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Genre transformation in Simone de Beauvoir's work "Force of Circumstance"

Жанрова трансформація в роботі Сімони де Бовуар «Сила Обставин»

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Abstract

The publicity dominance is the characteristic of memoirs "Force of Circumstance" by Simone de Beauvoir. The idea of S. de Beauvoir influences the genre transformation. The scientific problem is to clarify the specifics of a genre. The aim of the article is to highlight the features of the genres in the novels, diaries, memoirs, interludes, tragedies, comedies as genre memoirs, to understand better the ideas of the writer. The methodology is represented by a biographical method in the study. The most important findings are as follows. The result is to interpret systematic, structured, orderly procedural writing activities. The attention is drawn to the writing process. Writing is a passion, mania, which is causing an addiction. The meaning of creativity is the knowledge of people, culture, history, progress. Genre transformations are the basis for explaining the problem in the work: the artist's activity and her place in the history. The existential fear of death is a central part of literary existentialism. The writer embodied the death fear in her own works.

Анотація

Публіцистична домінанта є ознакою мемуарів Сімони де Бовуар «Сила обставин». Ідеї С. де Бовуар впливають на жанрову трансформацію. Наукова проблема полягає у з'ясуванні специфіки жанру. Метою статті є висвітлення специфіки жанрів роману, щоденника, спогадів, інтермедії, трагедії, комедії у жанрі мемуарів, щоб краще зрозуміти ідеї письменниці. У дослідженні методологія представлена біографічним методом. Найважливіші досягнення наступні. Результат полягає в зображенні систематизованої, структурованої, упорядкованої процесуальної діяльності письменниці. Звертається увага на процес письма. Писати – це пристрасть, манія, яка викликає залежність. Сенса творчості – знання людей, культури, історії, прогресу. Жанрова трансформація потрібна для порушення проблеми твору: діяльність митця та його місце в історії. Екзистенційний страх смерті є центральною частиною літературного екзистенціалізму. Страх перед смертю письменниці втілила у власних творах.

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Key Words: S. de Beauvoir, genre, freedom, choice problem, image writer.

Ключові слова: С. Де Бовуар, жанр, свобода, проблема вибору, образ митця.

Introduction

The genre is defined as an established type of creativity in the literature theory. However, in literature evolution, the variability of genre can be traced due to historical conditions. The XX th century is characterized by genre mixing, transformation. It depends on the idea that an author wants to express. The work by the French writer Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) 'Force of Circumstance' written in 1963 was defined as memoirs by genre (Beauvoir, 1963). Genre of memoirs was formed on the verge of epic and lyric literature. The features of historical prose, scientific literature, biographies, documents, essays, notes, diaries can be revealed in memoirs. The scientific problem is to understanding genre connotations in the work by S. de Beauvoir 'Force of Circumstance'. It makes it possible to clarify how a genre-specific individual variant is formed under the influence of the ideas that the writer wants to reveal, as well as what makes a style.

Literature Review

The analysis of the work "Force of Circumstance" is implemented according to the phenomenon of literary existentialism (Barrett, 1962). The works of S. de Beauvoir often attract researchers and readers mainly as a reflection of the writer's feminist views (Celeux, 1986), while her works are a complex genre creation (Bergoffen, 1997). The poetry of essay genre combines epic, drama and lyrics (Harmash, Kholodniak, Kryvoruchko, Razumenko, & Razumenko, 2019). The characters' existences are reflected in their empirical experience, which unfolds in the artistic space.

The leading issue in the study of the writer's heritage is the recoding of her work for a better understanding of the poetics of literary existentialism (Ageeva, 1994). The study of the genre specificity of the memoirs 'Force of Circumstance' allows us, in our opinion, to expand the notion of the typology of literary existentialism (Scholz, Mussett, 2005). It manifests itself through the variability of the historic epoch of the mid-twentieth century, which is a transition that combines the modern denial of normative content and postmodern propensity to genre mixing.

