

## ИСТОРИЯ И ТЕОРИЯ КУЛЬТУРЫ

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### BASIS OF GENRE IN A LITERARY NOVEL

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This essay provides a critical analysis regarding the basis of genre distinction in a literary novel: What is the epistemological and ontological locus of this basis? The thesis the author elucidates and defends is that theme constitutes the basis of genre distinction in a literary novel; it exists as a potentiality in the literary dimension of the novel *qua* significant form. This paper is composed of three parts. The first part focuses on the basis underlying the literary dimension of the novel, namely, art: possession of aesthetic qualities is what renders a novel a literary work of art. The second part argues that, as the basis of genre distinction, theme exists as a potentiality in the literary dimension of the novel. The third part illustrates in some detail how theme comes to life as a world of meaning in the aesthetic experience. If possession of aesthetic qualities is what renders a novel a literary work of art, if the literary dimension inheres in the novel as a potentiality capable of significant form, if theme exists in the literary dimension of a novel, it should follow that theme does not exist in the novel as a story but as a literary work, that is, as a potentiality in its literary dimension and nowhere else. Accordingly, the literary work of art should, and can, declare its genre identity.

**Keywords:** novel, genre, art, literature, aesthetic quality, world of meaning, aesthetic object, value, literariness, philosophicalness

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### Introduction

Most aestheticians and literary critics agree that the domain of a literary novel is composed of different genres, such as mystery, horror, romance, or fantasy, and that this domain is open-ended, in the sense that it is possible for new genres and sub-genres to emerge in the near or distant future. Indeed, it is difficult for a person to buy or read a literary novel that cannot be included in one of the generally recognized genres. Moreover, it is agreed that *theme* forms the basis of distinguishing one type of literary genre from another. For example, a novel is classified as a “romantic novel” if its theme is romance. However, what is the *ontological status* of theme in a literary novel? How does it make its appearance in the aesthetic experience? Under what conditions can one identify the genre identity of a novel? To what extent is theme an “objectively” given reality?

My aim in raising these questions is not to query or dispute the existing classification of literary novels into genres, but to provide an epistemological and ontological explanation regarding the basis of genre distinction in literary novels. It is one thing to say that *Wuthering Heights* is a romantic novel, while it is something entirely different to examine the *rationale* behind this assertion, that is, to understand the principle by which it is categorized as romantic. Is it romantic because the plot revolves around a passionate love affair between a man and a woman? A romantic novel is a love story, but not every love story is necessarily a romantic novel. Many novels contain meaningful, enlightening, and dramatic love affairs, and some contain meaningful discourses on the nature of love, without necessarily being romantic.

We may, broadly speaking, say that theme provides the basis of genre distinction in the literary novel. This is a reasonable proposal, and I shall discuss it in some detail in the following pages, but it is not as clear as it seems. Although a plot may revolve around a love affair, a religious experience, or an exotic adventure and may give the impression that it is a romantic, religious, or adventure novel, it may not necessarily qualify for inclusion in the romantic, religious, or adventure genre since it may *veil a deeper, more central theme*. For example, the plot in Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych* revolves around the rise and death of a successful and respected magistrate, but in fact, the theme of the novel deals with the meaning of human life<sup>1</sup>. Again, although the plot constitutes the structure of the literary novel and frequently functions as the ontological *locus* of its theme, it cannot be the basis of genre distinction. This is based on the fundamental assumption that a literary novel is not merely a story. A story can be emotionally attractive, thrilling, or juicy without being a literary novel. The structure, purpose, and mode of existence of the story are different from the structure, purpose, and mode of existence of the literary novel. Albeit a narrative, the story is given as a ready-made object. It is the narrative we read; put differently, it is identical to the narrative we read. Even the psychological revelations made by the characters, the events, or the narrator, are descriptive in nature. Indeed, what we imagine or conceive when we read the story are to a large extent based on what we read in the text. This is one of the reasons why it would be reasonable to say that the plot of the story forms the basis of its genre identity. Therefore, it would be a romantic or horror story if the theme of its plot consists of predominantly romantic or horror elements.

In spotlighting the difference between a story and a literary novel, I do not in any way, underrate the value of the story or the role it plays in culture, imagination, or human life. My comparison is purely descriptive, not evaluative. Like the novel, the story presents a distinctive theme and purpose while meeting a particular aesthetic need. I would venture to say that, overall, stories are more in demand than literary novels. Can we underestimate the role stories play in cultivating the minds of children, as well as adults? Can we easily forget the stories our parents read to us when we are young? Can we ignore the essential function stories perform in the world of entertainment and information? Do teachers, religious leaders, and parents not use stories as a medium of explanation and raising questions?

However, unlike the story, the literary novel is not, *as a literary work*, identical to its plot, although the plot may play a decisive role in the development of its

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<sup>1</sup> Porter, B. *Philosophy Through Fiction and Film*. Upper Sadler River, 2004, pp. 261–281.

theme, but *a potentiality inherent in it*. Moreover, any evaluative statement we make about the story can be corroborated by direct reference to the narrative. There is no need to venture beyond the text to ascertain that it is beautiful, interesting, or good. Is this why many people read stories in a short time, why most stories do not leave a deep impression or impact upon the way we think, feel, or act, or why a large number of people read stories mainly to kill time or simply to have a pleasant experience? But, the plot is not identical to the novel as a literary work of art and is not, in itself, the basis or the direct bearer of its aesthetic value.

As I have just pointed out, a literary novel is not only a story; more importantly, it is a work of art. But, what makes it art? I raise this question because its artistic dimension is the ontological locus of its theme. However, this dimension is not given as a ready-made reality the way its scenes, characters, or events are given but as a potentiality inherent in the novel as a *significant form*, that is, in the way the plot is arranged as a story<sup>2</sup>. In this context, we can say that the significant form of the novel is tethered to, or embedded in, the story. The significant form provides the foundation of the novel as a literary work of art. It is what the artist aims at during the creative process and what the reader aims at during the process of reading the novel aesthetically. It is significant because it signifies meaning. *The literary novel is a world of meaning*<sup>3</sup>. This world is and should be, the object of literary appreciation and criticism. Tolstoy did not write *The Death of Ivan Ilych* to describe the death of an important government functionary, a man we frequently see walking in the streets of social life, but rather to disclose an essential dimension regarding the meaning of human life. The vehicle of this disclosure is the theme the form embodies or communicates. This theme emerges as a world distinct, but not separable, from the story as a significant form primarily because it inheres in it, in the sense that it exists in, or permeates, its very structure.

