

ABSTRACT

Dissertation by Bissenbayeva Assel Pazylbekovna for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the specialty «6D020900-Oriental studies» on the topic: «The originality and development trends of modern Chinese prose (80s of the twentieth century – the beginning of the twenty-first century)»

Significance of the research:

Chinese literature is one of the oldest in the world, its history spanning thousands of years. Like all Chinese culture, the literary tradition of China is distinguished by its integrity and continuity of historical development. Even with the availability of old texts, there is an obvious desire to restore the original works, which are considered "sacred" in China. Literature originated during the Shang Dynasty and has constantly transformed at all stages of history, changing genres and directions, covering various problems and events.

In the course of its development, Chinese literature has experienced different periods due to changes in the political system and economy, as well as changes in society. The views of writers have also evolved. After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, state control weakened, which allowed Chinese writers to focus on world literature and explore new themes and genres. Over time, Chinese literature has become more comprehensive, reflecting a wide range of social and cultural aspects of modern Chinese society. New generations of writers and poets sought new forms and styles, expanded their subject matter, and offered their own points of view and ideas. Thus, after the events of the late 1970s and early 1980s, Chinese literature expanded, became more open, and received widespread recognition.

In the 1980s, Chinese society paid special attention to prose. The significant events of this era radically changed the nature of the development of "new literature." During this period, many short stories, novels, and stories were published in Chinese literature, causing a wide public resonance. The main innovation was that Chinese writers, having made great efforts, managed to soften the established, deliberately "civilized" and rigid patterns that had dominated literature under government control for several decades. This allowed them to embark on the path of free literary creativity, although many difficulties awaited them here too. The relevance of the topic is not limited to the ever-growing social significance of the "literature of the new era", but also to its unique role in the national literary process of the second half of the 20th century, when a revolution in the development of modern Chinese prose occurred in a relatively short period of time. This topic is especially important because it allows us to understand the achievements of modern Chinese writers in the broader context of Chinese literature of this period. In addition, the works of the last decade boldly reveal the inner world and behavior of people belonging to

different strata of Chinese society, reveal their complexity and diversity, and comprehend the path by which Chinese literature is integrated into the world literary process. It is necessary to note the lack of comprehensive studies of prose and its development in modern Chinese literature of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Therefore, the study of modern prose is of particular relevance.

Research database

The research is based on prose works by Chinese writers that characterize various genres and trends in literature of the 20th–21st centuries, works by foreign and domestic scholars and social scientists that describe the features of these genres and trends, works by cultural historians, as well as dissertations and textbooks, reference books, educational materials covering Chinese literature of the 20th–21st centuries, historical events that influenced the literary process in China. The sources of the research were the works and essays of about fifteen writers, including: Yu Hua, Ge Fei, Sun Ganlu, Su Tong, Chi Li, Liu Zhenyun, Yan Lianke, Zhu Wen, Han Dong, Shu Ping, Guo Jingming, Han Han, Fu Yuehui, Zhang Yuezhang and Chun Shu, reflecting the thematic, aesthetic and genre diversity of Chinese prose of the late 20th – early 21st centuries. In addition to books and periodicals, articles and works published on the Internet were used. These works allow us to form ideas about the development of the literary process in China, the change in literary genres and trends, and serve as an important source for understanding symbolism, the features of the depiction of artistic time and space, and the national characteristics of Chinese works, revealed in the system of images.

Object of the study: Chinese literary prose of the late 1980s – early 21st century.

Subject of the study: the main trends and genres of Chinese literature from the late 1980s to the present day.

Objective of the study: to characterize the main trends and genres of modern Chinese literature, to identify their thematic and artistic features, to analyze their connection with traditional plots; to explore various genres of modern Chinese prose; to dwell on the issues of the era and personality, the features of national identity.

In this work, for the first time, based on the achievements of modern literary criticism, the development of genres of Chinese prose in the late 20th - early 21st centuries is presented. This determines the following **objectives of the study**:

- To give the most complete picture of the state of literature in the late 80s - 90s and its critical assessment.
- To identify and substantiate the historical conditions for the formation and development of new literature in the PRC.
- To identify the main trends and genres of modern Chinese prose and describe their features.
- To reveal the artistic features of the works of authors belonging to various literary movements.

- To trace the evolution of the writers' worldview and to identify their artistic vision, originality in the depiction of characters and events.
- To compare and evaluate the artistic nature of the authors' works, the themes touched upon in them, as well as their characteristic style.

