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Multivariance of Mimesis in the 19th Century Literature

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Modern science of literature recognizes the need for update of the theory of realism and review of its specific development in different historical eras. It is important to take into account the modern discourse of realism, which can give impulses for further study of the realist literature. It is possible to have a new look at the classical heritage – realism of the 19th century, go beyond the traditional theoretical formulas and stereotypes in its perception. The heyday of realism in literature and art of the 19th century was prepared by development of the mimetic trends in the preceding epochs. Formation of the classical model of realism was accompanied by the intense search for ways of artistic reflection of life. Different interpretations of the main aesthetic principle of «the truth of life in art» produced a variety of mimesis forms. This experience proved to be productive for the future of realism, determined its flexibility and resilience in the struggle with modernism.

Keywords: mimesis, realism, artistic processes, the 19th century.

The modern science of literature is conscious of the need to review the issue of realism. The issue is inextricably connected with the problem of mimesis and inevitably becomes actual when art, being in the existential situation and experiencing the crisis of tradition once again, provides a rapid breakthrough to the new forms of artistic merit. This issue is certainly relevant today, when new artistic practices, related to the development of modern technology, virtual art, etc. appear. In this situation, the problems of identification of the special features of art (including verbal), its epistemological and aesthetic nature, finding the boundary separating it from non-art, and, of course, solving the “core problem of aesthetics” – about the relationship

between art and reality are becoming especially acute. Transforming and offering various modifications, realism showed its resilience in the struggle against modernism of the 20th century and continues to progress in the modern literature. The study of the phenomenon of contemporary realism is impossible without reference to its history; in this context it is important to hold a closer examination of its classic incarnation – the realistic literature of the 19th century. This, seemingly well-studied material, today requires a detailed study and a more nuanced development, taking into consideration the experience of modern art practice and scientific discourse of realism development.

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Polar concepts of realism in modern science

Searches and thinking about realism, its nature, and the fact of its existence are carried out for many decades. The modern discourse of realism represents a wide range of ideas and concepts. Its extreme ranges are represented, on the one hand, by the classical, traditional theory of realism, on the other – by the modernist and postmodernist position. The traditional theory, which goes back to antiquity, was actively formed in realistic and naturalistic aesthetics of the 19th century and developed mainly in Marxist or cultural and historical criticism of the 20th century. It was developed in details in Russian literary studies and incorporated the well-known formulas of “faithful reflection of reality”, “typical characters in typical circumstances”, “social determinism”, etc. In foreign science the most consistent and demonstrative example is the concept of E. Auerbach, presented in his famous work “Mimesis” (1946). This theory is based on the familiar postulate of reflection of the truth of life in literature and recognition of literature’s indisputable capability to represent reality. The modernist (R. Barth, T. Todorov, M. Blanchot) as well as postmodernist interpretations (J. Derrida) completely deny this possibility, focusing on intratextual problems and self-sufficiency of the immanent being of literature. Controversy reveals the chain of problems following each other. What is reality? Is literature its referent? If a literary text has access to intratextual reality or it exists only as an immanent entity? Is image represented in writing only an illusion of reality that borders on hallucination?

The main stumbling block which separates traditional and contemporary concepts is the problem of mimesis. Rejecting the traditional concept of “imitation of life” in art, structuralists, and especially French “literary theory” of the second half of the 20th century (although some of

its ideas were anticipated by the Russian formal school of the 1910-20s), argue that literature is only literature, it has no projection of reality, that is, mimesis is not possible. Even if a literary text is able to offer connotations, according to R. Barthes, it refers not to the natural reality, but only to the texts of culture. Analyzing a text Barthes plunges it into “triumphant multiplicity” and depthlessness of the cultural codes. “To interpret a text does not mean to endow it with some specific meaning (relatively proper or relatively arbitrary), but, on the contrary, to understand it as embodied multiplicity” (Barthes, p. 48). In this interpretation mimesis is substituted by semiosis, and realism turns out to be pseudo realism.

