In the history of literature up to the present day there doesn’t exist any unanimity in interpretation of a genre. It is a question of defining the notion of a genre, its theoretical basis and principles. Critics express different points of view as to the nature and essence of a story as a genre within Bashkir literature. The study of genres is often referred to as the main criteria (village life, industrial production, warfare, social problems) along with such features as a form of a plot realization (detectives, adventure stories), a style of narration (lyrical, romantic, documentary, realistic, philosophical, satirical, etc.), a subject of a narration (historical, scientific-and-fantastic, for children). Some researchers divide a story on the basis of its art structure into five variants: a narration, a story with an extensive final, a novel, a lyrical story, an autobiographical story [1, p. 7–8]. At the same time they understand it as a synthesis of genres: a dramatic story, a novel, a documentary story, a publicity story, etc. [2].

So, what a genre is?

G. Ramazanov defines it as follows: “A genre, to my mind, is a notion deduced from the peculiarities of an art work, its composition form” [3, p. 9]. But each genre emerges on a certain stage on the basis of tradition and art experience by developing such components as style, plot, conflict, composition [3, p. 137].

There don’t exist unalterable genres, there are only composition forms characteristic for definite time [3, p. 294]. A genre is a type of any art work with a specific form and contents [4, p. 32]. Citing G. N. Pospelov, a genre is both “a system of poetic expression” and “a composition-and-style unity” [5, p. 59].

So, the main feature of a genre is bound to the composition structure of a work by a wider more dynamic notion. Such interpretation of a genre common for Bashkir literary criticism [3, p. 294] is helpful in fuller and objective unveiling of laws of its development.

G. Khusainov noted that G. Ramazanov connects the development of a genre with an epoch he studies (second half of the XIXth century – 60s of the XX century) and adjectively analyses genres evolution taking as a model Russian and other national literature after having made a cornerstone problems of tradition and innovation, interrelation between national and world literature, between literature and folklore.

Up to 1917 the formation and development of the genre of a story in Bashkir literature was connected with the transition from enlightening realism to critical one. This process found its expression in the type of art conflict, in principles of characters creation. We clearly see one sided presentation of characters (either rationalist or sentimental), weak or mild conflict settlement (“New Followers of Cave Life” by Z. Khadi, 1908; “Asma or Crime and Punishment” by R. Fakhretdinov, 1903). As for such works as “Life Stages” (1928), “Blackfaced” (1927) by M. Gafuri, “The Fist Days” (1927) by M. Tagirov, they belong to transitional types of literary works.

G. Ramazanov divided Bashkir stories into four groups: epic, lyrical, documentary and those for children [6, p. 8–131]. The basis for division of stories into epic and lyrical is an intentional principle; the documentary are distinguished by the material used, and the children’s ones – by functional features.

R. Ilysheva divides Bashkir stories into social-and-true to life (social-psychological, social-publicistic, social-ethical), “lyrical” (lyrical-romantic, lyrical-philosophic, lyrical-true to life), a story-chronic (historical-documentary, memoirs, documentaries) [7]. It should be noted, however, that the classification is rather contradictory. The author herself is well aware of the fact, so she suggests a more fractional classification. One of the drawbacks of the given classification is absence of a single universal criterion when defining a genre and its varieties. It is unclear, for instance, why only a social story can be named a psychological one. Both “lyrical” and documentary stories can be psychological.
Professor R. Baimov divides Bashkir stories from the point of view of their problematic sets into social-psychological, lyrical, adventure stories, scientific-fantastic and historical memoirs [8, p. 5–45].

The emergence of historical documentary stories is an innovation in the Bashkir literature [8, p. 117]. The story “Pardon” by M. Karim was named by G. Khusainov a romantic work [6, 124]. G. Ramazanov defined A. Khakimov’s stories “Birds will fly away” and “Rainbow” as lyrical-romantic ones [6, p. 107].

Social-true to life and social-moral stories predominate. The reason for this on the one hand is that socialist realism prevailed in the period of Bashkir literature formation and it demanded an open social trend of any work and on the other hand such types of stories as adventure stories or scientific fantastic ones came into being rather late in Bashkir literature.

V. Synenko said, that “in routine work the inner world of a hero is unveiled, and an author doesn’t pursue an aim to show life in its epic width, he works with concrete material” [1, p. 28–29].


