

ABSTRACT

**Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
in the educational program "8D01704 – Russian Language and
Literature"**

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**"The Evolution of the Fictional Biography Genre in the Works of V. Mikhailov:
Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Study in Higher Education"**

General characteristics of the work. The Republic of Kazakhstan is undergoing a process of dynamic modernization. Outstanding individuals contribute significantly to the country's development and its international recognition. Interest in prominent public figures stimulates the creation of biographical works whose authors seek to demonstrate their role in the development of society.

Novelized biographies have become a notable trend in contemporary world literature. A significant proportion of biographies written by Kazakhstani authors are devoted to distinguished writers, prominent scholars, and cultural figures. Eminent writers, who play a leading role in the spiritual and moral development of individuals, serve as role models for younger generations. The promotion of the national literary heritage both within the country and abroad, the development of reading culture, and the formation of a reading nation have been identified as priority areas of state policy in the fields of culture, education, and innovation in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Measures for the Development of Reading Culture and the Formation of a Reading Nation" [1].

The younger generation should be educated through the finest examples of national literature. The genre of biography embodies important meanings that remain highly relevant today. Their interpretation constitutes one of the key objectives of literary scholarship. Assisting students in understanding the moral and ethical values embedded in biographical works is an important goal of literature teachers and corresponds to the requirements of official educational documents. The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Education," the State Mandatory Standard of Higher Education, educational curricula, instructional and methodological guidelines, and other regulatory documents recommend that educators foster high moral and ethical qualities in students.

Research Relevance. The relevance of the dissertation lies in the fact that it undertakes a study of the literary biographies of M.Yu. Lermontov, E.A. Baratynsky, and N.A. Zabolotsky written by V.F. Mikhailov and published in the *Lives of Remarkable People* (ZhZL) series. These essay-novels devoted to Russian poets have not yet been the subject of consistent, comprehensive, and analytical investigation in literary studies, although they undoubtedly deserve the attention of the wider cultural community, literary scholars, and critics.

The literary process of Kazakhstan encompasses autobiographical essays, autobiographies, biographies proper, and essay-novels. Biographical narratives are

based on a distinctive approach to the study of a writer's creative work through the prism of his or her personal life and life trajectory.

The issues of literary biography, whose origins can be traced back to the eighteenth century, continue to attract the scholarly interest of researchers worldwide. International academic forums devoted to biography studies have included *Russian History and the Russian Character* (St. Petersburg, 2002), dedicated to the 90th anniversary of L.N. Gumilev; *Russian Literature in the Context of World Culture* (Moscow, 2016); *Revolutionary Biographies in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Imperial, Inter/National, and Decolonial Perspectives* (Moscow, 2017); *Biography and Autobiography in the Culture of the Silver Age* (Moscow, 2018); *The Synthesis of Documentary and Artistic Elements in Literature and Art* (Kazan, 2018); *Problems of the Development of Contemporary Prose: National Traditions and Interliterary Relations* (Moscow, 2018), among others.

In Kazakh literature, the memoir-biographical genre is represented by such works as *The Thorny Path* by S. Seifullin, *School of Life* by S. Mukanov, *An Eyewitness* by G. Mustafin, *Our Family* by B. Momyshuly, and others.

The formation of the Kazakh biographical novel was addressed in a paper presented by Z.M. Auezova at the Auezov Readings 2025 held at the M.O. Auezov Institute of Literature and Art of the Committee of Science of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The relevance of the research is also determined by the fact that V. Mikhailov's essay-novels have not yet received comprehensive methodological interpretation. The dissertation proposes a methodology for studying the literary biographies of M.Yu. Lermontov, E.A. Baratynsky, and N.A. Zabolotsky written by V. Mikhailov, People's Writer of Kazakhstan.

Object of the Study is the genre features of the essay-novels by V. Mikhailov: "M. Lermontov: Alone Between Heaven and Earth," "Boratynsky," and "Zabolotsky. The Oriole, Hermit of the Forest," published by the publishing house "Molodaya Gvardiya" in the series "Life of Remarkable People" (ZhZL).

Object of the Study is the genre-stylistic and narrative specificity of literary biography in contemporary Kazakh literature, as well as the methodology for teaching biographical works in higher education institutions.

Aim of the Study. The aim of the study is a comprehensive analysis of literary biography in the works of V. Mikhailov in terms of its evolution and as a theoretical problem of literary studies, as well as the development of methods for its analysis and teaching in higher education institutions.

