

## „THE HOME OF BEING”: FINDING ONE’S PLACE IN THE LITERARY WORLD OF H. BELGER’S WORKS

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**Abstract:** *The search for a lost home is one of the most popular archetypal themes in world culture. In the present work, we tried to reconstruct the archetype of „home” using the translational text-the literary work of the Russian author of German origin H. Belger The House of the Exile. Belger is the author in whose texts new world pictures arise. Moreover, both his multilingualism and life credo of „world responsiveness” contribute to this. According to his beliefs, there are no language, culture and ethnic groups barriers but rather there are bridges between them. Using some of the manifold research methods (including diachronic analysis, hermeneutical approach, mythopoetic interpretation and stylistic analysis) we came to the conclusion that Berger’s universal idea of Home and Homelessness is connected to the philosophical categories of Being-here (Dasein) and the-They.*

**Keywords:** archetype, mythopoetics, Belger, Kazakh literature.

Kazakh literature is extremely rich in archetypal content. The fact that literary texts are so dense in archaic clusters makes an archetype *a tool of perception* while interpreting a literary text in its full stylistic harmony. Archetype, as it is well known, is a cluster of collective experience, a universal scenario of the individual’s mental reactions to the world outside. In the process of analysis, we will attempt to reconstruct the archetype both on the level of poetic elements (subjective organization of the text, the literary world of the work, etc.) and on the level of individual codes, represented by linguistic means (metaphors, allegories, etc.): spatial codes, spontaneous, somatic, food, subject ones. This method could be defined as a combined one - the method of explication aimed at deduction of the knowledge (expanding) from the subtext (implication) is in this case combined with method of explanation implying the presence of hermeneutic commentary (explanation).

In modern literary criticism, archetypes are generally used to denote universal human and fundamental motifs, patterns of images and ideas that form all artistic and literary structures.

Home is one of the very basic archetypes bearing the inclusive ideas of the collective unknown about the reality („*our circle*”, „*we*”, „*motherland*”, „*the world*”, etc.). Thus, in the artistic text, the archetype

reconstructs not only the idea of a human dwelling, but also recreates the model of the whole community living in a certain place on earth.

For quite legitimate reasons, each ethnic group believes that their living in a certain place has its own teleology.

Space is perceived by nomadic and settled communities differently. The space of a nomad is dynamic, „*camping ground*”, while the space of a settled man (farmer) consists of series of circles diverging from the sacral center, fading closer to the boundaries of the unknown.

The boundaries of the universe diverge from „*a man*”; he is the „*reference point*” in space. The closest circle to a person consists of objects which he can touch physically (body parts, clothing). The second circle is the nearest surroundings, Home. Home has borders (a window, a threshold), but it is associated only with *exclusivity of space*. This meaning is accumulated at the very heart of the archetype under scrutiny.

At first the world was unexplored and was fraught with danger. To explore the world, i. e. *to own it*, a man had to allot it (split it) and then reunite it once again. „*Striving to embrace as much space as possible, transform unknown Chaos into something familiar, an archaic human throws a mental grid of some kind on the reality—a system of binary and ternary contrapositions*”<sup>1</sup>

Forces of nature that historically helped people to survive were worshiped (sun, sky, spring, summer, warmth, earth). The opposing forces of nature were perceived as hostile.

The housing, centered on the hearth (and later the altar was added), provided a man with an opportunity to survive. Therefore, in the structure of the archetype „*Home*” there are opposing elements:

- 1) closeness of home vs openness of external space;
- 2) security, familiarity of the inner world vs hostility, unknown and unexplored nature of external world;
- 3) settled location of home vs the dynamic nature of a person (arrival and departure);
- 4) having a home (shelter, haven) vs absence of home (homelessness, placelessness, vagabondage);
- 5) one’s own place (and safe environment) vs. stranger’s outer space (and environment).

All events that take place in the character’s life are connected with the outer space, that is, they go beyond Home; Therefore the archetype of Home is often contrasted with the archetype of Forest (hostile

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<sup>1</sup> V. N. Toporov, *Primitive notions of the world. Essays on the history of natural science knowledge about antiquity*, Moscow, 1982, p. 25.

environment), that include the motives of the *road, wanderings and homelessness*.

„*One's own home is the first and foremost universe of a man, comprising one's memories, thoughts, dreams and thereby organizing the connection of times. Home is also a shelter, the last pillar left in life*”.<sup>2</sup> That's why the archetypal couple „*Home-Homelessness*” demands, to our mind, more careful and thorough studying.

To understand this ontological pair is the task the literary works of the prominent Kazakh writer Herald Belger are devoted to (the man, who has an excellent command of 3 languages: German, Russian and Kazakh).

### **The themes of finding and losing home in the literary works of H. Belger**

The Belgers family was deported to Kazakhstan from the Volga German Autonomy. Therefore, the loss of fundamental roots, the eternal search for a home lost became the leitmotifs of his works.

Belger creates new world images in his work, devoid of any unification and „*cognitive simplification*” whatsoever-i. e. a schematic cognitive method of being, which is based on a linear reaction to reality. If we develop the idea of Gachev a little bit further, the idea that every ethnic group „*throws*” the grid of a unique world view on the reality, thus ordering the Cosmos around itself, then Belger's „*grid*” will not be at the intersection of binary oppositions generated by a particular ethnic group. His multilingualism, which the writer metaphorically expressed with the formula „*three strings of my soul*”, was a basis, upon which Belger managed to create a more complex model of the world, both heuristically and aesthetically. „*The German language, the Russian language, the Kazakh language are like the melodies of three strings. The three strings of my soul*”.<sup>3</sup>

Bearing in mind Heidegger's idea that it is Language is the House of Being, we invariably come to the conclusion that the being of Belger was perpetually passing in three language dimensions, but not in isolation from one another, but in continuum.

Belger came from the family of the Volga Germans (Wolgakolonisten, Wolgadeutsche), peoples who appeared in Russia as a result of political activity of Catherine II. According to the manifestoes

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<sup>2</sup> V. A. Maslova, *Cognitive Linguistics*, Minsk, Tetrasistems, 2004, p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> G. Belger, *Motives of three strings*, Almaty, Zhazushy, 1986, p. 2.

of the empress, settlers from German states settled in the Lower Volga region in the 1760s. The fate of the Volga Germans turned out to be a dramatic one: having received their own autonomy in 1917, the Volga German Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, they were deported in 1941 by Stalin's decree to Kazakhstan and Siberia. This led to a crisis of national identity, the decline of the language and culture, intensive assimilation with neighboring ethnic groups and a persistent sense of „*loss of roots*”, „*forlornness in the world*”, „*eternal wanderings*”, „*being neither here nor there*” (A. Schmidt) in respect of the whole ethnic group. There happened a redistribution of ethnic and social statuses, as the result of which a Russian German turned into „*a deterritorialized individual*” (M. Tlostanova).

