapter the motif of tea and thirst starts interacting with the motif of sand: "Everybody ... were covering their mugs with their hands from the wind to protect them from sand".

N. Sharavin notes that in the novel "the author's method, familiar from the Turkmen stories, remains a polysemous detail" [Sharavin, 1990, 12]. The details, moreover, often acquire the form of a philosophical symbol.

N. B. Ivanova notes that there is a dispute to a certain extent going on along the pages of the novel, directly or indirectly: "Do you know how the Turkmens quench their thirst? Listen to this: first they

[&]quot;Turkmen Cycle" by Yuri Trifonov: in search of a literatureof fact

quench the "small thirst" with two or three bowls, and then, after dinner - the "great thirst", when a big kettle is ready. And a man who came from the desert is never given much water. It is given to him little by little. Otherwise it will be not well, said Platon Kirianovich. — Nobody will be not well! This is nonsense! - Tamara says excitedly. - How can there be too much truth? Or too much *justice*?.. The researcher rightly notes that the parable about "quenching thirst" defines the most important topic of the novel: the "thirst for justice" in life after the decisions of XX and XXI party congresses [Ivanov, 1984, 57].

The writer diligently immerses the reader into the everyday life of a construction site, from the beginning of the second chapter: "From behind of the purple sand ridge there was coming smooth buzzing and convulsive clanking of an excavator"; "from behind of the sand range there came the buzz of the second excavator, the wire rope creaked on the block and in a second the first bucket of soil fell down onto the slope". According to the remark of N. Ivanova, "Trifonov's attention to detail, his sharp vision allow him to convey the technology visibly, clearly, in detail, realistically" [ibid., 63]. However, the details of construction work in general fulfill the aim of the immersion in the environment, authenticity, and do not receive independent symbolic meaning in the novel, with an exception of the fact that the construction by itself symbolizes the change of the old for the new.

Much more convincing are those "industrial" details, which are presented from the point of view of not the depersonalized narrator, but of one of the characters: "even more often he dreamed of levers. A lot of levers that creaked, twitched, pulled out of his hands, and suddenly from somewhere above a bucket fell down, and the horror, instant and deadening like lightning, pierced his heart - what lever to grab?" (Chapter2). This dream of a young excavator operator clearly and convincingly explains the difficulty of mastering of the profession.

The desert turns to be the place where people do not rest, as there is simply no place for that: "We worked not by the hour, but depending on the endurance. One sits at the levers as long as he can endure. There were no days off, of course. Who needs them? What else can one do in the desert, but work? ... And there was no wine in the settlement: the dry law" (Ch. 2).

Speech features of the characters are also referred to accurately noticed by Trifonov details. Rudeness of Nagaev ("I am only good at moving cubic meters. I am good for working like a mule without any weekends") is a reflection of his selfishness and greed ("he is a skinflint"). Local expressions which are not typical of the Russian speech are sensitively rendered: "Why the hell do you do that? A man worked for you, and now you push him around like a dog? ... You construction is no matter, the other man is no matter, you only your interest is important - is that it? Damn, bitch!"(Beki Esenov); "local reptiles are poisonous to horror. If it bites you – so, consider it the end" (Mariutin).

Lives and portraits of the heroes is also a kind of processing of life's material, which was investigated by Trifonov in his Turkmen trips. Fate of a young Turkman Byashim Muradov is seen as typical for the middle of the XXth century: "Byashim ... was a shepherd, and his father was a shepherd, and his grandfather, too. For all his life – he was eighteen years old - he had never left the collective farm, except for the district town of Bayram Ali. In the collective farm he went to school, and for the summer time together with his father he went to the sands. When the construction began, there was lot of talks about the canal among the shepherds. ... And the further the water deepened into the desert, the more Turkmen young men – shepherds and cotton-growers, recent school students and recent soldiers started to come to the construction site" (Chapter2).

Time is changing, but the Turkmen society remains more traditional than the Russians who have arrived; it is held together by the ties of respect for the elderly and their opinion. The young excavator Chary Amanov says denouncing the exorbitant brideprice: "There are old people, they will die soon, they should be respected. Even if they do wrong, and we must respect" (Chapter2).

