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**Genre of ‘Stories from the Life of Peasants’ in Russian Literature before the  
Emancipation Reform: Plots, Poetics, Ideology**

Dissertation Summary

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## **Publications**

The following ten articles are submitted for defense. In nine of them, Alexey Vdovin is the only author, in one - the first author (corresponding author). All articles have been published (or are in print) in leading peer-reviewed journals indexed in the Scopus database. Of these: two articles were published in journals belonging to the 1st quartile in the Scopus databases, the other two were published in journals belonging to the 2nd quartile in Scopus; one article in a HSE List A journal.

- 1) Vdovin A., Zubkov K. New Approaches to Representations of Peasants in Russian Literature // *Russian Literature*. 2021. Vol. 119. P. 7-14.
- 2) Vdovin A.V. D'iavol'skoe iskushenie izvozhchika: genealogiia i sotsiologiia populiarnogo literaturnogo siuzheta // *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 2023. № 4 (182). S. 109-122.
- 3) Vdovin A. «Nevedomyi mir»: russkaia i evropeiskaia estetika i problema reprezentatsii krest'ian v literature serediny XIX veka // *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 2016. T. 146. № 5. S. 287-315.
- 4) Vdovin A.V. Russkaia etnografiia 1850-kh godov i etos tsivilizatsionnoi missii: sluchai «literaturnoi ekspeditsii» Morskogo ministerstva // *Ab Imperio*. 2014. № 1. S. 91-126.
- 5) Vdovin A.V. Krest'ianskie rech' i golosa v «Zapiskakh okhotnika» I.S. Turgeneva i v proze o krest'ianakh do otmeny krepostnogo prava // *Slovene*. 2022. T. 11. № 2. S. 168-186.
- 6) Vdovin A. Opaque Mind, Muteness, and Melodrama: Dmitry Grigorovich's Invention of Peasant Subjectivity in *The Village* (1846) // *Slavic and East European Journal*. 2022. Vol. 66. No 3. P. 373-391.
- 7) Vdovin A.V. Prozhivnoe myshlenie i krest'ianskaia sub"ektivnost' v povesti I.S. Turgeneva «Postoialyi dvor» // *Sibirskii filologicheskii zhurnal*. 2024. № 4 (forthcoming).
- 8) Vdovin A.V. Konstruirovaniie krest'ianskikh sub"ektiv v proze dlia naroda 1839-1861 godov // *Detskie chteniia*. 2023. № 1. S. 269-298.
- 9) Vdovin A. The Nationalization of Patriotism in Russian Literature during the Crimean War: Institutions, Everyday Nationalism, and Images of Peasants // *Russian Review*. 2024. Vol. 83. No 1 (forthcoming).

- 10) Vdovin A. "Devilish Money" and Peasant Ethics: Leo Tolstoy's Economic Imagination and Emplotment in "Polikushka" // *The Russian Review*. 2017. Vol. 76. No. 1 (January). P. 53-71.

The results of the dissertation research are also presented in the following 14 articles:

- 1) Vdovin A.V. Bremia modernizatsii: patriarkhal'nye ritualy, emansipatsionnaia etika i istoricheskie alliuzii v drame A.F. Pisemskogo "Gor'kaia sud'bina" // *Russian Literature*. 2021. T. 119. S. 43-69.
- 2) Vdovin A. V. Orientalizatsiia «drugogo» kak strakh pered svoim narodom: «Olesia» A.I. Kuprina v postkolonial'noi perspektive // *Scando-Slavica*. 2019. T. 65. № 2. S. 223-238.
- 3) Vdovin, Alexey. Nationalizing Science in Mid-Nineteenth Century Russia: Ideological Origins of the Naval Ministry's "Literary Expedition" // *Scando-Slavica*. 2015. Vol. 61. No. 1. P. 100-118.
- 4) Vdovin A.V. Sovremennaia russkaia literatura v khrestomatiakh 1843–1904 godov i literaturnyi kanon // *Quaestio Rossica*. 2020. T. 8. № 1. S. 85-10.
- 5) Vdovin A.V. Byl li M.M. Dostoevskii avtorom retsenzii na narodnye rasskazy Marko Vovchok v zhurnale «Svetoch»? (Iz kommentariia k stat'e F.M. Dostoevskogo «G-n -bov i vopros ob iskusstve») // *Russkaia literatura*. 2023. № 4 (v pechati).
- 6) Vdovin A. "Dmitry Tolstoy's Classicism": And The Formation Of The Russian Literary Canon in The High School Curriculum // *Ab Imperio*. 2017. No. 4. P. 108-137.
- 7) Vdovin A.V. Krest'iane v literature, lokal'noe znanie i problema modernosti (Rets. na kn.: Donovan J. *European Local-Color Literature: National Tales, Dorfgeschichten, Romans Champêtres*. N.Y., L., 2010) // *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 2017. T. 143. № 1. S. 362-370.
- 8) Vdovin, A. *The Peasant* // *New Cambridge History of Russian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024 (forthcoming).
- 9) Vdovin A. «Krest'ianskii panteizm na eksport: «Muni-Roben» Zhorzh Sand, «Kas'ian s Krasivoi Mechi» I.S. Turgeneva i ideologiya prozy o krest'ianakh 1840-kh godov» // «Ideologicheskie konteksty russkoi kul'tury XIX-XX veka i poetika perevoda T. 93: Wiener Slawistischer Almanach. Peter Lang GmbH, 2017. S. 89-97.
- 10) Vdovin A. V. Siuzhet dlia naroda: «Korobeiniki» N.A. Nekrasova v kontekste prozy o krest'ianakh 1840-1850-kh godov // *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 9: Filologiya*. 2016. № 3. S. 190-206.
- 11) Vdovin A. «Russkii narodnyi kharakter kak «literaturnyi obman» (rasskaz A.F. Pisemskogo «Leshii»)» // *Studia Russica Helsingiensia et Tartuensia*, XII: Mifologiya

