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## **Transformation of the Genre of Still Life in Painting and Literature**

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### **Abstract**

The article deals with one of the urgent problems of modern literature genealogy – the transformation of genres, which is quite significant especially within the context of intermedial interaction between two arts – literature and painting. The transformation of the genre of still life, starting with painting and continuing in literature, is in the focus of the current scientific research. It is mentioned that the evolution of still life painting from flower framing Madonna in the 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, through raising in the works of Dutch and Flemish artists in the 17<sup>th</sup>– 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, till Impressionism view on depicting the objects has been changing the understanding of the term itself. The diversity of the meaning of still life as a term of painting genre was caused by different interpretations of the Dutch term “stilleven” in national arts and artistic epochs. This issue is also important to discover whereas to understand the author’s interpretation of a literary work through the use of the term “still life” it is necessary to refer to its origin. Transformed into literary genre still life became verbal and acquired several meanings – actually ekphrasis (description of a still life art canvas); hypothyroidism (verbal still life); the use takes place at the level of the nomenosphere (playing in the titles of works of the term “dead life”) – that are analyzed on the basis of stories (“Still Life with Cats” by Vasyl Trubay, “Military Flyer” by V. Pidmohylny), crime stories (“Still Life with Woodpecker” by T. Robbins, “Still Life with Crows” by D. Preston and L. Child and in “Still Life” by Joy Fielding), novel (“Rösleinrot” by I. Noll). It is emphasized that in literary still life objects become a kind of subject of action, which is in a system of new relationships, whereas it is important not only to depict things in the text, but also to show how they coexist (composition) and how to depict the space where their relationship takes place.

**Keywords:** Intermediality, still life, genre, painting, literature.

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## Introduction

The transformation of genres is one of the urgent problems of modern genealogy. When it comes to intra-literary transformations the works by Yu. Tynianov are important here. He pays attention to the fact that the genre as a system can fluctuate: "It rises ... and falls, becoming the rudiments of other systems. The genre function of one or another method is not something immovable" (1977: 257). When Tynianov was writing his research the idea of impossibility of the genre as a static system was innovative, because the notion of it appears as a result of a collision with a traditional genre; the new phenomenon replaces the old, takes its place, although it is not a 'development' of the old, but its substitute. The phenomena of genre transformation became the object of research in the works by S. Skwarczyńska (1965), G. Grochowski (2014), V. Fesenko (2014), and others.

In the work "Literature and Painting: Intermedial Discourse" V. Fesenko (2014) also emphasizes the problem of genre difference in various types of art. According to the scholar, the definitions of the term 'genre' in literature and painting differ. Comparing the emergence of genre theory in these types of humanitarian activities, she pays attention to the fact that in literature the genre division appeared in times of antiquity in Aristotle's *Poetics*; in painting, this definition appeared somewhere at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries and became to use only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fesenko, 2014: 130). The author emphasizes that until then there was a division of plots of paintings: historical painting, portrait, genre painting, landscape, still life. Also noted that for understanding genres in literature it is important to understand them in painting: "Themes, problems, common spaces, allusions, intertextuality, history and practice of one art can illuminate the dark spots of another art and make it more accessible and understandable" (Fesenko, 2014: 130).

## Conceptual Framing

Attention to the problem of the interaction between literature and painting is a notable phenomenon in literary criticism of the recent decades. The reasons that grounded such interest can be considered the aspiration for interdisciplinary synthesis in the literary studies and the semiotic significance of such interaction. The appeal to the genre of still life reflects the search for a new artistic language in a literary text. As V. Fesenko notes, "reaching out a mirror to nature, artists, first of all, captured the imprint of their own character, their mood, their joy and pain in it" (2014: 150) and exactly "naturalism artists were the first who discovered that the theme in painting is not important, everything depends on the effects of life and color and forms" (2014: 151).

By definition of the encyclopedia "Art: Terms and Concepts", "still life (in French *nature morte* – dead nature) is a genre of fine arts (mainly easel painting), where the object of the image in paintings are inanimate objects like bouquets of flowers, utility items, fruits, snacks and drinks, attributes of a certain activity, etc." (Bezklubenko, 2010: 61). The works by B. Vipser (2005), E. Dymshyts (2000), I. Danylova (1998), N. Dmytriieva (1962), Yu. Zvezdina (1997), and others are devoted to the subject and genre of still life in painting and cinema. There is a significant amount of research on philosophical and aesthetic, art and literary aspects of the problem: the works and articles by Yu. Lotman (2002), S. Burini (2000), R. Bobryk (1998; 2011), O. Hryhorieva (2004), O. Malanii (2012), E. Elina (2014), and others.