After two expanded chapters written by an impersonal narrator, the fourth chapter, from the person of the hero, strikes with its instant individualization of the vision of the chronotope: "From the window of the room one can see the mountains. In the morning they are pink like juicy watermelon pulp, then they fade, turn yellow, become quite yellow. And they're yellow like a melon all day long. It is strange to see these yellow mountains: they seem to be naked". Being forced to talk about Turkmenistan, the hero cannot hide the fact that this land is not dear to him: "I tell something about the books by Loskutov and Tikhonov, I say that I have been attracted by deserts since my childhood and that I, in fact, have been going to visit the ancient land of Turkmenistan for a long time. All this very approximately looks like the truth".

At the same time, the hero is very sensitive to changes and signs of the time, such as the traces of the Ashgabat fire: "We are walking along the city, disfigured by a terrible disaster. They say it used to be beautiful. They say that it used to be unusually green and cozy. Greenery remained. Trees are much stronger on the ground than houses. ... The street smells of drying out foliage and soft asphalt. And the trees gently shake their branches above the roofs of new houses, in the same way as they used to do above the ones that were gone, crumbled to dust that night nine years ago..." (Chapter4). The crosscutting theme of Trifonov's work – the past and present - sounds particularly poignant here.

The hero-narrator brings to the novel a layer of autobiographical facts from the life of the writer: he explains his self-doubt by a long-standing arrest of his father: he recalls the meeting, after which "life ... has gone upside down". The facts of his own biography are used by Trifonov to give credibility to the psychological character of the hero.

[&]quot;Turkmen Cycle" by Yuri Trifonov: in search of a literatureof fact

A glimpse of the city life confronts the harsh everyday life of the desert fighters: in Ashgabat there are editorial squabbling, husbands cheat on their wives, go to restaurants at the expense of others, start and continue burdensome acquaintances, conduct drunk conversations. This reality, common to any urban topos, is opposed to the desert as a place of labour and struggle. However, it has the attraction of civilization, habitable place, the hero says goodbye to the city nostalgically: "Farewell, the city! In a week I will leave you, with your stuffiness, your nights, stars, with your people busy with their lives..." (Chapter 4).

At the same time, this city has its own specifics, which is primarily expressed by its proximity to the world of nature: "The entire city lies in darkness, and above it – there is the bright, blooming with stars sky. It seems too be alive because of the stars, it shimmers, sparkles, it has moving glow, bluish and silver, the boundless light is swaying, it is light. And only on the southern edge it is dark and starless. There are mountains there" (Chapter4).

More significant contrasting of chronotopes takes place in the fifth chapter, when after having a heat stroke the excavator Nagaev longs for Russia. Here contrasting of the two places again is given through the perception of characters, through the dialogue:

"-Well, Turkmenia, well, what a rubbish the land is... Damn it... - No, the Turkmen land is goood, - Marina was saying in a soft nursing voice, the kind of voice hospital nurses are supposed to talk in. - Though, the sun is aggressive here, one should be aware of it. And what damn thing brought me, a fool, here? - Our land is very beautiful, Semenych. I wish you'd gone to Chardjou ... - Don't talk! You see ... " he sighed and turned away. Marina humbly kept quiet. You are silly, you do not know life. You've seen nothing, except for sands and dust, - Nagaev continued slowly . - And what forests there are in Russia! You have not seen rivers, cities, real ones... Ah, my dear... And what the rains are! "Not the autumn drizzling" - do you know the song? - Have you heard the one at all ... - I've heard. - Nagaev contemptuously moved his hand. - What can you understand? Nothing".

The theme of the chronotope in the Turkmen prose of Trifonov is thoroughly analysed in the doctoral dissertation of M. V. Selemeneva. She notes: "The key spatial opposition of the "city/desert" cycle is complicated by the introduction into the text of the contrast of the capital city Turkmen topos (Ashgabat) and towns (Nebit-Dag, Kum-Dag, Kazanjik). Ashgabat is presented in the "Turkmen" cycle as a distant, almost illusory space of a big city. Small towns in the "Turkmen cycle", at the first glance, are created according to the model of the chronotope of a "provincial town", but, with all the formal coincidences (cyclicity of time, locality of space, repetition of events), they are not provincial towns: severe climatic, domestic and psychological conditions require from the inhabitants of the desert daily decision-making, having an active life position. While considering different spatial images, Trifonov

asserts that a person carries the locus that is inherent in him and projects his spiritual space at the surrounding world" [Selemeneva, 2009, 15]. Irreconcilable Nagaev does not approve of the settlement; the inhabitants of the city carry with them their psychology of a city dweller.