A sense of ethnic „*restlessness*” is typical of many Russian Germans. As E. Ziefert notes in her thesis, „*the world model for Russian Germans is the road leading to home, to homeland. It is a mixed Russian-German world: according to G. Gachev, the world model for the Germans is Home; for Russians is the direction to infinity, an open road. Russian Germans have two of these world models combined. The difference between the German (Home) and Russian-German (the aspiration to home) world models lies in the presence of Home and its absence. The Russian Germans world outlook is dynamic, but it is characterized by the prevalence of statics over dynamics, having arisen in the confrontation of the forced camping-ground*”.<sup>4</sup>

However, H. Belger himself belongs to one of the few so-called „*happy Germans*” who managed to overcome the crisis of their own otherness and to find a foothold in their multilingualism. The writer defined Kazakhstan for himself quite simply, as „*The land of my honor*”. But Belger did not come at this conclusion at once. It is enough to have a look at the semantics of the titles of his works in order to see the pathway of the growing author's self-perception of himself-in-the-world, himself-in-the-home: *The Pine house on the edge of the village*, *TujukSu* (translated from Kazakh „*Dead-end*”, „*Quiet Whirlpool*”), *The House of the Exile*. In first case, we notice a pronounced sense of being peripheral, „*marginal*”, and outside of his CIRCLE. The phrase „*Pine House*” is only strengthens this impression - that is a house built of wood, representing a model of different way of life i. e. more sedentary one, agricultural one. Thus „*Home*” enters into some kind of confrontation with „*aul*” i. e. a different cultural model. One cannot help but pay attention to the

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<sup>4</sup> Y. I. Zeyfert, *Genre processes in the poetry of Russian Germans in the second half of the XX century-the beginning of the XXI century*, Thesis for Doctor of Philological Sciences, Karaganda, 2007, p. 445.

singular-plural contrast of the title: the house is singular (the person living in the house is lonely), the aul is a collective notion, consists of numerous individuals. The next name is *TujukSu*, which means „*Quiet water*”, „*The Backwater*”, metaphorical meaning of it is „*the dead end*”. The characters of the novel actually named their aul like this, having determined its further desolation, decline and extinction. Symptomatically that the name of the village, representing a „*quiet*”, „*sedentary*” life, which essentially contradicts the very mentality of the Kazakhs, who for hundreds of years have been a dynamic peoples. Finally, *The House of the Exile* is a novel-result, telling the story of how within three generations of characters, including newcomers, „*outsiders*”, the protagonist finally becomes included into the society: his house is being built by the dwellers of the entire village.

Aul is the first ontological „*circle*” of the Belger’s main characters: „*Aul is a native hearth. Aul is like a big family. Aul is your own shelter in the only land, under the only sky. Aul is your conscience, love, care, pride, your green pier and joy. Aul is the beginning of homeland*”.

An aul slowly *dies* in the novels of Belger; important concepts such as „*IMAN*” disappear along with it (a complex concept that has no analogues whatsoever, reflecting the idea of conscience, morality, spiritual duty in the Kazakh language in a complex way), „*TOGETHERNESS/COLLECTIVITY*” and „*CONTINUITY*”. On the pages of his works, Belger paints a „*mental portrait*” of the Kazakh ethnos, which is can be seen in observance of important commandments (scripts, instructions). In the „*Air of Time*” the author shares the most significant of them: „*Nobody has ultimately taught us, happy-go-lucky fellows from aul, some kindness, humanism and kind-heartedness. These qualities were inculcated in us subconsciously, from the examples of everyday life. They flowed from the Kazakhs’ mentality, which had been formed for many years*”.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the archetype of Home is a regulative concept that directly affects human behavior. Scripts referring to this archetype are quite diverse („*The house must be protected*”, „*One always returns home*”, etc.). They can be connected both with „*one’s circle*”, as well as with personal self-identification. Its manifestation can be either expansive (when the House is equalled with the world), or „*compressed*” (HOME=MAN). The house can have a variety of „*external morphology*” (an apartment, Khrushchev-era apartments, a communal one, mansion, manor, outhouse, etc.). The

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<sup>5</sup> G. Belger, *Air of time*, Almaty, Balalar adabiyeti, 2012, p. 10.

person in relation to the HOME acts either as an organizing force or as a destroying one.

### **Reconstruction of the archetype „home” in the novel *The House of the Exile***

Belgers' characters are autobiographical in many ways. The main characters' development tends to follow the same plot patterns „*loss of a home-nomadic/vagabond lifestyle-getting used to a new station in life-finding a new home*”. David Ehrlich, Edmund Worm and other „*Russlanddeutsche*” in the Belgers' magnificent epic (10 volumes of his writings can be considered a thematic unity) find themselves in a paradoxical situation: each of them has more than one homeland and at the same time they all are eternal vagabonds, travelers, pilgrims. The title of the novel *The House of the Exile* is an oxymoron in the strict sense of the word, which helps to manifest the antithesis of important concepts in the strong position of the text: dynamics and statics, homelessness and finding one's place in the world, the outcomes of the heroes' journeys, full of wanderings and sacrifices.

In his essay *El* Belger wrote about particular importance of three homes-his three homelands: the grandmother's house in the Volga region, the home-hearth in Northern Kazakhstan and the parental home in Tashkent. The theme of the motherland and the mythologeme of home are related to the opposing theme of homelessness. The confrontation of these motifs and loss of fundamental roots encourage the characters to enhance the knowledge of their outer and inner worlds. When the Belger's character (namely a typical character) embarks on a journey, which resembles the adventures in the mythical quest, the author uses a number of techniques to help readers penetrate to the core of existential loneliness of his characters.