## Results and Discussions

It is known that still life as an independent genre of painting formed in the works of Dutch and Flemish artists in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but its elements appeared in the 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Originally it was considered as a part of a historical or genre composition and for a long time was connected with religious paintings, framing the figures of Madonna and Christ with flower garlands. Early still life

pictures often performed a utilitarian function of decorating cabinet doors or masking a wall niche. Objects in still life painting often had a hidden allegorical meaning; ordinary things that occurred in everyday life were provided with additional symbolic and emblematic meaning.

To understand the author's interpretation of a literary work through the use of the term "still life" it is necessary to refer to its origin. Reflections on this topic compose a whole part of the famous book "Problem and Development of Still Life" by Borys Vipper (2005[1922]). The scholar points out that the Dutch term "stilleven", first documented in 1650, came into use only in the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, later became widespread in German (Stilleben) and English (still life) languages, and only then the meaning was inherited with some loss by the French term "nature morte". Many paintings (and descriptive terminology such as "vanitas", "breakfast", "flowers", etc.) were brought under one category in those times when a developed system of genres had already been compiled in European fine arts.

Borys Vipper emphasizes that it must not be forgotten that the Dutch term, as well as the corresponding German and English terms, are not identical in meaning to the term "still life" (dead nature): "the sense of the Dutch term is a calm, quiet life, its meaning is more neutral and uncertain than the meaning of the term that replaced it and was instilled in France and Russia" (Vipper, 2005: 26). Clarifying this position, Vipper connects the paintings of "quiet life", first of all, with the theme of "vanitas" ("vanity of vanities") and even more specifically – with creative work by Jan van der Heyden. "In his paintings, the grimace of death nodding from the empty, black holes of the skull, not surprisingly, were replaced by luxurious goblets and rich embroidered carpets by Kalf, garlands of flowers by de Heem, silver mighty fish by van Beijeren, and colorful peacocks by Weenix. The mask of destruction peeped out through the shining shell of life; the uproarious holiday was replaced by a slumbering calm: stilleven, the silent life of things, appeared on the stage together with Vanitas" (Vipper, 2005: 34-35). Moreover, the scientist adds, in the early period of its development, still life imperceptibly merges with another genre – the interior.

The further history of the term was stipulated by the hegemony of France in the European art arena. Alexandre François Desportes and Jean-Baptiste Oudry, on the one hand, and Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, on the other hand, were the two main lines of French still life. The first depicted multifaceted canvases of a decorative nature with hunting attributes, landscape, etc.; the second demonstrated ordinary household items, through which the observer could make an idea of the owners, because the things in the pictures were vitally true.

However, the common term had a predecessor that is the expression "objets inanimés" ("inanimate objects"), which existed in the literature until Denis Diderot. The ancestor of literature criticism used the collocation "nature morte" not in a terminological sense, but as a linguistic phrase; Chardin's still life paintings were attributed by him to the genre painting (peinture de genre). It was not until the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that the term nature morte appeared in its usual meaning (a third of a century passed before it was included in Dictionnaire de l'Académie française published by the French Academy).

B. Vipper ascertains this confusing situation and offers his vision of the problem. In search of an adequate term (if not to be satisfied with the old), he comes to the concept of "painting of objects" (or "object painting"). The logic is as follows: the specificity of the genre is determined not so much by the world of inanimate objects as by what "has become an object, even in contrary to its organic structure" (Vipper, 2005: 54). So, it is a matter of living objects, whether fish, juicy fruits or dewy flowers, but they are removed from their living environment and detached from their element. This is the boundary that separates still life from the nearest neighboring genres – animalistics, interior, genre painting. Later, a similar opinion was expressed by I. Danylova: "The world of still life is a world of artificial reality, a

reality, to some extent changed by man. To get into a still life, flowers must be cut; fruits and berries – plucked; animals and birds – killed; fish, marine animals – caught. In still life objects are torn from natural or functional connections and appear in relationships that are the result of human activity, so each still life contains a message: a consciously composed cryptogram or an unconsciously left trace” (Danylova, 1998: 48).