The research tasks are:

- to examine the theoretical and methodological problems of the genre of biography and define the specificity of literary biography;
- to systematize conceptions of the biography genre in Kazakhstani Russian-language literature;
- to study the evolution of the literary biography genre in V. Mikhailov's works;
- to develop psychological, pedagogical, and methodological foundations for

analyzing biographical prose in higher education;

– to design an effective experimental methodology for studying the genre of literary biography in V. Mikhailov's works in university classes.

Hypothesis of the Study. The study is based on the hypothesis that the teaching of literary biography in V. Mikhailov's works in higher education will be effective under the following conditions:

– theoretical comprehension of the problems of the biography genre;
– systematization of ideas about the biography genre in Kazakhstan Russian-language literature;

– study of the evolution of the literary biography genre in V. Mikhailov's works;

– formation of psychological, pedagogical, and methodological foundations for studying biographical prose in higher education;

– development of an effective experimental methodology for studying literary biography in V. Mikhailov's works in university instruction.

Scientific Novelty – The scientific novelty of the research lies in the fact that contemporary forms of belletrized biography demonstrate the dominance of artistic principles in representing outstanding personalities, impressionistic style, and the synthesis of factual material, fictionalized narration, and historical narratology. In addition, alongside the “biographical method” or “life history,” the terms cultural-historical personology, biographics, and “individual case history” are considered.

Issues related to the representation of the formation of a creative poetic personality in essay-biographies, as well as the specificity of the poetic image, have remained on the periphery of literary studies.

For the first time in national literary scholarship, V. Mikhailov's literary biographies “*M. Lermontov: Alone Between Heaven and Earth*” “*Baratynsky,*” and “*Zabolotsky. The Oriole, Hermit of the Forest*” are comprehensively studied. The biographies of Russian poets and translators are interpreted as special cultural texts and as sources for understanding the meaning of their artistic works.

For the first time in literary methodology, a systematic framework for teaching these works in higher education has been developed.

Theoretical Significance – The theoretical significance of the work lies in the analysis of three literary biographies by a single author within the *Lives of Remarkable People* series, founded in 1890 by F. Pavlenkov and revived in 1933 in the Soviet Union. The series includes biographical stories, essays, and scholarly studies of writers' lives and creative development.

A typological analysis of V. Mikhailov's cycle of literary biographies and a comparison of their journal and book versions made it possible to identify features of initial and revised editions and to distinguish biography from chronicle.

The essay-novels included in the courses “*Russian Prose of Kazakhstan*” and “*Russian Literature of Kazakhstan in School and University*” demonstrate new narrative strategies.

In teaching biography in higher education, terminological inconsistency (autobiographism, autometadescription, autothematization, autoreferentiality, etc.) is

eliminated. Modern pedagogical approaches are based on the key concept: biography as a document of its time.

The heuristic potential of developing problems of intragenre typology and reception of the biographical genre is significant.

Practical Significance – The practical significance of the dissertation lies in expanding the communicative and educational space of higher education through the proposed scientific conclusions. The results may serve as a basis for elective courses on contemporary Russian prose of Kazakhstan, teaching materials on Russian literature of Kazakhstan, and the formation of concepts of the biography genre. The proposed methodology for analyzing literary biographies may be applied to academic and artistic biographies, chronicles, and literary portraits.

Main Provisions for Defense

1. The analysis of V. Mikhailov's works is based on established literary theories of biography, providing a solid theoretical foundation for interpretation.
2. Systematization of biography studies in Kazakhstani Russian literature enables accurate analysis of narrative structure and artistic-documentary synthesis.
3. The evolution of literary biography in V. Mikhailov's works reveals a transition from lyrical subjectivity to documentary dominance.
4. The methodological framework in higher education relies on psychological and pedagogical principles and promotes student-centered learning.
5. The teaching methodology includes interactive, heuristic, and research-based approaches supported by digital educational resources.

Approbation of Results. Seventeen scientific articles were published, including six in journals recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, one indexed in Scopus, and ten in proceedings of international conferences.

Structure of the Dissertation. The dissertation consists of an Introduction, three chapters, a Conclusion, and a Bibliography comprising 158 sources. The Appendices include the syllabus of the author's elective course "*The Genre of Literary Biography in the Works of V. Mikhailov*" and an Act confirming the implementation of the research results into the educational process.