

# HIKMET



Yil: XIII Sayı: 25  
Mayıs 2015/1

Year: XIII No. 25  
May 2015/1

ULUSLARARASI HAKEMLİ  
İLMİ ARAŞTIRMA DERGİSİ

INTERNATIONAL PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL  
OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

300 den / 6 €

ADEKSAM  
Gostivar  
Makedonya - Macedonia

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Yayın yılı/Year of publication: XIII, Sayı/No: 25, Yıl/Year 2015/1



## HİKMET

**Uluslararası Hakemli İlimi Araştırma Dergisi**  
**International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Scientific Research**

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## THE EPISTOLARY GENRE IN THE LITERATURE FOR YOUTH BY GORJAN PETREVSKI

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### ABSTRACT

This paper gives an overview of the epistolary genre and its role in literature. The attempts to define this genre, its characteristics that make it different from the other genres (autobiographies, memoirs, journals etc.) are being analyzed and its most important characteristic of having a dialogue nature is being emphasized. This paper also presents the different classifications of this genre, depends of the author who writes about this.

The exceptional characteristics of the epistolary genre are represented through various novels of Macedonian author for youth - Gorjan Petrevski. From them it can be concluded that the author applies and combines the different epistolary elements on different manner. While epistolary genre dominates in some works and the whole book is written in a form of a letter, such as the novel “Zadocneti pisma do Spomenka”, in the other novels from this author, the epistolary genre is partially present, but in the third group, the author turns to the most present type of communication among youth, the electronic communication, i.e. the electronic mails (e-mail).

**Key words:** *letters, literary genre, sender, recipient, Macedonian literature for young.*

## GORYAN PETREVSKI’NIN GENÇLERE AIT EPISTOLER EDEBİYAT TÜRÜ

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### ÖZET

Bu çalışmada epistoler edebi türünde ki sorunlar araştırılıyor. Öncelikle, edebi türü tanımlamak için gerçek bir girişim yapılıyor, daha sonra bu türün özelliğini ve aynı zamanda kurgusal olmayan düzyazı (otobiyografi, anılar, günlükler, vb) Mektupların edebi tür olarak genel özellikleri vurgulanır, ve bu onun diyalojik doğasıdır. Makalede bu türü farklı bir yönüyle sınıflandırma yapılmıştır.

Bu makalemizde, yazarın edebi eserlerinde farklılıkları göstermeye çalışır, bu farklılıklar yazarın görüşüne bağlıdır. Görüldüğü gibi yazar farklı bölümlerden inceleyerek farklı uygulamalar yapıyor ve epistoler unsurları birleştirmeye çalışır. Epistoler türlerin bazı bölümlerinde ise bütün kitabı alıp mektup biçiminde sergiler, aynen “Spomenka’ya geç kalmış mektuplar”, Yazarın diğer romanlarında bu edebi tür pek gelişmiş değil diğer eserlerinde bu türlere sadece kısmen yer verir, üçüncüsü tür yazılarında ise yazar daha fazla gençlerde iletişim bölümlerine daha fazla yer verir, o tür ise iletişim elektronik yoluyla daha doğrusu elektronik posta (e-mail) gibi.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mektuplar, edebi tür, gönderen, kabul eden, gençler için Makedon Edebiyatı.

## 1. Introduction

From all types of (non) fictional prose, none is less subjected to critical definition and categorization as it is the case with the letter. What distinguishes the epistolary genre from other realistic-autobiographical fiction, such as diaries, is the desire/demand for exchange. Thus, in the epistolary exchange the reader of the letter "is asked for" a response and thus contributes as a writer in this type of narration, which suggests the existence of some kind of "epistolary pact" between the sender and the recipient of the letter (Gurkin Altman, 1982).

## 2. Attempt to define the genre

According to the definition, the letter is a form of communication that expresses thoughts, feelings, describes a series of events or philosophical discussions. The most important characteristic of the letter as a literary or a semi-literary genre is its dialogical nature. Regardless whether the letter is of personal or business nature, whether it's formal or informal, it almost always requires a certain response from those to whom it is addressed.<sup>1</sup>

According to various on-line sources the epistolary form is the form of letters written/indicated to someone else, and "an epistolary novel" is a novel written in the form of a letter or series of letters written by one or more characters. Such form allows the author to omniscient viewpoint, but still to change the viewpoints among several characters throughout the narration.<sup>2</sup> In the Dictionary of Literary Terms<sup>3</sup>, the term "epistolar" implies "a set of templates for letters and addressing which with small changes can be used on various occasions", and "epistolary novel" implies - "a novel in letters."