Barthes’ follower Antoine Compagnon removes this antithesis, developing more dialectical conception. In his book “The Demon of Theory. Literature and Common Sense” (1998), he suggests overcoming the immanent restraint of literature and bringing it back to reality: “if literature refers to literature, this fact does not prevent it from referring to the outer world” (Compagnon, p. 148). Compagnon reveals contradiction in the thesis about impossibility of presentation of reality in literature, emphasizing that it is built on direct interpretation of linguistic studies by F. de Saussure and R. Jakobson. Conventionality of the relationship between a signifier and a signified in a language was transferred to the relationship between literature (art of words) and reality. As a result, linguistic illusion became universal and expanded to literature. But linguistic conventionality does not necessarily mean conventionality of a literary text. In a literary text words generally live a special life; combined in different combinations they escape from direct nominative meaning and acquire a new meaning, which is displayed when they combine with each other. In addition, following N. Fray and P. Ricoeur,

Compagnon emphasizes the Aristotelian concept of *anagnorisis* – “recognition”, which is an important component of *mimesis*. In this case recognition is understood as knowledge, creative comprehension of interrelations, relationships and consistent patterns that are revealed through the story (especially organized sequence of events, a legend and a myth – *Mythos*). Thus, recognition brings art into the sphere of the real relations of a human with the world. Existence of such dialectical concepts (that refer to common sense) which are capable to find a solution to conflicting views, broadens methodological possibilities of literature researches, and, in particular, can be used whenever necessary as experience of text-oriented studies with their attention to the specifics of immanent existence of literary text as a sign system and method of cultural and historical studies, with their access to broad expanse of culture, and consider its relationship with nature.

Formation and evolution of the concept of mimesis.

Man and nature

Recognition of *mimesis* also provokes a wide range of questions. What can be considered as imitation – copying static external forms of reality or actions and movements? Reflection of the external forms of life or its deep logic? Passive reproduction of forms and actions or creation of a new reality according to the method of nature? What we should emulate – nature or culture? The problem of *mimesis* (Greek *mimesis*, Lat. *imitatio* – imitation of life in art) is defined since antiquity. As a rule it is actualized in those times when materialistic tendencies are deepened in world outlook, and, accordingly, realistic tendencies – in artwork. This is Greco-Roman antiquity, the Renaissance, the age of Enlightenment, but this question became especially important in the 19th century, when art made a massive and dramatic

breakthrough to the truth of life and realistic school, which, after the sunset of romanticism represented the main line of artistic development of the century, was formed.

The history of the concept of *mimesis* offers a wide variety of interpretations, which do not reduce but multiply in modern science – both in western, which is clearly demonstrated by the collection of scientific papers “*Mimesis in Contemporary Theory: An Interdisciplinary Approach*” (Philadelphia. Amsterdam, 1984) and in Russian (researches by O.B. Dubova, V.A. Podoroga). Eventually, all the discussions are centered on the major question, which is considered at the levels of intra- and extra-textual relations of literature: is *mimesis* a copy or a model of reality? This dichotomy was outlined in ancient times and dates back to Plato’s and Aristotle’s concepts. The first dichotomy is imitation of life in its finished forms, copying them. The second is imitation of life in its ability to create, i.e. an artist’s ability to adopt the creative method of nature. Accordingly, in the first case it is a passive form of *mimesis* and in the second – active. Different modalities in the position “a human – nature” are behind them, as well as different ideas about the relationship of a man with God (gods), about the role of creative artist and purpose of art in general related to it.

Between the two extreme edge positions there is a wide range of interpretations of *mimesis*. After all, the so-called passive imitation, for example, can be not only a static copy of rigid life forms, but also dynamic – imitation of an action. Both of these alternatives still present in the ritual practices of primitive cultures, which syncretically merged religious, educational and aesthetic aspects. In the process of the megaliths (dolmens, menhirs, cromlechs) or man-made earth mounds creation primitive man echoed nature that created mountains, caves and hills. But imitation of nature was also mimetic dancing,

singing and skits reproducing the behavior of animals, birds, predators' attacks on their victims and fight scenes. Primitive people, who created them, did not perceive themselves as subjects of art separated from nature. They as if continued its work and the boundaries between culture and nature were not clearly defined. Mimesis was unconscious. Actually, there was no mimesis as the objective of art (within the meaning of modern aesthetics), as in syncretic unity of primitive culture there were no autonomously identified spheres, including art.

