

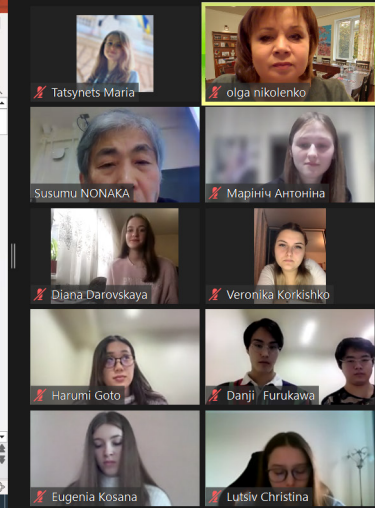
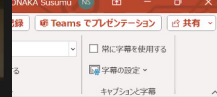
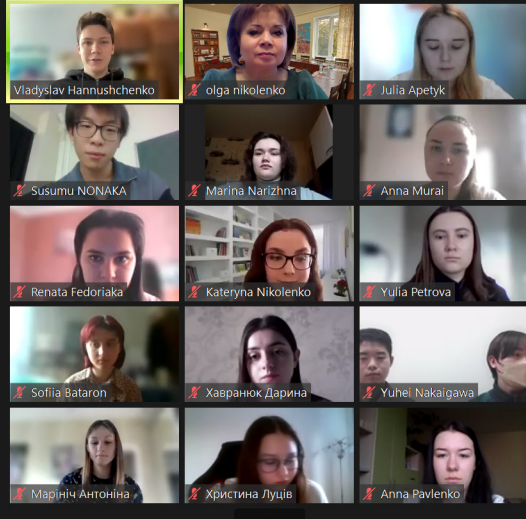


Perspectives of Comparative World Literature and Cultural Studies

Collection of research papers by students
and PhD students of Saitama University
(Japan), Poltava V.G. Korolenko National
Pedagogical University (Ukraine) and Ivan
Franko National University of Lviv (Ukraine)

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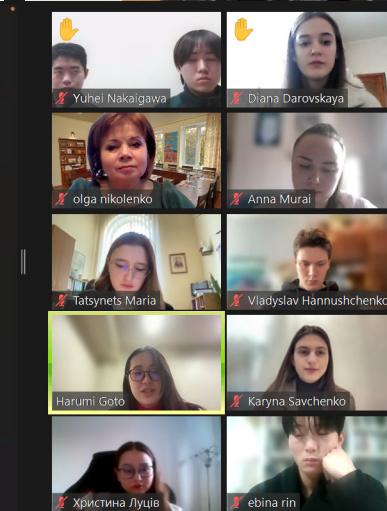
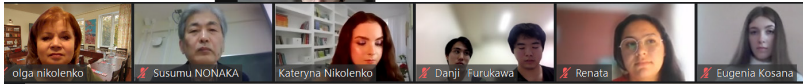
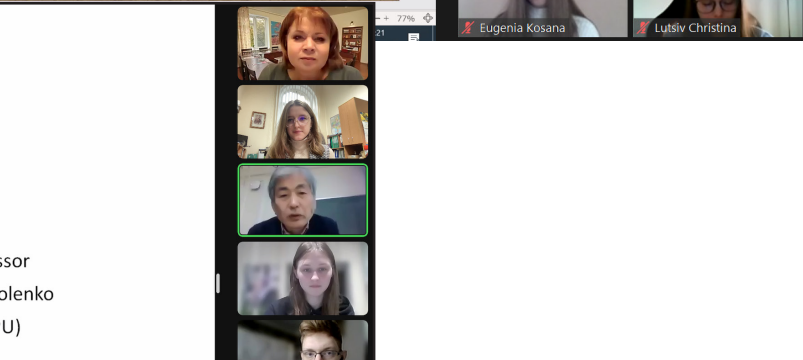


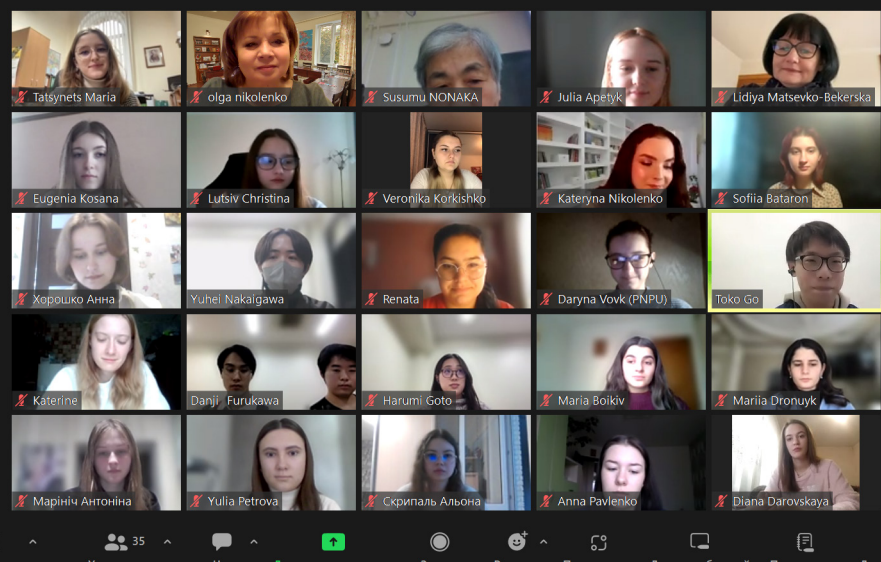
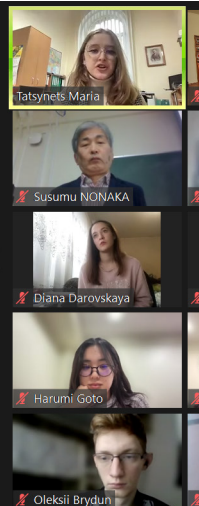
What is a National Writer?
 On Yasunari Kawabata:
 Focusing on *Thousand Cranes*

Susumu NONAKA (Saitama University)

Images of Ukraine and Ukrainians in the story
 "Taras Bulba" by
 M. Gogol (1835)

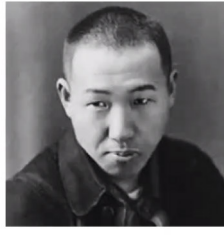
A.G. Venetsianov. Portrait of Gogol. 1834.



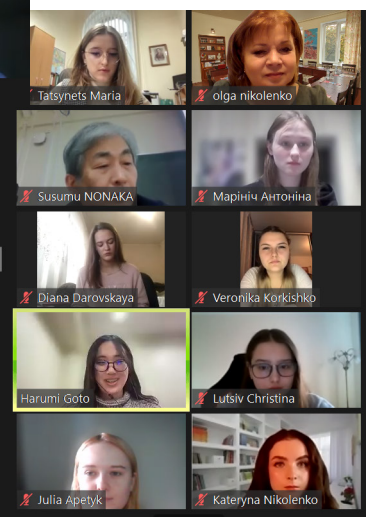
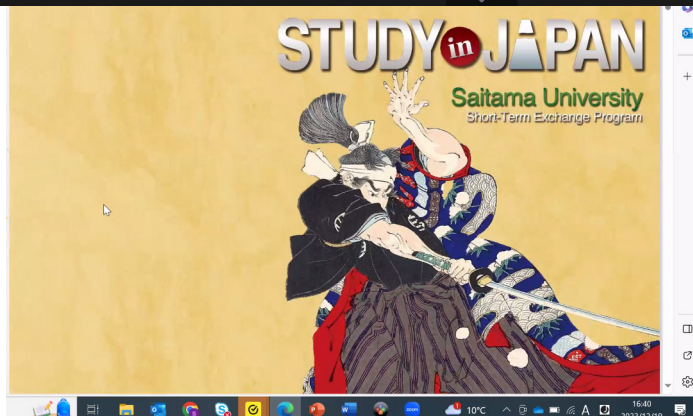
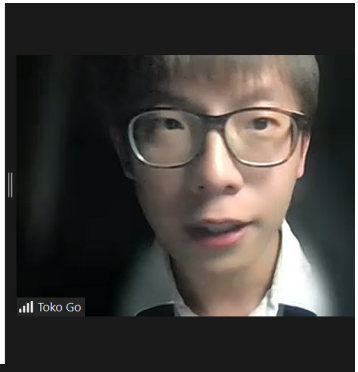


Taras Shevcheko and Kenji Miyazawa

-Two great poets who represent Ukraine and Japan-



Toko Go, (Saitama university B4)



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**Collection of research papers by students
and PhD students of Saitama University
(Japan), Poltava V.G. Korolenko National
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Franko National University of Lviv (Ukraine)**

**Kyiv
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2024**



Reviewed by: Doctor of Philology, Professor Shin'ichi Murata, Doctor of Philology, Professor Olena Kobzar.

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The publication includes scientific papers and reports by students and PhD students from Saitama State University (Japan), Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University (Ukraine) and Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (Ukraine), which were presented during international seminars within the framework of a joint scientific project “Perspectives of Comparative World Literature and Cultural Studies,” which took place online from 19 December 2023 until 30 January 2024. The papers are dedicated to topical issues of Japanese and Ukrainian culture, classical and modern literature, gender issues, challenges of today’s society, national traditions and art in Ukraine and Japan.

For students, graduate students, postgraduate students, and anyone interested in art, literature, and culture.

This collection of research papers is published at the discretion of the academic council at Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University (protocol № 3, 30 September 2024).

Edited by Susumu Nonaka (Saitama State University), Olga Nikolenko (Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University), Lidiia Matsevko-Bekerska (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv), Kateryna Nikolenko (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv).

FOREWORD

FOREWORD

The excitement of beauty calls forth strong fellow feelings, yearnings for companionship, and the word “comrade” can be taken to mean “human being.”
Yasunari Kawabata, Nobel Prize laureate

Since 2020, international scientific seminars (in English) have been held with the participation of students from Saitama University (Japan), Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University (Ukraine), Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (Ukraine). For several years, the theme of the scientific meetings has remained unchanged: “Perspectives of Comparative World Literature and Cultural Studies.”

The seminars are organized by Executive Officer and Vice-President, Professor Susumu Nonaka (Saitama University, Japan), Chair of World Literature Department, Professor Olga Nikolenko (PNPU, Ukraine), Chair of World Literature Department, Professor Lidiia Matsevko-Bekerska (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine).

The seminars take place every year in winter, in December and January, which is why they are called winter seminars. These events are made possible through the signed cooperation agreements between the universities of Ukraine and Japan.

International seminars for students are traditionally opened by professors who demonstrate depth of thought and dedication to scholarship. They show young people an example of diligence, responsibility, and commitment to philology, which now unites all people of good will.

In preparation for the seminars, students conduct research (individually or in groups) in the areas of fiction, folklore, art, and study the reception of classical and contemporary legacy in society. During the meetings, the participants share their observations and achievements, present their reports, and then discuss them, answer questions, express comments and reflections. An especially interesting space for intercultural communication is the round table, where students freely share their thoughts, learn to hear and understand each other, despite distance and differences.

After February 24, 2022, when the war in Ukraine began, international scientific seminars, in addition to sharing our experiences and research, have been playing another important role. The seminars help students realize that thoughts and freedom cannot be destroyed, that science gives spiritual strength and meaning to life, that culture is the shortest path between nations.

This collection presents articles by professors and students who participated in the international scientific winter seminars of 2023-2024. Thank you all for your participation! Our cooperation continues.

*Professor Olga Nikolenko,
Professor Susumu Nonaka,
Professor Lidiia Matsevko-Bekerska,
PhD student Kateryna Nikolenko*

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FICTION THROUGH THE AGES

Susumu Nonaka

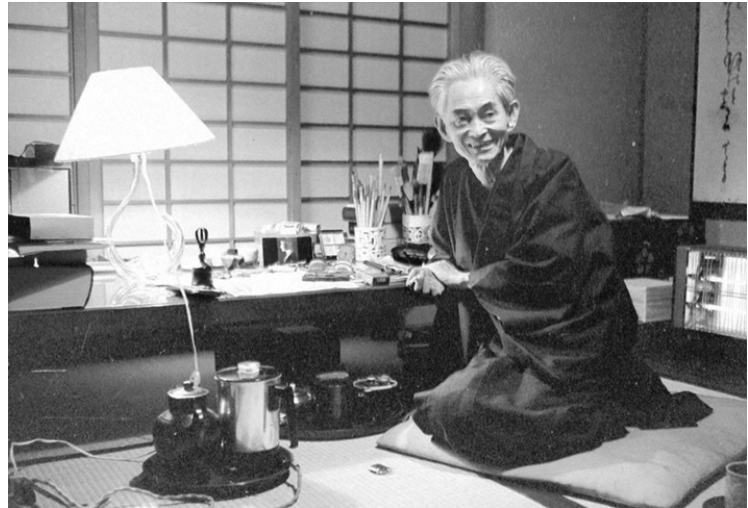
Saitama University

WHAT IS A NATIONAL WRITER? ON YASUNARI KAWABATA: FOCUSING ON “THOUSAND CRANES”

Today I will talk about a Japanese writer Yasunari Kawabata (1899–1972) and his novel “Thousand Cranes” (1949) which is used as a material of “Foreign Literature” at Ukrainian schools.

The theoretical topic of my lecture will be “What is a national writer?” As the first Japanese Nobel Prize winning author, Kawabata once played a prominent role as a national writer and is still regarded as one of the most important writers who helped create modern Japanese literature. But what is a national writer? What is s/he expected to create? What conditions does s/he have to meet to be regarded “national”? And lastly why do we need a national writer? I think these questions will be relevant for many countries including Ukraine.

My speech will consist of three parts: 1) introduction, 2) the general features of Kawabata’s literary works, 3) “Thousand Cranes” as the novel by a national writer.



Introduction: Who Is Kawabata?

Yasunari Kawabata was born in 1899 in Osaka, an economic and cultural center of Western Japan. His father, a doctor, died when he was one year old and his mother died when he was two. The young Yasunari was raised by his grandparents. In his works Kawabata often referred to the motif of orphanhood throughout his life.

Kawabata made his literary debut while he studied at the University of Tokyo. He then was regarded as a main member of a young writers’ group called “Neo-sensualism,” a version of modernist writing which aimed at defamiliarizing descriptions of “reality” by way of making a new combination of subjectivity and objectivity. The most famous works by Kawabata

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before World War II are a short story “Dancer in Izu” (1926) and a series of short stories “Snow Country” (1937 [1st ed.]), both of which were repeatedly made into movies and TV dramas.

After the War, Kawabata wrote several works focusing on Japanese traditional beauty, which are regarded as the main reason for his being awarded the Nobel Prize in 1968. The novel “Thousand Cranes” (1952) also belongs to the works of this period.

In parallel with the theme of Japanese traditional beauty, Kawabata continued to deepen another central theme of his creation – sexuality. The novella “House of Sleeping Beauties” (1961) caused a sensation in that Kawabata blatantly themed the sexuality of old men in both fantastic and realistic modes. One can see that Thousand Cranes is the combination of the above two themes as the beauty of precious old Japanese tea bowls symbolizes there such sexual love as defies social norms and personal ethics.