Several types of letters were distinguished in ancient literature. By studying the epistolary genre, Milorad Pavić notices *literary* and *non-literary form* and concludes that epistolography will gradually get its rightful place in literature as a real literary kind and will lose the status of unintentional/accidental literary activity, which is usually found in the Baroque era.<sup>4</sup>

According to Elizabeth Campbell, the epistolary novel is a novel written in the form of letters, exchange of letters between two or more correspondents, one or more letters sent by a correspondent to one or more recipients.<sup>5</sup> Ruth Perry, however, expands this definition, indicating that the epistolary form requires the deeper truth that people keep locked deep down, in their subconscious.<sup>6</sup>

Accordingly, the epistolary novel relies on the subjective viewpoint<sup>7</sup>, in other words, it is a literary genre in which prevails intimate provenance.<sup>8</sup> This means that it presents the intimate

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<sup>1</sup> Pismo kao književna vrsta, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/40240424/Pismo-kao-knji%C5%BEevna-vrsta>, accessed on 01.03.2014

<sup>2</sup> Literary terms and definitions, [http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit\\_terms\\_E.html](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_E.html), <http://epistolary.askdefine.com/>, accessed on 01.03.2014.

<sup>3</sup> Rečnik književnih termina, Institut za književnost i umetnost, Zdenko Škreb, Dragiša Živković, i dr., Nolit, Beograd, 1985, p.179.

<sup>4</sup> Milorad Pavić, Istorija srpske književnost i baroknog doba (XVII i XVIII vek), Nolit, Beograd. 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Elisabeth Campbell, Re-visions, Re-flections, Re-creations: Epistolarity in Novels by Contemporary Women, Twentieth Century Literature 41, 1995, p.332-348.

<sup>6</sup> Ruth Perry, Women, Letters, and the Novel, New York, AMS, 1980.

<sup>7</sup> Epistolary novel, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/190331/epistolary-novel>, accessed on 01.03.2014.

point of view of the character, his/her thoughts and feelings without the interference of the author and the course of events takes place with dramatic immediacy. Also, the presentation of events from several points of view, gives the story a dimension and capacity. Although the method is often used in sentimental novels, it is not limited to them. Shortcomings of this form were detected from the very beginning. Depending on the need of the author of the letter, whether he/she expresses his/her virtues through it, vice or weakness, these acknowledgements were subject to suspicion or derision.

The letter as a literary genre is found in the middle between the private and public discourse<sup>9</sup>, a high degree of individualization in the discourse is typical for it, and the attention is directed towards the narration and description of personal feelings and psychological states. The epistolary communication situation consists of a sender and a recipient (except in the private communication). In the case of official letters, they are with stereotyped content and consist of dating, naming the recipient at the beginning of the letter, explaining the reason and occasion for writing the letter, and finally, the signature of the sender which explicitly expresses the degree of honesty, because it is written to trustworthy people who can recognize the potential frustrations and intimate dilemmas of the author.

### 3. Classifications and characteristics of the genre

There are three types of epistolary novels: monological (letters of only one character), dialogical (letters of two characters) and polylogical (three or more characters who write letters). Crucial element in polylogical epistolary novels is the dramatic procedure known as "contrary to reason": the simultaneous but separate correspondence of the characters - villains that create dramatic tension.<sup>10</sup> According to other sources we distinguish: private letters (which talk about intimate situations and primary existence), open letters (the recipient is the audience in general, oriented towards the social, political or cultural space, and the subject expresses its viewpoints and theses) and appeals (with emotional origin, but addressed towards the public through the media and suggest feedback from the receiver).

Therefore, we need to try to define the nature of the epistolary literary genre more closely in terms of literary theory. Like any other text, the letter can be defined as a written linguistic message. In order to realize the message a sender and a recipient are necessary. According to Jakobson's terminology in order to complete the communication model context, code and contact (media) are also necessary. That linguistic scheme is not negligible, because it will be used in literary theory by structuralists, semioticians, advocates of the modern theory of discourse, speech act theory etc. Jakobson's model could confirm that the nature of the definition of the letter is autoreferentiality. The uniqueness of this literary genre is that it can be a whole by itself!

The more systematic and detailed reading of the letters, will reconfirm that they are not necessarily looking for an answer and recipient, but although the code does not necessarily simulate a recipient, the communication code still exists. The writer/author of the letter has in front of himself/herself a fictional interlocutor, recipient. The letter sometimes relies on an imaginary recipient – the reader. Accordingly, several common situations in letters are pointed out:

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<sup>8</sup> M. Koh, Does it exist a 'generic pact'?: About intimistic genres in prose works of Serbian female writers at the beginning of 20th century. *Zbornik Matice srpske za književnost i jezik*, 51(3), 695-708, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> The Letter as Literature,

<http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/courses/detail.FA2011.WRTNG-UG1326.001.html>, accessed on 01.03.2014

<sup>10</sup> Types of epistolary novels, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistolary\\_novel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistolary_novel), accessed on 01.03.2014