- kul'turnogo prostranstva: K 80-letiiu Sergeia Gennadievicha Isakova. Tartu: University of Tartu Press, 2011. S. 301-317.
- 12) Vdovin A. V. Pakhar'-pevets na poroge smerti: «Neszhataia polosa» N.A. Nekrasova i elegicheskaia traditsiia // Karabikha: istoriko-literaturnyi sbornik / Nauch. red.: M. Makeev, E. Ianovskaia, A. Ivushkin. Vyp. IX. Iar. : OOO "Akademiia 76", 2016. S. 47-59.
- 13) Vdovin A. Formulating the “Russian Idea”: Russian Writers and the Nationalization of Patriotism during the Crimean War (Maikov, Goncharov, Pisemsky) // Russian National Myth in Transition. Acta Slavica Estonica, VI. Studia Russica Helsingiensia et Tartuensia, XIV / Ed. by L. Kisseljova. Vol. VI. Tartu: University of Tartu Press, 2014. P. 107-120.
- 14) Vdovin A. V. Literaturnyi kanon i natsional'naia identichnost': «Chto ty spish', muzhichok?» A.V. Kol'tsova i spory o russkosti v XIX veke // Acta Slavica Estonica IV. Trudy po russkoi i slavianskoi filologii. Literaturovedenie, IX. / Otv. red.: A. V. Vdovin, R. G. Leibov. T. 4: Khrestomatiinye teksty: russkaia pedagogicheskaia praktika i literaturnyi kanon XIX veka. Tartu: University of Tartu Press, 2013. S. 139-162.

### **Approval of the work**

The main ideas, provisions and results of the study were discussed in 2013- 2023 at 25 international and national conferences, including:

- AATSEEL (2023), topic: "Marko Vovchok, Dostoevsky and the Debates on Popular Ukrainian and Russian Literature in 1860-61".
- AATSEEL (2021), topic: Making Peasants Sensible: The Paradox of Semi-Transparent Minds in Russian Pre-Emancipation Fiction.
- International Nekrasov Congress (Yaroslavl-Karabikha, 2021), topic of the report: Genesis and sociology of Nekrasov and other cabbies.
- Online seminar "19vek" (New York University, 2021), topic of the report: Shorthand, violence and melodrama: Marko Vovchok's folk stories between Ukrainian and Russian cultures.
- Theories and Practices of Literary Excellence (NRU HSE, 2020), topic of the report: Peasant voices: stylization of the speech of the common people in Russian prose of the 1850s
- Scientific seminar of the Department of Slavic Studies (Indiana University, Bloomington, 2016), topic of the report: Peasant voices and their admirers: Russification of patriotism in Russia during the Crimean War of 1853-1856.
- Scientific seminar of the Department of Slavic Studies (Humboldt University, 2016), topic of the report: Fear of one's people and stigmatization of the “other”: the problem of ethnic stereotypes in Kuprin's *Olesia*.
- ASEEEES (2016), topic: “Peasant Pantheism for Export: George Sand’s Idealized Peasants in Ivan

Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches*".

A total of 27 oral presentations were made on the topic of the dissertation. The research was supported by the Basic Research Program of the Higher School of Economics in 2013 and 2015.

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It is widely known that the "Notes of a Hunter" by I.S. Turgenev and the first novels by D.V. Grigorovich was approved in the Russian literature of the 1840s, the genre of the story and essay about the peasants, which was called the "story from the peasant life." However, until now, in domestic and foreign science, this type of literary work was considered only as a thematically homogeneous and relatively small group of texts written by a dozen authors (I.S. Turgenev, D.V. Grigorovich, V.I. Dahl, A.F. Pisemsky, LN Tolstoy, Marko Vovchok, NV Uspensky a). A frontal view of the periodicals and individual publications of 1790-1861, as well as a change in the angle of view and approach to the material, allow us to reconsider the established ideas and argue that the "story from the peasant life" was a special prose genre, widespread on the pages of publications of the first half of the 19th century, especially from 1830 to 1861. It is this array of **230** texts that constitutes **the source base** of the dissertation research. At the same time, it should be noted right away that we excluded drama, poetry and novels from peasant life from consideration. The limitation of the material to only small prose genres was done deliberately for several reasons. First of all, poetic language and dramatic representation, from the point of view of modern narratology, operate according to different principles and require different methods of analysis. Secondly, the search for poems about peasants in periodicals and almanacs would take many years, and to build a study only on the canonical poems of Nekrasov, Koltsov and Nikitin would be contrary to the intention to introduce into circulation a large array of little-known texts.

Genre definitions should also be specified immediately. Despite the fact that the source base of the work includes stories, short stories and essays, we decided to use the umbrella term "story(s) from peasant life" with some degree of conventionality, since this term was widely circulated in the criticism of the 1850s-60s. In addition, the genre boundaries between a story, a short story and an essay in literary criticism are debatable, and for the purposes of our study, not so much the genres themselves were much more significant than the genre modes (idyll, pastoral, "anti-idyll", see below). Finally, we purposefully delimited the "story from the peasant life" from the broader social cut "the story from the common people's life", although for contemporaries these definitions were often synonymous. We mean by "common people" a broader category, including other classes - the bourgeoisie, merchants, urban inhabitants, retired soldiers.