Kawabata committed suicide in 1972 at the age of 73 without leaving a will. It has been said that he had been suffering from sleeping pill addiction and psychological depression.

General Features of Kawabata’s Literary Works

Now I will summarize the general features of Kawabata’s literary works from the viewpoint of conditions of the creation of a national writer.

1) Depiction of People

To depict folk people is a central task of modern national literature. Let me explain why. Every country which has started modernization has to deal with many projects, the most basic of which is nation building. The humanities such as historical studies, linguistics, folklore, literature, and arts are required to show what the nation is, that is, what we are as the nation’s citizens. When and how was it born, what has it achieved in its history, how is it different from others, what mission it has in world history and so on – these questions play a driving force of nation building in each respective country.

In this respect what is important to deal with is folk people, or more concretely, poor farmers and workers. They have much less chances to reap the benefits of modernization as material well-being, education, or enlightenment than the upper social classes although they actually form a large part of the nation. Gaps between classes, the rich and the poor, educated and uneducated should be relieved to achieve successful nation building. National literature is required to depict how people are living and how upper classes should be united with them toward the goal of becoming a “fully-fledged” nation.

One can see that young Kawabata consciously or unconsciously chose such a theme in works as “Dancer in Izu” and “Snow Country.” In “Dancer in Izu” the hero is a university student who has an inferiority complex about his orphanhood. He was travelling alone in the countryside called *Izu* where he by chance became close with a barnstorming small theater company. Kindness and innocence of uneducated actors and actresses, especially a young girl whom he particularly liked, soothed his heart so that he regained confidence and parted with them to go back to Tokyo to continue his studies. This short story is one of Kawabata’s most famous works. It was made into movies and TV dramas many times and gave him nationwide

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popularity. In my opinion, it is the plot model “an intelligent individual meets the people and learns something very important” which helped to make this short story a work of national literature.

What is distinctive about Kawabata is that he often tended to depict people such as travelling entertainers, *geisha* in country towns or urban poor rather than village peasants, who had been a more orthodox object of description in national literature. But urbanization and population mobility accelerated by modernization created new groups of the people in cities and towns whom Kawabata depicted. In this respect he anticipated a new stage in the development of national literature in Japan.

Meanwhile, as we will see with “Thousand Cranes,” he depicted folk people much less after World War II while he chose more often heroes and heroines from the middle class. I suppose it has to do with the theme of war.

2) Theme of War

Kawabata did not serve in World War II and seldom depicted frontline battles or air raids on cities themselves. But the theme of the war played a crucial role in his literary creation. For example, he often described war widows. In the novel “The Sound of the Mountain” a war widow having an affair with the heroine’s husband says that if they should give her back her killed husband, she also would return a man to his wife (Kawabata, 1969–1974, v. 8, p. 347).

The more important subject with the theme of the war is the connection with the dead. In a short story “Sasanqua” Kawabata thought about children who had not been born because of the war and concluded: “While pitying them and my own life which flowed away during the war, I wondered if they might be reborn into something someday” (Kawabata, 1969–1974, v. 6, p. 353). In “Thousand Cranes” this subject is given a somewhat different expression in the hero’s reflection: “Perhaps you might be mistaken if you worry about the dead too much as much as if you criticize them. The dead do not impose morals on the living” (Kawabata, 1969–1974, v. 8, p. 73).

Another important motif related to the theme of the war is the return to national traditional beauty. In an essay written in 1949 when Kawabata was 50 years old, he wrote: “It would not be farfetched for me to regard my life after the war as the rest of it and feel as if it is not my own but an appearance of the tradition of Japanese beauty.” (Kawabata, 1969–1974, v. 14, p. 14). In the novels written after the war Kawabata often made use of traditional motifs such as the tea ceremony (“Thousand Cranes”), traditional Noh masks (“The Sound of the Mountain”), Kyoto’s culture (“The Old Capital”) possibly because he wanted to show that Japan still had something to save despite the huge damage of the war.

On the other hand, Kawabata also depicts new social trends in Japan after the war in a rather positive tone. For example, in the novel “Day and Moon” (1952–53) the hero, an old man who lost his two sons during the war, heard the news that some students tried to hand over a political appeal to the Emperor himself when he visited University of Kyoto and had the impression that it was not someone else’s problem. A new attitude towards the Emperor as a human being but not a living god was one of the most important cultural and social changes after the war, which both the hero and Kawabata himself accepted calmly and positively.

Thus, Kawabata’s works after the war are characterized by the theme of the war and several

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subjects related to it, which helped give him the status of a national writer who was expected to show a new image of national identity and a new path of the country. As was noted earlier, Kawabata's works were made into movies and TV dramas so many times that his image of a new Japan which was democratized while keeping its traditional values was supported by many people.



On “Thousand Cranes”

The novel “Thousand Cranes” and its sequel “Plovers on Waves” consist of a series of short stories written from 1949 to 1953, which is a way of writing the kind of novel Kawabata was fond of. Therefore, Kawabata's novels lack a strong unity of plot while they are characterized by deep lyricism and delicate psychological description.

Let me point out some characteristics of “Thousand Cranes” in connection with general features of Kawabata's literature mentioned above.

1) Motif of Sexual Love and Traditional Culture

The plot of “Thousand Cranes” revolves around the hero named Kikuji, a young man in his mid-twenties from a wealthy family, and his love affairs with some women which are fateful and tragic. It is characteristic that sexual love is associated with traditional tea utensils which Kikuji inherited from his late father. When he looked at two bowls which his father and his lover used, he had an impression: “Forms of the bowls three or four hundred years old are healthy and do not induce any delusions. They are full of life and even sensual. /Looking at the two bowls, Kikuji remembered his father and Fumiko's mother, and felt as if he saw beautiful figures of their souls side by side” (Kawabata, 1969–1974, v. 8, p. 137).

The connection of personal life and traditional beauty is a motif which Kawabata often made use of in his works after the war. Thus, he succeeded in representing Japanese tradition not in a formal, but in a personal, lively manner more understandable to the general reader.

2) Motif of a Double

“Thousand Cranes” is characterized by some sets of a double: Madam Ota and Chikako Kurimoto, who both had been lovers of Kikuji's late father so that Kikuji himself had a complex feeling of love and enmity toward them; Yukiko and Fumiko, two young girls with whom Kikuji tries to have a peaceful and stable love relationship but in vain; and lastly Kikuji and his late father connected by Oedipus complex which evidently leads to Kikuji's love

affair with Madam Ota who had been a lover of his father's.

As is well known, the motif of a double is popular and important in modern literature in many countries. For example, Nikolay Gogol's "Nose" is one of prototypical works of the double motif in world literature. One can say Kawabata is a writer who was fond of this motif, too.

Let me illustrate why this motif is so important in modern literature. In my opinion, it has something to do with the concept of the individual which has been essential in a modern society. But on the other hand, the concept of the individual has something vulnerable in comparison with such concepts as nation, clan or class, which had been more fundamental in a premodern society. This dilemma is more pronounced in countries which started modernization later than others. That is why the literary motif of a double has been popular especially in such countries as Japan or Ukraine because it is an expression of an anxiety about the notion of the individual who should be the only one but might also be exchangeable with others.

3) Reconciliation with the Dead

In "Thousand Cranes," the relationship between the living and the dead is important. Kikuji apparently has ambivalent feelings toward his late father as he told Madam Ota, "But what could bind you now? Perhaps, my father's ghost?" (Kawabata, 1969–1974, v. 8, p. 57). But Madam Ota committed suicide after she had a love affair with Kikuji, her ex-lover's son. Her daughter Fumiko, in whom Kikuji looked for a trace of Madam Ota, also disappears from his sight as if she had passed away. Thus, Freudian Eros and Thanatos combine living and the dead so that Kikuji gradually accepts conflicts and parting with the dead. It seems it is reconciliation, not confrontation, with the dead which Kawabata wanted to emphasize in *Thousand Cranes* and other novels written after the war.

One can imagine that Japanese as well as other nations had to make their own respective reconciliations with the dead after the war. Perhaps, they wanted to make reconciliation with the dead mainly to get some form of relief from their suffering, but it was very necessary for them in order to start a new life again. In my opinion, Kawabata's works symbolically portrayed survivors' grief for the dead and wishes for a new life, which were shared by many readers of the time.

Conclusion

One of the main tasks of national literature is to create an artistic image of the subject of nation-building. Now, we might add that another task of national literature is to create a figure, whether it is real or ideal, of reconciliation and harmony between the living and the dead who once lived and fought to build and protect the nation.

As we tried to show, Kawabata became a national writer after the war in that he tackled the latter task in some novels as "Thousand Cranes" and "The Sound of the Mountain," which were popularized in multiple media. One can say that this is how Kawabata became a national writer in Japan.

We believe that every nation has and will have such national writers, especially after great disasters, who could provide relief to the living.

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Olga Nikolenko

Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University

IMAGES OF UKRAINE AND UKRAINIANS IN THE STORY “TARAS BULBA” BY M. GOGOL (1835)

The theme of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Cossackdom is one of the main themes in the work of M. Gogol. For him, this theme was very important in the context of his family. It is known that Gogol's ancestors on his mother's side were Cossacks. For example, the writer's distant ancestor Ostap Gogol was a hetman of the Right-Bank Ukraine at the beginning of the 17th century.

However, the subject of Ukraine also interested Gogol as a historian and artist. In the early 1830s Gogol was deeply researching the history of Europe in the Middle Ages and wrote several historical articles. In particular, he wrote a lot about medieval knights.

Who are knights? This concept originated in Western Europe in the Middle Ages, especially in the 11th-13th centuries. Knights participated in military campaigns, fought in combat tournaments, and joined religious and military associations. At that time, the countries of Western Europe developed a chivalric code – certain rules of morality and behavior for knights. The leading ideas of the chivalric code were courage, honor, defending Christian faith, protecting the poor and disadvantaged, trustworthiness, dignity, etc. The knights also served their beloved ladies, for whom they performed feats, won battles, and composed poems and songs. In one of his articles, Gogol compared Ukrainian Cossacks to the knights of Western Europe.

The Zaporizhian Sich was a fortified center of the Zaporizhian army in the second half of the 16th-18th centuries, located beyond the Dnipro River. The Ukrainian Cossacks had their own code of honor, just like the knights of medieval Europe. Above all else, the Cossacks valued freedom, Christian faith, justice, honesty, loyalty to their comrades and the ideals of the Zaporizhian Sich. The images of Ukrainian Cossacks as strong, brave, loyal, purposeful, and friendly people are sung in Ukrainian folklore and art.

The rulers of that time often used the military skills of Ukrainian Cossacks to protect the state borders. However, the freedom-loving and independent nature of the Ukrainian Cossacks posed a danger to the rulers. That is why the Zaporizhian Sich was destroyed by the Russian Empire. It happened in 1775, when Empress Catherine II issued a manifesto “On the liquidation of the Zaporizhian Sich and its incorporation into the Novorussian province.” On the order of Catherine II, the last hetman of the Zaporizhian Sich, Petro Kalnyshevsky, was arrested and sent to prison in the Solovky Monastery, where he was held for 25 years.

After Catherine II's manifesto, the Cossacks settled in different lands (by the way, there are also ancient Cossack settlements in Poltava region), and some of them fled across the Danube, where the Zadunayska Sich was formed. On this theme, Ukrainian composer S.

FICTION THROUGH THE AGES

Hulak-Artemovskiy wrote the famous opera “Zaporozhets Beyond the Danube” (1863). It is about Ukrainian Cossacks, who found themselves in a foreign land, longing for their homeland.

In the early 19th century, Gogol emphasized the need to create “a complete, satisfactory History of a people who had been acting independently of Russia for almost four centuries.” Therefore, 60 years after Catherine II’s manifesto, the writer set out to revive the name of Zaporizhian Sich in fiction, as well as its glorious history, and to poetically glorify the deeds of the Ukrainian Cossacks. The story “Taras Bulba” (first edition, 1835) was devoted to this.

It is interesting that the word Ukraine (in the original Ukraina) appears 7 times in the text of “Taras Bulba.” In the times of the Ukrainian Cossacks, according to M. Gogol, everything was different: nature was more beautiful, characters were more powerful, and the history of Zaporizhian Sich was brighter compared to the author’s time (60 years after the manifesto of Catherine II, which destroyed the Cossacks).

In the first edition of the story “Taras Bulba” in 1835, one can feel the author’s deep nostalgia for the heroic past and admiration for the glorious history of Ukrainian Cossacks.

M. Gogol put the historical path of the Ukrainian people into the broader context of European history. The writer portrays Ukraine as a special historical and geographical entity, as a land in need of protection, so the Zaporizhian Sich is depicted as its organic part, a military school designed to educate Cossacks for the defense of Ukraine.

As the story progresses, the concepts of *Zaporizhian Sich* and *Ukraine* become inseparable from each other. They both have a heroic meaning. The Zaporizhian Sich is depicted by the author as a stronghold of Cossack freedom for the whole of Ukraine.

Ukraine in M. Gogol’s novel is not only a wild land that the Cossacks defend from enemy attacks, it is also a place where the Ukrainian nation was formed, and Zaporizhian Sich became the center of this national process.

In “Taras Bulba,” history is presented in vivid characters, strong feelings, and aspirations of the Cossacks. The main idea of the work is the idea of a “common cause,” the defense of the Cossacks’ faith in Christ and the ideals of the Zaporizhian Sich. For this purpose, the Cossacks do not spare themselves, they leave their family and prosperous lives, and boldly rush into great battles. The idea of a common cause gradually unites the Cossacks into a single entity, cementing different characters into a single whole.

The history of Ukraine in Gogol’s work appears as a majestic heroic epic, but at the same time as a domestic story – the private history of Taras Bulba’s family, which is part of the general history of Cossacks.

The story begins with the old Cossack Taras Bulba waiting for his sons Ostap and Andriy to arrive. The sons were studying at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. The father dreamed that they would become good Cossacks and serve the Zaporizhian Sich faithfully. Taras Bulba took his sons to the Sich to defend Ukrainian lands like other Cossacks. But the sons had different personalities and different fates.

In his portrayal of the Cossacks, Gogol constantly uses the words “knights,” “knightly,”

FICTION THROUGH THE AGES

“knightly honor,” and “knightly glory.” For Taras Bulba, the main thing is “knightly honor,” which is the defense of the faith of Christ and the Zaporozhian Sich. He himself is a guardian of the “knightly honor” and teaches this not only to his sons but also to other Cossacks.

For Taras Bulba, the leader of the Ukrainian Cossacks, there is no middle ground: one must either fight for “knightly honor” or die in a fair battle. This is how he raised his sons.