- the letter as a direct conversation, unburden by informative function
- the letter as a conversation with someone absent ("how to talk to you")
- the letter as a life-like presentation of the absent ("how I look at you")
- the letter as an expression of friendship
- the letter as a reflection of the social reality<sup>11</sup>

Ruth Perry points out several characteristics of this genre. One is that the use of the procedure of exchange of letters as a framework (cadre) contributes for a dose of credibility of the work. Another feature that she suggests is that the moving power of correspondence is an obstruction which typically occurs between two enamored (lovers), i.e. the epistolary narration almost always functions according to one kind of formula: two or more people, separated by an obstruction of various kinds are forced to keep their relationship through letters. Furthermore, Perry emphasizes that the protagonists are prevented from acting directly and the only way to overcome the difficulties is by writing about them and hoping for a solution that will bring the separated together again. And finally, Perry also identifies the seduction as a common theme in the epistolary novel. She points out that the process of seduction refers to the psychological rather than the physical domain. Namely, she believes that seduction is considered as an attempt to change the opinion of the other, as an attempt to penetrate into his/her subconscious, to identify the beliefs, and to convert the original intentions. Also, Perry emphasizes that typically the epistolary novel ends with love or death, i.e. the final contact between the separated characters can be seen not only as a reward for those who have proven themselves in loyalty, search or other virtuous qualities, and unlike it, another possible ending of the epistolary novel is the death of one or more characters. These alternatives of rendezvous or death correspond with the paradigm of novel written in letters, especially if one of the characters stops writing letters and to resolve the separation in which the characters have spent their fictitious lives, trying to overcome the difficulties.<sup>12</sup> According to the nature of adolescent literature, Wasserman points out that it is common for young people who are in the period of adolescence, to turn in conflict situations towards their inner world. On the journey to the world of adults, they often feel doubt and despair at the same time, mixed with a sense of hope. Therefore, Wasserman considers that their personal thoughts and words, as a form of expression, find their place very well in the construction of their identity in the literature for youth. One of the methods used by writers of literature for youth in order to cover all topics that adolescents face (physical changes, their sexuality, relationships with the parents and friends, philosophical way of thinking about themselves, the world and their place in it) is the epistolary form or the form of letter writing.<sup>13</sup>

An important segment in the epistolary genre is the style of addressing, which has a purpose to express respect to the listener (the addressee) and to emphasize the mutual behavior of both sides, as well as the degree of closeness and levels of communication. The addressing consists of two elements: from whom and to whom. The introduction can be different: a simple and direct and to consist of only one sentence and it can be short and immediately goes to the point.<sup>14</sup> It

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<sup>11</sup> Dubravka Brezjak-Stamać, Poslanice Marka Marulića benediktinki Katarini Obirtić, Kolo, br.1-2, Časopis Matice Hrvatske za književnost, umjetnost i kulturu, 2013, accessed on 01.03.2014 at <http://www.matica.hr/kolo/386/Poslanice%20Marka%20Maruli%C4%87a%20benediktinki%20Katarini%20Obirti%C4%87/>

<sup>12</sup> Ruth Perry, *Women, Letters, and the Novel*, New York, AMS, 1980.

<sup>13</sup> Emilly Wasserman, The epistolary in young adult literature, *The ALAN REVIEW*, The Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE (ALAN), 30.3, 2003, p.48-51 <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/v30n3/pdf/wasserman.pdf>, accessed on 02.03.2014

<sup>14</sup> Nela Savković-Vukčević, Retorika i stilistika u pismima i poslanicama crnogorskih vladika Danila, Save, Vasilija i Petra I Petrovića Njegoša, *Lingua Montenegrina*, god. IV/2, br.8, Institut za crnogorski jezik i književnost, Podgorica, 2011, p.129.

usually occurs in the case of overwhelming and tumultuous emotions, sudden feelings and major mental disturbances, such as anger, victory, defeat ...<sup>15</sup>

