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Invariant art forms in the essays of Gerold Belger

The article contemplates the genre of the essay and its invariant forms. The authors of the article point out that the essay is a genre that has a close proximity with scientific, journalistic and fiction literature, however, it does not apply entirely to any of them. From the perspective of the authors, the structure-forming principle of the essay is the leading part of the personality of the author's production. The author-essayist can act in several roles: a real author, a social person, a private person. The entirely building of the text, its form, composition, vocabulary, and techniques are interconnected with the final author's character. The authors highlight that another equally important feature of the style of the essay is the presence of figurativeness, expressivity — which is an expression of artistry. The aim of the article is to educe the specificity of invariant artistic forms in the essayism of the writer and publicist Gerold Belger. As follows from the analysis, the authors enunciate conclusions that the essayism of Gerold Belger is typologically multifarious and involves such types as: essay-sketch, essay-artistic word, essay-reflection, essay-investigation. The authors assert that the creations of this writer should be accounted as invariant forms of artistic and journalistic essay, meaningfully and compositionally unifying the features of fiction and journalism.

Keywords: genre, invariant, essay, typology, author's consciousness.

Introduction

The thematic justification is determined by the fact that in the humanities there is a mainstreaming of “borderline” genres: biographies, memoirs, diaries, essays, which can be attributed to the processes of transformation of the genre system at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries. In consonance with the well-established tradition, any given genre belongs to one definite sphere of acquisition reality. For instance, an article, monograph, abstract, commentary are scientific genres; novel, epic, tragedy, story — artistic genres; diary, chronicle, report, protocol — nonfictional genres; essay, interview, reportage — journalistic genres.

Concurrently, there is an evolution of semi-documentary literature, which begins to press up traditional genres of fiction. Paying attention to the unprecedented extent of “fact literature” in the 20th century, Jiri Hajek writes: “Reportages, lyrics, poetic essays, memoirs, biographical novellas and what we previously entitled as a popular science literature — all these “non-narrative”, seemingly “peripheral” genres cut out from their literary semi-injustice and, under certain specific conditions, even take a leading role. They have become a significant, intrinsic and, of course, not a “peripheral” part of literature” [1; 101].

In the category of such genres, as the contributors note, the essay should be attributed — one of the borderline artistic and journalistic genres, which “includes all these variety of methods of comprehending the world among its capabilities, not being confined to any of them, but constantly exceeding their boundaries and in this movement acquiring its genre or, more precisely, super-genre nature” [2; 342].

The authors of this article attempt to provide own understanding of the genre and peculiarities of the essay as an invariant form of artistic creation. It is worth to remark that the creation of a general concept of this genre is, in our view, an urgent problem of modern literary criticism. Currently, the essay genre, being one of the most productive genres in literature, as also the object of a sufficient number of critical works devoted to distinct essayists, turns out to be bypassed in literary theory. An entire, unifying vision of the essay genre does not exist to this day, views on the nature and specifics of essays are highly controversial. Our task is to investigate the genre-forming features of the essay, its invariant forms, identify arguable points in the concept of the genre and outline their tentative solutions. The creations of the essay writer Herold Belger were elected as the data for the study.

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Experimental

An essay is a genre that has a close proximity to scientific, journalistic and imaginative literature, however, it does not fully relate to any of them. The latitude of the functions performed by the essay makes it possible to classify any works with an indistinct genre belonging to this genre. The essay is related to scientific literature by its topic, which combines all objects of thought predominantly of the humanities: philosophy, literary theory and criticism, aesthetics, political science, sociology, and others. The essay is one of the most productive genres in terms of philosophical thought, that is, knowledge about the most common sides of the world and man.

In the sources, one can find diverse definitions of essays and unavowed judgments about the genre. Here are some of them. “Essays (French “essay” — experience, sketch) — a genre of philosophical, literary-critical, historical-biographical, journalistic prose, conjoining the emphasized individual position of the author with an informal, often paradoxical presentation, focused on colloquial speech” [3; 1565].

The literary dictionary defines an essay as “a prose composition of a small volume and free contexture, expressing individual impressions and considerations on a specific occasion or issue and knowingly not claiming to be a definitive or exhaustive interpretation of the subject” [4; 516].

