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THE ESSAYIST TRADITION IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

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Abstract. Essayism in literature allows us to explore unique forms of expression of subjective opinion, values and worldview. This article examines the features of the essayist tradition in American and Uzbek literature, analyzes the main motives and directions, identifies the differences and similarities of these traditions, and evaluates their socio-cultural functions.

Keywords: *stages, stylistic features, abstract, universal issues, literary tradition.*

The essay as a literary genre plays a unique role in the literary and cultural context, providing authors with the opportunity to express personal reflections, analyze social phenomena and explore philosophical issues in a relatively free form. Since its inception, the essay has become a powerful tool for conveying a subjective view, philosophical ideas and public opinion, which makes it significant not only in literature, but also in a wide cultural environment.

Essay writing in American literature is a rich and multifaceted tradition that reflects key philosophical ideas, social challenges, and cultural characteristics of American society. The development of this genre in the United States went through different stages, covering topics such as personal freedom, democratic values, criticism of social norms and the pursuit of self-knowledge.

The main stages and authors of American essay studies

The Age of Transcendentalism (XIX century) One of the earliest and most significant stages in the development of American essayism was the era of transcendentalism, which was represented by such authors as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. In his essays "Self-Confidence" and "Nature", Emerson reflected on the importance of individualism, intuition and spiritual independence [1, 2]. His essays emphasized the value of personal opinion and the ability of each person to achieve inner harmony. In turn, Thoreau, in his famous essay "Walden, or Life in the Woods", wrote about living in solitude and the importance of self-knowledge through connection with nature [3]. These authors laid the foundations for the further development of American essay studies, where personal freedom and self-determination played a key role.

XX century: Social Criticism and Cultural Analysis. In the 20th century, American essay studies significantly expanded its scope, and its subjects became more diverse. James Baldwin and his essays, such as "Notes on a Native Son," have become an important part of the cultural and political dialogue. Baldwin used the essay to criticize racism and social inequalities in the United States, addressing issues of racial identity and cultural heritage [4]. His essayistic prose is an attempt to better understand the social roots of conflicts and create a space for dialogue.

The influence of women essayists also increased during this time. Joan Didion, in her essays "Beautiful Women" and "Notes from Her Hometown," explored social and cultural changes, using personal impressions to analyze social realities. Her style — clear, attentive to detail — became recognizable and influenced an entire generation of writers.

Modern Essay Studies. Modern American essayism continues the legacy of the past, focusing on personal experience as a way of criticizing society. Author Susan Sontag, for example, explores cultural phenomena such as photography and disease through the lens of an essay, combining personal observations with cultural analysis [5]. Modern essayists often turn to issues of gender, ecology, psychology and technology, considering their impact on the individual and society. The essay has also

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become a platform for discussing the topics of mental health and personal resilience, which highlights the importance of personal experience for understanding broader social issues.

American essayism is characterized by a huge variety of themes and styles. It combines autobiographical elements with social analysis, when the authors use personal experience to clarify and analyze pressing issues of society. For example, the essays of Baldwin and Didion take the form of not just a narrative, but a personal testimony, where the authors bring their views and feelings. This tradition persists today, making American essayism especially sensitive to personal experiences, which are transformed into universal themes that affect wide audiences.

Essay writing in American literature has become a powerful tool through which authors comprehend and analyze dynamic cultural and social processes. It serves as a means to understand American identity, emphasizing the value of individual opinion, freedom, and a critical view of society's norms. The essay gives the authors the opportunity to explore not only the personal, but also the public, making their work an important part of the American cultural heritage.

Essayistics is characterized by great thematic and stylistic diversity, which allows it to be a flexible literary form capable of reflecting a wide range of cultural, philosophical and social ideas. The variety in themes and styles makes the essay attractive to both authors and readers, ensuring its relevance and versatility. Let's consider the main thematic areas and stylistic features characteristic of essay studies.

- Thematic diversity
- Philosophical reflections

Philosophical essays are focused on the study of abstract and universal issues, such as the meaning of life, questions of being, freedom and moral values. Such essays, for example, are characteristic of the works of Montaigne, whose essayism is based on deep reflection on human nature. This approach allows the authors to consider eternal questions through the prism of personal perception and analysis.

The essay as a genre is actively used for the analysis and criticism of social and cultural phenomena. Essayists such as George Orwell and James Baldwin raise thorny issues related to social injustice, politics, cultural change, and the moral dilemmas of society [6]. This area of essayism focuses on understanding social problems and their impact on personality.

Essays are often used to analyze works of art, literature, and cinema. Essayists such as Susan Sontag and Umberto Eco explore works of art, consider their cultural influence and symbolism, reflecting on the role of art in society [7]. A literary essay often combines criticism and analysis with the author's personal attitude to the work, which creates the effect of a "conversation" with art.