The novel *The House of the Exile* is comprised of three parts. In each part one of the three main characters (David, Christian and Harry) is introduced. All of them are special settlers, who suddenly lost the status of „*Soviet people*” and became „*enemies of the people*” due to the historical circumstances. Their houses have been pillaged and looted and their patronymics have been erased or changed to foreign „*analogs*” so drastically, that they can relate to neither cultural-linguistic nor human identities. Doctor David Erlich, Labor Army member Christian and schoolboy Harry enter a stage of nomadic way of life and start finding their station in life. The characters find themselves in the Kazakh village named Kzyl-Tu (the „*Red Flag*”), and the plot pathway of each of the

characters goes in different directions. David chooses the path of selfless service to people and eventually arrives at the idea that one should live in the present and let go of the past. Christian does not take a fancy to his „*mandatory homeland*” and dies in a foreign land. Harry comes to discover his individual identity in the Kazakh language, a communicative bridge to the outside world.

All the characters are alone in their search. The author explains their feeling by using expressive vocabulary: orphanhood, vagabondage, woeful vagabonding, cavalry. The writer applies the so-called focal length technique, when the scale of the narration changes from a close-up to a pan shot. Characters are opposed to the whole world; they feel „*small*”, „*tiny like a worm*”, while the world around them is boundless and wide, so that the feeling of loneliness, lostness, abandonment would come to the point of greatest intensity. The author applies this technique in several ways, by contrasting images and placing other texts within his novel. For one, David Ehrlich sings „*a little Hans’ song*” over and over again after his deportation to Kazakhstan. „*Poor little Gansikbas knocked around a foreign land for seven years*”. David relates to „*little Gansik*” and feels that the world around him is immensely huge.

The loneliness of the characters is vividly conveyed by the alternation of retrospective-synchronous narrative plans, due to which we find out about the past of the character and his once happy life in the Volga region in former times. David’s family (his wife Lydia and their little son Arno) remain in the past. David bitterly realizes that such wives are created for „*prosperous husbands*”. Their conflict was caused not only by a series of social problems, due to which David lost his former status. The difference between them also lies in the invisible line of ethnic self, so delicate that the character prefers not to speak about it openly („*There are things so delicate that I had rather not mention them*”). Belger develops the idea about the inmost essence of each person, which should not be betrayed. This essence lies in the respect for „*the national spirit*”. David’s wife Lydia Istratova violates the unwritten code that says to respect the people, even if they are *different people*. Many of her actions speak volumes about her unwillingness to be part of the Other. She keeps her maiden name and does not take her husband’s surname. She also does not let other people address her „*Frau*” (infringement of the phatic communication canon). Lydia is critical to the fact that the son is gradually learning German language from his „*Carl peers*”. Her negative rejection reaches its apotheosis when she flatly refuses to join in her husband’s homelessness: „*-Мы с Арношкой будем жить, как прежде, у*

родителей... А ты... А ты...еще неизвестно, как все обернется...устроишься...дайшь нам знать... тогда... тогда... Словом, так будет лучше. Нечего горячку пороть”.<sup>6</sup>

It is no coincidence that she uses sharply parceled phrases in her inconsistent, vague speech conveying a lack of her definite plans for the future. David ends their relationship symbolically by calling his wife a „*Russe Machka*”. Although this is not an offensive expression, Lydia takes it as an insult as it highlights her alienation from Russian German community. Only her husband avoids this stereotyping word, which turns out to be an aleatic index, i.e. it indicates the true qualities of a character/essence.

All in all, the wanderings of the character begin with the loss of the house and family breakdown, a real tragedy which David painfully goes through. The epigraph of the novel contains lines from Anna Akhmatova’s poem *The Cellar of Memory* (*But where is my home, where is my reason now?*).

In the first chapter of the novel David is rigidly defined as a „*traveler*”. It is David’s self-identification, and the recurrent definition of the author, which can be associated with Goethe’s *Wanderer’s Night Song*. The theme idea of the poem, which is presented in the novel as an allusion („*Soon now peace comes to you*”), is anticipated in a certain way. Not coincidentally, the poem exists in the aspect of cultural trinity: it was created in German, it became an integral part of the Russian (the poem was translated by Lermontov and Fet), and later Kazakh cultures (Abai’s translation). This a personally important text for Belger as a Kulturträger.

So, David is a wanderer, a „*homeless pilgrim*”, who was deprived of home and loving family environment. This social annihilation, according to L. N. Gumilev, was once called „*the exile from life*”. „*People who have offended canons were expelled from their lives, i. e. were prohibited to have the occupation, which would support their families*”.<sup>7</sup> This happened to the Volga Germans when an entire ethnic community was forced out of its circle: „*Тихая, уютная, благоденствующая республика со своим образцовым порядком за несколько дней превратилась в зону бедствия <...> С первого же дня выселения четко подчеркивалось: вчерашние благодушные и простодушные Kameradы обернулись если и не совсем врагами советской власти, то по крайней мере «не-нашими»*”.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> G. Belger, *Wanderer’s house*, Almaty, Raritet, 2007, p. 42.

<sup>7</sup> L. N. Gumilyov, *From Rus’ to Russia*, Moscow, AST, 2016, p. 113.

<sup>8</sup> G. Belger, *Wanderer’s house*, Almaty, p. 88.



By using an eventual antithesis, Belger narrated about the breakdown of the conventional world order. The first element of the opposition is the description of the peaceful agricultural life of the Germans („old haunts”, „full barns of millet”), the second-about the „woeful wandering” („...Sad, numb with grief and sorrow nomads stretched for over a kilometer”).

„Все, все, нажитое многолетним терпением, неутомимым, адовым трудом, старанием предков, было брошено-нет, не божьей волей-бешеному псу под хвост: добротные дома, убранство, подворье, погреб, склады, сараи с годовыми запасами, амбарами, свинарники, курятники, бани, летние кухни, сады, клумбы, мельницы, сыроварни, колодцы, всякая всячина, заготовленная, собранная впрок на радость и счастье их трудолюбивых обладателей и их потомков-все, все, все, в одночасье, разом, по злому умыслу, безрассудно, варварски, было оставлено, брошено в эти черные дни. Все провалилось в пропасть, рухнуло в бездну, в тартарары. Все было отнято у народа, облагородившего эти бросовые, дикие, запущенные некогда земли. Не было страшнее наказания!”<sup>9</sup>

„*Exile from life*” as a motive is also being actualized through several additional storylines. One of them is represented from the memories of Christian. This is the story of an Oscar the musician who is passing through several stages of social alienation in the labor army. The first of these is the unification of the looks, when the commander shaves his head, turning him into a „miserable young jackdaw”. The second stage is associated with the loss of the work of his life, the gift for singing: at first Oscar the musician loses his voice, performing „patriotic marches”, then the foreman deprives him from his family relic-an accordion, commenting on this: „Why the hell priest needs an accordion for?”. The third stage is the symbolic loss of the name. Together with his proper name, designated to *name a person* and stress his distinguishing features, Oscar also loses his *sameness*.

