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Section: WORD AND TIME

NARRATIVE STRATEGY OF PAUL VERLAINE'S PROSE POEMS

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Abstract. The article analyses historical and genetic origins of the genre of prose poem. It singles out the genus-genre syncretism of prose poem, the foundation of which lies in the intertwining and interpenetration of epic, dramatic and lyrical principles, "overlapping" of different modifications. The material under study is represented by a collection of prose poems by Paul Verlaine *Les mémoires d'un veuf*. The aim of the article is to study the narrative peculiarities of a prose poem given the syncretic nature of the genre, and its delivery, which allows to analyze artistic works from the standpoint of their composition and structure. According to the internal genre-style dominant, three forms of narrative modeling are distinguished: a narrative with the predominance of epic-realistic elements, a narrative with the predominance of lyrical-impressionistic elements and dramatization of the narrative. According to its plot-compositional structure works of the epic-realistic block can be divided into two categories: the first one is determined by the dominance of the linear principle of the beginning, the second one is characterized by the fragmentary principle of composition with the increased aestheticization and intellectualization, in-depth psychological insights, and appeal to "eternal themes". The works of the lyrical-impressionist model include an internal psychologized plot, attention to feelings and changes in emotional states, as well as stylistic syncretism. The lyrical semantics of the work is closely connected with the position of the lyrical character, personal author's experience. The entire plot of the poem is centered on the inner world of the poetic lyrical character; therefore, it is not the work itself that conveys the plot line but the character's emotional experiences do that. It is the ability to express a particular feeling, a state without adhering to the plot line that becomes decisive for the dramatized type of story.

Keywords: narrative, prose poem, genre, lyrics, epic, drama, Paul Verlaine.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the late XIX - early XX century there existed several dominant features that defined literature of the period. These characteristics included the intertwining of different literary and art movements, and renewal of eternal ideological problems, themes, genre structure of works. A particularly noticeable feature of the literature of this period is genus-genre syncretism, i.e. the interpenetration of epic, dramatic and lyrical principles, the transformation of genres, "overlapping" of various modifications. Writers of the given period were particularly interested in the genre of a prose poem which could be characterized by the subjectivity of an artistic discourse and its proximity to the related arts.

The historical and genetic origins of a prose poem can be traced back to ancient mythological epics and sacred texts. In particular, some features of prose poems can be found in the Indian holy book, the Upanishads, Sanskrit literature of Champu, in the Bible verses and Bible translations, as they all rely on increased emotionality and pathos, which correlates with internal reflections. Other characteristic features include division of the text into paragraphs containing one or two sentences, that is traditional for a prose poem, and the fact that the rhythm is preserved through prosody (alliteration, assonances), not metrics. Considering lyrical intentions of prose works as a manifestation of convergence of prose-poetic characteristics, certain elements of prose poems can be also seen in the cemetery lyricism of E. Young, various mystifications, such as *The Works of Ossian* by J. Macpherson, or *Guzla* by P. Mérimée, or in *Atala* by Chateaubriand. According to M. Gasparov, "behind the rhyme [there] were ancient traditions of high poetry, based on ancient and biblical verse" [4, 254] and that can explain the tendencies of violation of the signs of metrics.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Traditionally, it is Aloysius Bertrand who is considered to be the father of the genre introduced in his collection *Gaspard de la nuit. Fantaisies de Rembrandt et de Callot* (1842). However, the tendency to bring poetic works closer to prose has existed for a long time, and the artistic search for a free, organic form naturally associated with content yearned for freedom from hard rhythm and freedom from normative rhyme. At the beginning there were attempts to expand the traditional range of rhythms and rhymes; then there appeared living examples of the complete abandonment of the meter and rhyme; although sometimes these two waves met and overlapped. It was the end of the XVIIIth - beginning of the XIXth century when the first period of such tendencies manifested itself, the time of pre-romanticism and romanticism; the second period occurred at the end of the XIX - beginning of the XX century, the time of symbolism and modernism. New literary movements required changes in aesthetic canons by means of renewal of art systems, types of speech and creation of new genres.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE, METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Literary studies comprises a number of approaches to the categorization and typology of narrative strategies, them being introduced and advocated by both world-famous scholars such as R. Barthes [2], G. Genette [5], A. J. Greimas [6], J. Kristeva [7], Tz. Todorov [12], and a number of recent studies authors such as M. Bal [1], K. Puckett [9], D. Wittenberg [15]. In a given study the narrative strategy is perceived as the system of principles of constituting the text on the deep level of its formation in accordance with the nature of the narrative, which contains the following components: peculiarities of event series building and introduction; the way of story-telling and order of events unfolding; focalization (point of view) as a sum of conditions that affect the perception and presentation of events; type of presentation of statements and opinions of characters, narrator(s), author's signs in the text [8, 59]. The aim of the article is to study the narrative specificity of a prose poem relying on the syncretic nature of the genre and the way of material presentation; the latter allows to analyze works in the framework of their construction, structure as well as story introduction and presentation.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The collection of poetry *Le Spleen de Paris. Petits poems en prose* (1869) written by Charles Baudelaire became a classical (textbook) example for defining a prose poem. Although Ts. Todorov emphasizes that "it was not he (Ch. Baudelaire – O.B.) who "invented" this form, but it was he who gave it credentials, introduced it to his contemporaries' and successors' horizons, made it a model of