**The chronological scope of the study** is limited to 1861 - the abolition of serfdom. It is clear that the representation of peasants in prose continued after this date, but we proceeded from two simple reasons: on the one hand, the peasant reform made the peasants legally free subjects, which became a watershed in the social life of the empire; on the other hand, a huge array of texts had to be limited somewhere, otherwise the study would lose its focus on the genre of the story from the peasant life, which after the reform began to acquire new features.

Thus, the **subject** of the study is a corpus of 230 prose fictional texts about peasants, and the **object** is the specificity and boundaries of the artistic representation of peasant life and worldview in them. By "peasant" we mean any types of peasants that existed in the Russian Empire before 1861 – landowners' peasants (including yard, corvée, quitrent), state, palace and free.

**The research problem** of the work was to test the hypothesis about the existence in literature before the abolition of serfdom of a separate genre of a story (essay or story) about peasants with a clearly recognizable poetics and plot. As our study showed, such a genre not only actually existed, but was widely distributed, appreciated by critics, recognizable by the readership, and performed important cultural and social functions. The key **objectives of the study** were to describe the features of the poetics of the genre, identify the most characteristic plot models for it, and explain the reasons for its popularity and sociocultural functions in Russian society in the first half of the 19th century.

This, in fact, "archaeological" **acute work** will make it possible to open for researchers and potential readers the forgotten "Atlantis" - a large array of texts that depicted and artistically studied the life of the vast majority of the population of the Russian Empire - peasants of various types. The study of such an extensive, but not introduced into scientific circulation, array of texts will allow us to analyze what characteristics Russian peasants were endowed with before the abolition of serfdom, how the Russian national character appeared, the focus of which the elite in that era seemed to be precisely the peasants, and which plot models dominated to solve which aesthetic tasks. It seems that the plot models and types of peasant characters that developed in the first half of the 19th century turned out to be archetypal in many respects and were then reproduced with variations in Russian literature and culture until the "village prose" of the second half of the 20th century. In addition, the representation of peasant thinking, consciousness and speech differed significantly from that of the nobility, not only at the level of content, but also from a formal point of view - in particular, as we found out, in the depiction of opaque or translucent thinking.

**The historiography of the research problem** is rooted in the critical polemics of the middle of the 19th century. In general, our study is based on a large array of Soviet [Serman 1961; Tarshish 1966; Samochatova 1972], Russian [Zhuravleva 1993; Bolshakova 2004; Sokolova 2009] and foreign studies [Fanger 1968; Donkov 1972; Woodhouse 1986; Woodhouse 1991; Frierson 1993;

Ogden 2005; Pavlenko 2014 and others] representations of peasants in Russian literature, including those of individual authors.

**The novelty of the study**, therefore, lies in the fact that, unlike previous works on the peasant theme in Russian literature, in our work:

- for the first time, the most complete bibliography of stories and stories from peasant life published in Russian in books and periodicals from 1772 to 1861 is presented;
- for the first time, a description of the formal features of the genre of a story from peasant life in the rich literary and ideological context of the era was proposed;
- for the first time, the most frequent plot models of stories from peasant life were revealed and the symbolic ideas behind them about social reality and interaction between estates and within one social group;
- the correlation that existed in the 1840s-50s between the type of elementary plot and the genre modus was substantiated (such socio-ethical plots as "temptation", "violence", "treason", etc. always correspond to the anti-idyllic mode, as opposed to love plots that correlate with a mode of idyll or pastoral);
- For the first time, various socio-cultural and political functions of the genre are explained in a comprehensive manner, as well as the reasons for its popularity in Russian literature before the abolition of serfdom.
- based on a representative corpus of texts, a new theoretical model for the study of peasant subjectivity in the literature of the 19th century was developed.

**The methodology** of such an extensive and multifaceted study, by definition, included several different methods and approaches aimed at solving different, but closely related problems. On the one hand, this is genre criticism [Schaeffer 2010; Bakhtin 2012; Alpers 1996; Plechova 2007], narratology [Schmid 2000; Cohn 1978; Fludernik 1993; Leech, Short 2001: 270-276; Somoff 2015; Fludernik 1993; Fludernik 2002; Palmer 2004; Palmer 2010; Herman 2011] and plotment studies [Kitanina 2005], aimed at analyzing narrative structures, and on the other hand, this is the sociological poetics of texts, which involves the study of the sociological nature of the form itself, which translates a certain content and ideology in direct connection with a specific historical moment (Fredric Jameson, Peer Brooks, Margaret Cohen, etc.).

Turning to the study of the sociocultural and political functions of the stories about the peasants in the 1850s, we use several theories that have become widespread in the humanities. First of all, this is a philosophical and historical critique of the representation of oppressed and subjugated social groups, developed since the mid-1980s by the French philosopher J. Rancière [Rancière 2011, 2012]. Rancière's ideas touch the very core of the problem of aesthetic representation in its intersection with the problem of social and, more broadly, political

subjectivity. Following Ranser, we believe that the study of the representation of peasants and other oppressed in art should be based on such a formal analysis that would historicize the various aesthetic modes of depicting social groups and would allow us not to refuse to talk about even obviously manipulative and projective representation, which was the image of the nobility. peasant life in Russian literature in the first half of the 19th century.