I. Danylova characterizes the features of the genre of still life in painting. She pays attention to the 17<sup>th</sup> century as a border in destruction of the integrity of perception of the world, accordingly – the subject of painting: “Till the 17<sup>th</sup> century a painting (an icon or a picture) existed as a certain integrity, which included all the diversity, all the variety of this world pulling together heaven and earth, nature (outer world) and a man (with his inner world), as well as objects (as signs of divine presence and as attributes of human presence, signs of its place in the world)” (Danylova, 1998: 3). The researcher believes that during this period the image of a human had been standing out from the picture as a whole, and then gradually everything around him: an object as the immediate environment, architecture as the closest space of life, and nature as more distant. So, painting genres formed – portrait, still life, interior, landscape. The holistic perception of the world changed to fragmentary, that caused the emergence of subgenres – ceremonial, group, chamber portraits; still life as a depiction of breakfasts, fruits, beaten game, flowers, art objects, etc.; household, ceremonial, church interiors; mountain, sea, urban landscapes.

Following B. Vipper, I. Danylova discovers the genetic link between a portrait and still life among all genres of painting. The scientist considers that the confirmation of unity of their origin is the existence of an antique vase for a specific purpose: a dish with a hint of human face traits on it that served as the ashes storage and had a written name, that means an object keeping utility functions acquired the meaning of a peculiar “pre-portrait, in which its “portrait” essence was not yet discovered, but had already been stated” (Danylova, 1998: 5). In general, I. Danylova determines next levels of person’s “communication” with an object, emphasizing that all of them might be found in art: 1) the inner connection, when an object becomes an amulet, a talisman, a monument, a souvenir, or just a favorite item with some story; 2) traditional level, when an object is granted with a certain meaning, imaginative association, and which a person deals with business or gaming contact; 3) ritual, when an object acquires an allegorical meaning, is understood as the embodiment of some intangible values, as a mediator in the communication of a man and a higher power; 4) utilitarian, when there is the absence of attitude to the object as an embodiment of spiritual content, and its material, commodity value is only perceived. Still life is considered as a connection of the world of objects and the world of people (Danylova, 1998: 6).

The researcher finds out the main characteristics of the most important periods of the genre’s development. Thus, for the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the common features were the special activity of the genre, which for the first time discovered the meaning, significance, role of an object in life and art, the ability to talk to a person as well as about a person’s attitude to the world – life and death. The author analyzes the “language” of a national still life: in Dutch it is said that life is valuable for the human small joys, that a person has something to lose because of death, and therefore it is necessary to remember it constantly; in Flemish it is emphasized that life is the exuberance of flesh, the constant tension of the struggle against this exuberance and the joy of victory; in Spanish life is the heroism of a lonely, ascetic opposition to nothingness, etc. “In the art of the 17<sup>th</sup> century an object acquires significance not only because of its ability to speak the language of metaphors and allegories. Objects give the material density to the environment where a man exists, concrete sensibility and qualitative diversity of the space that filled with the mysterious darkness of the transcendent in Rembrandt’s works, the motionless, unheated light in Vermeer’s works, the spontaneous play of natural forces in Rubens’s

works, the frightening breath of eternity in de Zurbarán's works. Objects act as intermediaries between a man and the world outside the personal, they humanize this world, give it habitation..." (Danylova, 1998: 67), I. Danylova concludes.

According to the scientist, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century still life lost its ability "to speak". The depicted objects ceased to be signs of something more general, higher, they remained themselves, "equal to themselves", such that people use in the usual sense for them. Although the paintings of this time repeated the usual set of objects of the previous century, it no longer had any plot or compositional connection and internal drama.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century an impressionistic still life appeared, that determined the direction of development of the genre in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Impressionists' floral still life paintings presented not images of flowers, but the process of flowering, the effects of colors, so they are deprived of "material substance. We can say that in still life paintings of the Impressionists "an object" is elevated to a higher degree, but at the same time it has lost its "materiality"" (Danylova, 1998: 71). A peculiar reaction to the fact that a thing is dematerialized, blurred, dissolved in space, deprived of the only possibility of existence as an object in the material world, was the art work by Paul Cézanne. It is believed that Cézanne conveys "the materiality of being", but not the materiality of the depicted objects. He embodies objects in his own way: when the Impressionists dissolved them in light, Cézanne leveled them in materiality and objects acquired the character of the general material, but lost their names.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century embodied different ways of developing the genre of still life. There were two directions from Cézanne: the first was the gradual loss by objects their life space within the pictorial field of the picture; the other was the aggressiveness of forms that characterizes his still life paintings. The forerunner of one more method became Van Gogh, who carried out deobjectification of objects via involving into the inner self of the artist, merging with him, when things remain not their own "portrait", but a self-portrait of the artist. In Van Gogh's still life paintings objects turn out to be the equivalents to the auto-image of the author, although they empathize with a man and for a man, are losing the independent existence. Thus, in paintings by Cézanne and Van Gogh, there is a reduction of the distance between people and objects necessary for removing and independent perception. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century still life experiences the decay, the splitting of an object, its form, including silhouette and contour. An example is Picasso's "Still Life with Liqueur Bottle" and "Still Life with a Bottle of Rum", in which the object "is splitting into separate areas that make it up and start falling apart in sight, and the artist builds from these disjointed areas completely different objectless object and its separate parts remain only as a memory of a former, once-existing object" (Danylova, 1998: 78).