The contributors mark that the demand for the essay genre is due to the “non-specificity of genre” of modern fiction. In the meantime, the essay reflects “a new thinking that must rise above all intellectual and professional illiberality, cross the barriers separating scientific, artistic and everyday awareness” [5–7].

Epshtein singles out “integral lore” as one of the dominant structural features of the genre, in addition to the self-determination of the author’s “I”. “The substance of the genre”, he writes, “is in the dynamic alternation and paradoxical combination of different methods of comprehension the world. If any of them: imaginative or conceptual, plot or analytical, confessional or moral-descriptive, begins to prevail over sharply, then the essay will abruptly collapse as a genre, turn into one of its components: into a fictional narration or philosophical reasoning, into an intimate diary or a historical essay” [2; 126].

Epshtein, in his article on the theory of the essay genre, rests upon material from Montaigne's Experiments. “In this book”, he writes, the “genetic code” of the essay genre is revealed with the greatest clarity. Basically, an essay can be devoted to the universe, truth, beauty, substance, syllogism — in any case, these topics will lose their universality, acquire concreteness by the very will of the genre, which will make them particulars against the background of that all-encompassing “I” that forms the infinitely expanding horizon of essayistic thinking. “Experiments” explore the world, however the beginning point and principle of such research is the personality of the author, while the discontinuity of the structure of “Experiments” is associated with the special aspects of the author's thinking, his attitude to the world” [2; 123].

Results and Discussion

What are the genre-forming elements of an essay? The first and, in our view, the main genre-forming feature of the essay is the personality of the author, the conspicuous expression of the author's position, the author's perception, substantiated by means of various kinds of facts, arguments, examples. The key role of the author's personality as one of the main generic properties of the essay is also the most important structure-directing principle of the essay. Moreover, the essay analyzes some predominantly humanitarian object of thought, and not the author's own personality.

Dialogueness is the second genre-forming feature of an essay. Whatever form the essayist chooses to express his line of thoughts, no matter how he organizes the composition, the main thing is always a clearly expressed appeal to the reader. For instance, the essay writer Andrei Bitov selected the definition for his essays: “truth as a genre”. On the pages of the essay, in the opinion of one of the contributor, “the hero-author and the reader “shake hands”, meet face to face. This is an effort to immediately, from the very first lines, search out a new form of conversation with the reader” [8].

The third singularity of the essay genre is that in such a work the “concept” is not clearly worded. Concurrently, the image has internal dynamics, a complex network of associative links and a paradox as a method of playing with the reader are characteristic. The logic of the essay text can be intuitive or chronological and built on intuition if the author seeks to “capture” the reader's emotions, and not to enthrall with a new and original theory. In the contrary case, the text develops the following instance of the logic in the analytical article: hypothesis — arguments — conclusion.

The fourth genre-forming feature of the essay is the ingenious stylistics. The essay has its own style, while figurality and aphoristic nature are the style-forming signs. The essay uses a multifarious lexis from

stylistically high to colloquial. The means of artistic expression are multiform: metaphors, allegorical and parable images, symbols, comparisons. To convey personal perception, adoption of the world, the author of the essay selects analogies, adduces multitudinous examples, draws parallels, and uses all kinds of associations. In an essay, polemical statements, questions, reasoning, sketches, memories can be interchanged. At the same time, mythopoetry is an important component of the genre. The author builds up his own theories, making a kind of “author’s” myth, and the myth is based on images [9].

The next characteristic of an essay is a special actualization, correlation with the present moment. The essayist reflects on the events of the past, present and future as if all this is happening here and now, which allows him to compose a direct dialogue with the reader. Figurativeness, expressiveness is a phrasing of his artistry and journalism.

What is the typology of an essay? Different types of essays are segregated. For example, art-critical or literary-critical. In such an essay, the author deals not with life, but with its mirror in works of music, painting, literature. The configuration of the essay is set by the works of art themselves. Through the analysis of the creations, the author proposes his own view of the world, and all means of expressiveness are aimed at bringing this view to the reader.