writing: a genre in a historical meaning of the word ... "[13, 59]. Poetry in Baudelaire's prose absorbs vivid manifestations of modernism, when suggestion, image play and meta-language comprise the main components for the further development of this genre. Given the popularity of Charles Baudelaire's prose poetry in the artistic circles, Paul Verlaine was probably very familiar with Baudelaire's miniatures. In particular, Jacques Borel considers Verlaine's prose poetry a "worthy Verlaine replica" of *Le Spleen de Paris. Petits poèmes en prose*. by Ch. Baudelaire [3, 8], the collection in question being Verlaine's *Les mémoires d'un veuf* (1885). This collection features an unfolding story of mental anguish, a wide range of emotions: from quiet joy, sadness, and disappointment to exalted fun. The themes of Verlaine's prose poetry represent the whole range of mood palette, including present urban landscapes (*Quelques-uns de mes rêves, Nuit blanche*), philosophical reflections (*Par la croisée, Les fleurs artificielles*), social issues (*Nuit noire, Bons bourgeois*), intimate-autobiographical details (*La morte, À la mémoire de mon ami*), and pastoral sketches (*Un bon coin, À la campagne*). The dominant feature of the collection is existentialism, i.e. the issue of a man and a world, both in a state of complete imbalance, and this usually leads to psychological disorders, and mental devastation. The soul of a modern man has nothing in common with a heroic or surreal personality. Deprived of spiritual values, the loneliness of a man and his life become an analogue of metaphysical evil with a social meaning.

Narrative forms normally not only reflect characteristics of the individual style of the writer, stylistic dominants and constants of his work, but also stylistic trends of the day as well as the interaction of literary trends, currents, genres. The collection Verlaine's prose poems demonstrates the use of various forms of narrative modeling, which can be divided into three blocks according to the internal genre orientation: the one with the predominance of the realistic principle, lyrical-impressionistic, and a dramatic type of narrative. The narrative specificity of a prose poem includes the method of delivery course and the classification criterion, which allows to analyze works from the standpoint of their construction, structure and layout of a story. The components of the narrative organization include types of narrative, methods of constructing the narrative, a type of narrator (first or third person), inherent techniques of the story (narrative), narrative pace, the way of depicting the art world, specifics of the hero, characteristics of the chronotope, ways of creating emotional influence on a narrator (reader, recipient).