No less important for the study of the sociocultural functions of the genre were the concepts of nation and nationalism, which in recent decades have been increasingly in demand for the analysis of literature and culture of the middle of the 19th century and especially the era of the Crimean War [Smith 2010].

Finally, we turn to comparative analysis, which largely integrates the poetics and sociology of literature. As J. Donovan showed, the first 30-40 years of the 19th century in British (M. Mitford), French (George Sand), German (B. Auerbach), Czech, Russian, American (image of slavery), and later other European literatures, a whole trend of “local color” has developed, one of the most important thematic niches of which is precisely stories from the life of peasants (and, more broadly, rural common people) [Donovan 2010].

Synthesizing the described methods, our dissertation research proposes to project existing genre, political and narratological theories onto literary material in order to operationalize them, supplementing them with the necessary links, analytical procedures and concepts. Taken together, the defense articles offer a synthetic theory of peasant subjectivity in texts written mostly by non-peasants about peasants. The final concept lies in the fact that the genre of the story from the peasant life allowed the authors to construct peasant subjects through special narrative techniques (literary ethnography, speech stylization, transparent / opaque thinking). Through them, the symbolic form of this genre redistributed in the public and literary sphere of the 1840s and 1850s what Jacques Rancière calls “sensual”—in our case, the collective notions of peasant subjectivity, i.e. literally about how the peasants think and feel (from the point of view of the nobles). Thus, the stories about peasant life in the first half of the 19th century make it possible not only to effectively operationalize the analytical apparatus of cognitive narratology, creating a working narratological model for studying figurative thinking, but also to significantly clarify the dominant idea of the evolution of the technique of transferring thinking in Russian prose. This is the **theoretical significance of the dissertation research**.

**The practical significance** of the work lies in the possibility of using the results obtained primarily in teaching university courses on the history of Russian literature in the first half and the middle of the 19th century, the history of Russian prose and narratology.

**The first section** of the dissertation is devoted to some aspects of the prehistory of the idyll



genre in Russian literature about peasants. As you know, in the 1790s, within the framework of the culture of sentimentalism and early romanticism at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, a request arose for the depiction of peasants in prose. The authors of this time connected the peasant theme with the most important myth of the New Age about the lost paradise, which can be rediscovered in the bosom of nature in a peaceful rural life, opposed to the depraved life of growing cities. In relation to literature, this myth was explained and rethought in Friedrich Schiller's treatise "On Naive and Sentimental Poetry" (1795).

Almost simultaneously with Schiller's treatise, the first prose text appeared in Russian literature, in which a free peasant woman became the protagonist - "Poor Lisa" by N.M. Karamzin (1792). The story set an influential genre model for Russian prose, which researchers call "sentimental pastoral", or idyll. Karamzin turned to that version of it, in which the denouement of the elementary plot "Seduction" is unhappy and tragic (suicide of the protagonist). The plot "Seduction" will be reproduced dozens of times, first in the sentimental fiction of the 1800s and 10s, and then in the prose about the common people of the 1830s and 60s, since the situation of the seduction of a peasant woman by a nobleman allowed the reading public, sharpening Schiller's thought, to experience more sharply, on the one hand, the tension between the fading rural way of life and the modernized urban life, and on the other hand, the blatant inequality of estates.

Karamzin's story became in Russian prose the first example of the technique of transparent thinking ("transparent mind") long before its spread in Russian literature. The narrator resorts to almost total transparency of the soul and consciousness of the heroine. They are neither epistemological nor narrative problems for him. Created largely under the influence of the Karamzin tradition, pastoral and idyllic novels and stories about peasant life in the 1790-1820s ("Rose and Lyubim" and "Dasha" by P.Yu. Lvov, "Inna" by G.P. Kamenev, "Luka and Marya" by Fyodor Glinka, "Ivan Kostin" by V.I. Panaev, etc.) plot also revolved around love issues, and the narrative technique followed the vector set by "Poor Lisa". The subjectivation of the peasants proceeded in them in the mainstream of sentimental sensibility, which did not distinguish between the subjectivity/thinking of the peasants and those of the educated classes. Such a mode of representation was obviously important and inevitable in evolution, but since the mid-1830s, under the influence of various sociocultural factors (the escalation of imperial nationalism in the form of the triad of Count Uvarov and the ethnographic and statistical study of peasants, the request for a reliable, "realistic", image) it began to be increasingly criticized as outdated and inadequate. It can be considered that it was during this period that a kind of war began with the idyll and "idealization" in the depiction of peasants and their way of life, which only intensified as the abolition of serfdom approached.

Thus, the early period of the development of the genre of "a story from a peasant life" in

Russian literature falls on the 1790-1820s, when such a genre subtitle did not yet exist, and peasant subjectivity could be embodied in prose mainly in genre modes of idyll or pastoral. As we shall see, over the course of 50 years from the 1800s to the 1850s, the dominant mode shifted from idyllic/pastoral to anti-idyllic/anti-pastoral.

At the turn of the 1820s and 1830s, the expansion of the zone of representation of peasant life began, which turned out to be associated with the figure of a cab driver. In fact, these were the first anti-idyllic texts in terms of genre, abandoning love or family conflict in favor of another type of elementary plot, which we called "Temptation". In numerous stories about peasants, starting with I. Zapolsky's "The Carrier" and "The Bag of Gold" (1829) by N.A. Polevoi acted as the protagonist and was tempted by a large amount of money accidentally left by the rider.