Oscar turned into a walking shadow. The only thing that could be entrusted to him was to collect branches, measure fallen trees, and keep fire in.

The elements of food in Christian’s memory are correlated with the theme of home and, most interestingly, the functions of these elements are opposite: they are related to both life and hope, and to death and the loss of hope. After receiving a parcel - food sent from home, one of the characters comes alive, another one dies. But why?.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 91.

Since the dawn of times various peoples endowed food with the sacred properties and have strongly associated it with the life of the ethnos, the native home, its climatic and geographical contexts of being. It is a „*life-giving artifact*” of the culture of „*its own environment*”. „*Images of food items and everything that is associated with them, make up one of the richest and inclusive codes of any people. The number and variety of foods, cooking traditions, food rituals associated with them are linked to the basic value system of the people <...> and serve as symbols of the most diverse aspects of cultural life*”.<sup>10</sup> So, the motive of the food gift sent to the labor army from home marks both life and death. The first meaning is revealed in the subplot of Uncle Franz, who had almost abandoned all hopes to survive until he received an unexpected parcel from the house - *some cereal* and a *chunk of bacon*.

„Он уже с трудом ковылял по бараку, еле передвигал распухшие, как бревна, ноги, кое-как перемалывал, перетиравал кровотокающими деснами свои триста граммов хлеба, как судьба смилостивилась над ним: в самый отчаянный момент трудармейской жизни его Амалия, милая Мальхен, умудрилась непостижимым образом сообразить посылочку с крупой и шматом сала. Как ей это удалось, обреченный на гибель дядюшка Франц представить не мог. Однако этот крупяной приварок, жидкая блеклая похлебка с мелкими кусочками сала и спасли его от неминуемого списания в разряд безнадежных доходяг. Вперемешку со слезами хлебал он этот приварок с чесночным, желтоватым салом и на этот раз увернулся-таки, выскользнул из холодных объятий костлявой старухи с косой”<sup>11</sup>

In agricultural societies grain is endowed with sacred meaning. So, for instance, it was customary among the Slavs to decide to set a place for the construction of a new house „*according to grain*”, depending on whether it will sprout or not, whether it will mold in the ground, whether there’ll be shoots or not. The Volga Germans regarded grain as vow for the future, they used to stock it for future use for several years. Thus, it was symbolically associated not only with survival, but also with prosperity, wellbeing and hope.

In this case food is related to the theme of the house of one’s fathers, family, care, sacrifice in the name of the neighbor and memory. Ultimately, the stylistic image of parcel highlights the motives of salvation associated with it, the return home. Encouraged by care of the relatives, Uncle Franz returns to life. His duty in a camp is also symbolic: to *maintain fire* in cast-iron stove, to keep *the hearth* for all the people working in a camp.

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<sup>10</sup> V. A. Maslova, M. V. Pimenova, *Linguocultural codes*, Moscow, FLINTA, 2016, p. 87.

<sup>11</sup> G. Belger, *Wanderer’s house*, p. 138.

The storyline of the Oscar the musician goes in a completely different direction. Having received the parcel from home, namely *herring*, Oscar feels that the chance *to live like he used to do* is lost forever: „Однажды доставили ему посылку от сестер из Алтая. В плотную бумагу с нотными записями была завернута селедка. Бережно разглаживая засаленные, потрепанные нотные листы с записью разных попуффи из классических оперетт, Оскар-музыкант плакал, как ребенок. После этого случая Оскар-музыкант угасал на глазах. Он смирился со своей горькой участью и стал безразличным ко всему, что вокруг происходило. <...> II вот представился бедняга”.<sup>12</sup>

The destruction of the old way of life can be seen implicitly in the images of oiled, crumpled sheet music, symbolizing the *loss of purpose in life*. The *herring* itself, that is salted fish, has an ambiguous, „split” semantics. In some cultures, particularly in Mediterranean and Scandinavian cultures, fish, as well as bread, is the source of life-giving force, the staying of hunger. The process of salting fish is of particular importance; the salty and the sour, according to many ancient peoples’ beliefs, is not decaying, and therefore is not capable of attracting evil forces. Thus, the salted and the pickled acts as an amulet, apotropaion of some sort.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the image of a fish floating in water has long been associated with the transition to the other world, with the symbolism of *death* that Belger depicts in the storyline of Oscar the musician.

The existence of any of the organic life forms directly depends on food. Food is closely related to the life of the folk, the geography of its existence, their customs, traditions, rituals. That is why food acts as an artifact of culture, its code. The bodily capacity for acceptance or rejection of food indicates the inner readiness/reluctance of a person to live (except for cases of voluntary asceticism in the name of purification from the worldly life).

Symptomatically that Christian Ehrlich, having returned from the labor army extremely exhausted, is not able to eat any food—neither „his”, prepared by David in the custom of the Volga Germans, nor „strange” (food of the neighbors in aul). Food is coming out of him with blood. The repeatability of this physiological reaction reinforces the reader’s „apprehension” of the character’s imminent death, since the food in the

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 141.

<sup>13</sup> M. M. Valentsova, *Magic functions of meal. Traditional Russian table: Collection of articles*, Moscow, 2008.

world cultural tradition is the connecting link between man and the world, both this one and the otherworld. In fact, in every cultural tradition there is a body of myths, legends and fables about how a character attaches himself to another world, having tasted „*stranger's food*”. Thus, the young goddess from ancient Greek myths, Persephone is forced to return to the underworld over and over again, having tasted only one pomegranate seed. Russian folk tales characters, getting to the territory of the „*deathtrap*” (usually it is dense forest), turn to Baba Yaga for help, but first they ask her to „*feed, drink, give a place to sleep*”. Thus, they are included into „*inner circle*” of the supernatural and save themselves from certain death.