The emergence of a great number of social-moral stories is connected with writers’ aspiration to see both social essence of a human being and psychological basis of his existence. Writers as a rule consider the hero’s life through the prism of his inner feeling, they show all the changes which occur in the inner world of a character influenced by some events.

Presentation of the character’s inner world becomes the main trend of the work. There are a lot of such works in the Bashkir literature: “Trouble” by R. Kamal, “Devil’s Wheel”, “Two Men and One Lady” by N. Musin, “Pardon” by M. Karim, “Following Father” by Nisamov, “Yellow Nightingale’s Nestling”, “At the Dawn” by D. Bulyakov. They are unanimous in their authors’ aspiration to present psychological situations, typical for everyday life.

The common features of social-true to life and social-moral stories is the image of a contemporary, the place he occupies in the world, his attitude to people, his moral principles. Authors try to show their hero as a socially active personality, they are interested in moral-ethical principles of a modern man, social-psychological basis of his relationship with other people. For instance, the main clarion call in R. Nizamov’s story “Following Father” is keeping loyalty to ancestors’ traditions. It is a sincere call of the generation which had grown up early during war-time, the voice of the generation going step by step to its bright future, checking its acts by applying to the past, sharing their ideas, experience and feelings with descendants. Such works appeared in 70–90-s of the XXth century (“Next to Father” by G. Ramazanov, “We are village boys” by N. Musin).

The story “Following Father” depicts war theme, the relationship of fathers and children. N. Shaikhuluov’s story “In Forty Years” portrays the life of old people who had suffered the terror of war and are peacefully living in the village. Through simple narrations about their daily toil the author demonstrates the relations of three main characters: Khurmat, Gusman, Samsetdin. Such notions as loyalty, kindness, humanity, treason are important not only on the battlefield but in everyday life. Both, T. Giniatullin (Anatoly Genatullin) and N. Shaikhulov choose a very simple plot for their stories. The main character of his story “Return” Gaisa Kinyaugulov is an ordinary soldier, one of the millions of those engaged in the war. Everything he does is very natural and usual, his thoughts and dreams are very simple. These are the most attractive features of the hero’s character, which makes people believe in him: his simplicity is a kind of manifestation of deep psychological emotions, of true philosophic trend of his spirit.

All social-true to life and social-moral stories have one trend in common, they depict sharp social and historical problems of the century, settlement of social conflicts [9, p. 7].

Stories in which the leading themes were those of professionalism, industriousness and skill to manage people became widely spread in the 1970-s. It was rather bold and innovative step for Bashkir literature, since it previously had rather narrow range of themes. Undoubtedly, such stories have a great future, but they are meet special demands. Intellectual level of the talk, scientific foundation should be clearly thought. [8, p. 7]. I. Gizzatulin’s story “The Lovers’ Garden” is the one with the natural surroundings where the action takes place. The reclamation work in the village of Byshylga shown in the story reveals the influence of scientific-and-technical revolution onto human beings psychology. There is no character in the story indifferent to these events. Baty Yantylin stands apart, he saw too much in his life and he understands the problems deeper than others. The strength of his character is the result of life experience and of skill to see the logical end of every effort taken. This character can be compared to the main heroes in Kh. Musin’s work (Khultanbay from “Beast’s hide”, Yryshkulov from “Hills’ breath”), of M. Burakaeva (Gaisar Mutalov from “The cradle”).

M. Burakaeva’s story “The lights that never go out” is devoted both to scientific discoveries and moral problems, as well as to relations among people.

Up to recent time literary characters were divided into positive and negative ones, this led to limitation in revealing the objective complexity of the surrounding world.
Kh. Musin in his “Two men and one lady” specifically showed moral-ethical problems existing in the society. The plot is extremely ordinary: two men meet at the bed Suyumbiki, a sick lady who is prepared to be operated: her husband Antyl and her first love Raiman. The writer reveals their state of mind, the peculiarities of their inner world through different situations, describing them at work and near her bed. The sick lady’s thoughts of these two men are contradictory likewise they are. The writer shows that the main thing for any human being is the richness if spirit, of relations with people, not money or power.

Another Kh. Musin’s story “Hills’ Breath” reveals the interconnection of such notions as nobility, dignity, honesty, decency, love, faithfulness, and shows that ecology of wild life, as well as of a man needs protection.