Now, if theme forms the basis of genre distinction in a literary novel, if the ontological locus of this theme is the literary dimension of the literary novel, if this dimension is not given as a ready-made reality but comes into being during the process of reading it aesthetically, and finally, if the differentiae which define the thematic identity emerges from the womb of the *literary dimension* of the novel, it would necessarily follow that an understanding of the basis of genre distinction in a literary novel should proceed from a reasonable analysis of (a) the literary dimension of the novel and (b) the conditions under which types of theme are embodied in the novel and realized in the aesthetic experience of the reader. This proposal is based on the assumption that the theme is often not provided directly in the structure of the novel as a story but as a work of art. Accordingly, an examination of how a story communicates the theme inherent in it as a significant form presupposes an inquiry into the sense in which a novel is a literary work of art. But, fulfilling this condition is not enough; we should also explore the nature of the particular theme whose presence in a group of novels distinguishes that group as a genre. Here we can ask: What determines whether a group of novels belongs to the romance, horror, or fantasy genre? Finding an answer to this question is urgent primarily because the differentiae that distinguish the group as a genre reside in the artistic dimension of the novel: Under what conditions can this dimension be realized in the aesthetic experience? The point, which calls for special attention here, is that neither the theme

<sup>2</sup> Bell, C. *Art*. New York, 1958, pp. 15–34.

<sup>3</sup> Mitias, M. *What Makes an Experience Aesthetic?* Amsterdam, 1988, pp. 127–128.

nor the differentiae can be fully understood without an adequate account of the artistic structure of the literary novel and how it emerges during the aesthetic experience.

In the essay that follows, I shall, first, discuss the literary dimension of the literary novel: What makes a novel a literary work of art? Here, I shall argue that the literary novel is a world of meaning and that the main characters, actions, scenes, and events can be expressed in different figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, or symbolic images. Second, I shall discuss the possibility of articulating the basic features of a theme into *differentiae* that can act as the basis of genre distinction in a literary novel. Finally, I shall illustrate this possibility by an examination of a philosophical novel.

## Literariness

What makes a novel a *literary* work? This question asks for the feature or aspect whose presence in the novel makes it a literary work. What is the mode of existence of this feature or aspect? How does it belong to the novel? If the literary novel is more than a story, it must be more than a descriptive narrative – what is this “more”? It cannot be supervenient to the structure of the given text, but an integral part of it, otherwise, we would not be able to experience the literary novel, *qua* integrity, as a literary work, and we would not be able to justify its inclusion in the genre of a literary novel. The identity of an object, regardless of whether it is physical, biological, or human, is determined by reference to its essential structure, or features, not by something external or superadded to it.

Art, I submit, is the principle of literary distinction. Accordingly, a novel is a literary work inasmuch as it is art. I say “inasmuch as” because (a) the art-making element is not given as a ready-made reality but as a possibility for infinite realization in the aesthetic experience, and (b) if this element is a ready-made reality, we would undercut the possibility of aesthetic evaluation; that is, we would not be able to judge works as good or better, more or less beautiful, excellent or mediocre. The aesthetic value of an artwork depends on the extent to which its artistic dimension is rich, profound, or spiritually uplifting. Art is also what distinguishes a literary novel from a story. Only when the novel acquires an artistic being, does it become a literary work<sup>4</sup>.

We can now ask: What makes an artifact, such as a painting or a symphony, art? *Possession of aesthetic qualities*; the unity of these qualities is what I call in this paper “significant form”. This kind of form is symbolic in nature and, like all symbols, embodies, or signifies, a content of meaning that transcends its given parameters. We do not imagine, conceive, or see this content in the symbol but based on certain rules and conventions, we can make a transition to the content of meaning signified by it. However, although this content is not identical to the symbol, it cannot exist from it separately, nor can it be superadded to it, mainly due to the way the signification being embedded in the symbol. This is why, during the process of transitioning from the symbol to its signification, the symbol becomes an ingredient of the signification.

<sup>4</sup> Osborne, H. “What Makes an Experience Aesthetic?” *The Possibility of the Aesthetic Experience*. Dordrecht; Boston; Norwell, MA, 1986, pp. 117–138.

It is a generally recognized fact by philosophers and scientists that the aim of the scientist is to know *the facts* constituting the scheme of nature and, if possible, nature as a whole while the aim of the philosopher and the artist is to know the *meaning of these facts*. While the facts of nature are given as objects of empirical observation, the meaning is articulated based on the knowledge disclosed by the scientist. The scientist's knowledge of matter, life, and consciousness plays a decisive role in how we understand ourselves as human beings, how we design our life-projects, how we treat other human beings, how we understand the nature and purpose of the cosmic process, or how we interpret the meaning of justice, freedom, love, and happiness. In contrast to the realm of facts, the realm of meaning is the realm of human values – truth, beauty, and goodness. The first embraces values such as wisdom, erudition, and good sense; the second embraces values such as justice, love, and honesty; and the third embraces values such as elegance, grandeur, and gracefulness. To this list, we may add metaphysical and religious values. The first embraces values such as freedom, creativity, and meaning of existence in general, and human life in particular, while the second embraces values such as grace, faith, and piety. A quick, yet investigative, look at the domain of a literary novel will readily show that human values – their source, nature, and application – is the central theme of the novel

Values are not natural facts; they are human constructs. They are ideals, and as ideals, they are schemas, plans for action at the individual and social levels in the cultural, social, economic, political, and technological spheres of human life. An ideal defines the essential nature of *a type* of action without either implying or referring to concrete, particular actions. For example, equality, fairness, or rightness defines the essential nature of the ideal of justice, but this definition is general and as such ideal; it states that every just action should exhibit equality, fairness, or rightness as its essential nature. The activity of translating the general into a particular action or type of action is the task of the individual, the jury, the judge, or the legislator. This is based on the assumption that no two situations in any area of human life – practical, theoretical, scientific, moral, artistic, or religious – are identical. What may be just, generous, wise, elegant, or appropriate in a particular situation may not be so in a different situation, culture, or historical period. Consider the value, or ideal, of divine love. Is there one specific way of loving God? Again, is there one way of loving human beings, creating beautiful objects, seeking freedom, discovering the truth, or pursuing happiness? Again, do we not discover new, deeper, or richer meaning in a novel when we read it repeatedly or, as we grow older and hopefully wiser? Do teachers not frequently ask students to re-read a novel or a poem in the hope of penetrating their deeper meaning? This point merits particular emphasis, not only because the type of values, which permeate the artistic dimension of the literary novel and make it literature, *is a wealth of potentiality* awaiting realization in the aesthetic experience, but also because it can be realized in different ways and degrees. How can we discover new meanings or even delve deeper into the depth of the literary novel if these meanings do not exist in the novel or of if we do not believe that the novel is an inexhaustible source of meaning?

But, how does value exist in the literary novel? This question aims at the sense in which a literary novel is a significant form, for, as stated earlier, possession of this kind of form is what makes it art and consequently a literary work of art. As a story I buy from the bookstore, the literary novel is a structure or a kind of formation; as such, it is a form. This form constitutes its foundation as a novel.