The article "Still Life in the Perspective of Semiotics" by Yu. Lotman (2002), which was prepared for the symposium "A Thing in Art" in 1984, has the methodological significance for the studying of still life in a literary work. S. Burini emphasizes that the appeal of a prominent literary critic to the theme of still life is not accidental; it is not a tribute to "the theme of still life, an original and quite unusual theme", but a consequence of one of the main principles of all critic's theories – the connection between everyday life and culture, "because the meaning of "everyday life" itself follows from the attention to each particular object that defines and constructs the space" (Burini, 2000: 145).

Yu. Lotman pays attention to the peripherality of still life in works on the history of painting and believes that it is quite natural, because the mythological or historical painting, portrait, and landscape seem to be more closely related to the development of art. However, according to the literary critic, there are epochs when still life comes to the fore, thus actualizing the problems of art (Baroque, avant-garde, etc.). At the beginning of the article, the main emphasis is placed through the opposition of perception of a word and an object: in the cultural world, the word is perceived as a sign of the object,

something that replaces an object in communicative process, but cannot replace it in the real use. Objects are attributed not only with materiality, but also exclusivity, integrity, a special, independent of a man and his/her ideas authenticity. The sign is perceived as something conditional, created by human culture. The object is characterized by unconditionality and sensory reality, which takes it beyond the world of social conventions. So the author, with the help of the opposition of conditional/true and ephemeral/real, draws the line between the word that denotes an object and the object itself. The author warns that in the process of communication the word appears as a sign (substitute) of an object, but it never will be able to replace an object in real use.

An important property of an object is its authenticity. The word can cause doubts about its truth, the thing in everyday consciousness is not in doubt. The criterion of authenticity of an object is also its sensory sensation, therefore, the word and the object are characterized by the opposition: indirect/direct (heard/seen or felt). The word functions separately from the objective world, and the object is always perceived in direct contact is included in the sphere of direct emotional perception.

The author comes to a paradoxical conclusion: in the process of socio-cultural functioning an object undergoes interesting transformations, because if “a word is a sign of an object, the object itself, included in the symbolic world of culture, becomes a sign of falling out of symbolic relationships, becomes a sign of exclusion from sign relations” (Lotman, 2002: 342), which includes it in a long chain of complex semiotic relationships.

In the history of culture, we can meet situations when the word shows a desire to become an object (religious movement of the Middle Ages, futuristic theories), and the object in certain cultural and semiotic situations shows a desire to become a word, acquiring new signs and becoming an emblem. As the author concludes, “ ‘Still life’ is the art of depicting of an object located at the intersection of these semantic processes” (Lotman, 2002: 344). Yu. Lotman suggests of the possibility of a double typology of still life, getting it from the dual nature of the image of an object: in relation to the verbal text it is a challenge to the signed world and in relation to the object still life realizes itself as a particularly elegant form of sign. Still life might be like the complete illusion of the reproduction of an object, but “in this case it is not so much an illusion of naturalness as the semiotics of such illusion” (Lotman, 2002: 345), the antithesis of such still life painting is an allegorical still life, in which the depicted objects have a certain allegorical or cultural meaning assigned to them. The picture in this case becomes an encrypted message that can be read by those who know the “language” and “signs” encoded in the image. At the same time we add that the signs encoded in the picture can be read in different ways, depending on the level: domestic or religious (Zvezdina, 1997).