All texts with the dominance of a realistic model narrative are united by a thematic principle; they are works with social meaning, texts of philosophical content, comprehension of historical-cultural, artistic topical events. According to the plot-compositional structure, all literary works of the kind are divided into two categories: the one with the dominance of realistic beginnings and tendency to traditional prose (*Chiens, Nuit noire, Bons bourgeois, Formes, Un bon coin, Un héros, Du Parnasse contemporain, L'autre un peu, Lui toujours - et assez*) and the one with the mosaic principle of construction, with the strengthening of aestheticization and intellectualization, in-depth psychologism, and appeal to "eternal themes" (*Mon testament, Palinodie ou mon hameau, Auteil, À la campagne, Les estampes, Jeux d'enfants*).

The two types of narrative form characteristic of the realistic model works are the narrator in the first person, i.e. "I"-narrative and the narrator in the third person, i.e. the objective display. The objectified narrative from the 3rd person is characteristic of the prose poem *Bons bourgeois*, which turns into an ironic outline of the bourgeois way of life of new and rich "masters of life". The point of focalization of this work is the contemplation "from the side" with the predominance of descriptive elements of the narrative. Description of the interior is somewhat chaotic; it "accentuates" random few items that give an idea of the family Botruiar: *La sale à manger est une pièce sombre à poêle blanc en faïence, avec dressoir "Luis XIV", chaises idem, suspension en porcelaine à monture de nickel, natures mores au rabais et le portrait d'ancêtre acheté il y a déjà plusieurs années, rue Drouor, à la fameuse vacation Chose. Deux glases se font face des deux côtés de la table* [14, 43]. What is important here is the cartoon description of the characters, in which each detail in the portrait sketch is exaggerated: *Le père, une magnifique calotte de drap d'or un peu de côté sur sa tête chauve et blanche, barbe de magnat polonaise et des yeux matois. La mère, igne femme trop bonne. Un gendre un peu éméché, un autre gendre très sérieux ce soir. Il ne l'est pas toujours. Les deux filles, deux boulottes, qui bafouillent* [14, 43].

The work is characterized by the predominance of an epic beginning with a heterodiegetic narrator in an extradiegetic situation that does bring the characters to the foreground. The narrator presents the whole story in an ironic way. The comedy of the situation is that it is the discussion of literature during a family dinner that provokes a conflict leading to smashing of dishes, mirrors and destruction of furniture. The story includes several direct speech lines which play a significant functional role, as they occupy a strong position of the text, i.e. they appear at the end.

The absence of further description means that what has been already shown is enough to represent the topic. The relationship between the world of nature and the lyrical hero makes it a special topic for lyrics in general and for prose poetry in particular. Lots of poets associate nature with the concept of eternity; therefore, it acquires certain symbolic significance in lyrical poetry. Both natural landscapes and mundane natural manifestations together with some tiny elements contribute to the special logic of the plot organization, since its development stages include nature as a component of the emotional experiences of the lyrical hero rather than a background. In its semantic significance, the function of nature in a prose poem is close to the one in lyrical poetry; according to T. Silman, the latter one is full of "sub-textual meanings" of nature and the "super-information" of the landscape element [11, 89]. A special place in the poetics of modernism belongs to floral symbolism. Flowers and blossom are perceived as universal symbols of life. Flowers are associated with the sun, due to how their petals are organized, as this pattern resembles the shape of a star. Because of their essence, they make us think of ephemerality, beauty and spring. In symbolism, different flowers convey different meanings, but in a broader sense they are characterized considering two totally different aspects: the essence of the flower and its shape.

