

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2020.23.3.12>**НОВАЯ «ЭСТАМПА» В РОМАНАХ РОЛАНДО ИНОХОСЫ**

Научная статья

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Аннотация

В статье рассматривается процесс становления «эстампы» с момента ее возникновения из формы графического искусства до перехода в литературу и закрепления в творчестве авторов-чиканос. Изучается роль «эстампы» в романе мексикано-американского писателя Роландо Инохосы «Estampas del valle y otras obras» (1973) и его английском варианте «The Valley» (1983) на основе терминологической базы, описанной Хуаном Бенетом. Выдвигается гипотеза о необходимости выделения «эстампы» в ее современном виде в отдельный литературный жанр.

Ключевые слова: эстампа, Роландо Инохоса, литература чикано, мексикано-американская литература.

RETHINKING “ESTAMPA” IN ROLANDO HINOJOSA’S NOVELS

Research article

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Abstract

The article dwells upon the formation of “estampa,” which originated as an artistic engraving and evolved into a literary genre in Chicano writings. The paper analyses “estampa” in the novel “Estampas del valle y otras obras” (1973) and its English version “The Valley” (1983) by Rolando Hinojosa, making use of the terms introduced by Juan Benet. A hypothesis that “estampa” should be viewed as a genre is put forward.

Keywords: estampa, Rolando Hinojosa, Chicano literature, Mexican-American literature.

Introduction

In 1973 Rolando Hinojosa-Smith (1929-), a Mexican-American writer, published his first novel “Estampas del valle y otras obras,” which was translated under the title “The Valley” ten years later, in 1983. In 1994 a new edition “Estampas del valle” was issued. The Spanish name of the novel was one of the reasons for scholars and Chicano writers to rediscover the term “estampa” which has been extensively used by many researchers, although it can hardly be found in any literary dictionary. This research aims at understanding “estampa” today by means of textual and comparative analysis.

Discussion

According to Borja Rodríguez Gutiérrez, the word “estampa,” or engraving, became commonly used in Spanish literature in 1830s, when they began to produce “estampas” for commercial reproductions and illustrations for books and newspapers by means of lithography and wood engraving. “Estampa” as a form of artistic engraving gave rise to literary “estampa.” Spanish folk engravings, called “estamperia popular,” encompassed three main types of prints: “estampas” which were mainly printed in books, “aleluyas,” illustrated religious leaflets, and “hilera de soldados,” cutouts for children, portraying soldiers. At first “estampas” complemented the text, but later they were printed without any verbal part or with several lines below [8]. As for “aleluyas,” their topic was generalized to such a degree that nothing remained of their religious focus but the name. “Aleluyas” comprised a number of chronologically ordered vignettes or “estampas,” small illustrations with rhymed lines [7]. “Aleluyas” were also referred to as “the literature hanging on the rope” (Sp. literatura de cordel), which describes the way they were sold. “Literatura de cordel,” verses about everyday life, historical events and celebrations, originated in Portugal and Spain in the sixteenth century and later made part of Spanish Golden Age drama. With the development of transport and post, “estampa” reached every corner of the Spanish Empire, including New Spain and its capital Mexico City.

In the New World, before Rolando Hinojosa, the term was used by the Mexican writer Julio Torri (1889-1970), who called one of his mini tales “Estampa” [9]. Researchers usually refer to Julio Torri’s short works as “sketches,” comparing them to prose poems by Oscar Wilde. His sketches bear resemblance to prose poems, since Torri employs alliteration and creates rhythm, his text is quite descriptive in itself. “Estampa” is treated differently in Hinojosa’s novels. Although it requires a closer study, at first glance, the only parameter that unites Torri’s and Hinojosa’s “estampa” is the short format of their works. While Torri created separate short tales or sketches, Hinojosa’s “Estampas del valle” is a novel which contains four parts, each of them is divided into numerous fragments that can be considered “estampas.”