Shared meal is a sacred ritual associating a person with his circle, family or community. The act of sharing food generates a set of rules for the people who shared the meal, the violation of which is unacceptable. From now on, a man who broke bread with the host of the house, should not be enemies with him; one cannot do him any harm or hurt him. In the classical times the most terrible betrayal was the betrayal *after the table* - the violation of mutual vows after a shared meal. „*The presence at the same table automatically included a person into the family circle or the microcollective <...> The shared meal and treat consolidated society at the expense of eating the same their own food*”.<sup>14</sup> Sometimes eating „*stranger's*” food was perceived as alienation from „*one's own*” people. In Russian chronicles, there were references to how the Tatars forcibly fed captive Slavs with horse meat, ritually „*cutting off*” them from their faith. Thus, the willingness to share food with a representative of other nation is one of the most telling ethno-characteristics in terms of national mentality; the willingness of the „*foreigner*” to take food is also telling.

The storylines of the Erlich brothers are diverged based on their new perception of life. David Erlich quickly assimilates in the hospitable aul. The first meeting of the character with the local old man called „*poshtaby*” (mail worker) ends with an invitation from the host to share his shelter and dastarkhan. Despite poverty, cramped conditions of life and „*bare-bellied baranchucks*” (his toddlers), the old man finds for a guest both a place to sleep, and food to maintain his strength. The old woman treats David with *irimshik* (dried curd cheese) and sweet tea and is pleased when the guest accepts the meal with gratitude. Thus, an unofficial convention is concluded regarding their future benevolent relations. Among the Kazakhs, the character finds support and benevolent hospitality everywhere-both in the family of Gaziz and Maruar, under

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 111.

the roof of old man Bolpysh, and among all his patients. In a conversation with Christian David notes that „every *Kazakh* is like that”: „...Удивительно: гол, нищ, а на радостях последнее отдаст <...> Добрый, простодушный народ. Душа нараспашку. Я в том убедился. IIногда, правда, любит хитрить. Но это детская хитрость. II шутить мастак”.<sup>15</sup>

But if David, having settled down, traveling through houses of the aul, gradually becoming „his own”, then the image of Christian is conceptionally connected with the past. Let’s consider the time modes through the philosophical categories of Being-here and the-They.

### **The subjective embodiment of the categories of Being-here and the-They in the novel *The House of the Exile***

Appealing to such complex ontological categories as Being-here and Being-there, which were discussed profoundly in the work of M. Heidegger called *Being and Time*, as well as during the course of his lectures and discussions about *Sophist* by Plato, we have to justify their feasibility in the given study. Being-here (Dasein) is a philosophical concept that is difficult to translate into Russian without breaking its full semantic potential. In various translations of the Heideggerian term Dasein (note that the terminology itself is conditional), multiple nuances of meaning are actualized: „*Being-here*”, „*presence*” (not the same as being), „*existing being*”, „*things existent*” and „*existence*”. Comprehension of the category Being-here has a long history in European philosophy and traces its routes from Plato and Aristotle. In German classical philosophy, the Dasein concept was developed in the philosophical works of Kant, Hegel, and partly Husserl. According to Kant (1964), Dasein is *the present existence of the object of cognition in the experience whose presence is ambivalent: it is being-knowledge and being-ignorance*. In Hegel’s *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, the semantic meaning of Dasein is additionally expanded by additional connotations-it is not just the presence-of-the-thinking-subject-in-the-world, but the historical being associated with a certain epoch. „*It is not mere being but existence, or Dasein; according to its [German] etymology, it is being (Sein) in a certain place (da). But the representation of space does not belong here <...> the determinateness as such of existence, as is also expressed by the da (or „there”) of the Dasein*”.<sup>16</sup> A. V. Akhutin (2016) sums up the Hegelian reflections with the following formulation: „*Being as the*

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<sup>15</sup> G. Belger, *Wanderer’s house*, p. 167.

<sup>16</sup> G. V. F. Hegel, *System of Sciences. Part 1. Phenomenology of the spirit*, Saint Petersburg, Science, 1999.

*specific spirit, knowing itself in all its history, is reality-the identity of being and existing being, or, in fact, Da-Sein*". So let's accept this property of Being-here-the identity of the world comprehended by man and of the world itself-to be one of the distinctive features of this category. Note that identity here is not an equivalence of two cognizable entities, but there is their *presence within each other*, their *mutuality*. Let's consider the virtual semantics of the Dasein concept in the works of M. Heidegger.

The semantic variants of the concept Dasein diverge in two ways. In the first case, they have connection with a German verbal noun meaning „*to be present, to come*". In the second, it is connected with the translation of the Latin analogue „*existentia*" into German, as a result of which the concept bears multiple meanings.

„*Dasein-existence (quite synonymously close to 'die Existenz')* has a very wide semantic range: it can mean either the simple existence of a thing, or the being of God or the life existence (*das Leben*) of a person (being)... As for the last meaning, but not the least for Heidegger,-is itself distinguished by a significant discrepancy between the intentions of meaning".<sup>17</sup> The concept of Dasein has the following notional components:

-the notion of the ultimate individuation („*my being*", „*my lonely being*", the being in reference to age: childhood one, adolescence, maturity, old age);

-the fusion of individual being with the „*epic being*" of the peoples, of mankind, „*the ultimate meaning of being as an integral, unique event of life-always very personal-is intertwined with the meaning of being as typical features and opportunities of common human life (for example, we can tell about the Dasein of everyday life, commonness)*", as the position of man in the world (or in many worlds?);<sup>18</sup>

-the notion of unpredictability, the semantic inexhaustibility of being and, at the same time, a meaningful experience of life.

„*Meaningful being is a word addressed to the Other*".<sup>19</sup> Heideggerian concept of Dasein has a connection with Aristotelian sense, „*practical wisdom*" as categories of *verity*: „*Now it is thought to be the mark of a man of practical wisdom to be able to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for himself, not in some particular respect, e.g. about what sorts of thing*

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<sup>17</sup> A. Akhutin, *Dasein. Materials for interpretation*, 2016, retrieved from [www.ruthenia.ru](http://www.ruthenia.ru), accessed in 11.01.2018

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

*conduce to health or to strength, but about what sorts of thing conduce to the good life in general*".<sup>20</sup>

To sum up our reflections, Being-here is referring to sensible and reasonable presence of a man in the world, his readiness to accept it, his inclusion in time and space, according to the historical epoch; it is peaceful co-existence of an individual consciousness with other individual consciousnesses, the readiness to experience life „*here and now*” and benefiting from it by himself (as from the ultimate goodness, goal-setting). Dasein is both existence and things in existence, but *human existence*. Thus, being-here is *the existence* of man in the world *both as willingness to experience reality and actually experiencing it*. The category of Being-here is directly related to the archetype of the Home: Home becomes, so to say, an ontological container of Dasein, this state of mind is only possible at home/in the house.