Ostap always imitates his father and remains faithful to the ideals of the Zaporizhian Sich as a true Ukrainian Cossack until the last minute of his life. Ostap was captured by enemies during a fierce battle. But he bore the suffering in captivity like a giant, “with unprecedented firmness.” He bravely accepts execution, sacrificing his life for the sake of freedom and Cossack brotherhood. Ostap’s death in the novel resembles the execution of Jesus Christ.

In Gogol’s story, Andriy is also portrayed as a knight, but in the European rather than Ukrainian tradition. As you know, the entire medieval culture was imbued with the cult of women. Like the European knights of the Middle Ages, Andriy serves a beautiful lady – a beautiful Polish girl. He accidentally saw a Polish girl and fell deeply in love with her. For her sake, he is ready to abandon his father, mother, comrades, and homeland.

Perceiving a beautiful woman as a deity, Andriy is ready to throw everything at her feet. Andriy did not give up on God, because for him love is a manifestation of divine love. However, when he crossed into the enemy camp, Andriy betrayed the Zaporizhian Sich and his comrades, which contradicts the Cossack code of honor. Andriy was a Christian and a knight, but a knight who acted in the name of a woman, not in the name of a “common cause,” “knightly honor.”

Therefore, Taras Bulba had no choice but to kill Andriy according to the epic tradition and in accordance with the code of honor of the Ukrainian Cossacks.

The author does not poetize Taras Bulba’s deed in the scene of Andrii’s murder. Moreover, the author calls Taras Bulba a “son-killer.” From the viewpoint of private human story, Taras Bulba’s act is certainly a sin (that’s why the author calls him a son-killer), but from the viewpoint of a heroic epic, it is a natural and proper act of a true “knight” who cannot forgive the betrayal of the Cossacks’ “common cause.”

The finale of the story describes the heroic death of Taras. And moral superiority is on the side of Taras Bulba. Captured by enemies, he accepts martyrdom, but to the end he remains faithful to the “common cause” – he tells the cossacks from the height of the cliff, where he was executed, how they can better avoid danger. It is Taras who has the last look at the Cossacks, who managed to save themselves and will continue the “common cause.”

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Lidiia Matsevko-Bekerska

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

UKRAINIAN CLASSICAL THEATRE

The theatrical art of Ukraine dates back to ancient times, when it was expressed in folk games, dances, songs and rituals. Since the 11th century the theatrical performances of skomorokhs are known. In the era of Kievan Rus elements of theater were in church rituals. The first samples of drama as a literary genre can be found in the recitations of the pupils of the Kiev Brotherhood School (Kiev-Mohyla Academy) and Lavra School (16th-17th centuries). The Lviv Brotherhood School and the Ostrog Academy were also considered important centers for the development of religious drama at this time. Ukrainian theater began to develop actively in the Baroque era (17th-18th centuries). In the 17th century, a two-story puppet theater (Vertep) appeared.

The formation of classical Ukrainian drama is associated with the names of Ivan Kotlyarevsky, who headed the theater in Poltava, and Hryhoriy Kvitka-Osnovyanenko, the founder of artistic prose in the new Ukrainian literature. Burlesque and expressiveness, along with picturesqueness and humor, characteristic of their works, defined the face of academic theater in Ukraine for a long time.

In the second half of the 19th century, the amateur theater movement spread in Ukraine. It was in amateur circles that the future leaders of the Ukrainian theater – playwrights and directors Mykhailo Staritsky, Marko Kropivnitsky, Ivan Karpenko-Karyy – began their creative activity. In Halychyna amateur performances became more active in 1848-1850.

The creation of Ukrainian professional theater in the part of Ukraine controlled by Russia, as well as the next stage of the development of realistic drama are associated with the name of Marko Kropivnitsky. His love for art brings him to the theater to see the famous artist O. Fabianskaya, who performed the role of a boy in some translated melodrama. The young man spent several days under the impression from seeing her act, after which he decided to marry her, forgot about everything in the world and began to write a play in Ukrainian at night. M. Kropivnitsky was a member of the theater circle, an amateur group that exhibited works by Ukrainian playwrights – I. Kotliarevsky (“Natalka Poltavka” and “Moskal the Sorcerer”), H. Kvitka-Osnovyanenko (“Matchmaking at Goncharivka” and “Shelmenko the Township Clerk”), M. Vashchenko-Zakharchenko (“Woman, Be a Soldier”), I. Kotliarevsky (“Natalka Poltavka” and “Moskal the Sorcerer”), M. Gogol (“The Inspector”). Marko Kropivnitsky replenished his knowledge on his own, in libraries. He and Ivan Tobilevich read the works of Smiles, Robert Owen, John-Stuart Mill, Spencer, Shakespeare, Byron, Goethe, Heine, Dumas, George Sand, Thackeray.

Kropivnitsky moves to Kharkiv in 1873, where he finds a good environment for the development of Ukrainian theatre. Kropivnitsky’s fame as an actor and director reaches far beyond the borders of Ukraine, and in the summer of 1874 he received an invitation from the entrepreneur Zizerin at the head of a small theater group to come with the Ukrainian repertoire on tour in St. Petersburg. The actor had great hopes for the further development of

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Ukrainian theater during his six-month creative journey through Galicia and Bukovina, where there were no prohibitions of the tsarist government. In 1875, Teofilia Romanovich invited him here as an entrepreneur of the theater society “The Rus’ Conversation.” Thanks to this trip, the western Ukrainian public, cut off from the Dnieper region by the state border, had an opportunity to get acquainted with the best examples of Ukrainian theatrical art.

The sad news of the Ems decree, which banned the use of the Ukrainian language in print, the import of Ukrainian publications and the staging of plays or lectures in Ukrainian, caught Kropivnitsky in Yekaterinoslav (now Dnieper city). In the fall of 1881 there was a permission to stage Ukrainian plays on the territory of the Russian Empire. This was a very important stage in the history of the Ukrainian people.

The new Ukrainian theater began its first steps in the fall of 1882 in Kremenchuk, where M. Kropivnitsky worked as a director and leading actor in the Russian troupe of H. Ashkarenko. A new era of Ukrainian theater began with the staging of the immortal “Natalka Poltavka.” Ukrainian works were staged in Kremenchuk for a month. In addition to “Natalka Poltavka,” local admirers of Ukrainian dramatic art had an opportunity to see performances of such plays as “Give Your Heart a Will, It Will Lead You into Captivity” by M. Kropyvnytskyi, “Matchmaking in Goncharivka,” “Shelmenko-Denshchik” and “Sincere Love” by H. Kvitka-Osovyanyanenko, “Harkusha” by A. Storozhenko, “Kum-Miller, or Satan in a Barrel” by D. Dmitrenko, “When There’s Sausage and a Shot, Any Quarrel Will Pass” by M. Staritsky and some others.

A new stage in the development of the national theatrical art begins in late October 1882. It was then that Kropivnitsky was fortunate enough to create a troupe called “Theatre of Coryphaei” in Elisavetgrad (now the city of Kropivnitsky). It included such later famous masters of the stage as Mykola Sadovsky (Tobilevich), Maria Zankovetska (Khlystova, née Adasovska), N. Zharkova, A. Virina, A. Markova (Odintsova), I. Zagorsky, L. Manko and others. Over time, the troupe was joined by Anna Zatykevich-Karpinska (Kovtuneneko), Panas Saksagansky (Tobilevich), Ivan Karpenko-Kary (Tobilevich), Maria Sadovska-Barilotti (Tobilevich) and others. Their performances began on October 27, 1882 with the production of “Natalka Poltavka.” It was in this performance that the renowned Maria Zankovetska made her professional debut as Natalka.

Mykhailo Staritsky (1840-1904) studied at the Poltava gymnasium, and together with Mykola Lysenko entered Kharkiv University. In 1861, Staritsky and Lysenko spent New Year’s holidays in Poltava region at their comrade’s, the author of the Ukrainian anthem Pavlo Chubinsky. They traveled around Ukraine on foot, collecting folklore. When in May 1861 Taras Shevchenko was reburied, Kyiv students Mykhailo Dragomanov, Petro Kosach, Tadey Rylsky, Mykola Lysenko and Mykhailo Staritsky harnessed into a funeral wagon and delivered him to the Church of the Nativity on Podol. In 1871 he settled in Kyiv. He entered into creative cooperation with Mykola Lysenko – they jointly organized the “Society of Ukrainian Stage Actors.” In August 1883 Mykhailo Staritsky was offered to head the “Theatre of Coryphaei.” Staritsky’s theater toured all over Russia with great success. 1885 Staritsky left the Coryphaei troupe and founded a new one of young actors. Staritsky was a true teacher of young Ukrainian writers and played a great role in organizing the literary and social life of the 1890s. Mykhailo Staritsky reworked plays by other authors and staged prose works. This is how he wrote “Christmas Night,” “The Drowned Woman,” “Sorochintsy Fair,” “Taras

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Bulba,” “Gypsy Aza,” “Chernomortsy,” “Following Two Hares,” “Fashionably” and others.

Ivan Karpenko-Karyy is a Ukrainian writer, playwright and actor. The pseudonym Karpenko-Karyy combines the name of his father and his favorite literary character Ignat Karyy, the hero of T. Shevchenko’s play “Nazar Stodolia.” Survived arrest and exile. In 1886, the first “Collection of Dramatic Works” by I. Karpenko-Karyy was published in Kherson. In 1890 he wrote the comedy “One Hundred Thousand.” In 1900-1904 he created his own troupe, wrote the plays “The Master,” “Vanity,” “The Sea of Life.”

I. Tobilevich (Karpenko-Karyy) most fully realized himself in the genre of comedy, which, thanks to the unique individual creative manner of the playwright became a distinctive phenomenon in the history of Ukrainian culture. It was Ivan Karpenko-Karyy who established the genre of comedy in Ukrainian literature as a canonical universal form of artistic depiction and modeling of the most diverse manifestations of relationships between people and the organization of their inner world in the system of coordinates of universal values. The pinnacle of Ukrainian drama of the early 20th century was the tragedy “Savva Chaly” (1899, published 1900). It is about a concrete historical figure of the 18th century, the leader of Ukrainian rebels, who defected to the enemy. The play widely reproduced pictures of the national liberation struggle, and at the same time it is full of high poetry, marked by subtle psychology. In total I. Karpenko-Karyy wrote 18 plays. Ivan Franko wrote about Ivan Karpenko-Karyy: “What he was for Ukraine, for the development of its social and spiritual life, is felt by everyone who has seen on stage or at least only read his works; it is understood by everyone who knows that he was one of the fathers of modern Ukrainian theater, an outstanding artist and at the same time a great playwright, which has no equal in our literature.”

Maria Sadovska-Barilotti was the sister of Ivan Karpenko-Karyy, actress (real name Maria Tobilevich-Barilotti, 1855-1891). She began her stage career in Mykolaiv in 1876 as a member of the Russian operetta group. Since 1883 she played in the troupes of M. Kropivnitsky, then M. Staritsky, M. Sadovsky, P. Saksagansky. During her 12 years of stage activity, she performed nearly all female roles in the operas “Natalka Poltavka,” “Zaporozhets beyond the Danube,” “Drowned Woman,” and also played major roles in many dramatic productions. M. Sadovskaya-Barilotti entered the history of Ukrainian theater as one of the first and most brilliant performers of vocal roles in operas and operettas, which were staged on Ukrainian stages in the 1870s and 1880s.

Mykola Sadovsky (real name Tobilevich; 1856-1933) was a Ukrainian actor, director, and public figure. From 1881 he participated in professional theater in the troupes of G. Ashkarenko, Marko Kropivnitsky, and Mykhailo Staritsky, and in 1888 he organized his own troupe. In 1898 Sadovsky’s troupe united with the “Society of Russian-Malorussian Artists” of the Tobilevich brothers (I. Karpenko-Karyy and P. Saksagansky), then two years later (1900) they were joined by the ensemble of M. Kropivnitsky. In 1905, at the invitation from Halychyna, Sadovsky headed the theater “The Rus’ Conversation” in Lviv, which (together with M. Zankovetska) contributed to a significant rise of theater culture in Western Ukraine. Returning to Kyiv, Sadovsky founded the first Ukrainian stationary theater, which began its work in 1906 in Poltava, and then operated until 1919 in Kyiv.

M. Sadovsky was a talented film and theater actor, was exceptionally plastic, simple, deep, sincere, although quite characteristic. He became famous in heroic-historical (Bogdan Khmelnytsky in the play of the same name by M. Staritsky; Savva Chaly of I. Karpenko-

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Karyy; Hetman Doroshenko of L. Staritskaya-Cherniakhovskaya) and heroic and everyday life (Dmitry in “Not Fated” by M. Staritsky, Afanasiy in “Burlaka” by I. Karpenko-Karyy) repertoire; on the Ukrainian stage he was the first Commander (“The Stone Master” by Lesya Ukrainka) and Gorodnichiy (“The Inspector” by M. Gogol); in addition, he performed in the opera repertoire and became famous as a performer of Ukrainian folk songs. As a theater director Sadvosky brought up a whole pleiad of Ukrainian actors, giving them great freedom in creating the characters.

Panas Saksahansky (real name Tobilevich; 1859-1940) was an outstanding Ukrainian actor, director, playwright and teacher of the Marko Kropivnitsky school, one of the coryphaei of Ukrainian domestic theater. In his stage name Saksahansky immortalized the birthplace of his mother Evdokia – she came from the town of Saksahan (now a village in Kamyansky district of Dnipropetrovsk region). He began his stage activity in Yelisavetgrad in the amateur circle under the direction of Marko Kropivnitsky. He participated in Ukrainian performances of Chernyshov’s troupe. He began his professional creative life in 1883 on the stage of the Mykolaiv Theater under the direction of Marko Kropivnitsky and Mykhailo Staritsky, performing the role of Vozny in “Natalka Poltavka.” From 1885 – a member of Marko Kropivnitsky’s troupe, from 1888 - participated in the troupe of his brother Mykola Sadvosky, in 1890-1898 and 1905-1909 headed the “Society of Russian-Malorussian Artists.”

A new period in the history of Ukrainian national theater began in 1917, when the Young Theater (since 1922 – Artistic Association “Berezil,” in 1926 transferred to Kharkov) of Les’ Kurbas (1887-1937) and the State Drama Theater named after Ivan Franko (founded in Vinnytsia in 1920, now – the National Academic Drama Theater named after Ivan Franko) appeared in Kyiv. During this period, a pleiad of talented actors appeared on the theater stage: Amvroosiy Buchma, Maryan Krushelnitsky, Valentina Chistyakova, Les Serdyuk, Natalia Uzhviy, Ivan Marianenko and others.

The best achievements and artistic discoveries of Ukrainian classical theater are very brightly and creatively continued in the modern Ukrainian theatrical art. Today, the play “Matchmaking in Goncharivka” successfully gathers the audience in the National Drama Theater named after Maria Zankovetska in Lviv. In the title role of Stets’ko is a modern idol of theatergoers – Vasyl Korzhuk, the hero of the Ukrainian War of Liberation, who after a year and a half at the frontlines returned to his native theater and continues the traditions of Ukrainian classical theater.