P. Verlaine reveals an unusual perspective of floral symbolism in his prose poem *Les fleurs artificielles*. In terms of its size, it is a miniature that consists of four paragraphs. The third paragraph is extended, which hints at the similarity of this work to a musical piece, since, according to the canons of musical presentation, the middle part presupposes development. This prose poem rationally combines elements of lyricism and impressionistic fragmentary strokes aimed at instant capturing of each impression. This allows the author to narrate through seemingly randomly captured details that violate the strict coherence of the narrative plan and the principle of selection of the essential, but their "byline" truth provides stories with extraordinary brightness and freshness, and the artistic idea receives unexpected branching and diversity. The use of contrast as a stylistic device proves to be particularly effective in this prose poem since the author's reflections are based on the antithesis: fresh flowers - artificial flowers. Certain elements of the narrative are used to describe both live (real) flowers (*le bouquet de violettes se vend, et comme il se fane aussitôt acheté, il faut des sous et des sous encore pour en avoir tous les jours dans une verre d'eau*) [14, 69], and artificial ones (*parlez-nous de la rose en jaconet glacé se pavanat ingénument au-dessus du gâteau de Savoie les jours anniversaires, sur une nappe des quartiers suburbaines*) [14, 69]. The dominance of lyricism determines the display of the emotional state and special attention to inner reflections.

The internal textual structure of the work is based on a consistent consecutive gradation up to the final thought (idea): *Et vivent aussi, parce qu'elles ont l'air en papier peint, les solides, les fidèles, les tristes immortelles, jugées dignes par le deuil universel de fleurir, autour des morts oubliés, la féroce aridité des grilles!* [14, 69]. The emotional ending of the miniature summarizes its whole metaphorical meaning. The main contrast of the miniature – "live vs. artificial flowers" – is complemented by a series of symbolic oppositions hidden in the names of flowers; they serve as an embodiment of virtue (camellia), royal power (lily), love (rose), memories (forget-me-not) and so on. Interestingly, in the text of the miniature there are no indications of the color of flowers, while usually it is an integral characteristic to interpret. The work uses an indirect, third-person type of narration, it hides the subject of super-personal philosophical reflection, balancing on the border of external and internal spheres of lyrical communication; the miniature also relies on a focalized story and frame structure of the story with additional (inserted) micro-episodes.

Contrary to the above-mentioned miniature, the prose poem, *Quelques-uns de mes rêves* is dominated by the homodiegetic type of narrative (from the first person): the outline of the story is the

hero retelling his dreams intertwined with reality; there are also present additional (inserted) episodes. The landscape and mundane city life become the forefront for a complex game of internal dramas and personality conflicts. The structure of the work helps to reveal the depth of the hero's feelings, his inner state.

It is proven that human yearning for the sacred is most often revealed in the borderline states of the individual, in particular in their dreams which create a kind of boundary between the real and the oneiric, the imaginary, between the conscious and the unconscious. Psychoanalysts believe that the world of dreams is a little representative of what has left of the original natural state of a man, the state that allows him to be omniscient and see God with no obstacles. Dreaming provides a clear and complete picture with the accuracy of the semantic field and linguistic history simultaneously. In the dream reality you can follow the story of the subject, his inherent psychological behavior and practical results, caused by his previous choices [10, 39].

The center of the sleeper-narrator's story in the prose poem *Quelques-uns de mes rêves* is Paris. On the one hand, the city appears in its usual manifestations, on the other hand, it seems as if the lyrical hero sees it for the first time: *Je vois souvent Paris. Jamais comme il est. C'est une ville inconue, absurde et de tous aspects* [14, 17]. The poet tries to convey the purity and impartiality of the first impressions evoked when getting familiar with this city. The city's landscapes are built on a contrast. At first, Verlaine uses metaphorical brushstrokes to present Paris that seems to step off the paintings of famous landscapists: *Je l'entoure d'une rivière étroite très encaissée entre deux files d'arbres quelconque. Des toits rouges luisent entre des verdurees très vertes. Il fait un lourd temps d'été, avec de gros nuages extrêmement foncés, à ramages, comme dans les ciels des paysages historiques, et du soleil des plus jaunes à travers. Un paysage paysan, vous voyez* [14, 18]. The following line shows the unattractive urban debris of Paris: *Pourtant, quand je jette les yeux du côté de la ville, sur l'autre rive, il y a encore des maisons, cours et cité où partent des voix, les horribles maisons de plâtre du vrai Paris superurbain...* [14, 18]. However, for the lyrical hero those far-from-attractive sights are *vrai Paris superurbain*. It is the contrast that becomes the main plot-forming principle of the miniature.