Perception of mimesis occurred in antiquity, but even then not all regarded it as a purely artistic problem. The idea of a man as the subject of art was formed under conditions of explicit recognition of overwhelming superiority of nature and the gods-creators over man. A man must learn from nature, that is why the aesthetic aspect of imitation is not always identified and sometimes absorbed by a practical purpose. For example, people learn agriculture by watching wild plants (as Lucretius described in details in his poetic treatise "On the Nature of Things"), building techniques are learnt by imitating animals and birds, singing is learnt from cicadas and birds (for example, Greek "teretisma" – singing which imitates the chirping of cicadas), etc. Polish philosopher Vladislav Tatarkevich, emphasizing Democritus' and Lucretius' studies, draws attention to the fact that such "practical" interpretation of mimesis is typical of ancient materialist philosophers (Tatarkevich, p. 284). Aristotle in "Physics" and "Poetics" describes imitation of nature in details. At that, it is not always referred to art. In ancient Greece, the concept of "art" did not have a clear definition of terminology, it was named with the word "techne" that meant skill, handicraft and skillful technique in any sphere. Plato, enumerating different kinds of art, referred to them arithmetic, music, agriculture, metric, medicine, construction, military art, seamanship,

etc. (55e, 56b,) (Plato, p. 72). Specific features of art just started to perceive and conceptualize. The range of phenomena related to actual artistic creativity was outlined due to the definition of "muse classes" – the classes which were patronized by muses. The goddess of history Clio and the goddess of astronomy Urania were among the muses, there was no a clear distinction of art from other areas of activity.

Since Socrates, and then Plato and Aristotle, the development of the concept of mimesis came to a new level, as there was a breakthrough in the field of aesthetic and mimesis started to be studied in correlation with art. For Plato, art, imitating the outward forms of the world and visible things, seemed pointless and unproductive. Such art (realistic art) is just an imitation of imitation, copying material world, which was secondary to the world of ideas. Aristotle recognized the aesthetic value of the real material world, found sense in art imitating them, besides, he considered imitation in a more complex manner, including great creative activity of an artist and variety of forms of mimesis in his concept. This may be imitation of the real, potential and proper life – "just as it was and as it is; or how they say and think; or how it should be" (1460b10) (Aristotle, p. 676). An artist (a sculptor, a poet, etc.) is not limited by passive copying, he/she can emphasize their beauty or ugliness, highlight the typical, most essential traits, discarding the random. Therefore, "poetry is more philosophical and more serious than history, for poetry says more about the general and history – about individual" (1451b-5) (Aristotle, p. 655).

Mimesis in the artistic practice of antiquity was expressed in readily apparent realistic tendencies, desire of painters, sculptors and poets to represent tangible world. The materialist views, a sense of corporality of the world were outlined in intensive developing plastic art, which could skillfully imitate the outer forms of life,

especially man, man's appearance, the proportions of body and postures. Feelings and relationships, a variety of movements, behavioral patterns and conditions were reflected in the mimetic dances, drama and poetry. Even literature, beginning with Homer, gravitated towards the plastic expression, the illusion of visible corporality of images (recognition of the outer world).

Comprehending the problem of mimesis in ancient philosophy, and then in aesthetics of the following epochs, contributed to identification of nature of aesthetic perception and specificity of art. Later, during the Renaissance, it is a person's ability to reconsider reality aesthetically and, therefore, perceive and create harmony, that will develop the theory of mimesis and focus it on the idea of active creative role of an artist competing with nature, and, to a certain extent, is compared to the Supreme Creator (Leonardo Da Vinci, L.B. Alberti, T. Tasso) (Dubova, p. 44). Art of the Renaissance which clearly showed the realistic tendency learned to create harmony from Nature; it was not only imitation of the outer forms of life, but desire to master its creative method. Imitation developed into reproduction and creation (the Demiurge). However, this rise of the man-creator did not mean abandoning the priority of nature. Removing the categoricalness of medieval antithesis of the divine and the earthly, the Renaissance offers the pantheistic conception of nature. Nature, which contains the Divine, is full of harmony; it is superior to man with all his/her abilities. It is necessary to learn from nature, it was studied and examined with avid interest, endowing art with cognitive functions. Leonardo da Vinci called his creative work "the science of painting" and taught young artists to scrutinize natural shapes, lines and colors in all their shades. "Mimesis beats the Demiurge" (Dubova, p. 43).