The opposite concept, „*the-They*” („*Das Man*”), was introduced by Heidegger in the book *Being and Time* (1996). *Das Man* points to the unreal existence of man. According to the philosopher V. N. Semenova, in this case „*the world is built upon the alienation; in this world everyone are „others”, even when it comes to himself, a man is „different”; his personality dies*”.<sup>21</sup> „*The-They*” appeals to the idea of groundlessness of the world, loss of existence, impossibility to live „*here*”. The only force that can overcome the destructive power of „*the-They*” is an appeal to one’s sameness.

In the fabric of the artistic work, a character/characters act as the embodiment of the Being-here and the-They categories. In our opinion, there are original markers of Being-here or the-They of the characters coded in a certain way in the literary text. It can be symbols, detailed allegories, hermeneutic comments. In the *House of the Exile* Belger creates the embodiments of both ontological categories under consideration. Being-here is notable in the character of David, the-They can be seen in the character of Christian. The character of Harry is at the crossroad of these two notions. In the course of the narrative, we observe his movement on the „*frontiers*” of these two existential „*zones*” and the final acceptance of his Being-here in the world. Being-here of David is finding his home; the-They of Christian is connected with the loss of the present, ending with the ultimate death of the character. The midline position of Harry is, according to Y. Zeyfert, the formation of a new archetype of Home: „*Home-the Road*”. Artistic markers of Being-here of David and the-They of Christian can be arranged in the following order:

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<sup>20</sup> Aristotel, *Collection of works in 4 volumes, volume 4*, Moscow, 1983.

<sup>21</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, New York, State University of New York Press, 1996.

1. Being-in-the-language. According to M. Heidegger, „*language is the uniting beginning*” between people. Understanding each other is being-in-the-world, being-with-others. Arguing about the nature of language, the philosopher points out that the „*vehicle of the language*” is a person: „*Language tells us its own tale, that is, it shows us what he has absorbed in itself what he bears in itself. Language tells of being, we use the language (the tale of the language), we use the tale of the language to tell our own tale of ourselves. In other words, we do not speak the language (the tale), but the language speaks in us, the language speaks through us. Language cannot come into being in any other way than through a speaker of a language (the tale of a language)*”.<sup>22</sup> So, through the language, communal living with the Other is achieved. That is why David thinks at first that he cannot dwell in Kzyl-Tu: a foreign language for him is not a bridge, but a barrier between cultural worlds: „*А путник подумал: «Надо бы, наверное, поговорить со стариком. Но о чем и как? Непонятный народ. Другой язык, другие нравы. Не смогу, видно, работать». И от этих дум совсем тоскливо стало*”.<sup>23</sup>

The ways of overcoming alienation by means of communication are demonstrated to the character by dwellers of the aul. By putting the words of several languages into a single context, they try to achieve mutual understanding with the „*newcomer*”, facilitating his life in a new place. David notes the efforts put by Kzyl-Tu residents: in the process of interaction of Russian words and Kazakh articulation, there appear numerous phonetic aberrations: pershyl (paramedic), ates (father), medypunkit (first-aid post) and many others. Symbolic and phonetic transformation of the character’s name—the name David Erlich is gradually replaced by the equivalent *Dout Erlik*. Both name-doublets (Daut and Erlik) have a telling inner form. The Arab-Jewish foundation of the Daut bears the meaning of favorite, favorable, Erlik in Kazakh means valor. This name, as one of the residents of Kzyl-Tu points out: „*Ерлик?! -Баскарма вскинул кустистые брови. -Каких только фамилий не бывает! Посмотрим, какой ты совершишь ерлик*”.<sup>24</sup>

Symbolic names with a foreseeing meaning are characteristic for Belger’s literary technique. Through them, the author gives a hint of future events in the life of the character, determining the attitude of other people towards him. In the course of time David-Daut truly becomes *loved and expansive to all*: time after time, residents of the Oktyabrsky district save their „*pershylya*” from labor mobilization, from

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 133.

<sup>23</sup> G. Belger, *Wanderer’s house*, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 49.



possible death in the labor army, which Christian eventually couldn't escape.

„Потом он узнал, как все происходило. После его отъезда в аулах действительно всполошились. От председателей колхозов в райком и в райвоенкомат посыпались письма с просьбой вернуть им фельдшера Эрлика, <...> проявившего себя за какие-то шесть месяцев самоотверженным, ответственным и знающим медработником”.<sup>25</sup>

The semantics of the name Erlík is fully revealed on the plot level. David soon becomes so indispensable for the inhabitants of the village that no important work is done without him: „Завалит снегом мазанку Зайфы на краю аула, откапывать ее спешит безотказный Даут. Угорели интернатовцы, чистить дымоход, кроме Даута, в ауле больше никому. А если и есть, то у Давида-Даута все получается сноровистей и лучше. Обледенел колодец по самый сруб – не подойти, не подступиться, того и гляди соскользнешь ненароком в дымящуюся колодезную глубину, опять все тот же Даут долбит пешней лед, раскидывает ледяные глыбы далеко вокруг, чтобы люди и скот не переломали себе ноги. Полыхнет у кого-то пожар, бегут опять все к нему”.<sup>26</sup>

Noteworthy that each of the described events is associated with a risk for life, the salvation of the Other, the idea of selfless service to people, and therefore can be qualified as a *feat* (*Erlík*). So, for example, a well is an archetypal center of people's living space. The image of David gradually acquires the meanings inherent in the *cultural character of the myth*.

If at first foreign language is perceived by David as an obstacle to being-here, then later it becomes a bridge to a new territory of existence, in which, as the author explains through his characters, „*a Kazakh is a brother to a German*”. The character gradually learns a new language; He finds spiritual and family ties with some of the residents of Kzyl-Tu. Gaziz calls him *kurdas*, i. e. *a peer, a sworn brother*, in relation to whom the law „*What is mine is yours*” is enforced. He fosters the orphan Zharas, becoming *aga* to the boy - the elder relative-patron. Upon the initiative of David, his pupil Harry is studying at a Kazakh school.