It’s necessary to explain that the theme of ecology can hardly become the main one in art literature. Mainly it is elaborated in journalism. In the fiction it can be dealt with in the relations of a man nature, they are mutual. One can distinguish two ways of picturing such relations:

1. Through man’s attitude to nature dynamics of his inner world can be clearly seen;
2. Heroes attitude to one another is shown from the ecological position.

In the first case the author tells about richness of his hero’s inner world, in the second social-and-psychological atmosphere, the conflict resulting from heroes’ relations is shown.

A writer while creating his work of art orients himself to definite group of readers, that is why he should know his material as deep as those whom he addresses; besides a writer must explain what will be result of this of that way chosen, on the basic of his ideological and art conception, i.e. his main task is to represent all the events, problems in the production sphere all conflicts in socially meaningful aspect. If there is a conflict there must be a psychological aspect, which means nit only lofty feelings but also morality of heroes’ relations. R. Sultangareyev in his story “White Lychnis” continues his ideological quest, thoughts of the problems of today. He managed to sho in lofty cocours the attitude of modern man to labour, his responsibility for the task charged, the emergence of totally new features in his character, relativity in his attitude to the surrounding.

The principal character of the story Raisa – Raya is a working woman, a driver is shown in different situations, both as a human being and personality. She likes her work, holds responsibility for all she does, but her being a woman cannot be a ground for giving prominence among man – drivers. From the very start the writer underlines Raya’s laconic speech, her harsh words to the people around her, her likeness to men-drivers, which is explained by the fact that she is a single parent to her daughter.

But people’s attitude to her changed her greatly.

Another R. Sultangareyev’s story “Stone Deer” can be referred to social-moral works. One of the main characters – Yangar – admits every event close to his heart and mind, all this cannot but influence his own world outlook his life position.

These two works demonstrate the development of all Bashkir literature. Deep high – mindedness of both stories, the author’s ambition to create moving characters and through them to convey the most significant social problems of today, to make ethical problems the central ones are welcomed by both readers and critics. The author is distinguished by a special manner of narration, by its objectiviti. This is undoubtedly witnesses of the author’s mastery. [11, p. 10]

It is well known since the ancient times that one cannot live in a society being free of it. That’s the reason why the authors of such widely known stories as “Snow in Hills falls early”, “Warm Rain”, “Streamlet”, “White Lychnis” could not free themselves from the norms, demands, notions of the time they lived in. That is why many mistakes of the time described their reflection in these stories. One can ask: “Were there any achievements?”. Certainly, there were. Each story is a result of long creative search, thoughts. But we should admit that the search was limited, within the axiom “you can do it only this way, no other way possible”. Prevailed but limited one sided understanding of the majority of political, social, moral, psychological, defense willy-nilly of the existing system of management by administrative methods, a kind administration for it.

The writers who clearly saw what was happening in the country and tried to reveal their feelings and thoughts suffered from obstruction, strict censure; they were prevented from publishing their works, readers never saw these works. This led to the appearance of dozens of works based on the conflict between two types of managers – positive and negative, limited in their abilities to turn to truth in life.

Drawing attention to prose of 70s–90s of the XXth c. We can single out several main themes and trends. The main are the themes of historical past (October Revolution of 1917, Great Patriotic war, represions) and modern life. Though these trends are general, it should be noted that 70s–90-s differ from the previous period of the development of Bashkir literature. Up to early 70s the war was shown one-sidedly: selfless labour in the rear, unprecedented soldiers’ heroic deeds at the front. Inner world of the hero, his philosophic ideas, the source of his heroism come to the forefront in the period analyzed. Epic works about war by K.Simonov, A.Chakovsky, “Marshy Scrub Chronicles” by I. Melezh, by Yu. Bondarev, O. Gonchar, V. Rasputin, G. Baklanov, V. Astafyev, I. Drushe, Ch. Aitimov were extremely popular among readers.

In Bashkir literature war prose develops actively as well. Such stories as “Bridge”, “Lame Wolf”, “Echelon” by A. Khakimov, “Cedar lives for a thousand years” by I. Abdullin, “Following Father” by
R. Nizamov, “Shaking the Heavens” by A. Chanysh, “Falcon’s Way” by A. Magazanov, “Tunnel”, “Return” by T. Giniatullin, “Streamlet” by D. Bulyakov, etc. devoted to Great Patriotic War were published. 

However, the point is not in the quantity of the published matter, the quality changed greatly. Writers of prose tried to show the war in its epic width, complexity, with the spirit of tragedy, from the point of view of hero’s moral and psychological state of mind.