With the rise of the artist-creator, culture of the Renaissance did not know of such conceit of an artist to Nature, as the era of classicism.

Discouraging a lot on "imitation" and apparently following the ancient doctrines, the authors of the classical "poetics" (N. Boileau, C. Batteux) put art above the "virgin" nature; it must be treated selectively, imitating only beautiful nature or perfect samples of such imitations, which were represented in the art of antiquity. In classicism tutorial tone seems to be present in the approach to the irrational nature, it is deprived of representationalism, it can be referred to by selecting the desired, or not to be referred at all, shifting to cultural patterns. Culture, which is formed and polished by man as a reasonable being is above nature. It is this modality that makes the classical arguments of imitating nature the exception in the history of the development of the problem of mimesis and bears evidence of weakening mimetic intentions in art.

Realistic tendencies, nourished by awakening of the materialist interest to real life, always imply its recognition as being more ontologically important than art. This happened during the Enlightenment, when the axiom about necessity to follow nature became important again, and the conversation drifted into the mainstream of methodological and formal searches, i.e. drifted to the question of *how* to imitate this or that nature in different forms of art. Lessing in his "Laocoon", studying the problem of distance between art and reality, concludes that it can be mostly reduced in literature, rather than in the plastic arts with their clarity, making detailed, naturalistic images of the darker sides of life (ugliness, horror and suffering) unpleasant for the audience.

References to reality in aesthetics and literature of the 19th century

Artistic culture of the 19th century in the period of formation and heyday of realistic trend could base on this centuries-old experience of mimesis in art and its interpretation. It was formed in the 1830s-40s and announced of its

concepts in the middle of the century, especially in France, where in the 50s Courbet organized the exhibition “Realism”, Duranty published the magazine “Realism” and Champfleury – a collection of scientific papers under the same name. However, the artistic practice, as usually, outrun theory. Before validation of the term, the new direction in art and literature was defined in different ways: “the real poetry”, “the school of naturalism”, “naturalism”, “Flemish painting” and even “the daguerreotype literature”. This variability of definitions reflected incompleteness of the aesthetic concepts and undevelopment of the artistic principles. Even when the term “realism” was accepted, its meaning for the contemporaries was ambiguous, because “neither the concept of *consistency* with reality, nor the concept of *reality* itself were monosemantic” (Tatarkevich, p.306).

The priority of objective reality, as pre-existent to man objective given, was evident. The deepening materialism in the worldview, “clear-headedness” of the bourgeois epoch, development of the scientific thinking encouraged an artist to follow nature, study it and reflect it in art and literature. References to reality were regular and natural for the post romantic literature of the 19th century; they are reflected in the majority of literary manifestos of the era (in the works by Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert, Goncourt brothers, Zola, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, Mohnatsky, etc.) and in artistic practice. For Belinsky “poetry is predominantly life, it is the essence, so to say thin air, a triple-extract, the quintessence of life” (Belinsky, 493). Stendhal believed that what we should imitate Shakespeare in – “is a way to study the world we live in” (Stendhal, p. 242). Balzac in “The Human Comedy” promises “to portray man and life” (Balzac, p.4). Orientation to the truth of life in arts was often understood generally, without clear ideas and nuances, especially in the early realism. Clarification and specifications were made in the process of gaining artistic

experience. It was like a powerful stream that captured creativity in post romantic period, in which various mimetic motivations of literature and art were combined.

We should not forget that the 19th century romanticism made its breakthrough to the truth of life by destroying the normative and rhetorical restraint of classicism. Proclaiming creative freedom, triumph of individual style over tradition and norm, confusion of aesthetic criteria, genres and styles, romanticism achieved the most important – more naturality, especially in the depiction of emotions. Aiming for vitality and truthfulness that was also typical of the Romanticists was obvious in the aesthetic postulates of the Romantic era. This, as well as reflections of F. Schlegel about “the new limitless realism”, that “harmoniously combines the ideal and the real” and F. Schelling’s reflections about “the poetic realism”. V. Hugo writes about the reflection of life in art, and, anticipating the realist aesthetics, introduces the metaphor of a mirror, however, as a true romanticist, he gravitates towards “the convex mirror” (which admits hyperbole and emphasized bright colors). It was a revolution in art. The freedom of art in Hugo’s perception was associated with political freedom, “we are free of the old social form, why not to get rid of the old poetic form?” (Hugo, p. 368).