The further story is based on the opposition of "old / new", as it implies redevelopment of the city under Georges-Eugène Haussmann, a period when the new era ousted medieval Paris. The author introduces a scene of the city re-planning, a description of one of the newly renovated streets: *...le sommeil me retrouve arpentant à toutes jambes une de ces rues nouvelles et non pas neuves, vous savez? larges, à peine bâties, pas pavés par endroits, sans boutiques, et qui portent des noms d'entrepreneurs en -ier ou en -ard: poussière de plâtre et poussière de sable; les volets et les vitres des maisons, le bronze et le vert des réverbères et toutes choses y ont cet air mal essuyé qui agace les dents de devant et qui fait froid au bout des ongles* [14, 19]. This kind of update is alien to the city, and although the miniature offers neither positive nor negative assessment of the Paris' reconstruction, the author uses an imaginary dialogue, an associative plan, strengthens the emotional tone of the scene, and complicates the compositional-linguistic form by means of metaphorical vision, implying that the opposition "old / new" correlates with his perception of "one's own / foreign".

The next thing we know, as in a nightmarish dream, there come ghostly outlines of familiar/unfamiliar neighborhoods. Verlaine's next opposition is embodied in the "cemetery / fair" contrast. The lyrical hero finds himself in the middle of funeral procession, and in the crowd he meets his late father. After a series of unrealistic mystifications, he turns up at a cemetery, and the virtuoso impressionistic brushstroke touches create an appropriate atmosphere with a prevailing palette of gray: *De grandes tranchées dans de la terre glaise bâillent, vertes et jaunes, par couches. Des terrassiers appuyés sur leurs outils nous regardent filer, le train des morts et nous. Ces hommes sont grisâtres sur l'air grisâtre. Il fait froid. On doit être en novembre* [14, 20].

Here appears another contrast – after of the cemetery the place of action is transferred to the crowded bright market. The author conveys sound, tactile, visual effects and even the smells: *Mais l'odeur nous assaille, court avec nous, tourbillonne et dévale, l'odeur fade et grasse des charcuteries du "Siège", des pâtisseries et des confiseries anglaises là débitées et dont les formes, – pains de graisses roses et jaunes, bandes de caramel rouge à demi fondu que piquent des moitiés d'amandes rances, tas violet de gelées innommées et de*

galantines innommables, amoncellement poussiéreux de French-rocks, tea and coffee cakes et maffins avariés, – tournoient, s'effilent, s'évaporent dans la distance alacrement accure et dans les brouillards du rêve qui s'efface [14, 21]. The combination of heterogeneous elements in the structure of one work creates the effect of a collage; the role of subconscious associations and subtext is enhanced. Smell plays an important role here, as it "captures", "lingers", "curls" and "falls". In addition to scents, there are epithets of colorful present in the scene. The rapid change of angles and frequent change of locations is striking. However, despite being fragmented, the work does not lose its integrity. The original combinations of "frames" as components of certain fragments, allow catching on the subtle nuances of the mood and their "untranslatability" with common words.

The next opposition is can be found in the comparison "Paris / London", which correlates with the "one's own" (Paris) and "foreign" (London / other cities) space. It is expected of London to be associate with unpleasant experiences: *Et c'est une ville de province aux rues étroites en colimaçon avec des enseignes en vieux français, où par le plus désagréable et le plus entêté des hasards, je me vois honteusement ivre et berné d'épisodes mortifiants* [14, 23]. Besides London the author introduces in irrational city-state Nowhere: *Sauf le cas de Londres, ci-dessus énoncé, toutes mes nuits se passent à Paris, ou alons nulle part. Naturelement, ce nulle part est difficile à rattraper: autant que j'en peux ramener quelque chose, c'est un pays comme un autre, des villes et des campagnes. <...> Est-ce bien en pleine champagne ou à la sortie d'une de ces villes de Nulle-part que j'ai affaire à une chaussée bordée d'arbres extrêmement hauts, dépouillés, tout noirs – et d'où, sans qu'il fasse de vent, tombent à chaque instant des branches sur un sol humide qui éclabousse?* [14, 24]. The outline of work is dominated by the subjectivized unfolding of the narrative. Verlaine's image of Paris is the result of the subjective impression in combination with the emotional, internal psychological context; also, the role of the "stream of consciousness" is amplified.