Another widespread type of essay is philosophical. The object of comprehension in it is philosophical categories and theories, thoughts about the world and man. Spectacular examples of philosophical essays are the texts of Jean-Paul Sartre (“What is Literature?”), Albert Camus (“The Myth of Sisyphus”), Gabriel Marcel (“Essays on Concrete Philosophy”) and others. This series, in our view, should comprise the work of the poet-educator Abai Kunanbayev “Words of edification”, which, in terms of content, stylistic features, fully corresponds to the genre nature of the essay. The author’s philosophical meditations on the essence of life are filled with deep meaning and are directly addressed to his people. The addressee of the writing is a generalized image of a person who has both positive and negative qualities, in need of advice from a philosopher-educator, wise with life experience.

An autobiographical, personal essay is a popular genre. In this essay, the author’s autobiography becomes the foundation of the text’s plot. The author illustrates a view at various phenomena, his value position through memoirs, diaries, and impressions.

In the belles-lettres of Kazakhstan, an essay is a common genre in the form of a sketch, article, memoir, diary, story, confession, speech, letter, word.

Consider the invariant forms of the essay genre using the example of the creation of the writer Herold Belger.

The artistic legacy of Gerold Belger, a writer-publicist, is diverse and includes various artistic and journalistic genres: stories and sketches, tales and novels, translations and scientific articles. Artistic and journalistic essays occupy a distinct place in the genre structure of poetic idiostyle. If at the beginning of the artistic journey essayism was some scattered “notes and comments” of the author, then in the “mature” period, when Belger’s talent was fully revealed, the essay became one of the leading genres, a kind of literary tribune with which the writer expressed his thoughts and beliefs. In the 12-volume *Collected Compositions of Herold Belger’s Selected Works*, essays are systematized into a separate book and make up Volume No. 7 [10].

The seventh volume bears the symbolic name “Kazakh Notebook”, which embodies the spiritual essence of Belger, German by origin, but a convinced internationalist, patriot of the Kazakh language and culture, devoted to the Kazakh land and people who suckled him and gave wings. The seventh volume includes four blocks of essays: “Earthly Chosen”, “Kazakh Word”, “Quiet Conversations at Noisy Crossroads”, “Etudes on the Translations of Ilyas Dzhansugurov”. Regardless of the fact that the author designated the genre of works in the same way — essays, the works of each of the four blocks have their own characteristics, both in the content and in the formal aspects of these texts.

“Earthly Chosen” is a sketch-essay dedicated to Goethe and Abai, the great representatives of the German and Kazakh peoples, “earthly chosen ones”, not only poets, but also heralds, enlighteners of their peoples. Gerold Belger, who is fluent in three languages: German, Kazakh, Russian, searches out and reveals the commonality of themes and motives, diverse consonances in the works of Goethe and Abai, claims that there is a kind of spiritual kinship in the outlook of two seemingly so different poets. The author in the titles of the essays: “Consonance”, “Confessions of Poets”, “Echoes”, “Near the Chinggis Mountains” underlines this idea.

In our view, the invariant form of the essay of the first block can be defined as an essay-scientific sketch. The analysis made it possible to identify its main features: scientific character, objectivity, analyticity.

“Kazakh word” is a book consisting of 13 essay words, the author's analytical reflections on the origin, specifics, features, status of the Kazakh literary language. Gerold Belger uses the form “kara soz” — words of edification, characteristic of the work of the great Kazakh poet Abai Kunanbayev. Abai created this genre to express his educational, philosophical, poetic reflections on the topical problems of his time. Belger, feeling himself one of the students, spiritual heirs of Abai, follows his example, choosing for his essays the form “kara soz” — words of edification.

The “Kazakh word” is inspired with the author's great love for the Kazakh language, the richness and expressiveness of which the writer admired from childhood, was one of the facets of creative search. The Kazakh language became his second native language after German, the writer did not just speak, read and write in Kazakh, he thought, lived, worked using the blessed possibilities of this language. That is why, he is so worried about the fate of the Kazakh language, its past, present and future. Belger's reflections are filled not only with love and pride for the language, but also with bitterness, regret that the status of the Kazakh language, its development is still not at the proper level.