In the era of formation and establishment of realism, the problem of reflection of life in art became very important to the artistic culture of the 19th century. Gradually, in comprehension of reality, art became focused on the scientific worldview. Aesthetics of realism actualized and brought the cognitive function of art to the forefront. It was under the strong influence of science, carried away by the common desire to discover the laws of nature. Materialistic worldview of the era and scientific progress made the word “nature”, which was often the synonym of “life”, central. Mimesis was often

conceptualized in synonymous formulas of “imitation of nature” or “imitation of life”, which were quite broad and vague in meaning, and in this ambiguity they were applied to realism and naturalism. However, it should be noted, that realist aesthetics that was formed in the 19th century preferred other definitions to the word “imitation” – “*reflection of reality*”, “*knowledge of life*”, “*artistic reproduction of nature*” (the Greek word “mimesis” was not used at all). This distrust to the word “imitation” was determined by two factors. First of all, opposition towards outdated classicism, in which aesthetics defined its principles by the term “imitation”. The second reason is rejection of realism from coming naturalism, which had methodological character – the desire to distance itself from mere copying of reality and establish the method for its creative rethinking and recreation. The two main directions in the mimetic literature of the 19th century – realistic and naturalistic – co-existed and developed in parallel and dialectics of their relationship clarifies a lot in the artistic processes of the century. The controversy with naturalism contributed self-identification of realism and awareness of its special features.

The concept of “nature-life” combined both biological and social. The word “life” in the culture of the 19th century had several semantic interpretations. Life is the opposite of death. It is also the earthly journey of a person, person’s destiny (Napoleon’s life, the life of Lord Byron). Besides, life is objective reality given to us in sensations, which are opposed to fantasy. Life is a synonym of truth opposed to the romantic illusions (for example, in this meaning it is referred in the novel by G. Maupassant “Life”). Finally, there is another meaning – that is crucial to the culture of the 19th century: life is a higher level of organization of matter in relation to the mineral level. It has its own special features,

its own characteristics, not reducible to the mechanical laws.

In the 19th century, when the mechanistic materialism was overcome and the organic level of nature was discovered, life in fact, begins. The discovery made strong impression and greatly influenced the culture of the era. It generated a new view of nature and gave a powerful impetus to the development of the natural sciences. In 1802, Lamarck introduced the word “biology” into scientific use (from the Greek “bios” – life), which combined the complex of life sciences, G. Saint-Hilaire studied the entity of organism, J. Cuvier introduced the concept of animal type, J.B. Lamarck laid the foundations of the theory of evolution, C. Darwin discovered the internal mechanisms of evolution and the emergence of new species (variability, heredity and natural selection), L. Pasteur studied bacteria, G. Mendel developed the theory of heredity, anticipating future genetics. Perceiving the specificity of the organic level of matter existence, the culture of the 19th century came to grips with understanding the specifics of even more complicated levels – social and mental, painfully making its way to the mysteries of human being, unpredictable in its creative possibilities, and society, which is beyond the laws of rigid bio determinism, typical to the animal world. Since the mid-century, the social sciences were brought into focus, and in the end of the century psychology was rapidly developing. The path to the knowledge of the more complex forms of life was not easy, which gave rise to the inevitable reductionism in the interpretation of man and society and attempts to extrapolate to them the laws of the organic world. Specificity of the social level in relation to the biological level was not clear enough. Everything was perceived in terms of biological categories, living organism was everywhere. It was typical of the positivist philosophy (O. Comte), sociology (H. Spencer),

aesthetics (H. Taine), realistic and naturalistic art in particular.