As we have shown, there is a fundamental connection between the morphology of the plot about the adventures (in particular, the temptations) of a cabman and the sociocultural circumstances of the 19th century — the mass *otkhodnichestvo* of peasants to Moscow and St. Petersburg. The plot of a cab driver tempted by big money arose in the first third of the 19th century as a response of literature and related discourses to the growing population of Moscow and St. Petersburg due to the labor migration of peasants and the development of transport communications in the Russian Empire.

**The second section** of the study deals with the problem of representation and narration in literary criticism and prose about peasants in the 1840s and 50s. This section highlights the key and most debatable problems that synchronous criticism of the 1840-50s saw in the rapid popularization of the genre and in the work of its most prominent representatives – I.S. Turgenev and A.F. Pisemsky.

As our research has shown, literary criticism in Russia problematized the possibility of the existence of the genre of a story from peasant life only in the 1850s, i.e. at about the same time that the genre itself took shape in the literature of the second half of the 1840s and early 1850s. That is why this section will first deal with the general aesthetic and critical framework of the debate around the new genre and the new type of protagonist.

In an extremely generalized form, the questions asked by critics sounded like this: can a peasant and a commoner be at the center of a voluminous (in the limit - novelistic), psychologically reliable narrative? Does the depiction of the “reduced”, routine sphere of life contradict some principles of artistry (i.e., the consensus “aesthetic regime”)? The first Russian critic who seriously asked this question was P.V. Annenkov in the article of 1854 "About novels and stories from the common people's life" ("Sovremennik". 1854. No. 2-3).

The question of the probable European roots of Annenkov's ideas has never been discussed,

but we managed to establish that the thesis about the impossibility of adequately reproducing the peasant consciousness by means of the literature of the educated class has a very specific genealogy and is easily found in a certain tradition - the French one. It is safe to say that Annenkov's reasoning is a development of the ideas of George Sand from the programmatic preface to her peasant story "François le Champi".

Annenkov's aesthetic skepticism and even "agnosticism" about the very possibility of adequately depicting peasant psychology was determined by precisely the rationalist tradition with which Sand argued – with Hegel's speculative aesthetic system, as we have been able to establish. Its echoes are clearly audible in Annenkov's article. These and other examples of the direct influence of Hegel's aesthetics and philosophy on Annenkov's views that we have described made it possible to inscribe the debate around the new genre in the pan-European context of aesthetic reflection on the boundaries of representation in the era of realism.

One of the episodes of this "transgression" was considered by us on the example of the textbook story by I.S. Turgenev "Khor and Kalinich" (1847). We analyzed Turgenev's famous story from the point of view of how a discursive shift took place in the language of Turgenev's prose from the *Hunter's Notes* in the late 1840s, which set a new way of representing peasants. In our opinion, "Khor and Kalinich" is, without exaggeration, chronologically the first Russian story about peasants, where their consciousness, mindset and habits are described in the language of philosophical (primarily Hegelian) thought developed in philosophical circles 1830-1840 -s. This is achieved through the use of those methods of drawing and character development that were tested in intimate correspondence and the psychological story of the "natural school" (cf. the early story of Turgenev himself "Andrei Kolosov", stories by P.N. Kudryavtsev, A.D. Galakhov, I. I. Panaev mid-1840s).

Another experimental type of storytelling about peasants was proposed by A.F. Pisemsky. As we have shown, his story "Leshiy" (1853) allows us to see how the experimental groping for a new language and new narrative models for representing peasant life took place. Although Pisemsky is often contrasted with Turgenev's tradition of depicting peasants, in one respect their approach turned out to be strikingly similar. Like Turgenev, Pisemsky tried to discern in peasant life not only exceptional personalities, but also eternal images of world literature. Obviously, it was important for him not only to show that "peasant women know how to love," but to introduce heroes from Russian life into the sphere of high art, to make them equal with classical types, just as Hamlets and Don Quixotes can meet among petty nobles and in Russian counties.

In **the third section** of the dissertation, the most important problems of the poetics of the genre of the story from the peasant life are touched upon. I substantiate the genre parameters and

features of the "story from the peasant life" in the period of its rapid formation and flourishing - from 1840 to 1861. Based on the corpus of texts we have collected, four stable genre features have been identified that distinguish a story from peasant life from other related genres: 1) protagonicity of peasants, 2) ethnographism, 3) an orientation toward imitation or transmission of peasant speech, 4) at least a partial representation of peasant thinking and consciousness (in 3rd person narratives).

In all the texts of our corpus, the protagonists are peasants or peasant women. In 44% of the texts (101 out of 230), the protagonists are serfs (including serfs), and if state peasants are added to them, the percentage will be 47%. Free peasants (or at least those who appear in the text as having freedom of movement) make up only 19% of the texts (44), and more than half of them (24 texts or 55%) are localized in "Little Russia" or Right-Bank Ukraine, where until the end of the 18th century there was no serfdom and the Cossacks or their descendants could act as protagonists. The narrative in the vast majority of stories in the corpus is focused on describing their family or communal life, often in contact or conflict with the nobility and landlords. Accordingly, the most popular elementary plots of stories from peasant life were: 1) "ban on marriage" (33 texts); 2) "devilish temptation" (24); 3) "violence" (19); 4) "seduction" (18); 5) "rivals" (16).

Of particular note is our discovery. The plot "violence" appears in the prose about the peasants only in 1846 in the "Village" by D.V. Grigorovich. If in the plot "ban on marriage" the initial situation is usually not associated with violence, in "Violence" it triggers further events: the story "The Village" begins with the forced marriage of Akulina, which is the source of all further troubles. Over the years, the number of texts with such a plot increases, reaching a peak on the eve of the abolition of serfdom.