According to the remark of V. Sukhanov, the cycle of "Turkmen" stories, as well as the novel *Utolenie Zhazhdy (Quemching the Thirst)*, are associated with the processing by Trifonov of his own biographical values, his own spiritual experience [Sukhanov, 2001, 27]. Indeed, the autobiographical layer is not only noticeable against the background of the industrial problems; it seems to be a parallel text, with a different perspective and other creative tasks.

According to A. Shitov, "starting with *Utolenie Zhazhdy (Quemching the Thirst)* it seems that Trifonov wanted to understand: why in Russia the ideas of *violence* of one over the other, *destruction* of social foundations receive active support, where from, from what kind of past we are like that, why we do not *hear*, do not *feel* fully enough, why is fear rooted so deeply in us?"[Shitov, Polikarpov, 2006, 280]. This ethical theme is particularly evident in the layer of the novel, presented on behalf of Peter Koryshev.

Moral issues are closely related to the subject of the novel and also its form.

The form and contents are not only interrelated, but also interdependent: "The realities of Turkmenistan are observed and noted in terms of technological progress and narrative diversity: the narration from the first and third person, the Turkmen struggle, life in the desert, the channel - all these serves not only the exoticism of the scenes, but also highlights the points in which the modern world is different from the old one, and how the writer himself becomes more confident and skillful in the possibilities of narrative discourse" [Gillespie, 1992, 29].

The Turkmen cycle of Trifonov's creative activity proves that addressing to exotic subjects is not necessary for the writer's formation. Following the pieces of advice of his senior fellows: "Yes, now you must raise a new layer. Go somewhere to a construction site, to a factory..." [Trifonov, 1978, vol. 2, 524], having mastered the exotic material, the writer mounts to eternal themes and the everlasting conflicts: of nature and civilization, time and eternity, the old and new; sincerity and lies; conformism and fearlessness. As Y. Oklianskiy noted, at that time it was believed that "at remote construction sites there was supposedly true reality, though in a shop, a municipal service office, a shoe repair shop, a factory smoking nearby – there was only confusion of feelings and trifles of life" [Oklianskiy, 1987, 64]. Y. Trifonov, having gone from the "literature of the word" in the Turkmen cycle to the "literature of thought" in his later prose, justified the deep conflict of the "everyday", non-exotic material: "Everyday life is a great trial < ... > We are in a confusing and complex structure of everyday life, at the intersection of many relationships, views, friendships, acquaintances, dislikes, psychologies,

[&]quot;Turkmen Cycle" by Yuri Trifonov: in search of a literatureof fact

ideologies. .< ... > Are you tired? That's ok, you will be able to rest somewhere else. And here there is everyday life – the war which knows no truce" [Trifonov, 1978, vol. 2, 545].

The artistic manifesto of this point of view became the story *Puteshestvie* (*Journey*) written in 1969. Its hero is a writer eaten by the desire to go far away - "to get acquainted with any conflicts, passions, industrial dramas which would disclose destinies of people and different points of view on life", - as a result he understands that daily life is filled with true conflicts and passions; and, in fact, the man knows very little not only about people around, but also about himself: "In the mirror there flashed a grey, strange face for a moment: I thought about how little I know myself." The title of the story expresses a key metaphor: a journey somewhere far away for graphic material is not necessary; a nearby park is full of experiences and attractions, passions and exotic things as well as a neighbours' flat and even you yourself. This is the story with which the writer purposefully, in violation of chronology, opened the cycles and sections of stories in his books later on.