In art we can see the tendency to bring together the goals of an artist and a scientist-naturalist, see a living organism in society and emphasize the biological nature and heredity of a man (the concept of “experimental novel” by Emile Zola and his series of novels “Les Rougon-Macquart”). “We are both physiologists and poets” – we can read in “Journal” by Goncourt brothers (Goncourt, p. 614). Balzac speaks of an idea of “La Comédie humaine”: “The idea of this work came from a comparison of humanity to the animal kingdom” (Balzac, p. 1). Social typification was formed on the analogy of animals’ types, as well as social determinism was formed on the analogy of natural determinism: “Society is like Nature. After all, from the social environment society creates as many different kinds of man, as animals, which exist in the animal world”. However, unlike naturalists, the realist writers still overcome direct analogies of biological and social, recognizing that social life is more diverse and complex in its manifestations than the natural world, and it is more unpredictable, “Social health is marked by accidents, which never happen in the natural world” (Balzac, p. 2-3). Realism emphasized the social. The change from the social to the biological, passing central border which went beyond a certain standard, contributed to the shift from realism to naturalism.

Variations of mimesis the 19th century literature

The 19th century is traditionally associated with the classical model of realism. Its traditional formulas – “the typical characters in typical circumstances” and the concept of social determinism (a man is a product of the social environment) were still important. The characters of the novels by Balzac, Flaubert, Dickens and Thackeray vividly represent their

environment; the characters of the graphic and artistic paintings by Daumier, Courbet and Millet are plunged in the social context. But aside from the social typification, the epoch offered a lot of interpretations of mimesis and a wide range of its manifestations in arts and crafts. The main aesthetic principle of the epoch – the demand for “the truth of life” in art – despite its obviousness and simplicity interpreted quite differently, “the truth” was interpreted in different ways, and that caused the variability of mimesis.

From our period of time the realistic text the 19th century is perceived as a whole entity, represented in a stable model of the classical heritage. But, from our point of view, it would be more productive to see it in its formation and dynamics and consider the literature of the 19th century to be a kind of large experimental laboratory, in which art as if was aimed to try different forms of mimesis. It studied different distances of proximity to reality, the types of thoroughness and details of its reflection, different attitudes of an author, the problem of selection of life material (nature), its rethinking, evaluation and fraction by an artist “temperament” (Zola), the possibility to achieve actuality and illusion of reality.

Obviously, writers of the realist epoch wanted to create this illusion. So, they were trying to find different ways to do it. One of them was the method of detailed descriptions that were actively included into a text and complemented the narrative. Literature, which, according to Aristotle uses only “bare words”, can not have the clarity of the plastic art, it is mostly determined by the references of language, the connection of a signifier and a signified, signification and denotation. Direct imitation is possible only in the form of onomatopoeia. Written language is generally distanced from reality and has complicated relationship with it, even if it includes only simple nominatives. And literary

text – in particular. By description literature tries to get closer to pictorialism. Creating the illusion of visual images that were possible to *see*, i.e. perceived by the sense organs, it confirmed their reality by visibility. This technique was used in the ancient literature, artistry, in fact, originated from visual images-descriptions. The famous expert of the ancient culture S. Averincev paid attention to this fact, “It is necessary to determine plastic and objectifying description or “ekphrasis” as the essential part of literary art”. From the three main categories, which describe everything that was written –moral, narration and description – only description is typical to “fiction” and S. Averincev noted that even “Homer is very generous in descriptions, which are not provoked by the plot” (Averincev, p.60). Auerbach in his work analyzes this feature of the Homeric epos (chapter “The Scar on Odysseus’ Leg”). Verbal plastics – descriptiveness is widely represented in the realistic and naturalistic literature of the 19th century, though not in equal measure.

In the literary texts of that epoch we can often the forms of mimesis which are associated with the Platonic idea of imitation the external forms of life. This kind of “imitation” is mainly associated with the vivid naturalistic tendency in the 19th century literature. And still, different variations are possible here. Mimesis could be regarded as a simple naturalistic imitation of life. And this imitation, in turn, might be represented in various forms depending on the distance set between art and reality. Imitation could be simple description of everyday life (often represented by moral essays) – naturalism as “superficial realism”. It could also study the details and give their detailed description. In both cases, an author perceives a work, and even a document, as a snapshot from nature (“a daguerreotype”). Goncourt brothers mentioned “human documents”, accumulation of observations and “studying with the help of eyeglass” (literary manifestos by the French

realists, p. 92). Sketches and scenes from nature were especially widely represented in the small prose genres – short stories and essays, in which such a “narrative” goal determined the main content.