Ethnographism of literature about peasants was predetermined by the theme itself: it was possible to reliably tell about peasant life in the era of intensively emerging realism only by including ethnographic material in the text - descriptions of everyday life, rituals, folklore. The first wave of literary fashion for ethnographism appeared in the 1830s, when N.V. Gogol, G.F. Kvitka (Osnovyanenko) and other authors publish in Russian in Moscow and St. Petersburg cycles and series of stories from Little Russian life. In many of them, Ukrainian peasants and free farmers were the protagonists. In the 1840s, literary ethnography became an organic part of a broader ethnographic boom of the late 1840s, when a special scientific discourse was formed under the auspices of the Russian Geographical Society, founded in 1845, the collection of ethnographic materials was intensified, and the scientific infrastructure was being built. As we have shown, in the 1850s, in thick literary and trade journals (publications of the Russian Imperial Geographical Society), a proto-scientific ethnographic discourse was formed, an important part of which was

the study and description of peasant life and the collection of folklore. The most significant event of the 1850s in terms of the participation of writers in the geographical and ethnographic study of the Russian Empire was the so-called "literary expedition" of the Naval Ministry of 1855-1861.

At the textual level, ethnographism manifested itself in prose about peasants in three techniques widely used in the texts of our corpus. Firstly, the writers tried to cover as many real groups of peasants as possible and the realities of their agricultural, commercial or household life. Secondly, in order to create a rural entourage, writers often made excursions into the traditions and rituals of peasants - weddings, funerals, gatherings, fortune-telling, divination, quackery, horseshoeing, etc. Finally, many stories about peasants were imbued with Russian, Ukrainian and other Slavic folklore: the authors included folk songs, sayings, proverbs and sayings in the text, and the heroes told numerous folk beliefs and legends with taste.

The third defining feature of the genre can be considered numerous attempts to depict and even imitate peasant voices and speech. We analyzed a large corpus of stories about peasants from 1798 to 1861, both canonical (I. S. Turgenev) and lesser-known authors (I. I. Zapol'sky, A. V. Nikitenko, A. F. Martynov, E. P. Novikov) from the point of view of the representation of peasant speech. We came to the conclusion that throughout the entire indicated period, writers gradually increased the proportion of dialect ("regional") words in the speech of peasant characters. The apogee of this trend came in the mid-1850s and correlated, on the one hand, with the rapid development of ethnographic and dialectological knowledge in the Russian Empire, and, on the other hand, with the formation of a special regime for the aesthetic representation of peasants as "others" in relation to the educated elite.

The fourth genre feature of stories from peasant life is partly connected with voice/speech – the depiction of peasant thinking (in particular, consciousness). If in the era of Karamzin and even Pushkin, the consciousness and thinking of the peasants did not present a cognitive problem for writers, then the era of early realism posed a problem for them: how to depict the process that they knew and understood very poorly. The development of the sciences, including ethnography, further complicated the matter. Scientific epistemology and realistic narrative conventions demanded from writers a more sophisticated technique for conveying the feelings and thoughts of the characters, which had already been tested on the nobles in the prose of the 1830s and 40s. However, it turned out that this was not easy, since, according to the observations of critics, philosophers and ethnographers of that time, the peasants do not have the same developed intellectual abilities as the educated classes and are almost incapable of reflection. One of the first to embody this "otherness" of the peasant consciousness was D.V. Grigorovich in "The Village" (1846). Unlike Karamzin, Grigorovich splits the interiority of the heroine into feelings and thoughts. If the former are portrayed as accessible for "reading" and retelling by the narrator, then the latter turn out to be

translucent at best, and mostly opaque. However, the narrator constructs the inner world of a woman through the description of suffering, affects and pain. Akulina appears in the story almost wordless: serf and domestic violence harden her and lead to her refusal to speak. All this together explains how the writer managed to create a new type of narration about the peasants, which amazed his contemporaries, and why one can speak of a new type of peasant subjectivity.

The same technique of translucency is also characteristic of Turgenev's famous story "Mumu", in which it is taken to the limit: the protagonist is the deaf-mute Gerasim, whose thoughts the narrator cannot penetrate, because the hero cannot speak. In another well-known story from peasant life, *The Inn* (1855), Turgenev, on the contrary, for the first time in his work constructs the subjectivity of the peasant Akim through penetration into his consciousness through the transmission of direct thought and retelling of mental acts (including a wide range of sensations and emotions). As a result, the narrator pays close attention to the external and internal speech of the protagonist Akim, its loss, and then their restoration at the end of the story.

Thus, a long period of representation of peasants in Russian literature on the eve of the abolition of serfdom in 1861 can be described through a phenomenon that looks like a paradox: literary the formation of a peasant as a full-fledged hero / heroine and as a subject became possible only through the affirmation of the opacity of his thinking. Such an epistemological model was formed in public discourse (criticism, philosophy, journalism, essay writing) and fiction in the early 1850s. By the mid-1840s, the sentimental transparent consciousness of poor Lisa was being replaced by a new regime of the sensible (J. Rancière) and new ideas about what the status of a peasant is, what are his characteristic features and how he differs from all other subjects of the empire. The paradox is that in order to imagine and verbalize it, the educated class needed to exoticize it and endow it with features that are in many respects different from the cultural standard of the first third of the 19th century. This is how a new peasant and, more broadly, common folk subject arose and new conventions for the perception of peasant subjectivity.