Different perception of still life paintings refers us to the situation of reading a literary text, which can also be read in different ways. A large number of signs in the painting is appeared in those epochs when the attention of art is paid to the analysis of its own language, as it was in the Baroque epoch or in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is a difference between the object depicted in the genre scene painting and in the still life painting. Yu. Lotman thinks that in the genre scene painting an object behaves as in a theatre and in the still life painting it behaves as in a move: in the first case it is played, in the second – it plays, in the first case it has no independent meaning, but receives it from the meaning of the stage action, in the second – it has its own name, endowed with its own meaning, included in the intimate world of the viewer.

S. Burini, appealing to Lotman’s article, proposes a typology of still life in literature. It defines the coordinates that allow the use of this definition in poetry and prose. An important argument is the appeal to R. Jakobson’s article “What is poetry”, in which he not only includes still life in the list of poetic themes, but also puts it in the first place: “There is no still life or naked nature, landscape or ideas outside the circle of poetic themes” (Jakobson, 2007: 117), and also the words of the historian

of art Alberto Veca: "If the portrait determines the attitude to other people, if the landscape determines the attitude to nature, if the images of the interior or customs determine the attitude to home and family life, and veduta determines the attitude to the urban landscape, then still life paintings themselves determine the attitude to objects, complementing the collection of ideas of modern man" (cited in: Burini, 2000: 1479).

S. Burini defines still life as a genre of painting or as a theme. When she talks about the genre she means still life in painting but the theme involves a literary typology, the type of composition in literature. "To clarify the typological features of still life in literature, it is important not only to depict objects, but also to show how they relate to each other (composition), and therefore the space in which this relationship takes place" (Burini, 2000: 147). R. Bobryk (1998), I. Danylova (1998), and V. Luchuk (2009) pay attention to this aspect in their works. Thus, objects that are organized in an independent structure form a composition and establish a new relationship with the world as a whole.

According to S. Burini, "still life and landscape paintings are directly opposite genres, reflecting two poles, two antitheses of the world: still life is associated with microcosm, and landscape is associated with macrocosm" (Burini, 2000: 148).

The scholar singles out some typological elements that give the right to use this genre as a literary category: firstly, still life is a world of artificial reality, a world of changed reality transformed by a man: everything that lives and moves is deprived of life in still life painting and becomes like an object; secondly, the world of still life is the motionless world where everything becomes immovable when the moment in which everything freezes is fixed; thirdly, still life is a small-scale world where things are viewed at close range. When we introduce an object into a still life, it appears in another dimension, it is deprived of its functional responsibilities, its compositional and, consequently, semantic rank increases, and it becomes a kind of subject of action. Therefore, each still life, according to S. Burini, carries information-conscious encryption or unconsciously left a mark.

The general definition of literary still life, according to the researcher, is a verbal image of various inanimate objects: utensils, fruits, cut flowers, food, attributes of art. Readers can rarely meet separate works entitled "Still life" in literature, but still life inserts are widespread in prose and in poetry. As an example of a classical verbal still life, we can recall the famous description of Plushkin's bureau from M. Gogol's poem "Dead Souls":

Against a wall leant a cupboard, full of old silver, glassware, and china. On a writing table, inlaid with mother-of-pearl which, in places, had broken away and left behind it a number of yellow grooves (stuffed with putty), lay a pile of finely written manuscript, an overturned marble press (turning green), an ancient book in a leather cover with red edges, a lemon dried and shrunken to the dimensions of a hazelnut, the broken arm of a chair, a tumbler containing the dregs of some liquid and three flies (the whole covered over with a sheet of notepaper), a pile of rags, two ink-encrusted pens, and a yellow toothpick with which the master of the house had picked his teeth (apparently) at least before the coming of the French to Moscow (Gogol, 2009: 103-104).

The original type of transformation of the still life genre is the poetry of Emma Andievskaia: "Still life with a complication in time", "Still life in the perspective of the Trojan War", "Pregnant still life", "Still life with an iron watering can", "Still life in a single-plane historical context", "Still life with ethical bias", "Still life with a shadow" (Malanii, 2012).

In prose literary texts, in our opinion, still life is present at the level of the nomenosphere ("Still Life with Woodpecker" by Tom Robbins (2005), "Still Life with Crows" by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child (2006), "Still Life Painted with Tea" by Marianna Kianovska (2008), etc.), as well as ekphrasis and

hypothyposis (“Rösleinrot” by I. Noll, etc.; see more: Braginskaia, 1977; Heneraliuk, 2013; Ekphrasis in Russian literature, 2002).