Christian is a character who acts in a completely opposite plot direction. He turns to the dialect of the Volga Germans more often, revives forgotten German poems and songs in memory, communicates gladly only with his countrymen. The evening Christian spent with David and Olkie is solely devoted to memories and speaking in German. Unlike

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 112.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 163.

his brother, Christian does not agree to accept a new name: Gregory, Gyrisha. He also doesn't like the aberration „*Kyrystian*”.

As a rule, the cultural character follows the deductive path of identification, that is, moves from the general stage of self-determination to private ones. Researchers distinguish five stages of it:

-The first identification is a human being. This category refers to the biological species of *Homo Sapiens* with the corresponding morphophysiological features (anatomy, life cycles, ability to speak and for abstract thinking). According to the theory of archetypes, belonging to the human kind determines the presence of fundamental models, schemes and motives in the psyche manifesting themselves at the life-changing events;

-The second identification is gender. At this level, the gender characteristics of the personality are formed: activity/passivity, logic/intuition, etc.;

-The third identification is ethnicity. According to anthropology, culturology and psychology, this stage evolves in the psyche of the individual not only at the level of an inborn temperament and the environment having influencing it, but also in the respect of the consequences of national traumas - deportation serving as an example;

-The fourth identification is family, generation. According to this level of self-determination, each person is believed to be *Homo Patrimoniens*, that is, a Man inheriting. This implies following expected social behavioral scenarios, observing certain ethical and axiological canons;

-The fifth identification is a name, comprising all the knowledge about one's own identity. It is a sign of individuation of the person, which Jung (1988) imparts with indivisibility, integrity, sameness. This is the „*basic project of nature that shapes the human being*”,<sup>27</sup> the energetical core of an individual.<sup>28</sup>

David 'descends' the aforementioned stages of identification in a reversed order that is, inductively. The name of the character (David-Daut, Erlich-Erlik) is affected by global ideological transformation that triggers a change in the mode of his self-perception. There are breakage of bonds that occur within the family (fourth stage). The death of the mother (the archetypal loss of the past), the symbolic loss of the family

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<sup>27</sup> A. Mengetti, *Ontopsychology: practice and metaphysics of psychotherapy*, Moscow, Ontopsikhologiya, 2009.

<sup>28</sup> A. Sergeyeva, *The road to Far Far Away Kingdom: Slavic archetypes in myths and fairy tales*, Moscow, Sofiya, 2016.

(his wife Lida leaving him and raising her son in a different cultural tradition, replacing his German name-*Arnoshka*-with the Russian analogue *Alyoshka*). The character manages to survive the *national trauma caused by the deportation* of the Volga Germans, overcomes their secret recognition as the enemies, alienation from the „united” Soviet people. The character successfully passes the first two stages of identification, as a result he truly starts to believe that even representatives of what used to be really ethnically remote groups of the people could be like „brothers” to him. This fact strengthens his sense of Being-here in the world. The author emphasizes David’s connection with the two temporal modes: the present and the future ones. Contrariwise, Christian’s modus of being is focused on the past. The loss of the family name is not only painful for him, but unbearable, although everyone around him seem to accept the destruction of the ethnic and cultural traditions: „С такими именами, как «Фриц» или «Адольф», и высываться никуда нельзя было. Дмитрий становился Дмитрием, Фриц-Федором, Хайнц-Генной, Вернер-Вовой, Готтлиб-Богданом, Райнгольд-Романом, Вильгельм-Василием”.<sup>29</sup>

Christian cannot put up with the national trauma of deportation. The words he recalls so often are: „Do not call your homeland the land where you grew up, and the house where used to live”.<sup>30</sup>

„Где он, тот край, где он рос? И где остался тот дом, где он жил?.. Все рухнуло в небытие, все разрушено, все в невозвратном. Родиной не зови...не зови...не зови... Именно эти слова проникали в затаенную глубь сознания, огнем обжигали все его существо”.<sup>31</sup>

2. Symbolic marks of Being-here and the-They are manifested in the novel in several ways. The first of these is a method of psychological parallelism, that consists of constructing a „character-nature” congruent model or, on the contrary, stressing out their inconsistencies. Many philosophers and scientists, N. Berdyaev (2016) and L. Gumilev (2016) in particular, argued that the landscape somehow defines the spirituality of the nation (and each and every of its representative). David, unlike Christian, doesn’t deliberately seek out „the cozy limitedness of the agricultural plot”. The author identifies this character with the wide, open space of the Kazakhstan steppes. The most conspicuous linkage is observed between David and the overflown, powerful Ishim: „В эту весну Ишим разлился особенно широко. Ледоход был бурным, буйным. Торосистые льдины, громоздясь, сшибались, лезли друг на дружку, в ярости выпирали на берег,

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<sup>29</sup> G. Belger, *Wanderer’s house*, p. 152.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 145.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

*круша прибрежные тугай, заливая темной, дымящейся водой все старицы, уремы, овраги. Зрелище было потрясающим. Тихая, незаметная степная река, приток седого Иртыша, ярилась, буйствовала, сметала все на своем пути, и дикая, неукротимая эта силища заволаживала, притягивала, манила, будоражила. Поднимаясь на крутой, Давид подолгу смотрел на это неистовство пробуждающейся стихии, любовался разливанным морем, восхищаясь необузданным нравом обычно смиренного Есиля. Яростный весенний колоброд, творившийся вокруг, как ни странно, успокаивал его, наполнял скорбящую душу энергией и напором, пробуждал волю, взывал к действию, вселял надежду”.*<sup>32</sup>

Unlike David, Christian cannot get used to the new scenery: „Чужой край, чужой народ, чужие запахи, чужие нравы, чужой язык. Все не так, как на Волге <...> Поволжье, уютное и ухоженное, облюбованное предками и облагороженное многими поколениями колонистов, можно было охватить мысленным взором и почувствовать, как на ладони. А Казахстан, как и Сибирь, был слишком огромен, необъятен и не вмещался в представление. Казалось, его даже солнце с поднебесья не в силах было охватить от края до края. Особенно в глухую зимнюю пору”.

So here we observe an anti-parallelism of some kind that clearly shows the ontological discordance of a person and the world completely new to him.