In the final **fourth section**, we consider the two most revealing sociocultural and political functions that stories from peasant life performed in Russian society and culture before the abolition of serfdom. The first was the construction and discipline of peasant subjects through the depiction of acceptable and unacceptable patterns of behavior in stories for popular reading. The second was actualized during the Crimean War (1853-56), when among the educated and aristocratic elites, primarily in St. Petersburg and Moscow, there was a demand for common folk and peasant images that were associated with genuine Russianness, opposed to "false" and imposed by official propaganda.

In the traditional narrative on the history of public education and reading in the Russian

Empire, it is believed that books for public reading as a genre appeared not earlier than the 1860s, but massively in the 1880s. In our study, we significantly corrected this idea and, using the material of 15 stories about peasants created by the educated elite for popular reading in 1839-1861, we proved the existence of an early stage in the development of this type of didactic literature for the people.

We came to the conclusion that in the 1840s and the first half of the 1850s, in the literature created "from above" for the people, the orientation towards constructing a patriarchal peasant subject (a virtuous loyal subject) dominated, which was largely modeled on the model of a child and involved a repertoire of plots and ideology from children's literature of the 1830s. In this respect, the case of V.P. Burnashev, who began as one of the leading authors of children's literature of the 1830s, and from 1839 to 1846 created a series of stories for popular reading, in which he used his "children's" texts, changing the plot for a peasant audience.

In the second half of the 1850s, during the preparations for the abolition of serfdom, the radical part of the literary community began to perceive the former model of literature for the "people" as deeply archaic and offered an alternative to it. Such authors known for their democratic position as M.I. Mikhailov and Marko Vovchok, on the pages of the magazine "People's Reading", modeled a much more emancipated reader-commoner, including a woman, who had to use reading to become their own subjectivity through social criticism of reality in these texts and recognition of human dignity as the highest value.

The second important socio-cultural function of stories from peasant life was actualized during the Crimean War. We have demonstrated how stories from peasant life, along with folk dramas and scenes from the life of the common people, played an important role in the escalation of Russian ethnicizing nationalism during the Crimean War of 1853-56. Based on recent historical and cultural studies and theoretical works on nationalism, we examined how and why during the three war years in St. Petersburg society, theater and literature there was an urgent need for a nationalist experience community with the people, which was encoded in the categories of national identity ("Russianness"). Based on a large number of published and archival materials, we consistently described the institutions of the escalation of nationalism, everyday rituals (wearing Russian clothes, affects recorded in the diaries of contemporaries) and images of peasants who in works of art by A.A. Potekhin, A.F. Pisemsky, I.F. Gorbunov, I.S. Turgenev and D.V. Grigorovich acted as carriers of genuine "Russianness". The growing popularity of the texts of these writers in secular salons, in the theater and in magazines is explained by the fact that they demonstratively linked the psychology and subjectivity of peasant characters (irrationality, spontaneity) with their ethnic identity.

### Scientific provisions submitted for defense:

1. The early period of development of the genre of "a story from a peasant life" in Russian literature falls on the 1770-1820s, when such a genre subtitle did not yet exist, and peasant subjectivity could be embodied in prose in genre modes of idyll or pastoral ("Poor Liza" by N.M. Karamzin and others).
2. Although the genre definition "a story from a peasant life" or "a story from (simple) folk life" appeared in the titles and subtitles of texts only in 1848 (in V.V. Lvov's "A Story from a People's Life"), the 1840s became a period the rapid formation of the genre of the story about peasant life. If in the 1820s-30s only 20 such texts appeared in print, then in the 1840s there were already 69, and in the 1850s the peak value was 99.
3. The emergence of an anti-idyllic mode in the development of a story from peasant life can be dated to 1798 (story by I.I. Zapol'sky "The Carrier"). By "anti-idyllic" we mean here the rejection of a love or family plot in favor of another type of elementary plot, which we have called "Temptation". He was distinguished by a socially acute problematization of reality and depicted the temptation of a cabman or a peasant with big money. Cab drivers more often than other professional categories of peasants acted as protagonists, because they were a very massive and visible group of labor migrants and clearly represented the "people" for the capital's cultural elite.
4. The central place in the critical controversy around stories from peasant life was occupied by the idea of the impossibility of adequately depicting peasant thinking and life in literature. In the most pointed and expanded form, this concept was formulated in the article by P.V. Annenkov "About the stories and novels from the common people" ("Sovremennik", 1854). As we have established, the presumption of "inadequacy", which goes back to Rousseau's idea of the underdevelopment of consciousness in "natural man", was theoretically substantiated in Hegel's aesthetics (lack of reflection in a slave) and transformed in criticism and "rural stories" by George Sand of the 1840s, who proposed a new, "normalizing" theory of the representation of peasant thinking in literature.
5. The most influential examples of the genre of the story from peasant life in the 1840s and the first half of the 1850s were the texts of D.V. Grigorovich, I.S. Turgenev and A.F. Pisemsky, each of whom experimented with tradition in his own way and created new formal solutions. Grigorovich in "The Village" (1846) for the first time introduced the elementary plot "Violence" into Russian literature about peasants and replaced the idyllic mode with a melodramatic one. Turgenev in "Khor and Kalinich" used the philosophical language and discourse of noble circles and stories of the 1840s to describe the life and