However, realism also studied these lessons. The experience in detalization and detailed reproduction of the external forms of social and natural being were also widely used in realistic works, which generally set more ambitious goals, offering a succinct artistic breadth of life material. Scrupulous detailed descriptions of a character’s appearance (facial features, figure, characteristic poses), fragments of conversation, the subject and material environment, urban and natural landscapes in which a character stays were typical for the empirical environment of literature in the era of realism establishment. It is this environment of descriptions that sometimes makes realistic text of the 19th century soggy (too illustrative) for the modern sophisticated reader, who is ready for rapid associations.

True reflection of life in art could be also interpreted as inherited from the Romantics real feelings. But this reflection came to a new level, it was developed and settled in social determinism. The portrayed feelings were real, in case an author took into account their dependence on social environment that formed their bearer. At that, this environment, with irresistible objective laws, determines not only the content of these feelings, but also the forms they take and in which they are expressed. Agitated vanity and ambitions of Julien Sorel are extremely hypertrophied, reach the intensity of emotions, as it should be with a descendant of an ordinary family, who got a provocative chance to “go up”, which representatives of the lower classes of society got in the bourgeois epoch. At the same time, the feelings may be complicated and sophisticated (which are emphasized by the detailed and nuanced analysis), typical for well-

educated person who belong to “high society”. This complex symbiosis of Sorel’s emotions, determined by the dynamics of social status, is not acceptable either for his family, or for the members of aristocratic society, part of which he became. Neither family nor society understands him. Social reality penetrates into the human inner world. In this penetration E. Auerbach recognized innovative principles of artistic reflection in the novel by Stendhal “The Red and The Black”: “tempers, actions and relationships of the main characters are very closely connected with historical circumstances; political and social factors are realistically included into the plot, as in no other novel and no other literary work of the past” (Auerbach, p. 453).

Moreover, the real feelings were understood as sincerity and truthfulness of an author, who does not want to distort anything in a represented object. “In art I recognize only sincerity”, wrote one of the first theorists of realism Champfleury (Literary manifestos of the French realists, p. 69). Actualization of the sensory perception, as the main and the most reliable source of “truth” took place. Sensationalism, as one of the typical trends in the 19th century culture, was represented in the scientific-philosophical and artistic comprehension of reality. It is represented in the positivist epistemology, especially in the second half of the century (Max, Avenarius). The peculiar kind of deflection is also represented in the artistic practice of the epoch and it is differently displayed in naturalism and impressionism. The intention of an artist (writer) to represent exactly what he/she sees, feels and touches, although motivations and forms of embodiment may vary, is manifested.

Approximation to reality was performed by the proper linguistic techniques, the use of more natural, democratic manner of expression, similar to the colloquial language. It was possible to achieve naturality and harmony by appealing

to the prosaic narration. Prose follows the flexible flow of life, it is not constrained by the meter and rhythm of a verse. Stendhal insisted that modern tragedy should be written in prose, as brief moments of reality illusion that emerge in the theater, can destroy “admiration of a beautiful verse” (Stendhal, p. 226). The prosaic texts are mostly significant for the realistic literature. Flaubert insisted the style was plain and translucent. Work on the style should lead to its self-destruction. Aiming for objectivity and impartiality of narration, typical mostly for the naturalists, led to dissolution of style as a mediator between literature and life. As style is an author’s individuality, an author in this case also disappears, not passing impressions from reality through his/her perceptions and, therefore, not distorting it. This viewpoint of naturalism led art to a dangerous point, blurred its artistic and aesthetic nature.