Modern writers mostly appeal to the meaning of the term as “dead mature”. Especially significant in this regard is the story of Ukrainian author Vasyl Trubay “Still Life with Cats”. The content is based on the paradoxical opposition of living nature (cats) and inanimate (humans). People, being cut off from life in harmony with nature, lose the ability to feel joy from life. Their conversations are about nothing: “Yes, but it is the Poiting-Robertson effect that affects them not only the gravity of the Sun, but also the light pressure proportional to the surface area or square of the radius, while the gravity of the Sun is proportioned to its mass or volume (a cube of radius). At the same time, the addition of speeds will lead to the fact that the light will fall a little in front and slow down the movement” (Trubay, 2012) – this is the beginning of the work. Phantasmagoric imaginary and telepathic dialogue of black and gray cats reveals the idea of human degradation, the inevitable extinction of which is caused by an unwillingness to look inside themselves, to give up unnecessary and dead words.

The term “still life” acquires special significance in crime stories, which we observe in “Still Life with Woodpecker” by T. Robbins, “Still Life with Crows” by D. Preston and L. Child and in “Still Life” by Joy Fielding (Fielding, 2011). Robbins’ work is a kind of farcical, absurd story. The events take place in the United States, but the characters are the royal family, deprived of their rights, living among the thickets of blackberries under the care of the CIA. The red-haired beautiful daughter, disappointed in love and men, is fond of protecting the environment and then building a personal pyramid, as well as a red-haired rebel terrorist who is fond of explosives and can escape from any prison. In this novel, the reader becomes a participant in the Congress of Ufologists and Environmentalists, learns how to make bombs at home, and most importantly – observes the relationship of all particles of human life: spiritual and unspiritual, secret and explicit, microscopic and macroscopic, simple and complex. This relationship leads to the conclusion about the importance of human life in all its aspects. All events lead to an understanding of the fluidity of human life and the desire to save love, which is an integral part of it.

The novel “Still life with Crows” by D. Preston and L. Child is one of a series about FBI special agent Pendergast. The events take place in a small town in Kansas. In this city, among a boundless cornfield covered with heavy heat, people find distorted corpses, around which someone has clearly laid out a circle of dead crows. Everyone understands that something mysterious and scary is happening, and it is clear that the crime is revealed thanks to an FBI agent. The nomenosphere of the novel’s title refers us to the traditional understanding of the term still life, because the horrible “pictures” are indeed repulsive still life, but both people and nature are dead here.

The novel “Rösleinrot” (Noll, 1998) by German writer Ingrid Noll (Russian translation “Still Life on a bedside table” (Noll, 2003)) includes lots of allusions from the world of painting. The work contains direct quotes and “quotes”-ekphrasis from the world of still life (paintings by G. Flegel, R. Saverei, Caravaggio, D. Zegers, etc.), and hypotheses. Verbal text and visual images from the inner world of the characters mark the objective, material environment. In this novel still life is like a type of composition of objects which are organized into an independent, self-contained structure, creating their own composition and establishing new relationships with the world. The title of the book “Rösleinrot” (in German *red rose*) is polysemic. “Rösleinrot” is the quote from the Goethe’s ballad “Heidenröslein” (Meadow Rose, 1771).

The novel begins with a story about a dark red rose from Daniel Zegers’ painting (1618) “Vase of Flowers”: “Bright bouquet in a crystal clear goblet: roses, pink and white, cornflower, fiery red and yellow tulips, narcissus, tiny violet, pansies and jasmine, just a few flowers. Greenish stems and leaves



shimmer through the glass; the water is cloudy, green with black, like the whole darkened background of the picture. The author lighted only the bouquet itself. Each flower lives its own life – one leans to the right, the other – to the left, it blooms and proudly raises its head, and someone there is completely hiding among their luxurious counterparts. Only one bud is not like the other flowers: the rose bends down, as if ashamed and it wants to hide quickly in a dark corner of still life. One of the petals defiantly wrapped up, but the drooping head means that the flower is doomed and will soon die” (Noll, 1998: 10). Traditionally, the dark red rose symbolizes not only passionate love, adoration, but also love affairs, sadness, mourning. The composition of the picture involves the course of action, superimposed on the development of the plot, in which love and hate are mixed, passions are raging, overt and covert, people are lonely and offended, proud and frightened, left alone with the world, but continue to struggle against the evil.