If in some way it changes, the story changes, and if it collapses, the novel collapses. However, the novel is not merely a form; it is a significant form. It is not merely a story, but the kind of story that “hides” something, viz., meaning within its folds. I say, “hide” because it is not given directly to our imagination, and yet it can be lured from its hiding place by the seductive power of its significant form in the event of assuming an aesthetic attitude and making a serious effort to read the novel aesthetically. This power resides in what aestheticians call “aesthetic qualities”.

As I shall shortly discuss in some detail, their presence in an artifact is what makes it art, and their presence in the novel is what makes it a literary work of art! The birthplace of this form is the creative vision of the artist. The novelist does not create the words she uses in composing the novel; she creates a form, i.e., a plot that embodies meaning. How can this kind of form embody meaning? The type of meaning intended in this context is not lexical or conceptual, nor the meaning of the novel as a narrative, but the type of meaning that inheres in the form as an organic unity and emerges in the aesthetic experience as an aesthetic object. The novel as an artwork undergoes a transformation of identity during the aesthetic experience; it becomes an *aesthetic object*. What is the ontological status of this object? Let me at once state that the meaning signified by the significant form inheres in the literary novel as a potentiality that can be actualized during the process of reading it aesthetically. This assertion calls for an explanation<sup>5</sup>.

The meaning communicated by the novel exists within the web of the aesthetic qualities that inhere as a potentiality in its significant form. The capacity of this kind of form to embody meaning, and to disclose it in the aesthetic experience, is magically transferred by the novelist’s creative vision to the form she is trying to create. *This magic infuses and steers the way in which the form is created.* The uniqueness of this way and the magic of the hand that fashions it is what distinguish the novel from the story. It is what incites and gradually directs the imagination of the reader to the meaning implicit in the form. A novel that cannot perform this twofold function remains a story. Accordingly, when we say that meaning inheres as a potentiality in the literary novel, we should mean that its form has the capacity, *potential*, to communicate this meaning by virtue of its form. This meaning comes to life on the wings of the aesthetic qualities whose presence in the novel is what makes it art and, consequently, a literary work of art: a novel is a literary work inasmuch as it is art. Thus, any discourse about literariness is in effect a discourse about the artistic dimension of the novel, and any discourse about this dimension is, in turn, a discourse about the aesthetic qualities, which inheres in its significant form. The unity of these qualities, which appear in the aesthetic experience as an aesthetic object, constitute the structure of the novel as a literary work.

Generally, form is a whole composed of parts; it is a specific arrangement of individual elements – things, colors, lines, motions, shapes, words, and images – into a basic structure. Possession of form is a necessary condition for the existence and knowledge of an object, regardless of whether it is physical or mental. A formless object does not, and cannot, exist. We know it by means of its form, that is, by the way its elements are grouped into a structure. But, unlike natural

<sup>5</sup> Mitias, M. (ed.) *The Possibility of the Aesthetic Experience*. Dordrecht; Boston; Norwell, MA, 1986, p. 59.

objects and even objects in the visual and auditory fine arts, the literary novel exists in a non-sensuous medium, namely, written and sometimes oral language. However, like the painter, the sculptor, or the musician, who does not create her medium, but forms it in a certain way, the novelist does not create the words she uses; she *forms them in a certain way*. As a symbolic medium, ordinary language communicates meaning conceptually. This type of language prevails in science and philosophy. However, the literary novelist uses this medium to create and communicate different, and sometimes higher, levels of meaning. She does not only create figures of speech such as allegory, simile, satire, irony, metaphor, and images, which express different types or dimensions of meaning, she also creates stories that embody *worlds of meaning*; these worlds defy philosophical or scientific conceptualization. How does the literary novel embody meaning?

I tend to think that the logic governing the creative process in the different art forms is one and the same. Ordinary language, which consists of words that are formed phonically and as written marks on paper, can be a medium of artistic expression. Let me elaborate this statement by two examples, the first is from the visual arts and the second is from the domain of the literary novel<sup>6</sup>. First, a preliminary remark is in order. As a means of expression, significant form is a kind of language mainly because, like ordinary language, it is *symbolic* in nature. But, unlike ordinary language, which communicates conceptual meaning in most of its uses, significant form communicates *human meaning*, the kind that instantiates *values* in the multitude of moral, religious, political, metaphysical, and cultural spheres of human experience. It is also important to point out that, unlike ordinary language, which is constructed according to certain rules and conventions, significant form is created according to the logic of the creative vision that illuminates the process of artistic creation. This is why it is possible to say that the artist creates rather than follow specific rules in this kind of activity. But, although the artwork is the outcome of a creative vision, one that comes into being *sui generis*, the intuition and articulation of the meaning inherent in it is neither arbitrary nor idiosyncratic. This is primarily due to its creation being governed by the logic that steers the creative process, on the one hand, and the logic of the kind of meaning the artist seeks to communicate, on the other. This twofold logic forms the basis of learning how to penetrate the meaning implicit in the different art forms and works. Is this not the kind of logic relied upon by art teachers in teaching students how to appreciate works of music, painting, literature, dance, or sculpture? Do we not gradually master the dynamics of this logic in the activity of experiencing artworks as we grow intellectually, socially, culturally, and emotionally? This is based on the assumption that art teachers, critics, art historians, and lovers of art are, to a reasonable extent, conversant in the logic that underlies aesthetic appreciation and evaluation in the different art forms.

My critic would now interject: you have also referred to this dimension as a world *and* as “world of meaning”. How do we experience this dimension as a world? What makes it a world? This is a fair question. *First*, the characters, events, and scenes within which the action of the novel takes place are not shadowy but substantial objects. Although Ivan Ilych does not exist in the real world, and although he exists as a potentiality in the novel, which is an abstract type of existence, he comes to life as a real human being during the reading process, and

<sup>6</sup> Ingarden, R. *The Literary Work of Art*. Evanston, 1979, pp. 34–59.

this reality is sometimes more substantial than the reality of the objects that fill our social and natural environment – at home, in the workplace, or in the streets of the social life. His pain, anxiety, agony, questions, guilt, screams, and passion for life are not simply abstract mental states; they are living objects and events in my mind, heart, and will. I do not experience Ivan as a shadowy object out there in a vista of my imagination, but as a real human being with whom ordinary people can interact and understand. When I am reading the novel aesthetically, I *empathize* with him; I become a possible Ivan. He forces me to look at myself in the mirror of truth. I cannot ignore the questions his predicament provokes in my mind, even though I may refuse to feel that I am another Ivan. Do we not sometimes suddenly notice that we are shaking our heads, pursing our lips, blushing, laughing, frowning, or feeling sad, joyful, or confused in the process of reading a literary novel?