According to our reckoning, the invariant form of the essay of the second block can be defined as an essay-artistic word. The analysis revealed the main features: emotionality, subjectivity, expressiveness, aphorism.

“Quiet Conversations at Noisy Crossroads” are essays representing the author's virtual conversations with architectural monuments to great poets: Dzhambul Dzhabayev, Shokan Valikhanov, Abai Kunanbayev, Mukhtar Auezov, Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin, as well as the Independence Monument of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Clearly, this form of essay differs significantly from both essays and words of edification. Gerold Belger chooses the best representatives of literature and culture as interlocutors, sees in them fellows, fellow tribesmen, seeks support and attention in them.

In our opinion, the invariant form of the essay of the third block may be set as an essay-reflection, its main features: emotionality, subjectivity, expressiveness, rhetoric.

“Etudes on the Translations of Ilyas Dzhanisugurov” is an essay on the translations of works of Russian literature into the Kazakh language, made by the Kazakh poet Ilyas Dzhanisugurov. The author calls the writings of this block “essays”, “etudes”, “notes”, “observations”. Here Gerold Belger acts as a professional translator, fluent in three languages, is able to give an objective assessment of translated literary texts. The writer-translator analyzes the translations of A.S. Pushkin “Eugene Onegin”, M.Yu. Lermontov “Death of a poet”, N.A. Nekrasov “Railway”, A.M. Gorky's “Song of the Petrel”. The author begins his essays with the traditional Kazakh introduction — the beginning of the “alhisca”, which gives the creative background of the work. Each section of the introduction is named with the letters that make up the name of Dzhanisugurov: I-L-Y-A-S.

From our perspective, the invariant form of the essay of the fourth block may be set as essay research. The analysis made it possible to identify the main features of the essay: scientific, objectivity, analyticity.

The crucial role of the author's personality in the creations of Gerold Belger and the correlation of the described events with the present determines the ability of the essay to polemicize with the traditional interpretation and offer its own understanding of the object that claims to universality. The essay approach is functionally described by the dominance of the persuasion function, and in some cases, by persuading it, imposes the author's version on the reader, sometimes veiling this intention by creating the illusion of objectivity.

Conclusions

At this point of the research, we propose our definition of the essay genre. Essay is an invariant genre that has a close relationship with scientific, journalistic and fictional literature, however, it does not relate entirely to any of them. In view of its borderline position, the breadth of the functions performed, we have reason to classify texts with an implicit genre belonging to the essay genre.

The essay is related to scientific literature by its theme, which combines all objects of thought, mainly of the humanities: philosophy, literary theory and criticism, aesthetics, political science, sociology, and others. Though, the essay approach to the object in fiction differs from the scientific one in the leading role of the author's personality, which completely determines the principles of object analysis, that is, it is the paramount structure-forming factor of the essay. Moreover, essay is characterized by a special connection with time, increased actualization, which expresses the kinship of essayism and journalism, as well as expressiveness and imagery, a high degree of depth, originality and generalizing power, which determines the artistry of the essay.

Essays are undoubtedly a borderline invariant genre located at the intersection of literature, journalism, and science. In order to make a text in the essay genre, a clear and non-standard author's position is required. According to our reckoning, this is one of the main genre-forming features of an essay. At the same time, the characteristic of the author is significant — the main character of the essay. An essay author can play several roles: a real author, a social person, a private person. The whole structure of the text, its form, composition, vocabulary, and techniques depend on the resulting image of the author.

The essay pursues artistic-aesthetic and cognitive-practical tasks, thus, the dialogue is important for both the author and the reader. The method by which the author builds this dialogue is chosen individually. The most common methods and techniques: intertextuality, dialogueness, metaphor, first-person narration, rhetoric, and others.

The essay requires from the author a certain life experience, a high intellectual level. In this regard, the essay of the writer, translator, publicist Herold Belger is a kind of clot of the writer's creativity, summarizing the author's point of view on various topics: from the problems of language and literature, translation and journalism to socially significant philosophical problems of our time. The image of the author in Herold Belger's essay is associated with the personality of a sage, philosopher, aksakal, so one believes his word, expressed extremely accurately, in principle and sincerely.