Chronological framework of the study:

The dissertation covers works of Chinese prose from the 1980s to the beginning of the 21st century. The upper limit corresponds to the year of the emergence of the avant-garde movement in Chinese literature. The 1990s are considered as a period that introduced significant changes in the ideological content, aesthetics and formal structure of Chinese prose. When studying the diversity of prose of the 1990s, the works of the authors of the "late wave" are analyzed, as well as the works of Liu Zhenyun and Yan Lianke, which reflect the historical past of the country from a new angle. In literary criticism of the early 21st century, the works of the "post-eighties" period are illustrated by the examples of the works of the most prominent representatives of this generation - Guo Jingming, Han Han, Fu Yuehui, Zhang Yuezhang, Chun Shu, and attention is also paid to such phenomena as "network literature" and youth prose.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of the study:

The main research method is comparative historical. This method has been used in science since the end of the 19th century and allows us to see common and individual features, as well as differences in the literary work of writers, both in the works of authors from different historical periods and in individual works of modern authors. The dissertation also uses the following methods:

- analytical approach - helps to study the internal structure of a work of art;
- typological approach - helps to reveal the social and moral aspects in modern prose;
- comparative approach - allows you to describe in detail the phenomenon under study.

Scientific novelty of the study:

- The achievements, artistic values and aesthetic level of the modern Chinese literary process were considered based on the analysis of the works of famous writers.
- Various constituent features of trends and movements in modern Chinese literature were systematized in a certain sequence, their diverse manifestations in prose were classified through the analysis of specific literary texts.
- Particular attention was paid to the prose of the “new generation”, its historical features, stages of formation, development and maturity were revealed.
- The creative searches of Chinese writers, who masterfully reflected the breath of the era, their innovation and stylistic features were theoretically analyzed.
- Thematic and ideological features of women's prose in Chinese literature were studied and confirmed by specific examples from literary texts.

– The influence of changes after the Cultural Revolution on the literary world, as well as the emergence of new themes and trends, was studied.

– The significance of postmodernism in Chinese literature in conveying national character and psychology, in creating new forms and content was scientifically revealed. – The artistic function of expressive means used by Chinese writers to convey socio-political and socio-philosophical ideas is determined.

Theoretical and practical significance of the study:

This work introduces a significant amount of previously unknown material into Kazakh Sinology, and also presents the main directions of the modern literary process in China over the past twenty years. The results of this study can be used in the analysis of works by Chinese authors, in works describing the literary process of modern China, and in lecture courses on modern Chinese literature. The presented material can also be used in the creation of reference publications, teaching aids and educational and methodological materials in the field of studying oriental literature.

The main points to be defended:

– After the end of the Cultural Revolution, authors were able to openly express their creative positions, and there was a gradual distancing from topics strictly regulated by the state. Over time, new themes and trends emerged in literature, as a result of which styles began to mix, and literature itself entered a new stage of development.

– Authors of “avant-garde prose” (先锋文学) rejected everyday experience and ordinary life, creating in their works a fictional reality where completely different laws operate. They often created characters without clearly defined features, introduced a single narrator, and used the technique of a “novel within a novel”.

– In the late 1980s, many representatives of the avant-garde movement turned to the past and created a series of works that were called “allegories of historical defeat” (历史颓败的寓言). The meaning of these works was to “dramatize ideas about the crisis”. Thus, avant-garde authors sought to present history in a pessimistic light, which often led them to motifs of death and decline.

– Representatives of “neorealism” depicted a vague reality, making the poorest strata of the population, forced to survive in difficult conditions, the heroes. The authors turned to the lives of the deceived unemployed, hired workers, people experiencing difficulties in everyday existence.

– In the 1990s, writers of the “late wave” (六零后, 七零后), who are also called the “new generation of authors”, created significant literary works. Their work shows a noticeable increase in the tendency of individualism: they sought to speak only in their own name and only for themselves. Many emphasized the lack of continuity between their work and the cultural heritage of previous generations. Most often, writers used their own life experiences as a plot, leaving everything else out of account.

- “New Women’s Fiction” (女性主义文学) was divided into three directions: personal women’s stories, fiction by “beautiful women writers,” and social fiction. It raised themes of love and marriage, family, the social status of women in modern society, the role of women in political struggle, the intimate side of life, and same-sex love.
- “New Generation” writers (新代/后代/八零后九零后) were a new phenomenon in Chinese literature that emerged during the period of the “one family – one child” policy and reforms. Unlike previous generations, they wrote about the problems and experiences of their time, their youth, “young China.” Their worldview and attitude to life were significantly different from previous standards.
- “Internet literature” has become a new phenomenon that has contributed to the emergence of a new literary space, but at the same time it has never been able and cannot replace traditional literature.

Main results and conclusions:

The main materials of the dissertation were published in 15 scientific articles and 2 textbooks.

Dissertation structure: The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion and a list of references. The first chapter consists of two subsections, the second chapter of three, the third chapter of four and the fourth chapter of three, with a total volume of 196 pages.