Realism quickly started to distance itself from naturalism, rebelling against frivolous imitation. Belinsky compares such imitation with a deadening wax figure. Demanding from an artist to address to life, he considered it necessary “to extract, so to speak, its essence, and to combine different parts into a living and organic entity...” (Belinsky, Vol. IV, p. 479). What is meant here is artistic synthesis. The problem of artistry was one of the key problems for the realistic aesthetics of the 19th century. It was artistry that made it possible for realism to perceive the nature of art in general and its specificity in relation to naturalism. Plausible images are not life itself, but reinterpreted in a special way and synthesized life material. They have a conventionality that makes the illusion of reality in literature perceived, and, therefore, incomplete. This relativity of a poet’s visions, it doesn’t matter how vividly they were represented to him, was perceived even by the representatives of late Romanticism. In “Serapion Brothers” by

Hoffmann the conversing friends sympathize to madman Serapion, who, like the poet, believes in his fantasies, but, unlike the latter, doesn't realize their conventionality" (Hoffman, p.242). Stendhal directly says that illusion in art "is not a complete illusion" that the audience, for example, in the theater, perceives it and this fact is confirmed by the abnormal, exceptional case when a soldiers-guard fired at the actor playing Othello, who strangled Desdemona (Stendhal, p. 224-225).

One of the most important questions in the artistic culture of the 19th century was the question of an extent and depth of penetration into an imitated object. Should reality present in art only in its external, sensually perceived forms or in the deep logic of development? This dichotomy traditionally determines the border between naturalism and realism. It would seem obvious to correlate naturalistic direction of art with Plato's interpretation of mimesis, and realistic direction with Aristotle's interpretation. In fact, the relationships are more complex and attitudes – more diverse. The most representative naturalistic aesthetics, the theoretical programme of Emile Zola, which he tried to implement in his artistic creativity, is built on the idea of comprehension and research of internal objective laws of social life, mind and human behavior. This is not about superficiality, but thoroughness. Only a tendency to scientific character is manifested more clearly and vividly than in realism. Positivist fear of subjective refraction and, thus, possible distortion of reality in art is traditionally associated with naturalism. But the tendency to scientific character and impartiality emerges in the realists' works. Flaubert insisted, "Great art must be scientific and impersonal" (Literary manifestos of the French realists, p.16). Balzac, whom Zola considered as his mentor, wrote about the use of

the latest achievements of science in literature. References to science, the use of scientific methods in literature (observation, classification and experiment) were other means to achieve a convincing truth. Naturalism, driving this tendency to extremes, result in the obvious and sometimes labeled academese.

Different interpretations of "the art of truth" that generate a variety of mimetic reflections in artistic practice, in fact, were connected with the key question of aesthetics, represented by Chernyshevsky in his thesis "about the relation of art to reality". Only as a result of the longtime and dramatic search for the answer to this question, crystallization of the classical formula of realism, which suggests some found balance – the dialectical unity of typing and individualization, external credibility and deep logic of life, objective reality and subjective author's perception, authority of a real nature and necessary rethinking of the life material from a perspective of the aesthetic ideal, takes place.

These artistic practices, measurement of capabilities, forms and limits of mimesis, that were carried out in the 19th century, the epoch of formation of the classical models of realism, are important to take into account in the study of its further development. The experience turned out to be productive for the modern artistic processes. Flexibility and multiplicity of mimesis caused viability of realism and allowed it to stand in the 20th century, in the keen struggle with modernism, to detect its ability to change, mimicrate, renovate and generate new variants. It managed, avoiding accusations of useless imitation, mask and alter mimesis, enriching its classical forms, for example, by inclusion of mythology, parable and associativity. This experience is also interesting in the light of modern art strategies for creating new, experimental forms.

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Многовариантность мимесиса в литературе XIX века

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Современная наука о литературе осознает необходимость обновления теории реализма и пересмотра его конкретного развития в разные исторические эпохи. Для этого важно учитывать современный дискурс о реализме, который может дать импульсы для дальнейшего изучения реалистической литературы. Возможно по-новому посмотреть на классическое наследие – реализм XIX века, выйти за рамки традиционных теоретических формул и стереотипов в представлении о нем. Расцвет реализма в литературе и искусстве XIX века был подготовлен развитием миметических тенденций в предшествующие эпохи. Формирование классической модели реализма сопровождалось напряженными поисками способов художественного отражения жизни. Разные интерпретации в понимании главного эстетического постулата о «правде жизни в искусстве» породили разнообразие форм мимесиса. Этот опыт оказался продуктивным для дальнейшей судьбы реализма, определил его гибкость и жизнестойкость в борьбе с модернизмом.

Ключевые слова: мимесис, реализм, художественные процессы, XIX век.