Similarly, the scenes and events that make up the tapestry of the novel come to life in the activity of reading it aesthetically. For example, the funeral scene with which the novel begins is as real as the myriad scenes we encounter in real funeral homes. The corpse, friends, family members, flowers, and music are instantiations of real corpses, friends, family members, flowers, and music we encounter in real funeral homes. Although we do not encounter a scene identical to this one in real life, it is *true to real life* – to how people say farewell to a dead man, how they view death, how they gossip at funeral homes, how funerals are more about the living than the dead. Additionally, they are true to life, not only because Tolstoy discloses the essence of such a scene, which the philosopher can do conceptually, but primarily because the *way* he disclosed it endowed the novel with the capacity to become a luminous presence in the experience of the reader. The ability to endow images, scenes, or descriptions with this kind of capacity is the secret of the creative imagination. This secret lies in the capacity to infuse these images, scenes, or descriptions with life.

*Second*, as a significant form, the literary novel is an indeterminate reality. It is not merely the story the novelist writes; it is the significant form that inheres in it. As a literary work, the novel can be read differently at different times, by different readers, and from different perspectives. No two identical readings of the novel are possible, not only because the psychological, intellectual, and cultural knowledge and skills of the reader are always changing, not only because the significant form is weaved out of a multiplicity of meanings, but also because the novel is an inexhaustible source of meaning. This is one main reason why we can characterize the literary novel *as a world of meaning*. As I emphasized earlier, value is a schema, a plan for action; as such, it is a fountain of possible realizations.

We enjoy reading the literary novel because it is written beautifully, or aesthetically. Beauty is an intrinsic value. We seek it as an end in itself, not as a means to an end. This value manifests itself in the way the novelist chooses the plot, the language she uses, the images she creates, the figures of speech she employs to express the elusive feelings, emotions, and meanings, the way she depicts the scenes, and the way she presents the theme of the novel. These parts do not exist in it discretely but as an organic unity, so do their beauty and the beauty of the work as a whole. However, as realized meaning, beauty is not a particular object of any kind; accordingly, it is indefinable. Can we describe the beauty we feel when we listen to a beautiful piece of music or contemplate a magnificent sunset? Can we describe the love we feel when we are in the heat of union with



the beloved? The beauty of a work of art is the spiritual air that radiates from the form of the work as an organic unity; we breathe it the way we breathe the air of spiritual life. It flows from this form the way light flows from the sun as an inexhaustible abundance. Do we not delve deeper into the beauty of a sunset the more we contemplate the physical and cosmic dynamics that underlie it? Do we not discover newer and more profound meaning when we read *Moby Dick*, *Middlemarch*, or *Of Human Bondage*, as we grow older? Do we not enjoy the beauty of a man or a woman when we know that the beauty we perceive with our eyes reflects inner intellectual and moral beauty? Can we define this kind of beauty – its charm, profundity, warmth? Even these three epithets are a metaphorical way of referring to it! Beauty is seductive! It lures the reader into the heart of the novel the way the beauty of a woman lures the heart of a man into her heart or the way the beauty of a man lures a woman into his heart. It plays an active role in changing the reader's attitude from the mode of ordinary perception to the mode of aesthetic appreciation.

But, we do not usually read novels simply because they are beautiful but mainly because they are morally, intellectually, and spiritually meaningful. I do not exaggerate if I say that the meaning we experience in them is a concretization of a rich mosaic of human values: religious, moral, metaphysical, cultural, and aesthetic. Let us venture another look at *The Death of Ivan Ilych*. As a value, human life is the dominant theme of the novel. This value is unusually complex because it is composed of a cluster of social, political, aesthetic, moral, and intellectual values. We encounter these values in the major scenes of this novel: in the workplace, home, social life, Ivan's relationships with his colleagues, his wife, his doctor, his children, and his peasant. Every value that underlies these scenes is, as I argued earlier, a potentiality for a multitude of realizations in different ways and degrees. The more we read this novel aesthetically and reflectively, the deeper we glide into the womb of this potentiality. I tend to think that the desire to enjoy meaning is a fundamental urge in human nature.

*Third*, the theme of the literary novel comes to life in the aesthetic experience as an aesthetic object. As I indicated earlier, the aesthetic object is the aim of the novelist during the process of artistic creation and the aim of the reader during the process of reading it. The aesthetic object is a world of meaning. It does not derive its being and identity from an external source; it is an independent and individual sphere of meaning. This is another reason why we can refer to it as "world". The meaning we experience in it originates from the values that dominate the theme of the novel. When I read *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, I discover what it means to face death and how this phenomenon provokes the question of the meaning of human life; I also see the urgent need to come to grips with this question. In this discovery, I do not avail myself of any external source but rely exclusively on the life that unfolds before my mind as I read the novel. It seems that Tolstoy planted the seeds of the theme of the novel in the first chapter. These seeds grow and become a tree in the course of reading it. In fact, the story that unfolds in my experience becomes my story because, in the act of reading it, I am its author. I am the agent that brings it to life. Paradoxically, I become captive to its world. Can it be otherwise if I am one with it while I am reading it?

We make a grave mistake if we view the aesthetic object as a reality independent of the medium the artist used in the process of creating her work, namely, the novel that sits on the the shelf of my bookcase for two reasons. First,

as a text, the book embodies the aesthetic object as a significant form: the aesthetic object exists in the significant form as a potentiality. Expressed metaphorically, this form inhabits the medium in which it inheres. It cannot be experienced or conceived separate from it. It is, after all, the way this medium is formed! Accordingly, if the significant form is the unity of the aesthetic qualities which make up the structure of the significant form, these qualities can be realized only in their medium *qua* significant form. Second, regardless of whether it is physical or conceptual, this medium is spiritualized in the aesthetic experience, because in reading the novel aesthetically we do not experience it merely as a story but also as a meaningful story, a story imbued with realized aesthetic qualities: elegance, love, joy, justice, freedom, or tragedy. This is based on the assumption that the phenomenon of experience cannot be reduced to a physiological, conceptual, or psychological event. Am I aware of the physical painting when I am experiencing *Mona Lisa* aesthetically? Am I aware of any concepts or images when I am reading *The Death of Ivan Ilych* aesthetically? In this sort of experience, the human self rises to its highest level of spiritual realization. It is, I think, appropriate to say that during this event I am a drop of experience, as Whitehead would say, and that this event is spiritual in nature. I say "spiritual" because it includes the physical, psychological, and conceptual elements that form the substance of the experience, but as an organic unity. The experience of the whole is always more than the mathematical sum of its parts.

It should be clear from the preceding discussion in its entirety that if the basis of *literary distinction is art*, if the basis of artistic distinction is possession of aesthetic qualities, if significant form is the unity of these qualities, if their unity constitutes the structure of the aesthetic object, if this object is a world of meaning, then it should follow that a novel that is a literary work, embodies such an object. I have discussed the constituents of this line of reasoning mainly to show that the literary dimension of the novel exists in it. If a novel is a literary work of art, it should declare its literariness from within, from the depth of its artistic structure, not by the judgment of an external authority; and if an authority makes such a judgment, it should be based on this kind of declaration.