Juan Benet (1927-1993), a Spanish writer and theoretician, studied “estampa” and made an attempt to define it. Benet singles out two types of composition “argumento” (Eng. plot), under which he understands traditional linear type of composition based on the plot, and “estampa.” “Estampa,” according to Benet, is a series of images, that are constantly changing or moving, or, in other words, a projection of immobile images changing under certain circumstances [1, P. 88]. “Estampa” is the idea of image-effect that leaves traces and haunts reader’s consciousness by fragmenting the narrative and intensifying sections of the text [6, P. 34]. That is to say, in “argumento” type of composition, all events are logically connected and explained, consequently, events are more significant than images, while in “estampa” images prevail over events [2, P. 148-151].

One of the main characteristics of “estampa” is its being “simultaneously chaotic,” it means that “estampa” mirrors the way we keep our memories [3, P. 45]. Our experience and emotions are not preserved in our consciousness successively or linearly. Instead they are constantly moving, changing and interacting, like pieces in a kaleidoscope. All in all, Benet defines “estampa” as a type of composition which is characterized by fragmented non-linear narration. Pieces of “estampa” can be read separately and independently, regardless of their order in the text, as images produced by “estampa” are more important than the plot. A choice of words, which describe our experience, is significant as well, that is why in “estampa” the style predominates over the plot. In addition, “estampa” is usually quite short.

Anyway, it seems that “estampa” is not merely a type of composition, since describing “estampa,” Benet also uses terms such as “model,” “form” and “literature.” It may be assumed that “estampa” is closer to a genre than to a composition, as it resembles flash fiction of short short stories. At the same time, “estampa” is not clearly defined as it has been constantly developing. “Estampa,” which originated from artistic engravings and was later combined with verses, passed to Spanish Golden Age drama, where it was conserved in the form of vignettes, short descriptive scenes. Vignettes are not stand-alone works that can be found in all literary genres. The fact that “aleluyas,” a variety of “estampas,” initially consisted of vignettes gave rise to the confusion in terms and led to the current situation when scholars use these terms interchangeably. In Mexico “estampa” evolved into prose poetry in Julio Torri’s works. And in the USA “estampa” was finally converted into fiction, similar to the stream-of-consciousness novel, while the form of “aleluyas” presumably contributed to the creation of comics.

Hinojosa explained his choice of “estampa” by “a sense of place,” that is the key to understanding Chicano community: “For the writer – this writer – a sense of place was not a matter of importance; it became essential. And so much that my stories are not held together by the *peripeteia* or the plot as much as by *what* people who populate the stories say and *how* they say it, how they look at the world out and the world in...” [4, P. 21]

In other words, Hinojosa’s explanation fits Benet’s definition of “estampa,” Hinojosa recognizes the fact that in his novels the plot is of secondary importance, it is subordinate to the composition and the style of “estampa.” In “Estampas del valle,” Hinojosa creates a vast amount of characters and several narrators, constantly switching their points of view and the object of narration throughout the novel, to make temporal and spatial ellipsis. Like in “estampas” of the nineteenth century, where the story is told through a number of small vignettes, Hinojosa’s “estampas” are not closely connected, there are always narrative gaps between them. These numerous omissions make the readers pay more attention to the text, plunge them into the story, as the readers try to establish connection between different events and characters, combining numerous fragments of the text and narrative perspectives, filling in the missing parts of the narrative using their imagination in order to get to the heart of Hinojosa’s fictional world.

For Hinojosa “estampa” is also a way to gain objectivity and avoid prejudice. Hinojosa wants his novels to produce the same effect on the readers as the artistic “estampas” did in the nineteenth century, which today might be compared to documentary photography. This conclusion can be made, taking into account the way Hinojosa rendered the names of the parts of “Estampas del valle” in English: An Olio. One daguerreotype plus photographs (Sp. Estampas del valle), Rafe Buenrostro. Delineations for a first portrait with sketches and photographs (Sp. Una vida de Rafe Buenrostro). Sometimes It Just Happens That Way. A study of Black and White Newspaper Photographs (Sp. Por esas cosas que pasan), Lives and Miracles. Final entry in the photographic variorum (Sp. Vidas y milagros).

Conclusion

“Estampa” had had a long way to go before it became what we know today. It has left a lasting imprint on all literary genres and got a new lease of life in the novels by Rolando Hinojosa and some other Chicano writers.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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