DISASTERS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIONS IN THE ARTS

Anastasiia Batunina, Anna Murai, Daryna Khavraniuk

Poltava V. G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University

THE THEME OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN MODERN LITERATURE

At the beginning of the 21st century, the world came face-to-face with a horrible armed aggression against Ukraine. There are no logical explanations for the horrible events and crimes experienced by Ukrainians. This cannot be forgotten. But it must be understood in order for us to survive and protect our freedom and independence.

Modern writers often refer to the theme of the Second World War. Their works about the war do not contain fantasy or fun adventures, but they are worth reading in order to understand the value of human life and the means of opposing violence. The stories about the Second World War make us realise that war can be overcome not only physically with weapons, but also spiritually if we save and preserve the culture and people around us.

On May 10, Germany annually celebrates Book Day. This date reminds us of the horrors of fascism. It was on May 10, 1933, that inhumane book burning took place in Berlin and some other German cities. On March 20, 1995, the memorial “The Drowned Library” was presented to the public in Berlin. In the center of the square, under the thick glass, there is a white room with empty shelves. The words by Heinrich Heine are inscribed on the memorial board: “Where books are burned, people will be burned.”

Poetry by Mykola Nehoda

We would like to introduce you to a famous Ukrainian poet who wrote about the Second World War in his poems. This is Mykola Negoda. When the Second World War came to the land of Ukraine, M. Negoda was 13 years old, but he actively joined the fight against the enemy.

The peak of Mykola Negoda’s works was the poem “Steppe, steppe...,” which was set to music by the composer Anatoliy Pashkevich. This song became a requiem of the Ukrainian people for the soldiers who died during the Second World War and is still relevant today. It is still performed to honor Ukrainian heroes who defend Ukraine. It is interesting that this poem contrasts war and peaceful life – the steppe, wheat fields, the native village, where a mother is waiting for her son. The author writes that people should work, harvest, and not fight. But war takes away the best...

“The Boy in the Striped Pajamas” by John Boyne

John Boyne is an Irish writer, winner of numerous literary awards, who touches the topic of the Holocaust.

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War is always terrible. Especially when children suffer. John Boyne's novel "The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas" is one of the most heartbreaking representations of the Second World War. This work is unique in illustrating the conflict from the point of view of children.

Bruno, a nine-year-old German boy, lives happily in a beautiful five-storey house in Berlin with his father, mother and sister. However, his father's job requires them to move to a new location known as Auschwitz.

One of the largest Nazi concentration camps, Auschwitz-Birkenau, was located in the city of Auschwitz (Poland), where more than 1.1 million people were tortured during World War II.

Nine-year-old Bruno, the son of the concentration camp commandant, was unaware of the tragedy that was happening nearby.

With a bright and curious mind, the boy, who dreamed of being an explorer, became interested in a place where people wore the same "striped pyjamas." Bruno quickly found his way to the camp.

Near the fence, he met a Jewish boy named Shmuel, with whom he became friends. Little Bruno did not understand why people in the camp were wearing "striped pyjamas," "who Jews are" and "what they do there." When Bruno learned that Shmuel could not find his father, he climbed over the camp fence, put on the "striped pajamas" brought by a friend, and disappeared forever...

In his works, John Boyne addresses some of the most painful issues of the twentieth century: Nazism, equality and human rights. John Boyne writes simply, showing the history of the 20th century through the eyes of children.

There are no long descriptions, author's remarks or "complicated" terminology in this book. It is important to note that the language of the novel is not dramatic, and there are no scenes of violence in the book. The author avoids them, but the reader is aware of their existence and understands the injustice and tragedy of these events.

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, which tells the story of the Holocaust, is very relevant today, particularly in the context of the new escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Gaza Strip and the attack on Israel. Today, Jews around the world are once again in danger. In the words of John Boyne, "Nothing like this can happen again. Not in our time."

"Noah's Child" by Erik-Emmanuel Schmitt:

The French writer Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt also addressed the topic of the Second World War.

Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt is a prominent writer and dramatist, a doctor of philosophy, and the creator of several plays and performances that are now being staged in theatres around the world.

"Noah's Child" is a narrative which consists of numerous elements. This is a puzzle story. Everything is there: the terrible battle, the nation's sense of oppression, the formation of a religious worldview, and simple human actions.

The Jewish child Joseph tells the story from the first-person perspective. Little Joseph found himself in the middle of a violent and devastating time, on the eve of a huge flood. This was only possible since he was born in a Jewish family.

Father Pons is an important figure in this novel. He is a priest who put his own life at danger

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by sheltering Jewish children in an orphanage. Father Pons is an example of a priest who has never pushed his beliefs or religion on others. On the contrary, he attempted to develop in Jewish children a love for their parents' faith. According to Schmitt's perspective, the figure of Father Pons is the personification of an ideal priest.

The father kept a Torah scroll under precious embroidered fabrics, and a picture of Jerusalem showed where to turn during the prayer. Father's collection included prayer books, mystical poetry, and rabbinic commentaries from the seventh and ninth centuries.

According to Father Pons, Noah was the first collector in history: he found the male and female of every living creature to preserve and rescue from the flood on his massive ship. God created humans with the instinct and intellect to save themselves. As a result, Noah acted as a model for his father.

Six million Jews were murdered during that time. The father convinced Joseph to speak about the Jews who were no longer alive. To take care about the Jews, now there is Joseph, who will be known as Noah from now on.

Schmitt's characters are real and honest people who represent a specific place in their life while yet feeling extremely close to the reader, as if they are great friends. The heroes have doubts, but they listen to the voice of their inner world and heart. Goodness always triumphs because it is deep, diverse, and genuine!

“The Book Thief” by Markus Zusak

The modern literary process cannot be imagined without the Australian writer Markus Zusak. Markus Zusak was born in 1975 in Sydney, Australia, as the youngest of four children of German and Austrian immigrants.

His novel “The Book Thief” is the tale of orphan Liesel Meminger, who finds companionship and a new family in a tiny village in Germany during World War II. Zusak picked the topic in part to relate the experiences his parents told him about growing up during the war in Austria and Germany.

Language, reading, and writing are presented as metaphorical components of expression of freedom throughout the story. Zusak's characters have or achieve the power of literacy, individuality and personal liberation.

Books are nearly like characters in the narrative. Each of the novels is linked to a tale of the girl's life.

Liesel's adventure begins with “The Gravedigger's Handbook.” She grabbed it from the snow near her brother's grave which marked the first gloomy point in the novel.

Liesel rescued “The Shoulder Shrug” from the ashes of a flaming celebration of Hitler's birthday. The novel is about a Jewish man who is depicted positively, which is why it was condemned.

In the bomb shelter, Liesel reads “The Whistler.” It represents her complicated connection with Frau Hermann as well as a significant point in her personal development.

“Mein Kampf” is a book about the hate-filled ideals of Hitler and his supporters. Despite the fears, Liesel's family conceal Max in their basement, where he records his own struggles and experiences on the pages of Hitler's writings.

“The Book Thief” is the title of the book Liesel writes for months leading up to the Himmel

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Street explosion. It is the book that Death retrieves from the ashes and gives it to Liesel after she dies. "I have hated the words and I have loved them, and I hope I have made them right." Books are more than simply an occupation for the girl; they are her salvation and her heart.

This novel shows us the frightening example of war, violence and Nazism. Here we can see how little Liesel go through her horrible reality. If only it happens in books and books only. But, nowadays, Ukrainians have to face the same problems. The terrorist state has been trying to deprive our culture, our freedom of speech and our lives. They destroy our museums and steal our cultural heritage. They burn books written by Ukrainian authors. Our children have to spend their childhood in the bomb shelters because russia is shelling Ukrainian territory. For us, "The Book Thief" is more than just a novel. It is the portrait of our reality.

Prominent Ukrainian Poet Lina Kostenko about the War

The writer Lina Kostenko is one of the most prominent figures in Ukraine today. She saw the Second World War and wrote poems about it. But now she writes poems about the war that began on February 24, 2022 in Ukraine. Her poems are spiritual support for all Ukrainians who are fighting for the right to live and work freely on their land.

Lina Kostenko said: "Whoever stands for anything, we stand for independence. That's why it's so hard for us." We absolutely agree with this writer. It is hard for us, but we will stand it, because we do not want to be slaves to the empire. Ukraine will definitely be a free and peaceful country! This is the biggest Ukrainian dream.

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Kateryna Nikolenko

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

THE PORTRAYAL OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN “RILLA OF INGLESIDE” BY L.M. MONTGOMERY

In “Rilla of Ingleside” by L.M. Montgomery, war is portrayed with a stark and deeply emotional realism, marking a significant departure from the idyllic settings typical of Montgomery’s earlier works. Set during World War I, the novel follows Rilla Blythe, the youngest daughter of Anne Blythe (née Shirley) from “Anne of Green Gables,” as she matures into adulthood amidst the turmoil of the war.

Montgomery herself was deeply struck by the First World War. Her emotional investment was such that she reported being unable to sleep or eat after reading newspaper headlines and learning about yet another devastating event. In her journal, she wrote, “This war is slowly killing me. I am bleeding to death as France is being bled in the shambles of Verdun” (10 June 1916) (Montgomery & Rubio, p. 185).

The portrayal of war in “Rilla of Ingleside” is multifaceted, highlighting both the personal and communal impacts of global conflict. Montgomery does not glorify war; instead, she emphasizes its tragedy, loss, and the heavy burdens it imposes on both soldiers and those left behind. The novel explores the war’s influence on daily life in the small community of Glen St. Mary, focusing on the emotional strain experienced by families as their loved ones depart for the frontlines. Upon learning that her brother Walter, a talented poet, has joined the army, Rilla cries, “Our boys give only themselves. We give them” (Montgomery, p. 124).

One of the most powerful elements of the book is how Montgomery conveys the fear, anxiety, and sorrow that grips the community. The constant waiting for news, the dread of receiving a telegram announcing a loved one’s death, and the uncertainty of the future weigh heavily on the characters. Rilla, in particular, evolves from a carefree, somewhat immature girl into a responsible, compassionate young woman as she takes on duties such as fundraising for the war effort and caring for a war orphan. Through her eyes, readers witness the gradual stripping away of innocence as the horrors of war become unavoidable.

As Elizabeth Waterston observes, Rilla “has no intellectual ambition, no desire to go to college like her sisters Nan and Diana. She doesn’t write, except in a girlish journal. She certainly doesn’t enjoy the kind of frank friendly exchanges that marked the development of Anne’s love for Gilbert” (Waterston, p. 106). However, Rilla’s intellectual and psychological evolution is reflected in her diary. The teenage girl’s diary provides a sincere and striking account of personal transformations unfolding against the background of gruesome war events. Thus, the individual, the local, the national and the universal are intertwined in Rilla’s journal.

Having taken in an abandoned orphan which she begins caring for, Rilla assumes a new responsibility and starts growing as an individual. Later, she also discovers leadership

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qualities and organizes the efforts of local youths to help the army. Montgomery writes, “Rilla did not sleep that night. Perhaps no one at Ingleside did except Jims. The body grows slowly and steadily, but the soul grows by leaps and bounds. It may come to its full stature in an hour. From that night Rilla Blythe’s soul was the soul of a woman in its capacity for suffering, for strength, for endurance” (Montgomery, p. 64).

Montgomery also touches on the theme of patriotism, illustrating the conflict between the sense of duty and the personal cost of sending sons, brothers, and friends to war. While characters like Walter Blythe, Rilla’s sensitive and artistic brother, grapple with their moral responsibilities, the novel also explores the harsh realities of combat. Walter’s death becomes a devastating moment in the story, symbolizing the enormous sacrifice demanded by war.

Moreover, “Rilla of Ingleside” highlights the war’s effect on gender roles. Rilla and other women in the community take on new responsibilities as they manage the home front, participate in patriotic activities, and support the war effort. This reflects the broader societal changes during World War I, where women were increasingly thrust into roles traditionally reserved for men.

In this novel, the image of Anne gradually fades into the background as more attention is given to her children – in particular her youngest daughter, Rilla Blythe. This provides a stark contrast to the previous books of the “Anne” series, where the image of Anne was at the centre of the narrative. At the same time, as Elizabeth Epperly notes, Anne “serves as a reminder in the novel as a whole of the millions of quiet, nameless women who watched their sons and brothers and lovers and husbands and friends go to the front. And Montgomery makes it clear that for this she is heroic, for this and for running the Red Cross and carrying on her daily life” (Epperly, p. 115).

In sum, L.M. Montgomery’s portrayal of war in “Rilla of Ingleside” is somber and reflective, capturing the emotional depth of the home-front experience during World War I. Through her focus on personal sacrifice, communal solidarity, and the painful realities of loss, Montgomery provides a nuanced and heartfelt depiction of how war reshapes lives and leaves lasting scars on both individuals and communities.

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Kateryna Shvorob, Vladyslava Ivankiv

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

THE CHORNOBYL DISASTER THROUGH THE PRISM OF POSTMODERNIST LITERATURE AND CINEMA

The Chernobyl Power Complex, located north of Kyiv, had four RBMK-1000 reactors. The reactor design had a positive void coefficient, contributing to the accident. The Chernobyl accident in 1986 resulted from a flawed reactor design and inadequate operator training, disabling shutdown mechanisms, causing a power surge, and leading to a series of explosions. A steam explosion and fires released over 5% of the radioactive reactor core into the environment, leading to widespread deposition of radioactive materials in Europe.

The Chernobyl accident resulted in the largest uncontrolled release of radioactive materials ever recorded in civilian operations, lasting about 10 days. This event had severe social and economic consequences for populations in Ukraine and the USSR at the time. While most of the released materials settled nearby as dust and debris, lighter particles were carried by the wind across Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Scandinavia, and parts of Europe. Casualties included firefighters who responded to the initial fires on the turbine building roof. Although the fires were extinguished within a few hours, radiation doses on the first day led to 28 deaths, including six firefighters, by the end of July 1986.

After the Chernobyl accident, the priority was to clean up the site for the potential restart of the remaining three reactors and to provide more permanent shielding for the damaged reactor. Around 200,000 individuals, known as “liquidators,” from across the Soviet Union participated in the recovery and cleanup efforts in 1986 and 1987. The number of liquidators later increased to over 600,000, but most received lower radiation doses. Approximately 220,000 people were resettled into less contaminated areas, and the initial 30 km radius exclusion zone was expanded to cover 4300 square kilometres. The resettlement criteria were based on a projected lifetime radiation dose of 350 mSv, but actual radiation levels quickly fell, resulting in average doses less than 50% above normal background. The Soviet authorities initially concealed information about the accident, organized public demonstrations despite rising radiation levels, and only acknowledged the disaster 36 hours later.

The aftermath of the disaster involved extensive cleanup efforts by over 600,000 individuals, including firefighters and military personnel who faced health risks. The New Safe Confinement, completed in 2019, aimed to contain the remains of the reactor unit and prevent the release of radioactive contaminants. The Chernobyl Radiation-Ecological Biosphere Reserve, established in 2016, restored local flora and fauna and served as a sanctuary for rare Ukrainian species.