The attempts to analyze S. de Beauvoir's creative path (Bergoffen, 2002), the establishment of her place in the literature history, the identification of a problematic range of works, features of the image of nature (Bertozzi, 2007), linguistic author's manner, the themes of death are reflected (Bair, 1991). They have appeared since the 1950's and ending with the present. The real interest in the poetry of S. de Beauvoir's prose arises only in the 90's of the twentieth century (Bouchardeau, 2007). Two works are dedicated to her literary creativity and existentialism: 'Simon de Beauvoir's works: the evolution of art images' and 'Simon de Beauvoir's creativity in the context of literary existentialism of the mid-twentieth century' (Kryvoruchko, 2012), (Kryvoruchko, 2014).

The "correlation" of S. de Beauvoir's work with the 'general' is important. This allows a better understanding of the 'differential features' of the "special" and the individual in the achievements of the writer. We trace the transformation of the genre on the basis of the typology. This is the synthesis of epic and lyrical genera, which combines novel, drama and lyrics (Seltzer, 2007), (Cohen, Menschenfreund, 2008), (Sandrine, 2010). Thus, we are aware of the genesis of the work of S. de Beauvoir (Tidd, 1999).

Outside the researchers' interest, there was an understanding of genre specifics (Kostikova, Bozhko, Razumenko, & Goloborodko, 2020). Therefore, an interpretation of the genre transformation in the memoirs 'Force of Circumstance' is vital.

The purpose of the article is to investigate the genre specifics in the memoirs by S. de Beauvoir 'Force of Circumstance' (1963) in terms of genres. It allows showing the harmonious combination of conceptual features of certain genres in her work. It is necessary to use a biographical method with some dominants such as the author as a subject of consciousness, to understand: the artist's mission is a creative process (Calderon, 2003).

As for the purpose set, we distinguish the following tasks: to show the features of different genres which were reflected in the memoirs, how it is revealed the mood, some disappointing

ideas, characters, and the specifics of the writer's work.

Methodology

We involved biographical method in the study. The biographical method allows us to take into account the ideas of the era through S. de Beauvoir's diaries, memoirs, the environment influence, social attitudes, etc. Also, the biographical method is used to characterize the work "Force of Circumstance" by Simone de Beauvoir and her life as the writer. The life of Simone de Beauvoir through biographical works makes up a large share in the work, but the work itself is much deeper and wider than her separate biography, since it is the concentrated expression of social consciousness.

The biographical method is a necessary component in considering biographical works as the memoirs "Force of Circumstance" by Simone de Beauvoir. This method allows for a deeper understanding of the writer. The biographical method is understood as a certain way of studying novels, diaries, memoirs, interludes, tragedies, comedies as genre memoirs, recognizing the personality of Simone de Beauvoir and her individual characteristics as the determining factors in the analysis and interpretation of her work.

This method recognizes the importance of the social environment, living conditions, and the writer's character in her work. It shows the study of the writer's inner world, including her character, worldview, ideological issues. It allows us to pay attention to different years of Simone de Beauvoir's life, the weaknesses and the hardness of her nature. Through the character traits, life events, thoughts, ideas, the writer's searches, the characteristic of memoirs "Force of Circumstance" is reflected; it explains all the diversity of human relations. The biographical method allows us to place different emphasis, namely: to study not only her literary work, but also the writer. By analyzing the literary work, using various biographical data for it, we recreate a portrait of the writer herself.

Results and Discussions

To understand better the specifics of the genre Force of Circumstance, one should pay attention to the structure of the work as an individual form of a specific text (Card, 2003). The structure of the work as a set of relations between discourse and narrative is fluid. However, this fluidity

forms a model of a certain type, which is inherent in the integrity, defined transformation and intuitive (author–author), sometimes communicative (author – reader) self-regulation. The structure is not deduced in the content by S. de Beauvoir, but it is concealed, prompting a reader to intellectual work.