Janet Gurkin Altman in the book "Epistolarity" indicates six important aspects of the epistolary genre and along with analysis of specific texts, dedicates a whole chapter on each of them. The first aspect is the *intermedial nature* of the epistolary genre. Namely, the epistolary genre functions as a connector of two remote points, as a bridge between the sender and receiver of the letter, the author chooses whether to emphasize the distance or the bridge. The mediator role of the letter in the epistolary narration derives from its position. Namely, the letter is a phenomenon which stands halfway (either-or/neither-nor). As a means for communication between the sender and the recipient, the letter partly fills the abyss between the presence and absence; the two characters who "meet" through the letter, neither are totally separated, nor are totally united. The letter lies halfway between the ability for a complete communication and the risk of communication breakdown. The second aspect of the epistolary genre, according to Altman, is *the degree of trust between the sender and the recipient* and here it indicates more variants: confidential love letters, friendly letters etc. The third aspect is the reader, whose appearance is sufficient to differentiate the epistolary form of addressing from other forms of narration in the first person. Thus, it suggests the existence of *external and internal reader*. The term "internal reader" implies a specific character represented throughout the course of the narration, whose reading of the letters can affect their writing, and under "external reader" we mean, the overall audience that reads the work as a final product and has no impact on the writing of individual letters. The fourth aspect is the discourse in the epistolary genre, which differs from other types of discourse in three things: 1. the uniqueness of the I-you relationship; this stems from the dialogical nature of the epistolary genre, as well as from the fact that the pronouns I-you are reversible here, or more precisely, in the epistolary genre, "you" in the text (receiver), in the next becomes "I" (sender); 2. Present tense; as well as the author of the diary, also the author of the letter is "anchored" in the present from where he directs his gaze towards the past or future events; and 3. time polyvalence; the time aspect of any given statement in the epistolary form is relative from several aspects: the time of the event, the time when the event is recorded, the time when the letter was sent, received, read, re-read, etc. The fifth aspect is *the dynamic in the ending of the letters*, and here Altman discusses the following relationship: inner writer - inner reader, as an important factor that affects the overall structure of the correspondence, which in turn becomes particularly evident in the dynamics in the ending of the letters. The ending of the letters can have two options: 1. Using conventional endings, and 2. The letter to end with an open form in which the writer is always in dialogue with the possible interlocutor. Ultimately, all epistolary narratives end with silence, but in some works, the silence is more motivated unlike in other works. As a very frequent reason for discontinuation of writing letters is death (tragic ending), but also other reasons that prevent the writer to write, and in the case of comic endings of the letters, the most common is the case when epistolary communication ends because the writer has no one to write to, after the correspondence ended with a marriage. Thus, the tragic and comic unraveling, suggest two polarized sides: full attendance (reunion) - complete absence (death).

The sixth aspect is what Altman calls "*an epistolary mosaic*" and that title implies more characteristics of the epistolary genre: 1. Multiple plots 2. Impaired timeline due to non-chronological sorting of letters, 3. Multiple correspondents, each giving an individual tone to the

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<sup>15</sup> Branislav Nušić, *Retorika*, Beograd, 1966, p.87.

letter, and 4. Gaps/intervals that exist between letters and may contribute to the structure of the narration. These gaps have been called "dead time" by novelists and theorists.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4. The epistolarity elements in the novels by Gorjan Petrevski

##### 4.1. The novel „Dalechna ljubov“

This novel “ Dalechna ljubov”<sup>17</sup> starts with a scene when Sara hits Pavel Rampa in his face and he shows no reaction at all. The theme in this novel, as in every other novel by Gorjan Petrevski, deals with the issue of first love, falling in love, as well as the misunderstandings, arguments and dilemmas between the characters, both young and adults. The communication is conveyed on jargon language, usually used in the school classrooms, hallways, yards and streets, which fulfills this work with freshness and brightness. In the core of this story lies the unrequited love between Sara and Pavel. The only responsible for this is the intriguer, Ivan Lui Paster, who is also deeply in love with Sara, but has no courage to approach her, despite his great desire to win Sara`s love. Eventually, he manages to convince everyone in his honest and sincere plans.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the intrigue, Sara leaves to Moscow for educational purposes, and leaves both of her suitors to long for her and suffer in silence because of the unhappy love. The only evidence of those love feelings are Sara`s letters to Pavel. In the matter of fact, there is only one letter from Sara Kadina to Pavel Rampa represented in this novel. It is a covering letter for other package of letters, never sent due to a lack of courage: “In the package there were many letters written to him, to Pavel Rampa! And signed (just imagine this) by her, by Sara Kadina, while they were in their Gabrovo. Written but never sent... (139).”

In spite of the tense relationship and the many things left unsaid on their farewell, and her disillusionment because of the thought that he never shared the same feelings with her, on the beginning of her letter she writes: “My dear Pavel” (139), the underlined words meaning that she, in spite the distance, still feels him as her very close, loved one. That is why in the next, first section the opposition Gabrovo-Moscow, here-there, me-you is represented: “The long distance stands between us now. Gabrovo is too far from Moscow (136).” One can sense her disappointment in the following expression: “If you loved me as much as I loved you, our love would have been the most beautiful love legend ever (139).” Protected by the distance and her belief that he doesn`t love her back, Sara Kadina feels free to express her feelings to Pavel: “You never noticed me in Gabrovo. And the only reason I slammed you back then was for your unrequited love. And it was because of true love, real love (139-140).” From the letter, the readers can notice that Sara was very lonely in Moscow since her parents left the city too: “And from yesterday, I really am alone, my parents returned to Gabrovo (140),” so, it is logically to conclude that in such psychological state, alone in a foreign country, Sara gets the urge to connect to something stable and that is her