Pripyat, initially built for nuclear workers and their families, housed around 50,000 people who had to evacuate rapidly after the explosion of reactor number four. The evacuation, completed within hours, was delayed in informing citizens of the explosion’s severity. Some residents, including firefighters, perished trying to control the radioactive fire, while others

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suffered radiation effects, leading to illnesses such as thyroid cancer. Since the explosion, Pripyat has remained uninhabitable, with deteriorating buildings reflecting the aftermath. A few individuals have returned, but it's rare. Recently opened to tourists, the town has seen wildlife thrive in the absence of human inhabitants over the past four decades.

The Chernobyl accident played a role in the downfall of the Soviet Union by amplifying public distrust in government authorities. It underscored that the Soviet culture of secrecy was not only backward but also potentially disastrous. Additionally, the substantial economic burden of addressing the accident's aftermath further weakened the Soviet regime.

Due to Chernobyl, some governments opted to discontinue existing nuclear energy programs, while others abandoned plans for new ones. This decision was made even though the Chernobyl incident involved a distinctive reactor design and a comparable accident was deemed physically implausible with light water reactors.

After the Chernobyl disaster, the United States, along with other nations and international organizations, assisted in constructing a protective concrete shelter, known as the sarcophagus, to contain the damaged reactor and prevent further contamination. To address safety concerns, the U.S. and its partners provided aid, including equipment and training for nuclear reactor operators and regulators, to enhance the safety of these facilities and ensure preparedness for potential emergencies. Some members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) advocated for an increased role in nuclear safety, leading to the development and adoption of the Convention on Nuclear Safety – a treaty aimed at promoting global nuclear power reactor safety.

Despite the ongoing impact of the Chernobyl tragedy for hundreds of years, efforts have been made to mitigate its consequences. However, recent events, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, have posed new threats. Russian forces temporarily occupied the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, causing an increase in radiation levels, destroying laboratories, and sparking fires. Ukrainian counter-offensive efforts in March 2022 expelled the Russian forces, but ongoing dangers persist, with Russia still occupying the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, posing a threat to global safety through indiscriminate artillery fire. The international community faces ongoing challenges to prevent nuclear disasters and ensure the safety of nuclear power plants worldwide.

The Fukushima incident intensified the unfavourable view of nuclear energy, leading to more decisions against nuclear programs. It's important to note that the Fukushima reactors' situation was unique, and they do not represent modern reactor designs. Contrarily, the Three Mile Island accident highlighted that a well-designed containment building can effectively safeguard public health and safety even in the event of a severe accident.

About 25 years after Chernobyl, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident in Japan prompted a global reassessment by safety regulators. They considered enhancements such as mandating backup generators, as seen in Fukushima, and preparing for unforeseen accident scenarios. Like Chernobyl, Fukushima emphasized the vital role of safety culture, acknowledging that while new nuclear technologies may be inherently safer, human involvement remains crucial for nuclear safety.

Global postmodernist artists responded to the Chernobyl disaster by channelling their creativity into a range of diverse themes and approaches. Many explored pressing environmental concerns, considering the impact of human activities on the planet, and raising

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awareness of nuclear hazards and ecosystem fragility in the aftermath of the environmental catastrophe that was the Chernobyl disaster.

In typical postmodernist fashion, narratives of trauma and historical events became central to the work of artists inspired by the immediate and long-term effects of the Chernobyl disaster. Seeking to understand and portray the far-reaching repercussions of human actions on communities and the environment, these artists created thought-provoking pieces that continue to resonate with audiences today.

Critical engagement with technology was another avenue through which postmodernist artists expressed their response to the Chernobyl disaster. Stemming from technological failure, the disaster prompted reflections on the ethical dimensions of scientific advancements and the potential risks associated with unchecked technological progress.

The disaster at Chernobyl acted as a powerful catalyst for postmodernist artists to challenge and undermine traditional power structures, while also exploring the dire consequences of authoritarian regimes and truth manipulation. Their interdisciplinary approaches, which involved a combination of visual arts, literature, music, and performance, were able to effectively convey the complexity of the tragedy. By experimenting with various mediums, these artists were able to raise global awareness and promote activism, creating works aimed at engaging audiences in discussions about nuclear safety, environmental responsibility, and individual roles in shaping the world. Their efforts resulted in a profound response to the Chernobyl disaster, which became a symbol for artists to contemplate and express their perspectives with utmost clarity and conviction. While there is no singular postmodernist response to the Chernobyl disaster, artists worldwide have actively engaged with its themes, contributing to a broader conversation on the intersection of human activities, technology, and the environment. The disaster remains a historical and cultural touchpoint, continuing to exert influence on artistic expression and critical discourse.

Let us further explore the examples of pieces of literature and cinematography that showcase either the event itself and its aftermath, or the world which now has to learn the harsh lessons.

“Midnight in Chernobyl: The Untold Story of the World’s Greatest Nuclear Disaster” (2019) by Adam Higginbotham is a history of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster that occurred in Soviet Ukraine in 1986. It surely is one of the most popular recently written books about Chernobyl. Its author is a British journalist Adam Higginbotham, and the book is based on previously unpublished and classified facts about the disaster, as well as the memories and interviews of witnesses. Higginbotham explores the global consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, encompassing its environmental ramifications and geopolitical aftermath. The narrative evaluates how the incident shaped worldwide attitudes towards nuclear energy and safety. Offering a holistic perspective, the book not only addresses the immediate repercussions but also delves into the enduring environmental and health effects. This comprehensive approach enhances the reader’s understanding of the lasting impact of the Chernobyl disaster. In 2019, the book was recognized as a bestseller by The New York Times and Times, and not by chance: Higginbotham created a documentary thriller, effectively reconstructing the events of the night from April 25 to April 26 when the reactor exploded. Thanks to this, the book is a gripping read. This year, Higginbotham received the Carnegie Medal for “Midnight in Chernobyl” for achievements in literature and journalism.

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“Chernobyl 01:23:40: The Incredible True Story of the World’s Worst Nuclear Disaster” by Andrew Leatherbarrow who is a specialist in the history of nuclear energy. One of his most renowned books is dedicated to the Fukushima disaster. “Chernobyl 01:23:40,” published in 2014, is a blend of travelogue, chronicle, and historical investigation. The author spent several months on expeditions to Pripyat and the Chornobyl Zone, reconstructing bit by bit what happened on April 26, 1986. “Chernobyl 01:23:40: The Incredible True Story of the World’s Worst Nuclear Disaster” delves into the true and remarkable story of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster, considered the worst in history. The author provides detailed insights into the events leading up to the catastrophe, the immediate aftermath, and the long-term consequences. The title refers to the exact moment of the explosion at the Chornobyl nuclear power plant on April 26, 1986, at 01:23:40 a.m. The book is praised for its thorough research and its gripping narrative that unfolds the tragic events surrounding the disaster. Leatherbarrow intricately reconstructs the sequence of events related to the Chornobyl disaster, providing a detailed and all-encompassing narrative. The author delves into the technical intricacies of the disaster, elucidating the workings of the RBMK reactor and detailing the specific failures that culminated in the catastrophe. The book also includes 45 photographs depicting the modern-day Pripyat and the current appearance and functioning of the power station.

“Chernobyl: The History of a Nuclear Disaster” by Serhii Plokyh provides a nuanced and detailed exploration of the events leading up to and following the Chornobyl nuclear disaster. Plokyh begins by examining the Soviet Union’s political climate and the decision-making processes that led to the construction of the Chornobyl nuclear power plant. He delves into the technical flaws in the RBMK reactor design, emphasizing how these design flaws played a crucial role in the disaster.

Plokyh skillfully combines technical explanations with personal stories of the individuals involved, including the plant workers, firefighters, and local residents. The writer also examines the immediate response to the disaster, including the evacuation of the nearby town of Pripyat and the initial attempts to contain the radioactive release. The book goes on to explore the broader consequences of Chornobyl on global perceptions of nuclear energy, the environmental impact, and the geopolitical repercussions during the final years of the Cold War. The author’s background as a historian allows him to contextualise the Chornobyl disaster within the broader historical and political landscape of the Soviet Union. Plokyh draws on a wide range of sources, including declassified documents and eyewitness accounts, to provide readers with a comprehensive and well-researched narrative.

As for the films that delve into the topic of nuclear danger imposed on the world, we may recall the following ones.

“Chernobyl” is a television miniseries that premiered in 2019. It is a historical drama created by Craig Mazin and directed by Johan Renck. The series consists of five episodes and is a co-production between HBO and Sky UK. It received widespread critical acclaim for its accurate portrayal of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster in 1986 and its aftermath.

The series begins with the explosion at the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Pripyat, Ukraine, and follows the immediate aftermath of the disaster. It focuses on the efforts to contain the radioactive fallout, the impact on the local population, and the investigation that followed. The narrative unfolds through the perspectives of key figures involved, including

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Valery Legasov (played by Jared Harris), a Soviet nuclear physicist; Boris Shcherbina (played by Stellan Skarsgård), a Soviet government official; and Ulana Khomyuk (played by Emily Watson), a Belarusian nuclear physicist.

The series delves into the systemic flaws of the Soviet Union's nuclear industry, the suppression of information, and the heroism of individuals who risked their lives to prevent further catastrophe. "Chernobyl" stands out as a compelling and sobering portrayal of one of the most significant nuclear disasters in history, offering a poignant reflection on the consequences of both human error and the bureaucratic shortcomings of the Soviet system.

"Land of Oblivion" (original title: "La Terre Outragée") is a French-language drama film directed by Michale Boganim. The film was released in 2011. It is not a documentary but a narrative feature that deals with the aftermath of the Chornobyl disaster.

"Land of Oblivion" is set in Pripyat, a city near the Chornobyl nuclear power plant, during and after the catastrophic events of April 1986. The story follows the lives of two young lovers, Alex (Nadezhda Markina) and Anya (Olga Kurylenko), as they navigate the immediate consequences of the nuclear disaster and its long-term impact on their lives.

The film explores themes of love, loss, and resilience as it depicts the physical and emotional devastation caused by the Chornobyl incident. It provides a personal and intimate perspective on the lives of those affected, offering a human portrayal of the disaster's aftermath. It takes a dramatic approach to storytelling rather than being a documentary, and it uses the Chornobyl disaster as a backdrop to explore human experiences during and after the event.

Although various consequences of the Chornobyl catastrophe can be vividly seen, let's not forget about Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine. In February 2022, during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Russian forces reportedly moved vehicles through the Red Forest, using it as a route for their convoys, which kicked up clouds of radioactive dust from the forest. The name "Red Forest" comes from the ginger-brown colour of the pine trees after they died following the absorption of high levels of ionizing radiation as a consequence of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster on 26 April 1986. The site remains one of the most contaminated areas in the world today. Local workers reported the Russian troops moving through the Red Forest were not using protective suits and could have potentially endangered themselves. On 31 March 2022, it was reported that most of the Russian troops occupying Chornobyl were forced to pull back after suffering from radiation sickness caused by digging trenches in the heavily contaminated Red Forest. Ukrainian officials have provided access to the site which shows considerable trenches and digging in the Red Forest. On 1 April 2022, The Daily Telegraph reported that one Russian soldier died from acute radiation sickness after being camped in the Red Forest for a prolonged time. In October, CNN reported that injured Russian soldiers who operated in Chornobyl had been treated at the Republican Research Center for Radiation Medicine and Human Ecology in Belarus, including some who showed signs of radiation poisoning.

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THE WORLD OF FOLK AND LITERARY FAIRY TALES

Maria Tatsynets, Mariia Droniuk, Diana Nahorniak

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

WORLD OF FAIRY TALE AND LITERATURE

The meaning of literature and especially of fairy tales in Ukrainian culture could not be overrated. Hundreds of generations tried to teach their children and explain the reality in their own way for many years. Literature is an amazing example of cultural identifier as the values of the country and the nation itself is presented there. That is why we even know some typical characters of each specific national literature as a sample of their cultural experience and outlook.

Ukrainian literature has a long history, dating back to medieval times, and has been influenced by various cultural, historical, and political factors.

Throughout its development, Ukrainian literature has experienced periods of flourishing creativity as well as suppression and censorship under different rulers. It has often been a vehicle for expressing the cultural identity, national consciousness, and struggles for independence of the Ukrainian people.

Nowadays it is especially important to understand the value of Ukrainian literature through the current events. Russian war which has caused a lot of damage has led to many victims of destroyed fates. However it is essential to emphasize that as our ancestors, Cossacks, Ukrainian heroes of the modern times are brave enough to stand for our future, stand for the truth. Literature of our country shows it perfectly, that the strong spirit of Ukrainian defenders in different times gives us opportunity to live in a democratic country with its strong and independent citizens.

Speaking about Ukrainian literature, it is important to emphasize on the folklore, as it is a great part of the national consciousness. It keeps our traditions, tells the world about our culture and preserves our national memory for the future generations. Folklore, with its rich tapestry of myths, legends, and traditional stories, has influenced Ukrainian literature significantly. Writers often draw inspiration from folk narratives, incorporating them into their works to create a sense of cultural continuity. One of the features of Ukrainian folk tales is that many of them depict pictures of human life by means of allegory – through the images of animals. Cats, goats, dogs, hares, foxes, wolves, bears and other animals in fairy tales do the same things that people do in real life. They talk, quarrel, sing, get married, visit each other, arrange feasts, sing carols, go to court in search of justice, etc. In fairy tales about animals, we see the life of the Ukrainian people and their traditions. Ukrainian literature has played a crucial role in promoting and asserting Ukrainian identity, especially during times of foreign domination. Writers actively contributed to the national awakening by fostering a sense of pride in Ukrainian heritage. One of such examples is the tale of Kotyhoroshko, which is one of the most popular Ukrainian folk tales. It tells the story of a poor boy who, thanks

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to his strength and courage, rescues the king's daughter from the dragon's captivity. The tale is rich in symbolic images. Symbols help us understand the fairy tale's meaning and moral lessons. The fairy tale about Kotyhoroshko is a unique creation of folk art. It is part of our cultural heritage. It will continue to delight and educate us for many years to come.

Ivan Kotliarevsky. He was a Ukrainian writer, poet and playwright, social activist, regarded as the pioneer of modern Ukrainian literature and the creator of the central image of Ukrainian culture. "Aeneid" is a hilarious and insightful retelling of Virgil's epic poem, but with a distinctly Cossack twist. Imagine Aeneas not as a noble Trojan hero, but as a cunning Zaporozhian Cossack named Enei! That's the delightful premise of Kotliarevsky's poem. Enei, along with his band of Cossack companions, embarks on a journey from Troy (transformed into the Cossack Sich) to Italy. Their adventures are filled with bawdy humor, slapstick comedy, and sharp social commentary. Published in 1798, the "Aeneid" is considered a landmark work in Ukrainian literature. It played a crucial role in establishing the modern Ukrainian language and paved the way for a new era of national literature. Kotliarevsky's masterpiece continues to be enjoyed and studied today, delighting readers with its humor, wit, and enduring social commentary.