The memoirs Force of Circumstance consist of two parts 'After the War' and 'Hard Times' ending with an epilogue, which occupies a place of conclusions. The parts are divided into Chapters, which, in turn, accommodate Subunits. In addition to dividing into Chapters and Subunits, the Diary (an interdisciplinary and adjacent formation) is introduced into the text and the Interlude (the subgenre of a dramatic kind). Thus, 'Part I' includes 5 Chapters: Chapter I includes 2 Subunits; Chapter II includes 7 Subunits (the 3rd Subunit contains 'The Diary' from April 30 to May 18, 1946, and the 4th Subunit contains 'The Diary' which is kept by days of the week); Chapter III includes 4 Subunits; Chapter IV includes 9 Subunits; Chapter V includes 2 Subunits. 'The Interlude' is introduced between the parts of the work. 'Part II' contains 6 Chapters: Chapter VI consists of 4 Subunits; Chapter VII includes 2 Subunits; Chapter VIII includes 2 Subunits; Chapter IX is 'The Diary' (from May 26 to October 28), and one Subunit; Chapter X includes 10 Subunits; Chapter XI includes 5 Subunits; and the 'Epilogue'. 'Part I' and 'Part II' are internally combined by a common numbering of Chapters ('Part II' begins with Chapter IV, not from I Chapter).

For us, the researchers, to understand the genre peculiarity of S. de Beauvoir's work, it is appropriate to draw the achievements of literature theorists. Theoretical works of the last 20-30 years have been implemented in complex studies. They include the basic interpretation of genre evolution. Therefore, it is quite appropriate to cite them. The researcher Oleksandr Halych relates memoirs to the 'lyrical epic' or 'intermediate' and 'related' formations (Halych et al., 2001).

Based on his point of view, we characterize 'Force of Circumstance' as a harmonious creative combination of epic and dramatic types and lyrical epic intermediate formations. On the genre level they are represented by a novel (epic), interlude (drama), memoirs, diary (lyrical epic).

Thus, S. de Beauvoir combines the epic and lyrical epic so that a reader does not notice the

synthesis of two genres during the communication. In 'Force of Circumstance' the writer creates a novel meta-narrative that has a panoramic view (the scenes of the second half of the 20th century in different countries, continents, cultures), story and plot diversity (artistic, political, common human spheres), the development of conflict lines (analysis psychology of characters and their attitude to certain events and circumstances), the desire for polyphony (the author's attempt to highlight different points of view).

In memoirs 'Force of Circumstance' it can be traced the tendency to historical prose, where the writer tries to submit her own biography according to the criteria of scientific knowledge. S. de Beauvoir uses the documentary historical essays, depicting the circumstances witnessed. Thus, there is the discovery of a journalistic dominant, inherent in all of her creation. Of course, her coverage of historical events is subjective, as it is reflected due to the selectivity of comprehension of certain events, the interpretation of which involves not documents, but the author's perception and assessment of facts and information. It should be noted that the writer tries to avoid a one-sided interpretation of events, but using facts is accompanied by a creative analysis in which the work's heroine is given a central place (Crosland, 1992).

The genre of a diary, on the one hand, is used by the writer to be more convincing. However, at the structural level the diary formally intersects the novel and memoirs. The chronotope of the novel makes the diary more complicated, giving it fragmentation and detailing, and the notes about the past offer an artistic 'documentary evidence', factography and emphasize the importance of the writer's judgments. On the other hand, the common ideological plan 'Force of Circumstance' is destroyed by the fragmentation and the absence of a single plot diary. Thus, the detailing is too thorough, creatively incomprehensible, and it seems superfluous.

S. de Beauvoir's diary can be related to the third genre type: detailed dry notes, in which all kinds of events, facts, meetings are not connected with each other and incomprehensible to a reader. This type can be represented in the classification by another researcher G. Kostiuk, comparing S. de Beauvoir's diary to another dairies such as 'The Diary' of the famous Ukrainian writer Volodymyr Vynnychenko (Halych et al., 2001).