This type of essay focuses on the individual experiences and personal experiences of the author. Personal essays become a platform for understanding significant events, experiences and introspection. Classic examples are the essays by Joan Didion, who addresses her memories and personal stories, revealing themes of loneliness, loss and self-search. Writing in this genre helps the reader to feel the personal dimension of the author and his unique life experience.

In recent decades, environmental essays have become an important field that raises issues of nature conservation, climate change and the role of man in the world. Essayists such as Phillip Lopate explore how nature affects human life and culture, call for responsibility for the planet, and express a love of nature through their observations and reflections [8].

- a) Style diversity
- b) Conciseness and simplicity

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Many essayists strive for conciseness and clarity, using short phrases, clear formulations and a simple structure to convey a thought without unnecessary complexity. This style makes the essay accessible to a wide audience, allowing you to focus on the main idea.

Essayists often use metaphors, symbols, and figurative expressions to convey complex thoughts and emotional responses. For example, Susan Sontag's essay "On Photography" presents photography as a metaphor for time and memory. This technique enhances the expressiveness and emotional depth of the text, making it memorable and multi-layered.

Essay writing often takes the form of a conversation with the reader, where the author directly addresses him, creating an effect of intimacy and trust. This style allows the reader to feel like a participant in reflections, immersing himself in the personal reflections and experiences of the author.

Many essayists use irony and humor to emphasize the absurdity or paradox of a situation, to draw attention to the contradictions of society. For example, the essayist David Sedaris is famous for his witty style and satirical view of everyday situations, which allows you to look at familiar things from a new angle.

A personal essay often expresses the emotional experiences of the author, conveying feelings of sadness, joy, gratitude or despair. This style makes the essay closer to fiction and allows the reader to feel the depth of the author's emotions, which is especially typical for autobiographical essays.

The richness of themes and styles makes the essay a unique literary genre, capable not only of conveying personal reflections, but also of exploring important social and cultural issues. This diversity allows authors to find fresh ways to express their thoughts and create works that remain relevant and profound regardless of time and cultural framework.

Essays are important to American culture and society, serving as a form of self-expression, social criticism, and cultural analysis. It helps to shape public opinion, reflect cultural values and discuss current social issues, occupying a special place in the American literary tradition.

1. A form of personal expression and cultural dialogue

The essay in American culture is a unique form of self-expression where authors can freely share personal thoughts, views and experiences. This creates a connection between the author and the reader, enhancing the sense of identity and self-awareness. The author, whether James Baldwin with reflections on racial conflicts or Joan Didion with an analysis of social exclusion, conveys through an essay an individual view that allows readers to comprehend problems through the prism of someone else's experience.

2. Social criticism and transformation of society

American essay studies are often used as a tool of social criticism. It allows authors to discuss important social issues such as racism, inequality, human rights, political injustice and gender issues. Writers such as Ralph Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Ta-Nehisi Coates have used essays to critique social norms, questioning conventional wisdom. Their essays often serve as a powerful call for change and stimulate public debate, influencing American social movements and politics.

3. Search and formation of national identity

The essayist helps Americans make sense of their national identity, values and cultural characteristics. From the first essayists of the Transcendentalist era, such as Emerson and Thoreau, to modern authors, American writers use essays to explore the issues of freedom, independence and self-expression that underlie American ideology. The essay thus becomes a way to preserve and convey cultural values and views, strengthening the sense of national belonging.

4. Research and transfer of cultural experience

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The essay serves as a form of cultural archive, where traditions, social mores and cultural phenomena of different eras are reflected. American essayism is both a mirror and a cultural repository that allows you to preserve memories and pass them on to the next generations. For example, the works of John Updike or David Foster Wallace on middle-class life in the United States give modern readers and researchers the opportunity to understand the cultural and social conditions of a certain time.

5. Adaptation and integration of new ideas

American culture highly values individualism and diversity, which is reflected in the variety of topics and styles of essay writing. The essay offers the authors a platform for experimenting with new ideas, philosophical trends and literary forms. Through the essay, new ideas penetrate and consolidate the cultural consciousness, contributing to the adaptation of society to a rapidly changing world.

6. Enrichment and development of American literature

Essay studies have had a significant impact on the development of American literature, shaping its style and subject matter. In the American literary tradition, the essay has become an important genre that combines elements of fiction, journalism, and philosophy. This genre not only expands the scope of literature, but also offers a unique way to convey reflections, which over time becomes an important part of the literary canon.

Thus, essay writing in American culture is not only a literary genre, but also an important form of social and cultural work. It helps society to discuss important issues, explore identity, critically analyze social norms and preserve cultural values. The essay allows Americans to comprehend and rethink their society, serving as a source of inspiration, analysis and change at the same time.

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