### **Theme as the Basis of Genre in the Literary Novel**

I think the time is ripe to ask: What is the basis of genre in the literary novel, for example, is it a romance, horror, or fantasy novel? In answering this question, I shall begin with a statement on the basis and then discuss it in some detail.

It is generally recognized in the domains of aesthetics and literary criticism that theme is the basis of genre distinction in the literary novel: we know the genre identity of a novel by its theme. Readers of literary novels spontaneously drift toward the genre section of their interest when they desire to read a novel in the library or buy one in the bookstore. They intuitively, and sometimes by practice, know that horror or fantasy novels are found in the horror or fantasy novel section, and they take it for granted that literary novels are classified into genres on the basis of their themes, but they hardly know, and rarely question, the basis, or criterion, of these classifications. They simply expect that the theme of the novels in the horror section will signify horror novels and the theme represented in the romance section will denote romantic novels; most, if not all of the time, they are not mistaken in their expectation.

However, the question which should pique the interest of the aesthete and the literary critic is, What do we mean when we say that theme is the basis of genre distinction in a literary novel? I raise this question because a literary novel may contain more than one plot, as in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* or Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*, and in fact, many novels contain a multiplicity of themes, some more important than others. For example, a crime novel may contain a passionate love affair and a genuine religious experience. How does one theme acquire precedence or centrality in such novels? In some cases, this precedence is evident, but in others, it is not. Who makes this determination? Can a romantic or a mystery novel be romantic or mysterious to one reader or critic but not to others? Can a novel be romantic in one social or cultural context but not in others? I raise these questions only to emphasize the thesis I discussed in the first section of this paper, and plan to explore further in this section, namely, the basis of genre identity inheres in the significant form and emerges as an aesthetic object in the aesthetic experience. Let me elaborate on this argument.

If a novel is a literary work of art, if its literary dimension inheres as a potentiality in its significant form and comes to life as an aesthetic object in the aesthetic experience, that is, if its identity inheres in its structural form, it should follow that *the basis of its genre identity must inhere as a potentiality in its literary dimension*, otherwise, the novel would be voiceless, silent about its identity: it would not be able to declare its identity. All it can say is: "They call me a romantic, mystery, or horror novel". However, suppose a novel is classified as a horror novel, but I experience it as a romantic novel, in other words, suppose the romantic dimension is couched within a theme of horror – would my reading of the novel be correct? Moreover, the assertion that Hardy's novel, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, is a romantic novel logically, and I can add epistemologically, implies that romanticness inheres in it. If, for example, we say that people are rational animals, we certainly imply that rationality is one of their essential, or defining, features. A person who does not instantiate this feature cannot be treated or classified as a rational person. We treat a demented person, one who is insane, as non-rational. Do we not exclude mentally deranged people and children from responsibility on the grounds that they are not in possession of their rational power and consequently cannot distinguish right from wrong or good from bad?

But, my critic would ask: if the basis of literary distinction is the formal structure of the novel, what is the basis of the different genres within the sphere of a literary novel? Is there one basis? The basis is, as I insisted earlier, theme. Nevertheless, I should immediately add that a basis called "theme" does not exist. What exists, is types of themes: romantic, horror, or mystery themes. As a basis of genre distinction, the theme of each genre should inhere as a potentiality in the formal structure of the novel. Accordingly, the quest for a basis of genre distinction in the sphere of the literary novel is in effect a *quest for bases for every genre* within this sphere. If art is the differentiae of literariness, if these differentiae inhere as a potentiality in the novel *qua* significant form, if it comes to life as a world of meaning in the aesthetic experience, then it should follow that, if theme is the basis of a genre distinction in the sphere of literary novel, this theme should define its identity as a particular type of literary novel. If a literary novel is romantic, we should be able to experience its romanticness as its preeminent theme.

My critic would linger on the word "preeminent" and wonder whether a literary novel can have more than one identity, therefore, belonging to more than

one genre. I tend to think that a novel can have a multiplicity of themes but one preeminent theme, or identity. Broadly speaking, a novel presents a slice of life. This slice presents a complex amalgamation of individuals, actions, events, scenes, conversations, conflicts, and problems. It is extremely challenging, and sometimes impossible, to depict a theme without necessarily depicting a few or several themes, as is the case in Gabriel G. Marquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The depiction of such themes does not necessarily detract from the centrality of the major theme of the novel; on the contrary, it supplements and frequently enlivens it. This should not mean that the secondary themes are *secondary* in their value. Although the dominant theme of *The Death of Ivan Ilych* is questioning the meaning of human life, the novel contains several truly significant, and I can add profound, themes. Consider, as an example, Ivan's relationship with Gerasim, the man he treated as an insignificant peasant when he was at the peak of his social and professional success. The focus of this relationship is human love, the kind that originates from an innocent, pure, caring, giving heart and from a mind that intuitively comprehends the laws of nature and serenely abides by their precepts. Who can reflect on this relationship without feeling inspired by the power of true love? But, although secondary, and may be treated as a topic in itself, this theme forms an integral part of the question on the meaning of human life, since love and authenticity represent the foundation of a meaningful life. I think we should view the different themes of a literary novel as an organic unity and its central theme as the principle of this unity. This theme should function as the basis of its genre identity.

### Philosophicalness

Since there are several genres of literary novels, and since one basis of genre identity does not and cannot, in principle, exist, it is incumbent upon aestheticians to articulate the *differentiae* of each genre. Just as we were able to articulate literariness as the defining feature of the literary work of art, we should be able to articulate the feature of each possible genre, e.g., horror or romantic novel. In doing this, we should ascertain that this feature inheres as a potentiality in the novel as a significant form and that it comes to life as an essential ingredient of the aesthetic experience<sup>7</sup>.

In what follows, I shall discuss one literary genre: *the philosophical novel*. I choose this genre only because it is not widely recognized by aestheticians, not to mention the general literary reader. My aim in this discussion is to show in some detail how philosophicalness inheres in the *literary stratum* of the literary novel, and how it emerges as a world of meaning in the aesthetic experience. Although philosophical, this world is neither discursive nor descriptive but *a luminous presence*, one we directly see, feel, and comprehend. I shall begin with a brief analysis of the concept of philosophicalness and then discuss how this feature is embodied in the main characters of the novel as metaphors. I am indebted to Professor Alicja Kuczynska for the idea that philosophical character and the major scenes of the philosophical novel are metaphorical in character. We may view this part of the paper as an anatomy of two metaphors.

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<sup>7</sup> Kuczynska, A. "Art as a Philosophy," *Dialogue and Universalism*, 2018, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 9–150.