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<sup>16</sup> Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity, Approaches to a Form*, Ohio State University Press: Columbus, 1982, p.89, accessed on <http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/courses/detail.FA2011.WRTNG-UG1326.001.html>, accessed on 01.03.2014

<sup>17</sup> Gorjan Petrevski, *Dalechna ljubov*, Prosvetno delo, Detska radost, Skopje, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Radovan P. Cvetkovski, *Pisatelot na prvata ljubov i negovite knizevni iskachuvanja*, Pogovor kon knjigata “Dalechna ljubov”, Detska radost, Skopje, 2008, str. 169-196.

home country and her friends from there. Therefore, she promises to maintain further communication: "I'll call you again. And Ivan too. And every classmate back home. Lots of love, Sara (140)."

At the end of the letter, as it begins on a conventional manner, it also ends in that way as the venue and date are being represented – "Moscow, 26 August 1988", along with a recognition that in Gabrovo she didn't had courage to reveal her feelings, but the wish to express her love remained: "P.S. I thought about giving you these letters in Gabrovo. And as I had no courage to send them to you one by one, I also couldn't leave them to you before leaving for good. But, I wanted you to read them, and so... (140)."

#### **4.2. The novel „Sama“ by Gorjan Petrevski**

There are few different aspects that make this novel interesting. At first, it is a novel for young audience in which the protagonist Theodora is a high school girl, an ultimate sportswoman who practices karate and stands out from the crowd. What is unusual is that Theodora moves the boundaries of what is called a usual, ordinary, and trivial e-mail correspondence with the "Prophet". They communicate and interchange selected passages; he uses the book "Prophet" by Khalil Gibran, while she uses "The Greatest Salesman in the World" by Og Mandino. Thus, it is a matter of e-mail correspondence where both the sender's and recipient's identity is unknown until the end of the novel.

This novel<sup>19</sup> is kind of a dialogical, epistolary novel because the sender and the recipient change their roles alternately. When the plot begins, their communication had already begun: "Lately, it is the only thing she finds interesting and funny. And she rejected many guys who were interested in her (7)." Everything happens in a time when Theodora becomes aware of her appearance and sexuality: "After training, she took her clothes off and stood in front of the mirror analyzing her body from every possible angle. She has nothing any boy wouldn't like. Everything was perfectly shaped (10)."

The first messages she receives from the Prophet awake her curiosity and lust for fun, but she remains completely aware that she must keep her distance and stay anonymous, bearing in mind how dangerous the Internet can be: "I'm curious but... Nothing. They are all the same... But at least I'll have some fun! In spite of the others, at least he is interesting in his own way. And Malin won't be like them... (8)." This narrative sequence reveals that Theodora has aversion and low opinion towards boys, but hopes that her little brother won't be their kind. This represents an introduction to the psychological motivation of what made Theodora an ultimate sportswoman, a karate girl. While in seventh grade, Theodora had a traumatic experience, when her close friend Emil, in whom she had unconditional trust and with whom she went to musical classes, tried to take advantage of her in his house. Furious for not getting his way, Emil spreads the awful story around the school, thus Theodora had to continue her education in different school. Realizing that one cannot escape from something like that, she starts feeling rejection towards boys. She enrolls to karate classes and driven by her wish to revenge her abusers, she becomes great in karate. Feeling lonely in that period, as an only child, she wants to have brother or sister. Identifying herself as lonely, alone, having no one to share her secret with, her Internet nickname is *Lonely* too.

The plot begins three years after the unpleasant experience, when Theodora is already a famous karate practitioner, has her little brother Malin and new friends from high school. But, the demons from the past follow her everywhere, she can't stop thinking of what happened, waiting patiently for the moment for revenge. This moment comes when Theodora squares accounts with Emil and his gang who deal drug in a nightclub. As an ultimate sportswoman, at first she will be

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<sup>19</sup> Gorjan Petrevski, *Sama*, Makedonska reč, Skopje, 2003.

judged for what she did, but after a while the impressions will settle down. Following the initial disciplinary action she realizes that the karate doesn't have the same meaning to her as earlier.

Using the pseudonym "Lonely", she discusses with the "Prophet" about life, loneliness, love, hatred, happiness, success, failure, joy, sadness, friendship, religion: "In this way of communication, whether she'd liked to admit it or not, she found some pleasure. She liked his messages too (34)." Even though at the beginning she starts correlating for fun, gradually she started to feel curious about who her interlocutor is, especially because she becomes too involved in everything: "His messages were wisely chosen and sent to her... This time she liked the messages too. She closed her eyes in front of the computer, and tried to picture what he looked like (71-72)." She even becomes thrilled by him and starts to worry not to be disappointed if she would ever meet him: "It was the first time when someone actually managed to increase to her intellectual level, which in a way made her feel complete and at the same time, extremely worried. It is a wisdom that initiated answers without even knowing who stands behind it. Will she be disappointed when she finds out? Or she will be even more thrilled? He might be very similar to her, anyway!?" (72)" Very often her e-mails to the Prophet are inspired from real situations, like the death of the high school girl from overdosing: "She couldn't accept the reality of death. It is not unexpected when someone reaches deep oldness, when a person is so exhausted that can't live anymore, so waits for the death as a salvation. But it is completely different when one has his entire life in front of them (128)."