- thinking of the peasants. In “Kasyan From Krasivaia Mecha”, Turgenev used Sand's concept of "peasant pantheism" to represent the otherness of the peasants.
6. On the corpus of 230 texts we collected, four stable genre features were identified that distinguish the story from peasant life from related genres: 1) protagonicity of peasants, 2) ethnography, 3) an orientation towards imitation or transmission of peasant speech, 4) at least a partial representation of peasant thinking and consciousness (in 3rd person narratives).
  7. the most popular elementary plots of stories from peasant life were: 1) “ban on marriage” (33 texts); 2) "devilish temptation" (24); 3) "violence" (19); 4) "seduction" (18); 5) "rivals" (16).
  8. On a large sample of texts, we found a stable correlation between the type of elementary plot and the genre mode. The idyllic/pastoral mode is characterized by love plots (“seduction”, “separation”, “rivals”, “marriage ban”), while the anti-idyllic mode is characterized by social and ethical plots (“violence”, temptation”, “adultery” , "crime").
  9. The story from peasant life was that new genre that pushed the idyll and pastoral to the periphery of literature and formed a new understanding and representation of peasant subjectivity by new narrative means.
  10. In the 1850s, a proto-scientific ethnographic discourse was formed in thick literary and trade journals, an important part of which was the study and description of peasant life and the collection of folklore. In the development of this ethnographic paradigm of knowledge in the 1850s. a variety of actors took part - university professors, officials, amateur ethnographers, critics, publicists and writers.
  11. *The ethnographism* of stories from peasant life correlated with the ethnographic paradigm of knowledge of the 1840s-1850s, and in some cases literally the same authors acted both as authors of stories and as ethnographers (the cases of S.V. Maksimov, A.F. Pisemsky, A.A. Potekhin).
  12. Peasant life and thinking were described in the prose of the period under study only on Russian and Ukrainian material (N.V. Gogol, G.F. Kvitka, N. Tikhorsky, P.A. Kulish, Marko Vovchok, etc.). Other ethnic groups and nationalities were practically not represented in fiction.
  13. Such a genre feature as imitation of *peasant voices and speech* has been appearing in prose about peasants since 1798. Over the course of 60 years, writers gradually increased the proportion of dialect (“regional”) words in the speech of peasant characters. The apogee of this trend came in the mid-1850s. and correlated, on the one hand, with the rapid development of ethnographic and dialectological knowledge in the Russian Empire, and,

on the other hand, with the formation of a special regime for the aesthetic representation of peasants as “others” in relation to the educated elite. For the most complete disclosure of the subjectivity and subjectivity of the peasants in prose, it was necessary to depict their speech both as generally understandable to readers, and as phonetically and lexically different from it.

14. The depiction of *peasant mind (in particular, consciousness)* was another essential feature of the genre. If in the era of Karamzin and even Pushkin, the thinking of the peasants did not represent either a cognitive or narrative problem for writers, then in the mid-1840s there was a fundamental gap. In "The Village" Grigorovich splits the inner world of the heroine into a separate description of feelings and thoughts. If the former are portrayed as accessible for “reading” and retelling by the narrator, then the latter are translucent at best, and mostly opaque. The narrator constructs the inner world of a woman through the description of suffering, affects and pain.
15. The same trend is observed in Turgenev's peasant prose, written in the auctorial type of narration. So, in “Mumu”, Gerasim's thinking is opaque (because he is deaf and dumb), although the narrator still conveys his emotions and feelings. In another well-known story from peasant life, *The Inn* (1855), Turgenev, on the contrary, for the first time in his work constructs the subjectivity of the peasant Akim through penetration into his consciousness through the transmission of direct thought and retelling of mental acts (including a wide range of sensations and emotions).
16. The “Golden Age” of the representation of peasants in Russian literature on the eve of the abolition of serfdom in 1861 can be described through a phenomenon that can be considered a paradox: *literary the formation of a peasant as a protagonist/ki and as a subject became possible only through the affirmation of the opacity of his/her thinking* .
17. The genre of stories from peasant life performed important functions in Russian culture and society until 1861, creating stable images and plot situations that symbolically embodied the most significant values and meanings that encoded the basic ideas of the educated elite about the Russian national character. His model was precisely the peasant as an internal "other", more precisely – as a different and better, in contrast to the nobles, part of the population of the empire.
18. The tendency to idealize the imaginary peasant manifested itself in many ways. In the 1840s and the first half of the 1850s, literature for the people created “from above” was dominated by the didactic orientation towards the construction of a patriarchal peasant subject (a virtuous loyal subject), which was largely modeled after a child and involved a repertoire of plots and ideology from children’s literature 1830s. In the second half of the

1850s, the radical part of the literary community began to perceive the former model of literature for the "people" as deeply archaic. Known for their democratic position, the authors M.L. Mikhailov and Marko Vovchok modeled a much more emancipated commoner reader, including a woman, who had to use reading to develop their own subjectivity through social criticism of reality in these texts.

19. Stories from peasant life, along with folk dramas and skits and folk life, played an important role in the escalation of Russian ethnicizing nationalism during the Crimean War of 1853-56. Images of peasants, which in the works by A.A. Potekhin, A.F. Pisemsky, I.F. Gorbunov, I.S. Turgenev and D.V. Grigorovich acted as carriers of genuine "Russianness", satisfied the demand of the elite and the socially diverse theatrical public for symbols and models of unity within the national community, which could compensate for disappointments from defeats at the front.
20. The results obtained in the study can be applied to analyze the poetics and ideology of stories, novels and novels of the second half of the 19th century, when, although serfdom was abolished, the literary tradition of representing peasants was already formed.

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