Taras Shevchenko. A Ukrainian poet, writer, artist, public and political figure, folklorist and ethnographer. His pseudonym was Kobzar. Moreover, "Kobzar" is also a collection of poems by Taras Shevchenko. It is considered to be one of the most important works in Ukrainian literature and is often referred to as the "Ukrainian national epic." "Kobzar" was first published in 1840 and contains 82 poems, including some of Shevchenko's most famous works, such as "The Dream," and "The Caucasus." The poems in "Kobzar" cover a wide range of topics, including love, loss, freedom, and national identity. Shevchenko wrote "Kobzar" in a simple, accessible style that was intended to appeal to a wide audience. He used Ukrainian folk music and folklore to create a unique and memorable literary voice. "Kobzar" was a major influence on the development of Ukrainian literature and helped to raise awareness of Ukrainian culture and identity.

Ivan Franko. He was a Ukrainian poet, writer, social and literary critic, journalist, translator, economist, political activist, doctor of philosophy, ethnographer, and the author of the first detective novels and modern poetry in the Ukrainian language. His pseudonym was "Kamenyar" (Stonemason). His piece of literature named "Lys Mykyta" ("Fox Mykyta") is a story, written as a satirical fairy tale poem in 1902. It tells the adventures of a cunning fox named Mykyta who uses his wit and trickery to outsmart his enemies, often other animals like wolves and bears. The story can be seen as a celebration of cleverness, a cautionary tale about vice, or a humorous reflection of human nature.

Lesia Ukrainka. One of Ukrainian literature's foremost writers, best known for her poems and plays. She was also an active political, civil, and feminist activist in Ukrainian literature. Her real name was Larysa Petrivna Kosach. "Mavka. Forest Song" is the play written by Lesya Ukrainka in 1911. It is considered a masterpiece of Ukrainian drama and explores themes of love, loss, nature, and the human condition. The story emphasizes the interconnectedness of humans and the natural world. Mavka's struggle highlights the consequences of disrupting this balance. We're reminded that respecting and safeguarding nature is crucial for our own well-being. Throughout the story, music serves as a bridge between humans and nature, a tool for understanding and appreciation. It symbolizes the unifying and healing power of art,

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highlighting its potential to bridge divides and inspire environmental consciousness. Mavka's transformation and Lukas' journey remind us of the cycle of life and the inevitability of change. The story encourages acceptance of impermanence while celebrating the enduring spirit of nature and the legacy of love.

At the end of the day it is important to emphasize on the idea, that there are a lot of decent and unique pieces of literature written in Ukrainian, and the most essential thing is to respect them as the national literary treasure and as a significant tool of preserving and spreading Ukrainian language.

To sum up, we would like to use a quote from the poem "Caucasus" from "Kobzar," written by Taras Shevchenko. It masterfully captures the tenacity of resistance against the threat of foreign subjugation and extolls determination to defend one's homeland. Here we can observe the role of Caucasus in the landscape of culture, identity, and politics in Ukraine and other countries that experienced russian imperialism in the nineteenth century.

Keep fighting – you are sure to win!
God helps you in your fight!
For fame and freedom march with you,
And right is on your side!

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Julia Petrova, Alona Skrypal, Renata Fedoriaka, Anna Khoroshko

Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University

GOOD AND EVIL FORCES IN UKRAINIAN MYTHOLOGY AND FAIRY TALES

Ukrainian myths have long reflected the beliefs of Ukrainians, their perception of the world, ideas about good and bad, as well as their ideals. Ukrainian mythology was formed in close connection with the mythology of the Slavs, but it was also influenced by other factors. It is known that the Vikings paved the road from Scandinavia to Byzantium through Ukrainian lands, so in Ukrainian mythology we find some echoes of Scandinavian myths. Also, due to the proximity to the Ukrainian lands of Poland, the countries of the Baltic region, Romania, Moldova, etc., their influences also appeared in Ukrainian myths.

The embodiment of natural forces is usually represented by female characters, especially mermaids and dryads. As we all know, a mermaid is a goddess of reservoirs. It was believed that mermaids were young, beautiful girls who lived at the bottom of rivers in splendid crystal palaces. In Ukrainian myths, mermaids have long, perfect blond or green hair down to their knees. They live in water all year round and come out onto the land in spring, on a Clean Thursday, and roam until autumn. We all remember the image of a mermaid in Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale. In Ukrainian myths, there is a variation of the mermaid called mavka (dryad). Traditionally, mavkas are believed to live in forests, and in the Hutsul region, the Carpathian Mountains are considered their dwelling place.

Dryads symbolize the souls of children who were born dead or died unbaptized. They often appear as young beautiful girls who lure boys into the forest with dances and songs, where they either tickle them to death or cut off their heads. Dryad can only dance to a single accompaniment – the flute. Interestingly, the Ukrainian writer Lesya Ukrainka used the image of Mavka (Dryad) in her poem "Forest Song." She created a remarkably attractive image of a beauty born from nature and living in nature. But alongside her appears a representative of the earthly world – Lukash, who plays the flute, after which Dryad falls in love with his melody and him. However, this love brings sorrow and death to Dryad.

Female characters can embody not only the forces of nature but also evil, such as the Witch and Baba Yaha. One of the most vivid characters in Ukrainian demonology is the witch. The witch has a wrinkled face, a hooked nose, large greedy lips, and big immobile eyelids. The word "witch" comes from the word "to know." Therefore, a witch is "one who knows everything." According to myths, recognizing a witch among people is very difficult: she can be old or young, transform into different forms. She is a symbol of a malicious, quarrelsome woman who knows a lot and can influence events.

The next character is Baba Yaha. Baba Yaha is a mythological character common in Slavic folklore. Baba Yaha is usually depicted as a large, hunchbacked old woman with a large, long, humped and hooked nose. In fairy tales, Baba Yaha flies in the air on a broom or in a stupa, commands animals and birds. Lives in the forest in a hut on a chicken leg. She eats people, turns heroes into an animal, a bird or an inanimate object, engages in battle with heroes, after which she sleeps in a long sleep. In some fairy tales, she helps the hero achieve his goal.

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In the world of Ukrainian folk tales and myths, a magical realm flourishes, rich in mysteries and symbolism that reveals the depths of collective consciousness. However, amid this vast imaginative diversity, dark male figures emerge, embodying the power of evil and evoking both fear and fascination simultaneously.

Viy is the character in Ukrainian demonology, that most often appears as an old man with thick, long eyebrows and eyelashes, through which he can't see anything. He lives under the ground. His gaze can be fatal to living creatures. He has a destructive power that can sink a house into the ground creating a water reservoir on its place. Although, this magical power is countered by the fact that "Viy" cannot see anything around him due to his extremely thick and long eyebrows and eyelashes.

The water spirit is an evil spirit, an embodiment of the water element as a negative and dangerous entity. It's a transformed image of a devil that spent 40 days in a water environment and remained there. The water spirit appeared in the form of an old man covered in mud and scales, with a beard and hair made of seaweed, sometimes with a tail and wings. At times, he was described as resembling a person with green or black hair. He had the ability to transform into a catfish, a goat, a dog, a tomcat, and more. He was believed to have control over fish, other aquatic creatures, and mermaids. An angered water spirit could cause harm to people: flooding rivers, destroying dams, mills, and drowning individuals. In Ukrainian mythology, the werewolf is a semi-fantastical creature, a human in the appearance of a wolf.

The ghoulish is the son of the devil and witch. He lives like an ordinary person, but among others, but among others he is distinguished by his anger. According to another belief, ghouls only have a human appearance, but in essence, they are real devils. Any person can become a ghoulish if the steppe wind blows around him. In appearance, a ghoulish may not differ from ordinary people or have a very ruddy complexion. Before death, a ghoulish could transfer its power to another by holding a hand or saying the right words, and immediately after that the weather changed and a heavy wind blew in.

Koschey appears as an old, frail-looking man, often with a very long beard. Sometimes he is a dwarf, and his beard significantly exceeds his height. Despite this, Koschey is extremely strong: he scatters heroes "like mosquitoes," raises a sword "five hundred pounds," and fights with the hero all day long. To maintain strength, he must eat a lot: "for three heroes," he drinks a barrel of water at a time, and eats half a bull.

The word "Koschey" comes from "bone." Therefore, Koschey is often depicted as a thin, bony man. Koschey is blind; in particular, he cannot lift his eyelids on his own, like Viy. He lives very far away, at the edge of the world. Fairy tales often indicate that the hero, before getting to Koschey, tramples down several pairs of iron boots, wears out iron hats, sticks, etc.

This is a large flying dragon with clawed paws, a long neck and a tail with spikes (that is, it looked more like a dinosaur on the outside). The motif of snake fighting is one of the key ones in the tradition of Ukrainian fairy tales. So, Kotygoroshko (folk tale "Kotygoroshko"), Illya Muromets, Mykyta Kozhumiya fought with the Serpent. In the myths of many peoples, the Serpent participates in the creation of the world. He seems to support the earth or maintain the balance of good and evil on Earth.

In the twists of Ukrainian folklore, not only mysterious images of darkness and evil are reflected, but also mighty forces endowed with the blessing of protection and goodness. Among them are prominent figures that protect the home, family, and people, building bridges

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between the invisible world and the one where everyday life flows. From the divine Svaroh, carrying the essence of fire, to Yarylo, who brings a new life-giving cycle with the eastern sun, or the house spirit and Chuhayster, who have become an integral part of the home hearth and household, each of these characters embodies kindness and protective power.

Svaroh is the god of fire, the supreme deity, and ruler of the world. He was envisioned as a young blacksmith, silent and stern. Representing the essence of the Universe, Svaroh sometimes takes the form of the starry sky. He is all-knowing and all-seeing. Svaroh's 12 titans are the 12 constellations of the Zodiac. In the name of these deities, the lord controls the heavenly fire and the Earth's harvest.

The ruler of the world taught people to use fire, craft copper and iron, and forged the first plow. He endows humans with wisdom, peace, and balance, assisting them in mastering any craft. He is the god of blacksmiths, the god of marriage and family happiness. He forged the first wedding ring. Svaroh is honored on July 1st, which is a great blacksmith's holiday.

Yarylo is the god of love, a mythological and ritual character associated with the idea of fertility, primarily of the spring. Yarylo is the god-sun of the spring equinox, the god of young love, the deity of romantic passions, the blossoming of nature, and childbirth. The month of this god is May. His name comes from the root "яр" ("yar") which in many Slavic languages is associated with spring, energy, youth, and passion. Yarylo was depicted as a young, handsome, barefoot lad dressed in white linen clothing, riding a white horse.

Domovyk is a spirit creature that takes up residence in a newly built house along with the people. It influences the well-being of the family because it is the master of the house, the deity of the home fire and the stove, and the guardian not only of the house but also of everyone living in it. Domovyk is invisible, but sometimes, it reveals itself to small children. There's a belief that in wealthy households, the domovyk is hairy, while in poorer ones, it is depicted as naked. Sometimes, it has its own mistress to whom it speaks with affectionate words.

Chuhayster is a cursed figure, a dweller of forests and mountains. Depicted as a tall and sturdy sorcerer, he possesses extraordinary strength. He is covered in white or black fur with a white beard and blue eyes. The Chuhayster is considered a harmless being, known for his cheerful character. It's believed that he hunts dangerous female spirits, like Mavkas, and devours them. He is friendly to humans, guarding them in the woods, providing protection, and enjoying sitting by the campfire, playing the flute, and dancing. He can foresee the future, bestow talents, and teach craftsmanship.

There is always a struggle between good and evil in the world. But culture, in particular Ukrainian myths, convinces us that there is more good. It always wins! We believe in this too!

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TRADITIONS AND CHANGES

Karyna Savchenko, Vladyslav Hannushchenko, Daryna Vovk

Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University

TARAS SHEVCHENKO IN THE MODERN WORLD

Taras Shevchenko is an outstanding Ukrainian writer. But for us, Ukrainians, he is not just a writer. He is a great mind of the Ukrainian people. He has become a symbol of the whole Ukraine, its struggle for freedom and independence, a symbol of the victory of the Ukrainian spirit over enslavement.

Taras Shevchenko's poetry and his bright image have always accompanied Ukrainians around the world in good and bad times. His fiery words fill our hearts with love and patriotic feelings for our native land. With the word of Shevchenko, Ukrainian heroes have always defended the Ukrainian land, and they are still defending it today.

Taras Shevchenko was born on 9 March 1814 in the village of Morinty (then Kyiv province, now Zvenyhorod district, Cherkasy region) in a peasant family.

His parents died early in life, and the young boy had to work as a labourer, and later Mr Engelhardt took Taras as a servant (Cossachok) to his house. Together with the Engelhardt family, Taras Shevchenko came to Vilna (now Vilnius, Lithuania), and then to St. Petersburg (then the capital of the Russian Empire).

In 1832, Shevchenko was sent to study painting with the artist V. Shiryaev. The leading people of that time noticed Taras Shevchenko's great talent. In 1838, with the participation of artists and writers, Taras Shevchenko was redeemed from serfdom with a price of 2500 karbovanets.

Taras Shevchenko was a serf, that is, a slave, but he became a free man and reached the heights of art. Taras Shevchenko's first collection of poetry, "Kobzar," was published in 1840.

The poet saw Ukraine, which was dear to his heart, in 1843 and 1846. During a trip to Kyiv, he joined the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, a secret society that advocated the idea of freedom.

In March 1847, Taras Shevchenko, along with other members of the brotherhood, was arrested. While behind bars, he wrote the cycle "In the Casemate." During interrogations, Taras Shevchenko did not renounce his views and did not betray any comrades. The court was unable to prove his involvement in the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, but still punished him for the poems of the cycle "Three Years" that were seized from him during his arrest and sentenced him to be assigned as a private soldier to the Orenburg Corps with a ban on writing and drawing.

In 1850, Shevchenko was arrested again for violating the conditions of his imprisonment (paintings and poems were found in his possession) and placed in the Novopetrovsky coastal fort on the Mangyshlak peninsula. During his seven years there, despite the difficult circumstances, the poet secretly painted and wrote poetry.

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In 1857, Taras Shevchenko was released, but until his death he was under secret police surveillance.

In 1858, the poet arrived in St. Petersburg and settled in a room at the Academy of Arts, where he lived out his life. For the third and last time, the poet visited Ukraine in 1859, where he was arrested again and ordered to leave Ukraine forever. The poet was forced to return to St. Petersburg. The last years of his life were surprisingly efficient for his work. In 1859, Taras Shevchenko wrote the pearl of his legacy, the poem “Maria”; in 1860, an expanded collection of his works, “Kobzar,” was published. The artist was awarded the title of academician of engraving. Despite the public recognition, Taras Shevchenko dreamed of settling “at least in a small hut” on the slopes of the Dnipro River. Corresponding with his relatives, he sent them money and asked them to buy him a “hut” on the Dnipro hills.