With the help of the wisely selected messages by the Prophet, Theodora is firmly convinced that she can achieve everything she wants: "As long as I breathe I'll hold on. Because I have learnt one of the greatest principles of success: if I hold on long enough, I will win (127)."

As the novel proceeds to its ending, Theodora is more and more enthusiastic about the Prophet and secretly longs to meet him: "Oh my God! What a wisdom... This person who sends me all those messages, is he my friend already? – thought Theodora. Who should make the first step? Me or him? But if he's stubborn as I am? Then what? (168)" Until the moment the Prophet asks for a meeting first: "He was the one who asked her to meet. As friends... And just to satisfy her curiosity about his age, he said he was a young man... (191)." Their meeting was very much surprising because it turned out that the Prophet is the 23 years old pianist Simon who lived nearby and from a very long time had feelings for her: "A fresh start of love that wasn't a start at all, because it was since long time ago as the both admitted. They expressed their love in silence, sincerely looking at each others' eyes, hugging in the rain with a promise to be together for a long, long time (204)."

#### 4.3. **The novel „Zadocneti pisma do Spomenka“ by Gorjan Petrevski**

This novel is very specific because of its structure, since it is completely written in form of letters from Bojan to Spomenka after their separation.<sup>20</sup> Throughout the fourteen letters written to Spomenka, Bojan once again lives the memories of the moments from their childhood spent together. In the introduction chapter named as "Something as Before Beginning", the writer/sender of the letters asks the readers to help his letters reach Spomenka: "If you ever meet her, give her my letters... And you, will you help me find her? Will you agree to look for her together?... And I'm sure she is impatient to receive my letters. (5-6)"

Even though he says he will write her a thousand letters, in the book the number of letters match the number of chapters – forty. In every letter/narrative, one of Spomenka's personal traits are being described: modesty, nobility, nice voice, sociality: "There was no other girl that was prettier than you, Spomenka!... And you, Spomenka, sing more beautiful than everyone!... But you were the best student! You always knew how to avoid fighting. And how to forgive (10)";

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<sup>20</sup> Gorjan Petrevski, *Zadocneti pisma do Spomenka*, Detska radost, Skopje, 1990.

“It seemed to me that you are always very, very honest (24)”, “When we pass by the house of the sick girl, you were the only one who stopped (31)” etc.

At moments, his lust for Spomenka is so great that he, the football star Bojan, sees her everywhere around him and desperately calls for her attention. In the middle of the novel, in his twentieth letter, he reproaches her for not coming back to him, calling her naughty and pretentious girl: “Why are you so pretentious, Spomenka? Like you don’t know that... Do you really have to hide? And not answer any of my letters? (69)”; He wants to meet her again in the village: “If we ever come back, I will give you many violets. The most beautiful with a miraculous scent... (119)”.

His impatience grows, so in the thirty-sixth letter he once again reproaches her for not calling him, he wants her to feel embarrassed, warning her that he will send a thousand letters and if there is no response she will not hear from him again: “When you’ll receive my last letter, will there be any answer?”; “Call me Spomenka, call me! We are all grown up now, it’s not like us playing hide and seek anymore (118)”; “Not even a word from you Spomenka! Where, oh where are you hiding girl?... That’s it, I’m out of patience now... But I will write a thousand letters to my blue-eyed girl, just thousand... And that would be it! Not a word anymore, just so you know! And when I’ll be writing the last letter, I’ll swear that it would really be last (130)” etc.

In his last letter, he addresses her with vision of a future meeting, something similar to a mirage: “It is so beautiful in spring. It is so wonderful... You and me, Spomenka, leave the meadow holding hands and head towards the hill... Our eyes suddenly meet and you start to blush... And just for a moment, you vaguely disappear somewhere behind the sunny landscape”; “I am staying alone in the mountain, on the very top, but from that side that should get dark soon... Silence... Do I hear your voice Spomenka, or it’s just an imagination? (134-135)”.

#### **4.4. The novel „Spomenite za Spomenka“ by Gorjan Petrevski**

The novel consists of three letters, two written from Spomenka to Bojan and one from Bojan to Spomenka.<sup>21</sup>

In his previous novels, the author follows the love of these young people. In this novel, Bojan and Spomenka are separated, she moves with her family in another town and later Bojan leaves in the city too, where he lives in a boarding school and studies in the gymnasium. The new environment brings new challenges for the both of them.