The second method the author uses quite frequently is plant symbolism. The literary image of David is conceptually associated with garden trees. During equipping the medical station, the first thing David brings are bushes of bird-cherry, hawthorn, apple tree seedlings for planting. Garden trees have always been associated with the idea of cultivating an open space, its exploration. Trees are rooted deeply into the ground, blossom and bear fruit. According to V. A. Maslova,<sup>34</sup> „Being a symbol of nature, in many cultures a tree symbolizes dynamic growth, natural processes of dying and regeneration <...> Plants, grass, trees, according to the legends of the ancients, possessed a supernatural power, both healing and destructive. The archetype of the totem tree lies at the heart of these ideas”.

Totem-trees are represented in almost all mythological world images. As for the ancient Scandinavians, ash tree was playing the central role, namely was the axis of the universe, in nomad society the Great Poplar (Baiterek) played such a role. It is no coincidence that a poplar

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 116.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 161.

<sup>34</sup> V. A. Maslova, *Cognitive Linguistics*, Minsk, Tetrasistems, 2004, p. 161.

tree even to this day bears the imprint of mythological thinking in the culture of the Kazakh ethnoses.

Another universal trait of the TREE as an archetype is the existence of the semantic element of „*life*” (compare the world tree, the tree of life) at the heart of it. Indeed, the tree grows out from the depths of the Mother Earth. A man has especially close connection with fruit trees, because this kind of a tree belongs more to the world of culture than to world of nature.<sup>35</sup> If the image of David is semantically connected with the fruit-bearing trees, the image of Christian is compared by the author with *a tumbleweed*-a plant that does not have roots and connection with the earth whatsoever.

The symbolism of the present and the past is embedded in a recurring literary element, namely *a draft of the house*. Christian restores the draft of his house in the Volga region solely from his memory. He lives by *the past* and at the same time suffers severely from the impossibility of returning it. The draft acts here stylistically as a mirage, a symbol of the loss of the former life, it is the highest point of existential longing that ultimately leads Christian to death. On the contrary, David does not want to live by the things lost. His being is focused on „*here and now*”. The drawing of his house is a symbol of the new beginning, a stable and long life in a new place; it is the bridge to the future. Everyone is occupied by the idea of a new house: the wife of David Olkje, their four children (the number of which is metaphorically proportional to the four corners of the house), all the inhabitants of the village for whom David-Daut is now and forever „*one of them*”.

Thus, Being-here of David is ontologically connected with the idea of finding home, while the-They of Christian marks the impossibility to let the past go and death: „*Истил, выходит, свою чашу до дна. Ухожу на чужбине в чужую землю. Ухожу, не увидев хоть краешком глаза Волгу Вольную, не отогревшись на ее песчаном берегу под вольным солнцем, не налюбовавшись синим куполом неба над волжским простором. Ухожу, ухожу, растворившись в стьлом мраке*”.<sup>36</sup>

And yet, to our mind, the perspective of author’s attention is mainly focused on David and Harry. An important idea for Belger is manifested through these characters, the idea about the gratitude to that land that could have become *The House of The Exile* for them: „*У каждого человека должно быть место на Земле. И нет чужой земли. Надо быть благодарным Земле, где живешь, тогда и она тебя отблагодарит, воздаст*

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 84.

<sup>36</sup> G. Belger, *Wanderer’s house*, p. 223.

сторицей. Каждый, кто вольно или невольно скитается или вынужден скитаться по Земле, оставляет незаметно то здесь, то там частичку своей души, понемногу растрчивает себя и превращается в перекасти-поле, гонимое ветром”.<sup>37</sup>

That’s why the character of Christian is associated with the symbol of tumbleweed, while David takes care of his own blooming garden in the village which became his home, the place of his Being-here.

A special place in the novel is reserved for Harry. His symbolic development is facilitated by the intertextual image of the Gray Neck-a duck with a broken wing, which was forced to remain in a fierce cold while her flock flew south. Harry’s physical disability is also a somatic code. As the Jungian psychologist Maria-Louise von Franz (2010) points out, from the archetypal point of view *legs* mark the character’s connection to the earth, the ability to live in certain conditions, inheritance (it is no accident that in Russian the root of ‘inheritance’ is a *trace*) and belonging to a *particular family*. Leg impairment is interpreted as an transitional position of the character between two worlds, „*here and there*” [Let’s recall a quote of Tsvetaeva „*Because I’m touching the ground with only one foot*”]. Harry is at the crossroads according to space of a novel. He is a member of community and alien at the same time, and this foreignness is marked, mainly, in the plot development of the novel. Harry is denied of medal, because a special settler is „*not entitled to*”. He enters the university with great difficulties. He does not have a passport, a document proving his identity. That’s why the passport is imparted with a truly sacred meaning for the character, turning into an „*artifact*” of his *sameness*.

Noteworthy that retrieval of home is facilitated by the learning and knowing the Kazakh language - the true „*home of being*” of the character, where he celebrates his integrity. Both characters, David and Harry, go along the whole archetypal route of finding home (the scheme is proposed by J. Campbell (2013) in his work *The Hero with a Thousand Face*): the beginning of the road (the call for wanderings)-the overcoming of the first threshold-the path of ordeal-the apotheosis-the reward at the end of the path-the return Home-the freedom to live.

Significantly, the reward at the end of the journey and the *return home* for the Belger characters are ontologically the same, and the freedom to live becomes the privilege of the new HOME. As we can see, the archetype of home in Belger’s works is associated with the idea of

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 238.

Being-here in the world, the willingness to live in it, overcoming the longing for the past and heading for the future - to true freedom.

### Conclusions

The literary works of the Volga Germans, including Herold Belger, proves convincingly that for many decades a unique environment, including language one, is being formed; that this ethnic group has its own historical destiny and its own place in the ontology of humanity; that bilingualism manifesting itself through translanguaging in a literary process contributes to the construction of language systems that are more complex than “clean” ones, those of the languages of limited contact.

Belger defines the Volga Germans as „*the product of several cultures*” (this idea is expressed by the school teacher Franz Frisen in the novel *Tujuks*). A compilation of the essays *Remember Your Name* is devoted to understanding his countrymen’s (Nora Pfeffer, Johann Varkentin, Nelli Wacker and many others) twists of fate, their contribution to literature, and their life mission. Belger gives them succinct, teleological definitions that have no analogues in the Russian language: they are „*Hoffnungsträger*” („*bearers of hope*”), „*life improvers*”, caught up in the „*crossroads of fate and time*”. And yet the most important home in the man’s life, according to Belger, is not only a „*land*” but memory: „*The most important home is home in the soul of a man which stands firmly for as long as his moral foundation is strong. The home of a man is his memory*”.