The novel consists of twenty chapters, and in each of them, the plotline is connected with a real picture (mostly a baroque still life). The second chapter, “Quiet as a Mouse” begins with the following words: “Another of my favorite paintings is still life, where among motionless fruits and nuts, small rodents scurry around. This, of course, violates the laws of the genre: the aim of still life is to depict only inanimate objects. Three brown mice by Ludovico di Suzio are so tiny that it would seem to fit at the very tip of a finger, and the fruit in comparison with them is just huge. You want to pick them up: a golden lemon, a fiery orange with every fold of porous skin which was rendered by an artist, ruddy apples, nuts, sweets sprinkled with powdered sugar, a fruit knife on a polished tin dish. You do not notice the mice at once, but only when you look closely; you see that they gnaw almond seeds. Quietly, they rummage in the darkness of the night and look for something to steal. With a sensitive ear, you can catch how they squirm on the table, how the almonds crunch on their teeth. But, of course, this will not wake the one who sleeps deeply” (Noll, 1998: 48).

Annarosa is the name of the main character of the novel. “My first husband called me Rose Geranium, but he could hardly then think that I have something to prickle and I can take care of myself” (Noll, 1998: 42). Noll escalates the atmosphere with anxious uncertainty and a prediction of something terrible. The writer looks into the soul of Annarosa, shows the origin of dark thoughts and neuroses. The description of still life paintings and a first-person narrative intensifies the suspense (a feeling of uncertainty, psychological “suspension”, a state of anxious anticipation). After all the crises of life and love, the heroine builds her life, virtually stepping over the corpse.

Hypotyping sometimes plays the role of retardation, but, mostly, structures the text and determines its chronological and topographic framework. Interesting examples are shown by the Canadian writer Louise Penny (she was born in 1958). Her crime stories have won numerous awards. The main character of her works is Arman Gamache, a senior police inspector from Quebec, who is characterized by such traits as intelligence and observation skills. The setting of L. Penny’s works becomes an ancient village, the secrets of which lead to tragic events.

In the novel “Dead cold” the author uses descriptions of objects repeatedly, thus marking the space and place of action: “Dishes filled with candied ginger, cherries in chocolate, fruit in sugar, stood on the table next to puddings, cakes, cookies” (Penny, 2015: 214). “In the dining room the gate-legged table was open full and groaning with casseroles and homemade molasses-baked beans and maple-cured ham. A turkey sat at the head of the table like a Victorian gentleman. The center of the table was saved every year for one of Myrna’s rich and vibrant flower arrangements. This year splays of Scotch pine surrounded a magnificent red amaryllis. Nestled into the pine forest was a music box softly playing the Huron Christmas Carol and resting on a bed of mandarin oranges, cranberries and chocolates” (Penny, 2015: 294).

Still life inserts in the text are used in the literary work as a kind of description, along with landscape, portrait, interior, etc. For example, in the short story “Military Flyer” by V. Pidmohlyny

(1901–1937): “A small table covered with a newspaper was standing by the window; a pile of books was laying on it, which he had already read and carried with him aimlessly. A large gasoline lamp was beside them shining white every night. Wide double bed, covered with a gray blanket, occupied half of the room, and a helmet and altimeter hung above its head. Further there were gray cracked walls and a floor with peeling paint. Serhiy still hadn’t paid attention to the poverty of his apartment, and now it impressed him” (Pidmohylny, 1991). The same we see in “Untitled story”: “there was an ordinary wooden cot by one of the walls, a kitchen-type table covered with green paper was in the corner by the window, there was a lamp, pencils in a copper stand and a large ashtray; the only chair in the house was at the table and near the second wall, quite unexpectedly, was an old, heavily inlaid chest of drawers with convex drawers and a round alarm clock on top” (Pidmohylny, 1991).

### Conclusion

Thus, the genre of still life, transforming from a traditional pictorial, figurative, to verbal, acquires several meanings: ekphrasis (description of a still life art canvas); hypothyroidism (verbal still life); the use takes place at the level of the nomenosphere (playing in the titles of works of the term “dead life”). In literary studies, it is important not only to depict things in the text, but also to show how they coexist (composition) and how to depict the space where their relationship takes place. In literary still life, objects become a kind of subject of action, which is in a system of new relationships.

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