“A story is an art investigation of a separate man’s fate. The greater part of stories depicting the war confirms this. Soldiers’ heroic deeds in the fight against fascists for freedom of their land, their own people are shown from the point of view of moral and ethical sufferings. These are the soldiers’ thoughts and wishes, their humanistic character. But every writer shows the essence of this heroism in his own way”. [12, p. 71]

The theme of war if dealt with as a global event influencing all sides of life of several generations of people – suits more for a novel, not a story. But when the genre of an epic work fails to penetrate the phenomenon deeply, an author of a story gets greater chances. A story can do much where a deeper research of the reality, as well as the description of influence of sharp social contradictions and events on to separate human being’s life, consideration of a character’s dynamics in these most complex conditions are needed, a story can suggest a lot. In such cases not only the observance of the chronicle of events, their wide embrace, featuring of a multitude of characters are important but the human being, his inner world and his attitude to what is around him.

Especially impressive is the description of the war in T. Giniatullin’s story “Assault”. The episodes of war are given through the main character’s (T. Giniatullin) vision, through his experience. Reminiscences and meditation of the main hero, necessary for comprehensive description of his character occupy an important past in modern writers’ technique. This can be easily explained: an aspiration to unite as a whole different events and epochs presupposes a definite analytical element.

Very often the usage of this technique (“Long-long childhood”, “Rainbow”) is bound to the traditions of Oriental literature, especially Turkish. Many world known works are created with the help of his compositional technique (“Thousand and one night”, “The Book of Syndbad”, “The Book of Love”, “The Book of Kahun”, etc.).

Past times and their analysis are used to investigate modern problems within contemporary literature. But very often this technique is misused. In many works hero’s present state of mind is hardly mentioned, but his past is investigated through his reminiscences. I fact, the main character being out of the contemporary reality becomes a man of the past [9; 10, p. 34]. “It is impossible to create a character without of plot, a conflict must also be found to a plot in prose”. This refers to lyrical-and-romantic stories as well.

If “lyrical beginning” occupies a greater place in prose, it serves not only a genre definition of a work, but points to the aspiration to diversify styles. That is why using too much of lyrical prose, loss of sense of duty leads to lifeless works, fails to describe life objectively. [13, p. 56].

The problem of attitude to the Great Patriotic War, of evaluating those events, of people of that epoch from the position of modern times, of present interpretation takes a significant place in many stories.

Hero’s deeds are shown in two plans. But the return to the past serves not only the description of his biography.

The war having forced people to abandon habitual way of life, having put them on the brink between life and death became the touchstone that tests people on their humanity. In D. Bulyakov’s story “Yellow Nightingale Nestling” all the events are shown through the fate of the main character – a village girl Zainap, who followed her lover to the front, gave birth to a child and lost it. All her hopes were ruined but she met a woman at a hospital and she helped Zainap understand herself. Later on she could find explanation to many events in the past, but she can’t understand death of a child in our peaceful time, she compares fascists to those “mothers” who desert their children.

The story “Yellow Nightingale Nestling” can be characterized by one of the most important artistic means – “image symbols”. A nestling here is a symbol that there is grief and sorrow in our life, but it will grow up and give us pleasure with its songs, it is a symbol of future beauty. It leaves a deep feeling in readers’ hearts: there is no difference for a mirror which reflects all those qualities which make a person a Human Being, whether a person is young or old, if he loves everybody a nestling included. Such deep philosophic retrospective comes to mind when comparing a young girl and an elderly woman who mourns over a child.

In literary works an author’s position is sometimes expressed through description of his own attitude to heroes. And even if an author expresses it through the image of some hero, he shows the hero’s attitude to society, to other characters. It’s unlikely; there is an author quite indifferent to characters created by him. Even in strictly realistic work an author’s position is clearly indicated. In non-autobiographic works this attitude can be denoted by such notions as “pride”, “jaz”, “emotion”…

In post-war years authors of stories paid great attention to historical theme.

The creation of documentary and historical and biographical stories is an extremely difficult and responsible task. Nevertheless this kind of stories developed rapidly in recent years.

In such works an author cannot deviate from historical documents, he must base his conclusion on strictly documentary facts. In case necessary sources are not available his description should not violate historical

All these works created on the principle of historicism and documentalism correspond to historical reality.