The analysis showed that Belger's essay is typologically diverse and incorporates such types as essay-sketch, essay-artistic word, essay-reflection, and essay-research. In our view, the works of this author can be considered as invariant forms of artistic and publicistic essays, meaningfully and compositionally combining the features of fiction and journalism.

Clearly, the study of the border areas of literature, to which the essay belongs, is controversial. It seems that promising areas for further work may address a large number of problems. This is, for instance, the problem of the concept and typology of modern essays, identifying, on the one hand, common types of writing, such as associative essay, and on the other hand, a clearer justification of individual differences between the poetics of specific authors within the framework of one type of essay. In the latter case, it is necessary to trace the relationship of different forms in the work of a particular author, for example, the interaction of his essay with his own poetry. In the end, communicative issues cannot be ignored in the analysis of any text in general, since any literary text is nothing but a communicative form, and its reflection, in our opinion, can be useful within the framework of any literary-theoretical methodology.

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Герольд Бельгердің эссеистикасындағы инвариантты көркемдік формалар

Мақалада эссе жанры және оның инвариантты формалары қарастырылған. Авторлар эссені ғылыми, публицистикалық және көркем әдебиетпен тікелей байланысты жанр, бірақ олардың ешқайсысына мүлдем қатысы жоқ екенін айтады. Мақала авторларының пікірінше, эссенің құрылымдық қағидасы

— шығарма авторы тұлғасының жетекші рөлі. Эссе авторы бірнеше рөлдерде әрекет ете алады: нақты автор, әлеуметтік адам, жеке тұлға. Мәтіннің барлық құрылысы, оның формасы, құрамы, лексикасы, әдістерінің нәтижесі автордың бейнесіне байланысты болады. Сонымен қатар, мақала авторлары эссе стилистикасының тағы бір маңызды ерекшелігі — бейнелеу, экспрессивтілік — көркемдік көрінісі екенін айтады. Мақаланың мақсаты — жазушы және публицист Герольд Бельгердің эссеистикасындағы инвариантты көркемдік формалардың ерекшеліктерін анықтау. Талдау нәтижесінде авторлар Герольд Бельгердің эссеистикасы типологиялық жағынан әртүрлі және оның мына түрлерін қамтиды: эссе-очерк, эссе-көркем сөз, эссе-рефлексия, эссе-зерттеу. Авторлар бұл автордың шығармаларын көркем әдебиет пен журналистиканың белгілерін мазмұнды және композициялық түрде біріктіретін көркем және публицистикалық эссенің инвариантты формалары ретінде қарастырған жөн деп санайды.

Кілт сөздер: жанр, инвариант, эссе, типология, авторлық сана, көркем-публицистикалық эссе, эссе авторы.

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Инвариантные художественные формы в эссеистике Герольда Бельгера

В статье рассмотрены жанр эссе и его инвариантные формы. Авторами отмечено, что эссе — это жанр, имеющий непосредственную близость с научной, публицистической и художественной литературой, однако не относящийся целиком ни к одной из них. По мнению авторов, структурообразующим принципом эссе является ведущая роль личности автора произведения. Автор-эссеист может выступать в нескольких ролях: реальный автор, человек социальный, частное лицо. От того, каким в результате станет образ автора, зависит все построение текста: его форма, композиция, лексика, приемы. Кроме того, авторы статьи полагают, что другая, не менее важная, черта стилистики эссе — наличие образности, экспрессивности — того, что является выражением художественности. Цель статьи — выявить специфику инвариантных художественных форм в эссеистике писателя и публициста Герольда Бельгера. В результате анализа авторы формулируют выводы о том, что эссеистика Герольда Бельгера типологически разнообразна и включает такие ее виды, как эссе-очерк, эссе-художественное слово, эссе-размышление, эссе-исследование. Авторы утверждают, что произведения данного автора следует рассматривать как инвариантные формы художественно-публицистического эссе, содержательно и композиционно объединяющие признаки художественной литературы и публицистики.

Ключевые слова: жанр, инвариант, эссе, типология, авторское сознание, художественно-публицистическое эссе, автор-эссеист.

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