The last chapter of *Utolenie Zhazhdy* (*Quemching the Thirst*) goes beyond the narrative framework: the hero tells that he wrote a book: "The canal was built. And I published a book of essays. And they even made a film about the canal <...> All the most incredible things came true" (Ch. 27). This unexpected twist, with the subsequent retelling of the fate of the characters, casts doubt on the fictional character of the novel; it is to certain extend a breakthrough to the documentation and social and political journalism. It is not by chance that the next major, turning point Trifonov's work became a documentary story that marked the beginning of a new period of his creative activity.

Conclusion

In the Turkmen cycle, for the first time in Trifonov's work, the following regularity was expressed - each new stage began with stories and ended with a novel. The cycle of stories *Pod Solntsem (Under the Sun)* marked a certain stage in the development of skills of Trifonov as a prose writer. Despite the abundance of graphic material, the use of local colour, the stories of the Turkmen theme are not subjected or limited to it: the texts address the problems of the meaning of life, the conflict between the old and the new, the transience of time.

In the final, published version of the novel, Trifonov used in many ways the pattern of the industrial novel which was very well mastered by the Soviet prose. First of all, the novel *Utolenie Zhazhdy* (*Quemching the Thirst*) is related to this genre by the material used – construction of the canal in the sands of Turkmenistan, industrial environment, workers and engineers, as well as the traditional conflict: the confrontation between the conservatives and innovators.

The study of the principles of the writer's appeal to the realities of Turkmen life allows us to identify four important functions of the everyday life detail and a historical fact:

- describing everyday life (associated with "local color", designed to give the work credibility);
- chronotopic (associated with the opposition of time and place, becoming increasingly important in the work of the writer);
- psychological (performing tasks of psychological characteristics);
- symbolic (everyday life detail becomes a symbol, a philosophical generalization).

Tryphonov's appeal to the Turkmen – new, exotic – theme marked distancing from the habitual way of life, an appeal to a new reality. At the same time, as the analysis of the Turkmen text of the writer shows, the new material gave him the opportunity to make generalizing conclusions about universality for different worlds of many topics: psychological regularities, the role and flow of time, etc.

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«Туркменский цикл» Юрия Трифонова: в поисках литературы факта

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена туркменскому циклу в ранней прозе Юрия Трифонова. Цель данной статьи – анализ роли и функций документально-фактического начала в прозе Ю. Трифонова 1950-х – начала 1960-х годов, когда происходило формирование идейноэстетического Ключевые слова Юрий Трифонов, проза, производственный роман, экзотика, психологизм, цикл рассказов, роман, документализм, философская проза.кредо писателя. Командировка в Среднюю Азию оказалась плодотворной: на долгие годы туркменский материал стал предметом изображения в прозе Ю. Трифонова. Цикл рассказов «Под солнцем» знаменовал определенный этап в развитии мастерства Трифонова-прозаика. Несмотря на обилие выпуклой фактуры, использование местного колорита, рассказы туркменской тематике не подчинены и не ограничены ею: тексты выходят на решение проблем смысла жизни, конфликта старого и нового, быстротечности времени. В опубликованном варианте романа «Утоление жажды» Трифонов использовал во многом схему производственного романа. Исследование принципов обращения писателя к реалиям туркменской жизни позволяет выделить четыре важнейшие функции бытовой детали, исторического факта:

бытоописательная (связанная с «местным колоритом», призванная придать произведению достоверность); хронотопическая (связанная с противопоставлениями места и времени, становящимися все более важными в творчестве писателя); психологическая (выполняющая задачи психологической характеристики); символическая (бытовая деталь становится символом, философским обобщением). Обращение Ю.Трифонова к туркменской – новой, экзотической – тематике знаменовало отход от привычного быта к иному, обращение к новой реальности. Вместе с тем, как показывает анализ туркменского текста писателя, новый материал дал ему возможность сделать обобщающие выводы об универсальности для разных миров многих тем: психологических закономерностей, роли и течения времени и т.д.

Для цитирования в научных исследованиях

Казимагомедова Р.И. «Туркменский цикл» Юрия Трифонова: в поисках литературы факта // Язык. Словесность. Культура. 2018. Том 8. № 4-5. С. 10-32.

Ключевые слова

Юрий Трифонов, проза, производственный роман, экзотика, психологизм, цикл рассказов, роман, документализм, философская проза.

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