From the point of view of a genre specific character the above works are closer to a novel. First, those definite requirements were made to the genre of a historical novel. Second, since a writer decided to elaborate a historical theme he tries to widely investigate the epoch under study. Among historical stories greater place is taken by the works devoted to a separate personality, to a certain event. The problem of correlation between historical truth and artistic invention has always been the most significant one. Sharp polemics carried on by writers, historians and literary critics testifies to this.

The problem of correlation of artistic invention to historical truth became urgent still in the epoch of socialist realism. In the works of that epoch it often happened that biographies of many historical figures became distorted, only those events were described which corresponded to modern political guidelines (Birth-day” by Ya. Khammatov, “The Eagles Dies in Flight” by A. Bikchentaev). Being well aware of the necessity to correspond historical reality these authors showed (were forced to do so) patriotism of their heroes. As a result, the main hero was an ideal far from reality.

In recent years there appeared many works devoted to people who suffered from repression of 30 of the XX th c. Among those there are historical documentary works devoted to single personalities. The story “Red Snow” shows a typical picture of those years. At the first sight all these events are known from history and literature of the previous period: people’s aspiration to find truth and absurdity of all those accusations... The author reminds us what a formidable force can be the blind impulse to exterminate, which ruined such clever people, to what consequences can lead blind faith.

But it should be noted that the story “Power of Love” is of great educative importance: peoples’ traditions, everyday amenities, such as evening gatherings by women and young girls, children’s games and even commemorative feasts are described in clear and plain language, very comprehensively.

Likewise, T. Giniatullin’s story “What is there behind the Hill?” is remarkable by a scrupulous description of each event.

F. Akhmetov called his work “Our shoulderstraps” a “chronicle”: he described his biography as well as his family tree-shezhere (family tree), and tells about people around him.

T. Sagitov’s “Amanat” was called by the author a “poem-essay”. The author’s biography is intermittent with the narration about his people from his village, about heroism of his relatives and friends at the front Great Patriotic War.

In documentary prose the correlation of historical fact and artistic invention is defined as rule by idealistic tendency, where means of artistic invention must prevail being accompanied by historical facts.

Adventurous works differ from realistic ones by their invention features. This genre is popular because such works are easily readable. Besides, the plot can develop around several characters. That’s why there are works in this genre written for children and youth. Though it is thought an easy genre (fictional one) authors should know the readers’ psychology, possess the mastery of conflict.

Stories by A. Bikchentaev are attractive for analysis in this respect. Heroes of his works are young people experiencing difficulties in their complicated life full of romance. The aspiration to fill the works with interesting situations leads to the appearance of elements of a detective story (K. Mergen) [14, p. 275].

There are many adventure stories written for grown-ups. The greater part are war-and-patriotic or detective stories. A. Gareyev’s “The Pike’s Chase” is very compact, all the events and situations are presented in their depth and completion.

The peculiarity of a form is very important for adventure stories because the plot to be parallel to the author’s position.

To attract readers’ attention authors put their characters into unusual, sometimes fantastic circumstances. The plot of such stories is usually some hypothesis to be solved by artistic means. The specific feature of such works is usage of scientific terminology as well as artistic representational means. (“On the track of mysterious signals” by K. Khamitov, “Loulla”, “The last Ploughman’s Festival”, “The Last Stupidity” by B. Rafikov, “Black Tin”, “Farewell”, “On the Other People’s Planet” by N. Gaibybaev, “Ylansay Adventures” by A. Agliullin, “Sherlock Homes Cries” by G. Khisamov, “Nostalgia” by A. Utyabai, “I’ll be back at Dawn” by F. Ishkaeva). An author having framed a hypothesis looks for its evidence, presents it as a way out for his heroes. B. Rafikov in his “Loulla” successfully tackles the problems. The story tells us about cosmonauts’ interesting work, about different moments of orbital spacecraft controls, about some dramatic situations which show how dangerous the work is and what courage it requires.

The most attractive aspect of adventure stories is that not only answers are given, but also questions are put, and they can be solved in the nearest future.

The peculiarity of this genre is that all compositional elements, events, characters and details are aimed at the plot development, stress the positive heroes’ features...

As was seen above the majority of stories published in 70–90’s of the XXth c. are devoted to modern problems. Each author relying on his experience and potential actively showed all urgent problems dealing with world outlook, morality. Problems of genre and style were also paid attention to. Some works are characterized by their leisureness and lyricism and readers’ easily see the diversity of genre and style forms characteristic for modern Bashkir story.

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