What makes a text, a theory, an activity, a discourse, or a question philosophical? An answer to this question should proceed from an adequate understanding of what philosophers actually do – their aims, the domain of their inquiry, and the method they employ to establish the truth or validity of their ideas, theories, or views. *First*, unlike the scientist, whose aim is to explore the essence of the facts that make up the domain of nature, viz., matter, life, and consciousness, the aim of the philosopher is to explore *the meaning of these facts*. While the domain of nature consists of *physical facts*, the domain of meaning consists of *human values*: beauty and its derivatives (e.g., elegance, grandeur, or gracefulness), good and its derivatives (e.g., justice, friendship, or love), truth and its derivatives (e.g., wisdom, erudition, or validity), and metaphysical values (e.g., freedom, purpose, or order). The experience of realizing a particular value is an experience of meaning. The scientist may say that consciousness is reducible to brain processes; the philosopher wonders about the implications of this assertion to moral, religious, social, and artistic life? What does it mean to be free or to pursue ideals in this short life of ours if we are ripples in the cosmic process? How can we understand or explain creativity? How should we live in a world of brute facts? Are human beings evil or good by nature? I will not be too much amiss if I say that the preeminent questions people have been asking since the dawn of human civilization in the areas of morality, art, metaphysics, religion, and culture, constitute the domain of philosophical inquiry.

*Second*, unlike the scientist who relies exclusively on empirical observation in her endeavor to ascertain the nature of physical facts, the philosopher relies on contemplation. The field of her contemplation is composed of three general dimensions: the mosaic of knowledge articulated by natural and social science, human achievements during the last five millennia in the different areas of civilization and culture, and the philosopher's own observation of the scheme of nature and human life as it unfolds in the course of human history. The aim of this contemplation is to articulate an adequate concept, or understanding, of the world and humanity: Is the world material or spiritual in nature? Why do we exist rather than not? What is the purpose of the universe? Who created it? It is extremely difficult, and I think impossible, to answer the fundamental questions of human life or to explore the nature and validity of human values if we do not proceed in this undertaking from a reasonable understanding of the fabric of human nature – whether our existence and the existence of the world is accidental or purposeful, and if purposeful, who is the source of this purpose. No matter the topic of her inquiry, the vision of the philosopher is always focused on the source, essence, or *arche* of the type of reality she aims to understand.

*Third*, unlike the scientist who verifies the truth of her claims or theories by way of empirical verification, viz., sensuous observation, instruments, experiments, and mathematical calculation, the philosopher verifies the truth of her claims or theories using logical reasoning conceptual analysis, and demonstration. Although the sphere of this method is mind, it is, generally, consistent with the most recent findings of science, established knowledge, and common sense. It would be notoriously odd if the philosopher's claims contradict the testimony of science or common sense, even though this type of contradiction is a frequent occurrence in the history of ideas. However, although the scientist and the philosopher differ in their aims, fields of investigation, and methods of inquiry, they communicate their knowledge discursively. Concept is the medium of communication in both science and philosophy.

However, if philosophical knowledge is essentially discursive, how can a literary novel, which is a work of art, be philosophical? The mere presence of philosophical ideas, questions, problems, or conversations in a novel, no matter their abundance, does not necessarily make it philosophical. If it is philosophical, its philosophical dimension, or character, must be embedded as a potentiality in its literary dimension, but as such a potentiality, it can never be discursive, even though the experience of this dimension may provoke philosophical questions, insights, or ideas in the mind of the person who reads the novel. Thus, the question the philosophical novelist faces is how to transform content of conceptual meaning into a potential luminous presence, that is, into a meaning we directly intuit as a quality of the situation – event, action, conversation, or problem – we experience in the process of reading the novel aesthetically. How is this possible?

It is critically important to recognize that any symbolic form, philosophic, scientific, or artistic, originates from what a large number of philosophers and artists call *pre-reflective intuition*. This type of intuition is the birthplace of the different types of meaning and consequently any form of symbolic expression – concept, metaphor, image, idea, value, figure of speech, or theory. Do we not call the state of mind, which precedes the formation of a hypothesis, a “hunch”? Does the creative act in any area of human experience, theoretical or practical, not originate from an intuition that emerges from an encounter with a problematic aspect of the universe, or from contemplation on the meaning of this or that type of experience? Does the philosopher’s system not originate from, and rest on, her fundamental intuition of the nature of the universe as a whole and the meaning of human life? We may view this intuition as “cognitive clay” that can be formed in a multitude of different ways. We should always remember that the realm of inquiry in art and philosophy is the realm of human values: meaning. The mystery that permeates the universe, the purpose of human life, the problems people face in the course of daily living, the basis of happiness, the problem of evil, the dynamics of human nature – yes, these and related issues which occupy the attention of the philosopher also occupy the attention of the artist.

Let us concede, my critic would now ask, that the intuition and articulation of meaning is the preeminent interest of the philosopher and the artist alike. Essential features of philosophicalness are argument, analysis, and demonstration – does the philosophical novelist argue or demonstrate? No! The philosophical novelist does not argue, analyze, or demonstrate. *She presents; she depicts*. She draws a picture of a moral, metaphysical, religious, social, or political situation *philosophically*. This picture may or may not contain discursive philosophical discourse, but instead reveals the life of the values that are implicit in the situation in the fullness of their truth, problematic character, and possibilities. This kind of picture provokes the reader to think about the situation and see its meaning and relevance to the individual and society, creates a moment of self-consciousness and hopefully self-examination, kindles our sense of curiosity, in short, transforms the reader into a momentary philosopher. How can any literate person read *The Death of Ivan Ilych* without having a direct encounter with the ugly face of death, without asking about its significance in her life, without feeling guilty if she discovers that the life she has been leading is a sham? The magic of the literary novel is that it discloses *the world of the possible*. The potential for living in a more profound and wider world of meaning always exists. When we enter this world, we cannot remain speechless; we become

“voluntary residents” in it. In the following section, I shall illustrate how philosophicalness inheres in a literary novel and comes to life in the aesthetic experience of the reader. The novel I shall select for analysis is Mitias’s *The Philosopher and the Devil*.

### Analysis of One Metaphor

I have so far argued that the literary novel (a) should declare its genre identity from within and (b) the ontological *locus* of this identity is its significant form. This two-fold assertion implies that genre identity inheres as a potentiality in the significant form and comes to life as an aesthetic object in the aesthetic experience. The world of this object is a world of meaning. A careful examination of these two propositions will readily show that if a novel is philosophical, its philosophicalness should be an integral part of the aesthetic object; it should shine as the essential quality of the aesthetic experience. How can this quality inhere in the novel as a potentiality in the significant form, and become actual in the aesthetic experience?

