

**Monsters, Mages, Cripples, Saints: Implications of Judgment in Narrative Perspective in Contemporary Russian Literature (Fellowship am Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of California, Berkeley)**

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Russian literature of the 21st century shows a remarkably high number of texts which, in a traditional way, can be described as 'fantastic': monsters, magicians, zombies, saints and other apparently anti-mimetic figures often enough populate post-apocalyptic settings in which the laws of physics seem to be overridden or can be overcome. At the same time, however, it is noticeable that in many respects there are overlaps with texts that work with similar scenarios and constellations of characters, but which cannot be classified as anti-mimetic. Quite the opposite: What is observable is the use of 'hyperrealistic' techniques with a high density of details and a movement away from conventional plot structures to reach an 'unfiltered' representation of the represented/fictional world. The observation that many of the texts in contemporary Russian literature deal with 'monsters' in various forms, but at the same time many of them are by no means 'fantastic' or fantasy literature calls for a new analytical method to supersede the usual interpretation of these texts as anti-mimetic narrative modes. Obviously, the traditional distinction between mimetic and anti-mimetic narratives is not suitable for contemporary (Russian) literature, and especially not for literatures of (post-)traumatized societies. While previous approaches explain the hypertrophy of 'monsters' as cultural-historical or -psychological, there is no approach from literary studies that helps to grasp this phenomenon. The project draws on the mechanisms of narrative selection operations and thus develops a narratological analysis method based on the judgmental implications associated with each perspectivization. Perspective determines by its ratings what is understood as a 'monster', a 'cripple'; as 'mimetic' or 'anti-mimetic.' Thus, this work provides a possibility to read the monster-, cripple- and saint-texts in contemporary (Russian) literature independent of imprecise and inapplicable categorizations such as 'fantastic' or 'realistic.'

**Projektbeteiligte**

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