'The Interlude' plays a very important role in 'Force of Circumstance'. According to the classification by another researcher Yevhen Vasyliiev, the genre of interlude is a small comic piece or scene performed between the actions of the main drama: it is not connected with the drama content, its purpose is to weaken the emotional tension and entertain the tired spectators (Halych et al., 2001). So, entertainment and comedy are central components of this genre. S. de Beauvoir transforms this genre ideologically but leaves a formal tradition.

'The Interlude' in 'Force of Circumstance', as already mentioned, is introduced between the 1st and 2nd Parts, it divides chronologically the book into the periods: 1945–1952; 1952–1963, however, the date 1952, according to the writer's testimony, is not a crucial one. 'The Interlude' divides the work into two parts and is not related to its content. However, the leading features of 'The Interlude', its entertaining and comedy character are transformed by the writer in the opposite direction. 'The Interlude' is a sensuous novel component, in which the book idea is explained to a reader, the peculiar aesthetic writer's concept is explained as well, it is stressed that her life sense is in the work. S. de Beauvoir's creativity and creative process are her life goal, which she brings to a reader in 'The Interlude'. So, the essence of author's aesthetics and the creative idea of the book are revealed in 'The Interlude'.

The purpose of Force of Circumstance was to demonstrate the writer's activity as a structured, systematic work that requires the life organization in a certain way: 'There is scarcely any way of describing work; you do it, and that's all. And so it is that in this book it takes up very little space, whereas in my life it takes up so much; my whole life is organized around it. I am insisting on this point, because the public is more or less aware of the time and trouble it takes to write an essay, but on the whole they imagine that a novel or a book of memoirs can just be dashed off in no time at all. 'There's not so much to that, I could have done as much myself,' a lot of young women said after reading 'The Memories of a Dutiful Daughter'; it's no coincidence that they did not in fact do as much. With one or two exceptions, all the writers I know work enormously hard; I'm like them' (Beauvoir, 1992a, p. 273).

S. de Beauvoir describes writing as a kind of 'torment of purification', which can be compared

with a passion or mania, causes a dependence sense. The creative process takes place only with certain rules. Besides the discipline, the writer emphasizes the important role of inspiration: 'It often happens that a sentence suddenly runs through my head before I go to bed, or unable to sleep, and I get up again and note it down' (Beauvoir, 1992a, p. 274). The creativity meaning for S. de Beauvoir is in the world knowledge, the author focuses on analyzing the time and time changes in all spheres of activity (people, culture, history, technical progress). Thus, in genre originality such as interlude introduction and novel code the forms are revealed as the opportunity to reach another potential poetical level as well as the problem ground is introduced, so the artist's work and her place in history.

The epilogue comes from the dramatic genre and traditionally is an integral part of the ancient Greek tragedy and comedy, a kind of viewer's appeal. During the Renaissance this monologue as an appeal was explained the work idea. In the XIX century the epilogue moved from drama to epic, where it performed a formal function, it is author's message. The epilogue finished the composition and revealed the characters' further fate. 'Epilogue' in S. de Beauvoir's work completes the composition formally, but changes it in the ideological sense, giving it the scientific character and the final peculiarity. In 'Epilogue' S. de Beauvoir tries to analyze her work in the context of her own self-perception and in interconnection with the people who had played an important role in shaping her creativity as an artistic phenomenon. She also defines the society attitude towards herself and distinguishes her own place in the literature.

In 'Epilogue' the author raises a problem, which still remains not sufficiently analyzed by literary scholars. S. de Beauvoir, despite her own great achievements, is still perceived as the J.-P. Sartre's 'shadow' (Moi, 1990). Unfortunately, even at the beginning of the XXI century, the most literature historians consider her creativity to be secondary. The exceptions are certain literary critics who researched directly S. de Beauvoir's works, by the way, they are all women (Descubes, 1974). The writer considers that Creative communication with J.-P. Sartre is a success of her own life, thanks to the harmony existed between them (Deutscher, 1997).