Bojan’s joy was enormous when he received her letter: “I wanted to scream, maybe for someone it was just a piece of paper, but for me it was invaluable treasure! I wouldn’t change it for anything in the world! (21)”. In her first letter she is very sad because of the distance that sets them apart, and makes him remember how beautiful their home village is, comparing the two feelings of nostalgia: the first for her home village and the second for her love there. Her wish to come back is very strong: “Sometimes I just want to run back home, run until I find you, until I go back where I belong, where my love is the strongest (22)”; “But someday, I just don’t know when I will go back... I promise I will go back! When I’ll be grown up and able to make decisions on my own (22)”. These kind of letters are almost always accompanied by tears, as in this case Spomenka doesn’t hold back her emotions either: “I can’t write anymore. There is something inside me that makes me want to cry. But I won’t cry... (23)”. This letter truly touches the recipient Bojan: “It was as I was dreaming, unreal but beautiful and precious... And he reads the letter over and over again... No one can write that kind of letter. No one but Spomenka! (23)”. The second letter, from Bojan to Spomenka, also hides the pain of their physical separation, when under the influence of temptations in the big city, the strength of their love turns into a matter of question: “You are away from me... Now you are far away from me.

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<sup>21</sup> Gorjan Petrevski, *Spomenite za Spomenka*, Detska radost, Skopje, 2006.

And the only thing I wish for is to always stay close to you and never be away”; “And those other boys you’ll meet, they’ll long for you too”; “Are you alone too? Is it hard for you too in that more distant and bigger town? Should we promise to stay faithful to the first love?”; “Don’t make fun of me for writing you this kind of letter... Maybe it is funny for you, but I write as my heart dictates (55)”. “I won’t make up anything. Because I have realized that the letters to those you love, you write simply and honestly, without making up words to sound more pleasant (55)”. The third letter is from Spomenka to Bojan and in this letter she reveals her wish for a meeting: “Oh, I wish for a miracle to bring us close together (91)”; encourages him to keep doing sports because it is what makes him happy: “I know you are doing great. I trust in you. You’ve always been that way (92)”; at the same time revealing her plans for the future: “I want to succeed in something else. In medicine, I want to help people. I’ll be very happy if my wish do come true (92)”. “And I’m too excited about your letters. Our letters are what bring us closer; they are the bridge between our shores (92)”. After this statement, Spomenka feels need to trust him other things too, but still decides to remain silent and mysterious: “I’m not sure if I should tell you that... (No, no, I better tell you some other time, when the time is right!). Please don’t be mad at me... (92)”. The letter is ended with thoughts of the never ending first love, along with sincere hopes for their correspondence to continue in the future.

If we consider the addressing in all three letters, it is obvious that it is a reflection of their true feelings: “My dear Bojan” and “My dear Spomenka”, which corresponds with the ending of these letters too: “I send you my kisses, sincerely and with lots of love. Always be mine. Love, Spomenka”, “Lots of love, Bojan” and “Always yours, Spomenka”.

#### 4.5. The novel “Zaludenost od zaljubenost” by Gorjan Petrevski

It seems that Gorjan Petrevski’s best ability as a writer is to constantly talk about the famous first love, but never repeat himself. The novel “Zaludenost od zaljubenost”, as a protagonist has the girl Dimitra also called *The Inspired* because of her ability to find inspiration for writing lyrics everywhere around.<sup>22</sup>

In this novel there are many epistolary elements interpreted in a modern way, understandable for the young generations through the language of the computer technology and possibilities that mobile technology offers. In this novel, the letters are electronically sent to many recipients. The letters are in form of SMS, as it is the one from Ognjen to Vesna: “My message is sincere and honest; you are the only one I love!”, which is followed by Vesna’s reply: “Times have changed... The fields are plowed differently now, and you are late as a regular plow... I’m in love with someone else now! (37)”. Another example is the rhymed message from Igor to Elena:

“Elena please don’t play mad,  
Without you this fall I’m very sad! (148)”

Inspired by all those messages both from familiar and unfamiliar people and their love pains, Dimitra writes lyrical poems and sends them back<sup>23</sup>: “I found out from your friend Milena that you’ve been receiving phone calls both from boys and girls. And that you write the most beautiful words for everyone. Especially when it comes to love (129)”. That is also the case with Petar, who is in love with Ana, even though he only mentions his feelings at the end of his letter. In the rest of his letter, he speaks about his family condition and their inability to understand his problems: “I am a man who wears the whole burden of this world on his shoulders. My life is so difficult. Even at home, everybody yell at me... That’s why, the poem you are going to write, I will sent to her. Maybe, at least, it will touch her cold heart!? But, having in mind she is so

<sup>22</sup> Gorjan Petrevski, *Zaludenost od zaljubenost*, Detska radost, Skopje, 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Although in the novel these short, humorous, poetical lyrics are represented, they are not matter of interest for this paper.

arrogant, she might become even more self-centered (132)". Along with her poetical writings, Dimitra sends her answers too.