Having lived all his life alone, Taras Shevchenko died on 10 March 1861 far from his homeland – in St. Petersburg, where he was buried. Taras Shevchenko was reburied on 22 May 1861 near the town of Kaniv, on Chernecha Hill.

Chernecha Hora or Taras Hill near Kaniv in Ukraine is the place where Shevchenko was re-buried. The hill formerly was the burial place of several hetmans of Ukraine: Ivan Pidkova, Samiylo Kishka etc. That’s why this place was chosen. A museum has been created in honor of Taras Shevchenko. And alongside Shevchenko’s alley 19 sculptures dedicated to the characters of his works were installed. There is a library of more than twenty three thousand books in Shevchenko National Preserve. Art exhibitions, poetry readings and other special events are held here. A lot of people from Ukraine as well as foreigners come to Taras Hill to express gratitude to the great poet. This place is sacred to every Ukrainian.

Throughout his life, Taras Shevchenko deeply studied the history of the Cossacks, which was reflected in his works, where he described heroic and tragic chapters of the Cossacks’ lives. The poet paid special attention to depicting the figures of Cossack leaders who were able to lead the people and defend their homeland from invaders.

Among them is the image of the leader Ivan Pidkova. According to the legends, he had a rare physical strength and was extremely tall (about 2 meters 30 cm), and was able to break horseshoes with his hands, for which the Cossacks nicknamed him Pidkova (literally Horseshoe). He arrived at the Zaporizka Sich (semi-autonomous Cossack community where they lived) in 1556 and brought a whole Cossack army with him. He took part in campaigns led by Samiylo Kishka. Later he fought with the Cossacks against the Turks and Tatars (populations of the former Golden Horde).

In 1577, he together with Hetman Yakiv Shah chased Peter the Lambe from the throne and resisted the first wave of violent Ottoman reaction. When Ivan Pidkova’s army obtained a victory, he was proclaimed the Moldovan lord. But in the following year, 1578, the troops of the Ottoman Empire entered the Principality of Moldova. In the end, Pidkova was taken prisoner by Poles and decapitated in Lviv on 16 June 1578.

According to legend, his last words were:

“I am being led to death, even though I had done nothing in my life to deserve such an end. One thing I know for sure: I have always fought with courage as an honest knight against the enemies of Christianity and always acted for the good and benefit of my homeland, and my only desire was to be its guardian and protector...”

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The Cossacks transported Ivan Pidkova's body to Kaniv, where he was buried in one of the monasteries near Taras Hill.

Taras Shevchenko wrote the poem "Ivan Pidkova." In the poem, Ivan Pidkova is empowered with supernatural abilities. He is a brave, wise, and fearless Cossack who leads his troops to a victory. Not only his comrades were under his command but also the natural elements obeyed to him. He has the qualities of not only a true knight, but also the characteristics of a leader of the Ukrainian nation.

The image of Taras Shevchenko has a place of pride in the work of Ukrainian artists. Almost two dozen paintings on Shevchenko's theme were created by Oleh Shupliak, an artist from Ternopil region. He said,

"...I wanted my paintings to be distinguished by national spirit. I wanted to capture all the national symbols in one painting – the Dnipro River, the cliffs, the flight of a falcon, and a Cossack with a bandura. And, most importantly, all the symbols together create an image of the greatest son of Ukraine – Taras Shevchenko."

In 2013, the artist won the Ukrainian open competition for the best logo concept to mark the 200th anniversary of Taras Shevchenko's birth. This logo was on the billboards in Kyiv's Maidan during the Revolution of Dignity.

It is known that Taras Shevchenko died far from his homeland. In the poem "When I die, bury me..." (1845), the poet wills to be buried in Ukraine on a high mountain.

This poem is also called "Testament." It was written on Christmas Day in 1845 in Pereiaslav. Once the poet was staying at a farm in the Poltava region and suddenly became seriously ill, was suffering terribly, and was hallucinating. The owner of the farm took him to Pereiaslav to see a doctor, Andriy Kozachkovsky who took care of the sick poet. On the night of 24-25 December 1845, Taras Shevchenko barely recovered and wrote this poem.

"When I die, bury me..." unites the past, present, and future. The poem organically combines the personal fate of the lyrical hero (poet, kobzar, fighter) and the fate of the people (the artist's dream of a happy future for the nation and his passionate belief in it).

The central image of the work is Ukraine. The image of Ukraine is complemented by the image of a poet-prophet who not only wills to be buried in his homeland, but also calls on the people to resist the enslavers, break the chains, and gain freedom.

The text of the poem "When I die, bury me..." is the basis for works of great musical forms, such as cantatas by S. Liudkevych, V. Liatoshynskyi, L. Revutskyi, and others. Dozens of musical interpretations of the work are known. As early as March 1868, M. Lysenko and M. Verbytskyi presented their versions of the music. The most popular was the melody composed in the early 1870s by Gordii Gladkyi, a Poltava music and choral singing teacher. It is this version of The Testament that is often performed during celebrations.

There are over 1100 monuments to the great Kobzar in the world. There are monuments to Taras Shevchenko on all continents. The first monument on Ukrainian soil was installed in Kharkiv in 1897. Today it is covered with sandbags and guarded because the war in Ukraine is ongoing.

About 50 countries have honored the memory of our genius with sculptures. One of the most interesting foreign monuments to Taras Shevchenko is located in Rome (Italy), which

depicts Kobzar in the image of an ancient philosopher. And this is no accident, as the power of Taras Shevchenko's wisdom is recognized all over the world.

There is a monument to Taras Shevchenko in Denmark, in the city of Copenhagen. The poet's memory is honored there every year. It is organized by members of the Ukrainian-Danish society. Students of Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University studying in Denmark also participate in these events.

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Toko Go

Saitama University

TWO POETS WHO REPRESENT UKRAINE AND JAPAN: TARAS SHEVCHENKO AND KENJI MIYAZAWA

Poetry has a certain impact on people, and countries around the world have produced great poets whose influences have continued to exert their ideas and vision throughout history.

In consideration of how distinct poets from different cultural backgrounds compare, one question that arises is what kind of similarities, and perhaps differences, do Ukrainian and Japanese poets have? This paper explores the similarities between them through a comparison of the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko and Japanese poet Kenji Miyazawa. It could be considered that these poets share something common in their works, thoughts, and backgrounds. By comparing these elements, the paper demonstrates that both poets shared a love for the nature of their lands, compassion for the poor, and a passion for enriching their respective languages.

This paper comprises three parts: an introduction to the two poets, an analysis of the themes and features found in their works, and a concluding discussion on their similarities and the impact of their works. The first section will briefly introduce Taras Shevchenko and Kenji Miyazawa, highlighting their backgrounds and significance as artists. The second section will delve deeper into their respective works, identifying common themes and distinctive features. The final part will synthesize the findings from the previous sections, highlighting the similarities between the two poets and exploring the lasting influence of their works on contemporary society.

These points will contribute to the understanding of why their works remain vivid impacts on the present day.

Who Were Taras Shevchenko and Kenji Miyazawa?

Taras Shevchenko is known as one of most important Ukrainian poets, writers and artists. He was born as a serf in 1814. After gaining support from those who were impressed by his paintings, he achieved freedom in 1838. Two years later, he published his first poetry collection “Kobzar.” In “Kobzar” he depicted Ukrainian traditions, encouraging Ukrainian culture and national identity by writing poems in Ukrainian. This poetry was criticized for two reasons: using Ukrainian and not focusing on his primary profession as a painter, which led him to lose his scholarship. In 1843, he was invited by one of his patrons to travel around his homeland, Ukraine. Seeing the poverty and harsh conditions there deeply affected him.

In 1845, he wrote “Three Years,” a collection containing messages critical of the Russian emperor, the empire, and its government. Due to its critical content, Taras was arrested and sentenced to more than ten years of prison.

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As evidenced above, Taras Shevchenko dedicated his life to fighting against the serfdom system and advocating for the restoration of Ukraine as an independent country.

Kenji Miyazawa, like Taras Shevchenko, is considered one of the most important poets, writers, and agricultural educators in Japan. Born in 1896 in Iwate Prefecture, north-eastern Japan, he grew up in a family that was both financially secure and spiritually rich. This background allowed him to excel in his studies, particularly in agricultural science. It also instilled in him a deep connection to Buddhism.

At the age of 25, he was deeply affected by the loss of his sister, an event that plunged him into deep sorrow. In 1924, at the age of 29, he published his first poetry collection, “Spring and Ashura.” This collection revealed his unique composition style, which he himself called “mind-sketching,” where he observed and depicted the interplay between reality and his own inner world. While actively creating literary works, he also dedicated himself to education, teaching agricultural technology and introducing art to his students. This demanding workload eventually sowed the seeds of health issues, leading to a severe cough.

Although his life was cut short at the age of 38, he spent his years working without rest and inspiring others through his work.

An Analysis of the Themes and Features Found in Their Works

In “Kobzar” and “Three Years” Taras Shevchenko beautifully depicted the Ukrainian landscape, featuring elements like the Dnieper River, while expressing his personal sorrow and lamenting his life experiences. It can be inferred that the hardships he endured as a serf instilled in him a sense of compassion. While some of his works appear negative on the surface, they are not solely focused on negativity. Poems like “My Thoughts” and “My Testament” expressed his bravery, determination, and patriotism towards Ukraine.

Fujii (1988, p. 44), a Japanese translator who interpreted Shevchenko’s works, noted the poet’s deep affection for Ukraine and how his personality, shaped by hardship, significantly influenced works like “My Thoughts.” Furthermore, in poems like “A Dream” Shevchenko directly criticized the Russian Empire and its emperor. Through these diverse works, he expressed sympathy for the plight of the underprivileged and lamented the harsh conditions they faced in Ukraine.

Kenji Miyazawa expressed concern and offered encouragement to workers and farmers, as seen in works like “No. 1023.” Through his unique “mind-sketching” technique, he captured the beauty of his native Iwate Prefecture. One of his most famous poems, “Won’t Give in to the Rain,” depicts his resolve to live a diligent life, despite challenges. Affected by Buddhism, Miyazawa emphasized that true happiness could only be achieved when the whole world achieved it. This philosophy permeates his writing.

Miyazawa’s works are characterized by their rich metaphors, lyrical language, and spiritual thoughts. Literary critic Inoue (in “Miyazawa Kenji,” Shogakukan, pp. 210–212) praised him for his flawless use of Japanese, including personal pronoun, blending singular and plural forms.

Concluding Discussion on Their Similarities and Impact

This paper has analyzed the lives, thoughts, and works of two poets, Taras Shevchenko and Japanese Kenji Miyazawa; revealing three key similarities in their approach to their compositions: depicting nature's beauty and the way of living, outstanding linguistic usage, and patriotism and empathy.

Firstly, both poets portrayed the beauty of their respective homelands, Ukraine and Japan, while addressing the hardships faced by their people. Secondly, they showed deep love for their countries and compassion for the underprivileged. These shared characteristics highlight their common ground. Thirdly, they pushed the boundaries of their native languages, maximizing their expressive potential. While embracing different religions, both related their life experiences into words that still resonate today with readers worldwide, offering encouragement and inspiration.

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Yushi Nakatsuka, Danji Furukawa

Saitama University

JAPANESE EMPEROR TENNO AND YUKIO MISHIMA'S PERSPECTIVE: RECOVERING JAPANESE SENSE OF UNITY AGAIN

The Japanese royal family is the oldest dynasty in the modern world and the present emperor Naruhito (becoming the 126th emperor of Japan in 2019) is the only emperor in the world today. The royal family lives in the imperial palace in Tokyo and the Japanese emperor is widely supported by Japanese people. It is said that the unbroken line of the royal family from the great Sun Goddess Amaterasu continues to the present emperor from a thousand years ago. However, this idea comes from mythology. In fact, it is not clear when the real first emperor was born in Japan. In historical research, the 13th emperor Nintoku (Circa A.D. 313–399) has been believed to have existed in reality. In actual fact, it could be more reasonably argued that the existence of the first emperor Jinmu (Circa B.C. 711–585), who is regarded a grandson of a god and other mythological gods is more likely than not to be a fictional character. Japanese mythology is not the same as actual history, but it is true that the origin of Japanese royal family is considered to come in large part from such mythology.

In terms of the function of the emperor, they participate in religious services, pray for the happiness of the Japanese people and for the continued peace of the nation. In this respect, the Japanese Emperor is been regarded as being synonymous with the existence of the Japanese public. For example, the Emperor Showa (124th, 1926–1989) asked a close advisor, “It continues to rain. How about the rice plant?” just before his death. The quality of rice plant means people’s life. He was worried about quality of rice plants being grown by farmers in the years than himself. This episode means that even before his death, the emperor Showa had a public presence.

The Characteristics of Japanese Emperors

A lot of European kings, queens and Chinese emperors in history were willing to kill and sacrifice their people for their own benefit and wealth. Eventually, those kings’ and emperors’ political influence tended to collapse and they were in some cases killed by their family or advisors to be replaced by a new king or emperor. Of course, in Japanese history, the rulers and the political system changed many times, but the imperial system was never abolished.

Why Has the System of the Emperor Escaped Abolition?

Since the 13th century, the emperors had not been involved in politics due to the rise and assumption of power of samurai clans and Daimyos. During this period, the Shogun

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was the political leader of all samurai clans. The shogun with the greatest military power at times became the real ruler through a series of civil wars known as the *senkoku jidai* in the 15th and 16th centuries. By recognizing that shogun, the emperor justified his rule of Japan. At this time, the emperor had no political independence so they represented no political threat to the Shogunate.

After the 13th century, emperors only conducted religious festivals for happiness and peace and studied Japanese traditional culture, arts, and classical literature. The relationship between the emperor and academic studies has a long history. The retired emperor Akihito has been admired in various countries for his achievements in the field of ichthyology. The current emperor Naruhito is a master in transportation history.

The Image of Japanese Emperors in Modern Times

From the second half of the 19th century, Japan needed to modernize to avoid invasion by European countries; so it imported legal, academic and political systems, as well as aspects of culture, military structures and literature from European countries such as Germany, Britain, France and United States.

To make Japan a modern nation-state, the 1889 constitution of the empire of Japan regarded the Japanese Tenno similar to a monarch, like in modern Europe. For example, during the Meiji's period (1867–1912), the traditional Japanese kimono changed to the military uniform. As an example, historical images of the Meiji Emperor was inspired by modern images of western monarchs.