However, in 'Epilogue' she focuses on the general public opinion, which pushed her creativity into the background: 'It has been said

by some people that Sartre writes my books <...>' If you give any interviews, make it quite clear that you did write 'Les Mandarins'; you know what people are saying: that Sartre are standing behind you...' <...> Even more strongly held is the belief that all my convictions were put into my head by Sartre. <...> But people in our society really do believe that a woman thinks by her uterus' (Beauvoir, 1992b, p. 366). However, S. de Beauvoir emphasizes that a woman indeed chooses her man (Simons, 1990).

The writer notes that she accepted J.-P. Sartre's ideological potential and never tried to compete with him, because, in her opinion, a sexual opposition contradicts intellectualism and deprives a person's freedom. The very fact that she had enemies and opponents who were pushing her achievements to the background emphasizes her significance and importance.

The author concludes that contemporaries are never able to understand and appreciate adequately the modern artist, that's why the 'myths' are created around her. So, the society came up with two S. de Beauvoir's images: 1) a madwoman, an eccentric, dissolute, living in a perpetual orgy; 2) a pure intellect, spending her existence with books and sitting at her worktable. It is clear that she trained herself not to care for public opinion. In 'Epilogue' the writer explains the essence of the book 'Force of Circumstance'; it is to establish the truth about herself for contemporaries and descendants.

The writer, as we consider, has experienced vanity. But she managed to escape from the environment and step away. It was precisely the alienation in existence that made C. de Beauvoir indifferent to her place in history. Throughout her life she felt intuitively misunderstanding of her own goal in the life path, it caused a certain existential life position. S. de Beauvoir took her own fame negatively, as it forced her to live in isolation. However, intellectual privileges as sophisticated feelings that brought suffering became the main features of her non-conformism worldview.

The existential fear of death, which is the central component of literary existentialism, was embodied not only in her writings, but was comprehended by her throughout all her life. As for S. de Beauvoir, the fear of death was embodied in the fear of old age, which became for her not an external, but an internal age. She perceives the time meaning as a sense of inner age, the core of which is suffering.

The age at the emotional level is a rejection of any desires. The general expectation of death in her mind is formed in the existing fear of J.-P. Sartre's death (Daigle, 2009). She believes her life was succeeded as it was interesting. All plans have come true, but death, to which every person needs to be prepared subconsciously, remains unexpected. It was in this unexpectedness that the writer saw a deception. Thus, in spite of success, as a result it feels her disappointment at the being level.

Conclusions

We draw attention to the work of S. de Beauvoir 'Force of Circumstance'. We analyze the memoirs not in terms of acquaintance with the biographical events of S. de Beauvoir, but to clarify the form of the genre, which differs from the conventional one. We find that S. de Beauvoir has transformed the genre, and this is the creative achievement of the writer, because it distinguishes her from the general memoir discourse.

S. de Beauvoir wanted to reveal the specifics of the aesthetic search for literature in the middle of the XX century in her memoirs 'Force of Circumstance'. In her opinion, the traditional form of memoirs was not suitable for this. Therefore, the writer made a creative transformation of the genre of memoirs. She combined the features of a novel, diary, interlude, drama, memoir to better convey to the reader the idea: the meaning of the writer's life is creativity, existential disappointment, humility with disappointment, continuation of 'being' and 'writing'. This work is the result of the literary existentialism and philosophy of life of S. de Beauvoir. Personal and social ethical 'actions' are central to S. de Beauvoir. The feeling of 'femininity' as a culture consists of these 'actions'. S. de Beauvoir focuses on intuition, takes an active position in life, and defends the importance of the life of each individual.

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