The thesis I shall now elucidate and defend in this last section of the paper is that philosophicalness can inhere in the significant form of the novel as a potentiality and become actual in the aesthetic experience *inasmuch* as its main characters, and to some extent its scenes and events that are metaphorical in nature<sup>8</sup>. Metaphor is an essential artistic category. A character can be a metaphor when she stands for a philosophical quality, and she stands for such a quality when she exemplifies it, in what she does, i.e., in her action, so that the action reveals the quality. Does Rodin’s *The Thinker* not exemplify pictorially the quality of thoughtfulness, usually characteristic of philosophers, in a bronze statue? We intuit this quality directly, by acquaintance, not by a conceptual process. In this context, the character instantiates the essential feature of philosophicalness in the way she speaks, feels, makes decisions, responds to questions and problems, and acts. If, for example, she suddenly finds herself in a problematic situation, she does not respond to it impulsively or emotionally but rationally, reflectively. If the situation involves the value of justice, she reflects on the rule of justice, evaluates the social, psychological, material, and cultural dimensions of the situation and then translates the essence of the rule into judgment and the judgment into action. This attitude applies to every question or problem she faces in her life. With the wand of creativity in her hand, the novelist translates the essence of the values, beliefs, and questions in the novel into living pictures. Moreover, as a type, the philosophical character always aims at the central values, questions, and problems of human life: happiness, beauty, love, death, hate, justice, freedom, or truth. She always stands as the spokesperson of these values and questions. Is it an accident that all the philosophical novels that punctuate the tapestry of a literary novel struggle with questions and values such as freedom, love, God, faith, and the meaning of human life? One quick look at novels such as *Moby Dick*, *Of Human Bondage*, *Middlemarch*, *Metamorphoses*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and *The Magic Mountain* will lend credibility to this claim.

Although the philosophical character is an imaginary construct, and although she is essentially a depiction, she acquires a life of her own in the creative hands

<sup>8</sup> Mitias, M. *The Philosopher and the Devil*. London, 2018.

of the novelist: she becomes a substantial, living reality in the aesthetic experience. We see, feel, and think her the way we see, feel, and think a real person. Indeed, we experience the character as more real than the people we encounter in the streets of social life because we experience her more intimately, more truly, more directly than we experience the ordinary person.

But, my critic would ask, some novels such as Proust's *Remembrance* and Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* include philosophical conversations and sometimes arguments – can we still classify them as philosophical novels? Yes. Rational discourse exists in many literary novels. Their presence is secondary, auxiliary, not primary. Their function is to illuminate the meaning of a value, the truth of a belief, or the dynamics of a moral or social problem. They can perform this kind of function only when a philosophical context requires their presence. We should view the prevalence of philosophical thought in a novel like *The Brothers Karamazov* in light of this fact. How can any symbolic form communicate the most difficult questions and values such as evil, God's existence, hate, a lust for power, love, death, or freedom without some appeal to explanation, argument, or conversation? Besides, can we fully comprehend the significance of philosophical thought apart from its literary context in which it is embedded? We think and comprehend it in *The Brothers Karamazov* in terms of this very context: What do people really want? Do they want freedom, true education, a life of Christian love, of beauty, of justice, or alas! of security, a satisfied stomach, and a few crumbs of pleasure, love, freedom, and social recognition? Can we grasp the full significance of these questions, which reach a climax in the Grand Inquisitor scene, *but* within the context of the sudden visit of Jesus to Seville during which he resurrects a child from the dead and then has a chilling, ironic conversation with the Grand Inquisitor? Let me probe the main challenge of this question in some detail by a focused look at *The Philosopher and the Devil*.

Since philosophicalness inheres as a stratum in the literary dimension of the literary novel, and since literariness inheres in the novel *qua* significant form, it would be prudent to begin the analysis of *The Philosopher and the Devil* with a synopsis of the novel, primarily because it is a recently published literary work. I shall highlight the parts that are relevant to its literary and philosophical dimensions.

Andrey Adamczewsky is a highly respected and admired professor of philosophy at Lambeth College in Jackson, Tennessee. He is married and has two children, a daughter called Antigonis and a son called Richard. His wife, Amanda, is a professor of psychology at Lambeth College. She is having an affair with a psychology professor who also teaches at Lambeth College. But, Andrey, who knows about the affair, is a devoted husband. He loves his wife truly, loyally, and never loses hope of the possibility that she will return to him. He is also a loving parent and feels strongly attached to Antigonis. Andrey is working on a most important project: the design and implementation of a decent world order in which individuals and nations can thrive under the conditions of freedom, justice, peace, and prosperity.

We are introduced to Andrey when he is recovering from serious heart surgery. One morning, soon after his wife leaves for college, he hears a knock at the door of his house, but he is not allowed to answer any phone or house calls. His wife reminded him on more than one occasion that this is the surgeon's instruction and that he should act accordingly. Andrey tries to heed this instruction but he fails only because of the visitor's persistent knocking at the door. Thinking



that it must be important, he feels an urge to peek through the peephole to see the visitor, but he is unable to detect anybody on the other side of the door. Nevertheless, the knocks keep streaming into his ears. He peeks through the peephole again, but the entrance to his house is empty! After repeating this process a few times, he hears a friendly voice that addresses him as Professor Adamczewsky, as if the owner of the voice knows him.

Baffled, Andrey reluctantly opens the door. To his surprise, the visitor, who was invisible a second ago, becomes visible at the threshold of the door. He introduces himself as the devil. The devil? Impossible! Andrey has no choice but to allow the intruder into his living room. They have a lengthy conversation on the source, nature, and purpose of natural and human evil in the universe. During the course of the conversation, the devil tries to convince Andrey that he is indeed the devil even though the professor does not believe in his existence. However, the devil reminds the professor of his lectures on Empedocles who theorized that the universe is ruled by two cosmic forces: Love and Strife. Love is the source and principle of union and construction in the universe, while Strife is the source and principle of separation and destruction in the universe. The devil is an embodiment of the cosmic force of Strife. Nothing whatsoever in the universe can exist without him, since separation is a necessary condition of change, and since change is a necessary condition for the creation of anything! The moment something comes into being he acts on its gradual destruction!

Andrey inquires about the purpose of the devil's visit, and the devil is blunt: Andrey should desist from his work on the design and implementation of the decent world order project! Why? The devil is again blunt: Andrey's project is an act of love. His mission as the devil is to frustrate Love's projects, and he is determined to frustrate this project. Andrey declines the devil's request. Disappointed, the devil warns the philosopher that he has a plan that will make him change his mind, but Andrey ignores the devil's warning.

Well, the devil begins to execute his plan, first by inclining his son to be a drifter and later on a criminal, then by inflicting on Andrey the most horrible and devastating nightmares which interferes with his work at the college and soon leads to his suspension from the philosophy department, then by the news that his wife has left him alone with the children, then by sending Richard to prison, then by leading his daughter into a serious car accident, and finally by inflicting upon him a fatal heart attack. During all this time, the devil visits Andrey and tries to dissuade him from his pursuit of the world order project, but Andrey declines his request. When Andrey is reduced to a lump of flesh and bones and is about to die, the devil visits him again and gives him one last chance, but Andrey refuses to accept the devil's request. In a state of indescribable rage, the devil curses Andrey and disappears forever, while Andrey regains his life and thrives again. The devil does not have authority over the souls of human beings!