Some of the letters that reach her are signed with initials, as it is the case with a guy signed Dz. in love with a girl E.: "I'm so in love with you E. But I don't know how to say this to you... Why can't I look in your eyes and say I'm dying for you? And I would like so much for you to breath only for me... (101-102)".

In a letter from some Ivan, the method "story in story" can be found. In his letter to Dimitra, in which he talks about his secret love to Biljana from a different grade, and the ways he came up with only to be able to see her on the breaks, borrowing school supplies from his cousin Jovan who was in the same class as Biljana, a hideous message from Jovan to Ivan is revealed: "Don't think that I can't see what's happening Ivan, don't you try to hide it from me... I can see that something in you starts to whiter! Tell me what it is, so that I can make it easier on you... I can tell you are in love!" on which Ivan responds through SMS: "I love Biljana and I see her often... Even though she is in the eighth grade and I'm in the sixth. That's why I'm so impatient all the time (125)".

In the letter from Theodor, many other persons are involved. Theodor is in love in Jana, who doesn't care for him, while some other girls (Ana, Fana, Dana) send him numerous messages: "I'm waiting for her response now. I'm not sure whether I'll get one, but maybe she'll become compassionate... it is nice to wait. That's what I've heard (144)".

A very interesting moment in this novel is when a century old letter appears, given to Dimitra by her grandmother, a former teacher. This letter was found by her student in a book she borrowed from the city library. The letter was written by some matchmaker Stojan, who knew about the love some Stefan felt for Milica, and in this letter he praises them both, the hard working Stefan and the beautiful Milica: "That's why, Stefan and Milica are made for each other (214)" and as it follows: "Apparently, someone should have given his approval in order for them to get married... (241)".

## 5. Conclusion

According to the previously stated, it can be concluded that the epistolary genre has its ancient historic background. Based on the author's integration regarding communication either with real or with imaginary reader, the dialogic nature is dominant, as well as the subjective form of perception, i.e. the intimate provenience. It was established in this paper that the number of definitions for this literary genre, its theoretic considerations, its characteristics as well as its classifications are numerous.

However, besides all of these, the fact that epistolary genre is specific narrative form which offers a lot of perspectives and opportunities for further researches remains. This paper reviews the epistolary elements in the works of Gorjan Petrevski, intended for the young.

In his first novel "Dalecna ljubov", the basis of the Romanesque story is the unrequited love between Sara and Pavel. The truth about the love feelings is revealed in the letters from Sara to Pavel. Actually, the novel contains only one letter addressed from Sara Kadina to Pavel Rampa, who she loves. It is actually one covering letter, delivered with whole package of letters, written again by Sara Kadina to Pavel Rampa, but never sent, due to lack of courage, so the communication/ correspondence was one-way.

The second novel "Sama" is dialogic epistolary novel in its essence, because the communication and exchange of letters is realized between two people who take the place of sender and recipient of messages via electronic e-mail one after another. The correspondents are not familiar with their mutual identity, which remains hidden to the end of the novel.

The third novel "Zadocneti pisma do Spomenka" is one of the rarest novel in the Macedonian literature for children regarding its structure, because it is about a novel fully written in the form of letters addressed from Bojan to Spomenka after their separation. Through

fourteen letters, addressed to Spomenka, Bojan relives the memories from their moments spent together from their childhood and education.

The novel "Spomenite za Spomenka" from Gorjan Petrevski contains three letters, two of them are written from Spomenka to Bojan and one is written from Bojan to Spomenka.

In the novel "Zaludenost od zaljubljenost" a lot of epistolary elements are present, but they are given in one modern way understood by the young generations, that is the language of the computer technology and the opportunities of the mobile technology. It is about polylogical epistolary novel or novel which contains letters (electronic) of many people.

From the reviewed novels, it can be concluded that this is about the presence of epistolary genre, the author changes the procedure of combining epistolary elements in different ways.

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Abstract: Dieser Beitrag gibt einen Überblick über die briefliche Genre und seine Rolle in der Literatur. Die Versuche, dieses Genre zu definieren, ihre Eigenschaften, die es von den anderen unterscheidet (Autobiographien, Memoiren, Tagebücher etc.) werden analysiert und die wichtigsten Eigenschaften, wo ein Dialog besteht werden hervorgehoben. Die außergewöhnlichen Eigenschaften der briefliche Genre werden durch verschiedene Romane von mazedonischen Autors für die Jugend dargestellt, wie zum Beispiel Gorjan Petrevski.

Schlüsselwörter: Briefe, literarische Genre, Absender, Empfänger, mazedonische Literatur für Jugendliche.