When it comes to such key categories of drama as emotionality, conflict and staginess it is worth mentioning that considering the features of Paul Verlaine's poetics, the dramatic beginnings in his prose poetry strikingly come to the forefront. It is not only the fact that in his works dramatic categories are imitated by means of the synthetic genre and that drama constitutes a part of the poetic-aesthetic content, but there is also an idea of drama being "involved" in the general movement of poetic and epic elements, the existence of the synthesized type of artistic consciousness. Only comprehending the whole dynamic structure of this genre in the creative work of Paul Verlaine makes it possible to assess and evaluate its true meaning.

Among characteristics of prose miniatures it is the poetics of an artistic conflict that draws the most attention. In particular, it manifests Verlaine's conception of the world and a man, as well as various conflicts between them. The vivid drama and tragedy of a prose poem bring it closer to drama than any other kind of literature; in a prose poem a conflict appears as a form of awareness of the unresolved contradictions of life. This is, so to speak, an external conflict. An internal conflict shows itself as a clash of contradictory social, ideological, moral and ethical or other positions, different interests, and characters. A dramatic beginning is characteristic of the following Verlaine's prose poems: *Nuit noire, Apologie, Scénario pour ballet, Pantéonades, Motif de pantomime*. It is worth emphasizing that the images of the world and a man created by Verlaine are symbolic and polysemous, their conflicts are so diverse, multifaceted, and filled with the highest spiritual pathos, that it is difficult to apply any schemes of dramatization to them. The plot outlines of these prose poems highlight the main, both dramatic and tragic, stages of the life of his lyrical hero, who is almost invariable accompanied by death, which seems to round the circle of the life's rollercoaster. Sometimes death is grotesquely present at funeral (*Corbillard au galop, Jeux d'enfants*), or it leads to emotional breakdowns when takes away the beloved (*La morte, À la mémoire de mon ami*), and then it morphs in piercing pains filling the final moments of the frail and elderly (*Cheval de retour, Mal'aria*).

The theme of death creates an inexplicable tension in *Par la croisée*. Subtly and delicately Verlaine uses the suggestive power of the word to destroy the boundaries between the subjective and the objective, the spirit and the flesh, the sublime and the ordinary. A common sight in the eyes of the lyrical hero is filled with seemingly insignificant details: a small garden with a path, a lone tree, a rope to dry laundry on, a funny coloured Chinese metal figurine on the top of a tiny gazebo, asphalt tightly

wrapped around the foot of a tree, tidy garden patches. This slightly naive landscape seems to be stable, inviolable and colorless. Then, suddenly, the everyday picture becomes a stage for dramatic events. The drama of the scene unfolds gradually until the reaching its peak, that is the understanding that a person's death, their parting with the world is carried out trivially: *Cela, la bitume qui entourait le pied de l'arbre et les plates-bandes débordantes de crottin, nous fit gais une minute, et déjà plaisant de vivre sans craintes ni amours, quand sortit du pavillon un home à favoris, tête nue, en habit et porteur d'une cuvette pleine d'eau où il se lava les mains. L'eau se teinta de rose et nous rîmes encore plus de le voir rentrer, ce fantoche, en se courbant très bas sous la porte du pavillon dont il ressortit presque aussitôt coiffé d'un chapeau de roile cirée, soutenant péniblement un cercueil apparemment plein dont un autre homme au costume et à la coiffure analogue suait à maintenir l'autre extrémité* [14, 39]. На межі цього контрасту попередній «наївний» пейзаж набуває нових смислів: маленький сад мислиться як такий-собі рай, стежина в саду – дорога життя, крихітна альтанка – символ дому, дерево, затиснуте кільцем асфальту, – поєднання природи і міста, навіть грядка символізує ниву людської праці. On the borderline of this contrast the previous "naive" landscape acquires new meanings: a small garden is perceived as a kind of paradise, a path in the garden is the road of life, a tiny gazebo symbolizes home, a tree stuck in an asphalt ring is viewed as combination of nature and city, while garden patches tell us of human labour.