Read as a story, *The Philosopher and the Devil* is not a literary work and, consequently, it is not a *philosophical* novel. Most people would read it as a religious, psychological, or perhaps amusing story in which a philosopher defeats the devil in a duel. Some may read it as a variation of the well-known story of Job in the Old Testament. Yet, this is a philosophical novel *par excellence*. If we read it aesthetically, we recognize, the moment Andrey meets the devil at the threshold of his house, that the devil is not an anthropomorphic being but an embodiment of evil, the same evil the ordinary person, the philosopher, the theologian, and the artist abhor and seek to understand. Even though Andrey does not

believe in his reality, *he accepts it implicitly only because evil exists*. The devil did not pay a friendly or a social visit to Andrey; he comes with an evil plan: the destruction of a project of love. This realization by the reader marks the transition from reading the novel as a story to reading it as a work of art. If the devil in the Christian sense does not exist, why would a magical being, one that can assume any physical form or appear and disappear instantly, suddenly appear at the door of the most celebrated professor in Jackson, Tennessee? The mere reflection on this incredible fact, which cannot escape the aesthetic reader, beckons the unfolding of the world of the aesthetic object that is potential in the novel as a significant form. She cannot anymore read it as a story but as a narrative with a “deep” meaning – as a world of meaning. If evil is not a fact the way cats and stones are facts, what is it? How should we understand it? Again, if change, which both the devil and Andrey agree is king in the universe and that everything in it, including human beings, is a ripple in the cosmic process, why should people strive for the realization of human ideals? Are these ideals worth living and dying for? Andrey was willing to die rather than surrender his soul to the devil – was he a wise or a foolish person? The author of the novel does not give answers to these or any other questions raised in the novel. He created the conditions by asking them. These conditions come to life in the dramatic depiction of the duel between the devil and Andrey. However, what makes it possible for this transition from the ordinary to the aesthetic way of reading the novel to occur? I will not be too much amiss if I propose that the power, which makes this change possible, is metaphor. Metaphor is a powerful figure of speech; it derives its power from the fact that its very essence is expressive in character. It does not contain its meaning by implication or within the folds of a concept but by *signifying* it, by directly pointing to a meaning that transcends its symbolic form. The more the signification of a metaphor increases, the more powerful it becomes. Can one overlook the supreme importance of good and evil in human life?

The two main characters, the philosopher and the devil, are metaphors. The basis of this metaphorical application is simile. These two characters represent the forces of good and evil in the world. These forces are in conflict, and the conflict is *depicted* as a duel between Andrey and the devil. The force of good signifies love, beauty, creation, and wisdom, while that of evil signifies destruction, hate, selfishness, exploitation, and ignorance. The duel is not presented as a discursive contest or fight but as a pictorial, yet living, presentation of a series of events, and actions that are weaved into a dramatic portrayal.

But, my critic would insist, what is the ontological status of these two metaphors? I aver that they inhere in *the way* the author constructed the plot of the novel, that is, in the kind of characters, theme, scenes, and events by which he knitted these elements into a story. As I argued earlier, the capacity of a form to be significant derives from the creative vision of the author and inheres in the kind of form she creates. Signification is what we comprehend when we read the novel aesthetically. It is always embodied in the action of the characters and the aesthetic dimension of the different scenes and events that make up the structure of the novel. In *The Philosopher and the Devil*, we know Andrey by what he does and by the way he makes his decisions, not by what he says or feels about himself, and certainly not by what his colleagues or the devil say about him. He reveals himself to us in the way he treats his son, wife, daughter, college officials, and the devil. Similarly, although the devil presents himself as the real devil and declares his identity and plan to Andrey at the beginning of their duel,

we really know him and ascertain that he is the real devil in and through his actions. What is revealed by the actions of both characters transcends what is given in their metaphorical articulation.

### Concluding Remark

I began this essay with an inquiry into the nature and basis of genre in a literary novel. It is generally recognized that theme is the basis of *genre distinction* within this sphere. But, as I pointed out, it is not clear how theme exists in the novel and how it functions as a principle of genre distinction: what is the ontological locus of theme in a literary novel? How does it emerge in the aesthetic experience? I focused my attention on the question because if, for example, a novel is romantic, it must declare its romantic identity. This claim is based on the assumption that it cannot make this declaration if the basis of its identity does not inhere in it. But, how does it inhere in it? In the preceding pages, I elucidated and defended the thesis that the theme of the literary novel inheres in its literary dimension, and that this dimension, in turn, inheres in the novel as a significant form. Possession of aesthetic qualities is what makes a novel a literary work of art. Theme exists as a potentiality in the medium of the aesthetic dimension of the literary novel and emerges as an aesthetic object during the process of aesthetic experience. In *The Philosopher and the Devil*, it exists as a metaphor. The aesthetic object unfolds in the aesthetic experience as a world of meaning. Any reference or discourse about the theme of a literary novel, critical or analytical, is a reference to or a discourse about this world. It should be the basis of *literary appreciation and criticism* in a literary novel. In a philosophical novel, the characters as well as the events which make up its plot, are metaphors. In this and similar cases metaphor, or any type of symbolic form, is the building block of the aesthetic stratum of the literary novel.

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## Основа жанра в литературном романе

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В данном очерке представлен критический анализ оснований, по которым осуществляется различие литературных романов по жанрам. Какова эпистемологическая и онтологическая локализация этих оснований? Автор отстаивает тезис, согласно которому основа жанрового различия романов конституируется темой. Тема произведения существует в качестве потенциальности внутри литературного измерения романа, понимаемого в качестве значимой формы. Статья состоит из трех частей. Первая часть посвящена искусству как основанию литературного измерения романа, ведь именно наличие эстетических качеств делает роман произведением литературного искусства. Вторая часть посвящена тезису о том, что тема как основа жанрового различия существует в качестве потенциальности в литературном измерении романа. В третьей части более подробно представлена экспозиция того, как тема претворяется в жизнь в качестве мира смыслов в опыте эстетического. Если обладание эстетическими качествами делает роман произведением литературного искусства, если литературное измерение присутствует в романе как потенциальность, содержащая значимую форму, если тема существует в литературном измерении романа, то тема должна существовать в романе не как сюжетная линия, а как литературное произведение, т.е. как потенциальность в своем литературном измерении и больше нигде. Именно поэтому литературное произведение искусства может и должно самостоятельно заявлять о своей жанровой принадлежности.

**Ключевые слова:** роман, жанр, искусство, литература, эстетические качества, мир смыслов, эстетический объект, ценность, литературность, философичность

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