It is important that the Chinese figurine - a weather vane - appears twice. Most likely, it symbolizes destiny. It's no coincidence for the poet to end his miniature with: *...et le magor de la Chine en glissant nous tira la langue sans que cette fois nous eussions envie de nous réjouir d'autre chose que de cette misérable vie humaine qui a toujours le mot pour rire et sait comme un acteur consommé préparer ses effets sans trop d'emphase* [14, 40]. There is no doubt that symbolism of this work is philosophical. Verlaine uses the striking technique: the "insight" effect of the final lines comes from understanding of the tiniest details. The work demonstrates a whole variety of the writer's experiments with creative word; they range from exquisite thrift of forms and means, landscape introduction, interactivity to the waterfall of sensual epithets and metaphors, a rich color palette, symbolic images, games of contrasts, lyricism of the story, its fragmentation, and broken structure, in addition to profound psychological and philosophical grounds, and personalization.

In the depicted conflict situations and circumstances, it is the social nature of human suffering that sometimes comes to the forefront (*Nuit noire*). However, the prevailing tendency is to depict external conflicts, i.e. the world order that dooms us to eternal struggle with death, and internal ones, i.e. moral and psychological conflicts, the development of which takes place entirely outside the social context, in the plane of mental coordinates. Lyrical heroes usually think in categories of love, conscience, goodness, sin, redemption, fidelity, faithfulness and so on. The internal psychological collision, i.e. a conflict between the human spirit and his mental state, can be treated as a peculiarity of Paul Verlaine's artistic thinking, the synthesis of such types of authorial aesthetic consciousness as symbolism, impressionism and expressionism.

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Проаналізовано історичні та генетичні витоки жанру поезії в прозі. Виокремлено родово-жанровий синкретизм поезії в прозі, що полягає у взаємопроникненні епічного, драматичного й ліричного начал, «накладанні» одних модифікацій на інші. Матеріалом дослідження є збірка поезій у прозі Поля Верлена *Les mémoires d'un veuf*. Метою статті є дослідження наративної специфіки поезії в прозі з огляду на синкретичну природу жанру, способу організації викладу, який дозволяє аналізувати твори з позиції їх побудови та структури. За внутрішньою жанрово-стильовою домінантою виокремлено три форми наративного моделювання оповіді: з перевагою епіко-реалістичних, лірико-імпресіоністичних елементів та драматизації оповіді. З'ясовано, що за сюжетно-композиційною структурою твори епіко-реалістичного блоку діляться на дві категорії: перша - з домінуванням лінійного принципу початку, друга - з фрагментарним принципом побудови, з посиленням естетизації та інтелектуалізації, поглибленим психологізмом, апеляцією до «вічних тем». Твори лірико-імпресіоністичної моделі містять внутрішній психологізований сюжет, увагу до почуттів та зміни емоційного станів, стильовий синкретизм. З ліричною семантикою тісно пов'язана позиція ліричного героя, особистісний авторський досвід. Ліричний герой поезії акумулює у своєму внутрішньому світі весь перебіг сюжету, тобто твір передає не сам сюжет, а його переживання. Можливість вираження окремого почуття, стану без дотримання сюжетної лінії, стала визначальною для драматизованого типу оповіді.

Ключові слова: наратив, поезія в прозі, жанр, лірика, епос, драма, Поль Верлен.