From the late 19th century, the image of the emperor changed from the symbol of culture to the military leader of Japan. However, just like with the British royal family, the Japanese emperor didn't have any political influence or power. He could only give royal assent to decisions and laws of the government at the time. From the Manchurian Incident in 1931, when the Japanese army abused the emperor's authority to justify their military actions and invasion of Manchuria and China. Eventually, Japan had to surrender to allied forces in the defeat of World War II in 1945. After the war the emperor became the symbol of Japan under the new Japanese constitution which the occupation forces of the United Nations led and created. There is no agreement of whether the Emperor Showa was responsible for the war. However, even after suffering a serious defeat in the war, the Showa emperor was not tried as a war criminal and allowed to continue as the Japanese head of state which was intended to help pacify Japan's war-time militarism. Because of this, many Japanese people have continued to respect the emperor and the imperial system which has continued to remain intact.

There are many opinions and ideas about Japanese Emperor. This time, our group focuses on the emperor's influence on Japanese culture. Yukio Mishima had a unique idea about the relationship between the emperor and Japanese culture. Therefore, we would like to introduce Mishima's view of the emperor.

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The Abstract of Yukio Mishima

Yukio Mishima (1925–1970) was a highly popular Japanese novelist and a fervent nationalist. Yasunari Kawabata, was Mishima's teacher and rival. Mishima's works have been translated into many other languages and he is known worldwide as a famous Japanese novelist. One of his famous works is "Kinkakuji" (Temple of the Golden Pavilion) which is based on an actual event. This work is known as one of the great works of modern Japanese literature.

From around 1960, he started being interested in political subjects little by little. He published some political novels and essays. He also founded a private political students' organization against new left groups in 1968. Mishima wanted to be a pioneer of the national guard. He believed that the Communist revolution and the influence of Communism in other countries would not have a good effect on Japan. If a communist revolution broke out, he wanted his private organization and army to cooperate with the Japanese army and police to quell any communist uprising. Communist revolutions in countries such as Russia and mainland China, have tended to deny traditional aspects culture and democratic systems of government. Mishima was extremely afraid of losing the Japanese traditional culture and spirit.

In 1970, he barricaded himself in an office in the military base at Ichigaya and urged soldiers to take action for the revision of the Japanese constitution. However, soldiers and officers did not want to listen to him. Eventually, during his plea to the soldiers in the base, he committed suicide by harikari with Masakatsu Morita who decapitated him by Japanese sword. He was 45 years old.

Mishima's View of the Emperor from His Literature.

First, Mishima argued that the Japanese emperor was different from a president or traditional monarch:

Japanese emperor is different from the president. It differs on this point of passing down from father to son. The emperor differs from usually monarchs in one respect of religious service for Japanese people. The emperor is the symbol of Japanese historical continuity, the symbol of worshipping Japanese ancestors. [The complete works of Mishima Yukio V. 36, p. 126]

Mishima argued that in the history of Japan, there were only a few emperors who were geniuses as politicians or military leader but there have been a lot of emperors who were geniuses as scholars, writers, and artists at times. In his book "The Defense of the Culture" in 1967, Mishima argued that the unchanging essence of Japanese culture is the emperor as the old cultural concept. Political systems and social environments have changed dramatically throughout the history of Japan. Japanese culture has changed since ancient times. At the same time, the culture has continued. Mishima thought that only the axis of the emperor has remained unchanged in Japanese culture's history, so he focused on the Japanese emperor as the oldest cultural concept of the nation. Mishima insisted

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on his opinion of Japanese culture and the emperor in the book of “The Defense of the Culture.” In his opinion, Japanese emperor must exist for the development of Japanese culture.

Of course, culture needs the uncontrolled person to create every at times. So, culture needs totality which allows all culture’s expression such as liberal democracy. If the expression’s meaning does not fit the current political thinking or social morality, the freedom of expressions is necessary for developing the culture. Mishima thought that the emperor had maintained this cultural concept of totality to allow these form of expressions.

“The fact that Japan is too free in its culture. That may be the reason that we are not yet aware of capacity for freedom. Each emperor until now has had the capacity to admitting the culture of freedom. That is the nature of the old cultural concept of Japanese emperor.” [The defense of the culture (1968), p. 263]

Traditional National Identity and Tenno

Mishima rejected dictatorial and communist based countries like China and recognized the form of liberal democracy in Japan because he thought that freedom of expression was necessary for developing Japanese culture. In his opinion, Japanese people could not live completely independently from their culture and traditions. The United States has only a 248 year history, but they have a unique historical evolution, tradition, and culture. Mishima thought the emperor was the unchanging axis of Japanese history and the focal point of the birth of Japanese cultural identity. So that if every Japanese individual would share the old cultural concept of Japanese emperor, they would get the sense of being the same nation and overcome the mental decline of mind and morals in Japan.

Conclusion

These are the ideas of Yukio Mishima. I think he was extremely afraid of losing the spirit of Japanese traditional culture in the 20th century. After World War II, many Japanese people thought that American culture, science and social trends were more attractive than those of Japanese traditional culture. He worried about losing important elements of the traditional Japanese cultural spirit. I think Mishima’s awareness of such cultural issues can be applicable to other modern countries, including Japan, China, and Ukraine. They will have to think about the significance of their own identity and traditional culture in the future. That is what Mishima wanted to say.

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Christina Lutsiv, Andriana Aladyskina, Anton Yaremchuk

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

THE PAST AND FUTURE OF UKRAINE THROUGH THE PRISM OF LITERATURE

Literature is an essential part of the culture of every nation that exists, existed, and will exist on Earth. In the works of the past, we immerse ourselves in the reality of writers who had already left this world, we explore their emotions and world-views, while contemporary authors describe the life around them and the hopes they see for the future. The rich collection of Ukrainian masterpieces serves as a trustworthy prism through which we can explore the sophisticated interconnection between the past, present, and future of Ukraine.

Starting with Old Ukrainian Literature that is deeply rooted in the 10th-century Kievan Rus, it is worth noting how it reflects the early intellectual achievements of the Slavic people. One of the most important texts from this period is the “Primary Chronicle,” also known as the Tale of Bygone Year. This work provides a historical account of Kievan Rus, encompassing religious, cultural, and everyday aspects. It merges historical events, religious concepts, and narratives, offering a comprehensive view of early East Slavic beliefs and practices. Another significant work is “The Tale of Igor’s Campaign,” which recounts the unfortunate expedition led by Igor Svyatoslavich against the Polovetsians in 1185. This narrative explores themes such as the ill-fated consequences of Igor’s campaign, the medieval Eastern European context, and the courage displayed by participants like Igor’s son Vladimir and his brother Vsevolod Svyatoslavovich. It is essential to mention such a historical figure as Hryhorii Skovoroda. Despite encountering challenges such as Russian censorship, his works persevered through underground circulation and revisions, making significant contributions to Ukraine’s intellectual and cultural legacy. Skovoroda’s enduring influence continues to resonate across time, shaping the philosophical discourse and inspiring deep reflections on the human condition.

We will look through the second period in Ukrainian literature named “New Literature” to precede. There are many bright examples of authors whose works represent Ukrainian past and future. The first one is Ivan Kotliarevsky. In the poetic verses of Kotliarevsky, the rustic landscapes come alive, echoing the laughter of lovers and narrating a timeless tale of love against the backdrop of Ukrainian traditions. Through his pen, Kotliarevsky immortalizes the essence of Ukrainian romance, capturing the nuances of the heart with a delightful blend of wit, humor, and cultural richness. “Natalka Poltavka” stands as a testament to Kotliarevsky’s mastery, enchanting readers with its vivid portrayal of love and life in the Ukrainian countryside. The key themes in “Natalka Poltavka” are rural romanticism, love and sacrifice, traditions, celebration of Ukrainian identity, humour, and satire.

The second one is Leonid Hlibov. Leonid Hlibov, with his imaginative storytelling, goes beyond the surface narrative, using the whimsical world of his fables as a canvas to paint thought-provoking lessons. His stories serve as mirrors reflecting the intricacies of human behaviour and provide a lens through which readers can contemplate timeless truths. The

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key themes in his fables are irony and paradox, educational value, timelessness, humour and wit.

The third one is Ivan Nechuy-Levytskyi. Through the artistry of Nechuy-Levytskyi's pen, the rural landscapes of Ukraine come alive, and the pages of "The Kaidash Family" unfold a rich tapestry of tradition, family dynamics, and the ebb and flow of village existence. In this literary masterpiece, Nechuy-Levytskyi delicately weaves the threads of everyday life, portraying the joys, struggles, and complexities of the Ukrainian peasantry. The key themes of his work "Kaidash Family" are family dynamics, village life, tradition and culture, social injustice, generational change, love and relationships, and nature.

The next step in the history of Ukrainian Literature is modern and contemporary literature. The period of modern Ukrainian literature is first and foremost associated with the Shot Renaissance, a tragedy, a generation that was supposed to liberate Ukraine and breathe into it the spirit of freedom and a form of expression, hunted down by the communist regime during the 1920s and 1930s. One of those souls was Mykola Khvylovy. Khvylovy is one of the most tragic stories, a story of ideological enthusiasm, disappointment and death. His magnum opus "I Am (Romantic)" is an impressionistic masterpiece that dwells on this idea of duality, of following this higher purpose of communism, the dualism of "the end justifies the means" or giving in to humanism, represented as the hero's mother. The story paints the bleak and depressing reality: "But it was a reality: predatory and cruel, like a pack of hungry wolves. It was hopeless reality, inevitable as death itself." The next trailblazer of modernism was Ivan Bahrianyi. While Khvylovy represented Ukrainian ideological struggle, Ivan Bahrianyi represented struggle in its rawest form. Painter by profession, writer by choice, he spoke his mind, took part in different literary groups and published his works in which he did the worst kind of crime there is, speak against the regime and act as a freeman, for what he served 8 years in camps of far east, of taiga, these experiences he outlines in his most famous works, "Tiger Trappers" and "Gethsemane," where he spoke about his brutal experiences. "Tiger Trappers" is such an important work, because it represents the Ukrainian spirit in its very essence. The theme of standing up to fight when all the odds are against you, and having no fear, perfectly encapsulates the spirit of the Ukrainian nation through the centuries.

Now, let's look at the present. Yuriy Ruf, a person beyond intelligent, a PhD in engineering, a terrific poet, was writing poems since he was 14. He wrote about taking pride in your nation, about fighting spirit and will, he even wrote a book for kids. He enlisted on the very first days of the war and tragically died from mortar fire. It is a vicious cycle that doesn't stop. Oleksandr Mykhed is another contemporary, luckily still alive, he's what you'd call a soldier-scientist/writer, the modern historian-chronicler. In "Nickname for Job" he spoke about what it was like to live through this massacre. And in his speech "The Language of War" he expanded on this topic of what it feels like to lose and to hope to not have lost.

The message is to not forget because if we do, evil will get away with murder, so let us remember all the pain, the horror, the brutality that Russia has brought. Let us remember the fear, dread and terror that Ukrainians have lived through, let us not forget.

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NATIONAL CULTURE OF UKRAINE AND JAPAN

Anna Pavlenko, Kateryna Zheleznyak

Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University

UKRAINIAN EMBROIDERY AS A CULTURAL CODE OF THE NATION

Ukrainian embroidery is a pearl of folk culture, a landmark of the Ukrainian people and a true cultural code that holds the traditions of our ancestors, beautiful ornaments and harmonious colour combinations. Vyshyvanka is a symbol and an important component of Ukrainian traditional clothing.

“The code of the nation” is what Ukrainian vyshyvanka is called. And these are not just beautiful words. Depending on the historical region of Ukraine, the details and themes of the embroidery ornament differ. And in the early 20th century, when Ukrainian nation began to fight for its political rights, embroidery was used in patriotic and religious clothes as a symbol of Ukrainian identity.

The History of Ukrainian Embroidery

The oldest Ukrainian motifs were geometric patterns, such as those of Trypillian culture. Wavy lines, rhombuses, zigzags, circles and specks – these were the first fragments of Ukrainian ornaments. Since ancient times, they have had a certain meaning. For example, the Trypillian spiral symbolised the eternity of life, the continuous running of the sun. The idea of the sun moving across the sky can be clearly seen in those spirals where the sun signs (circles with crosses in the middle) are represented on the bends. The triangle is a sign of the spirit; with its top up, it symbolises the masculine principle and represents the connection between the past, present and future. The rhombus is a symbol of fertility, the embodiment of the masculine and feminine.

Since the 18th century, beads have been gaining popularity among embroiderers. According to the history of Ukrainian embroidery, small glass beads were especially popular in western Ukraine.

Ivan Franko played a significant role in the popularisation of embroidery as an element of everyday clothing among the Ukrainian elite. He was the first to bravely and quite successfully combine a classic embroidered shirt with a business style (jacket). And his example is now being followed by modern Ukrainian politicians.

The history of Ukrainian embroidery has taken another turn after gaining independence and since the Orange Revolution. Clothing with ornaments is no longer perceived only as an element of a folk costume for a stage performance, but has become clothing that demonstrates national identity, patriotism and origin.

The Meaning of the Symbolism of Ukrainian Embroidery

Our ancestors honoured and worshipped the elements of nature. The most common elements of embroidery were symbols representing the elements of the sun and water. The sun was shown as an eight-pointed star or a cross of lines, and water was depicted as wavy lines. These symbols served as protection from evil forces. Another common symbol is a rhombus with a dot in the centre, which symbolises fertility. Ukrainian clothes with the image of rhombuses were worn by couples who wanted to become parents.

Embroidered shirts often depicted one of the Ukrainian national symbols, kalyna. Kalyna is considered to be the personification of the Sun, Moon and stars. The red colour of kalyna has different symbolic meanings. The first is the immortality of the family. The second meaning of kalyna is a symbol of the difficult fate of a person, often a woman's fate. Another meaning of kalyna is the blood of the nation, spilled in the struggle for freedom and independence.

Men's embroidered shirts often feature the image of an oak tree. Oak symbolises masculine strength, the energy of life and development.

The symbol of a happy family life on Ukrainian embroidery is grapes. Grape bunches were depicted not only on shirts, but also on towels and tablecloths.

And here's another plant common on Ukrainian embroidery. This is the vinca. This plant has long symbolised youth, determination, and development. That is why embroidered clothes with vinca were and are often worn by young people.

The red poppy on embroidery is considered to be a family amulet and protection from evil spirits. The poppy is also a symbol of memory of the dead, a symbol of the connection between the living and the dead. If a family had fallen soldiers, women from that family would depict poppies on their clothes in memory of them.

Roses are often depicted on women's clothing or towels. They represent love, mercy and Christian faith.

Another traditional flower for Ukrainian embroidery is the sunflower. It symbolises the energy of life, the desire for peaceful work, and the happiness of living in one's native land. In Ukraine, especially in its central part, there are huge fields of sunflowers. This is the result of the hard work of many people. A lot of sunflowers have been grown in Ukraine for a long time, so it is no surprise that this flower appeared on Ukrainian embroidery.

Not only do the patterns on the shirt have a symbolic meaning, but also their colour:

- red is the colour of the sun, good luck, protection, love and passion;
- green symbolises the processes of birth and growth;
- yellow is the colour of solar energy, life, joy, wealth and prosperity;
- blue is a symbol of feminine energy, calmness, the colour of water and sky;
- white is the colour of spiritual purity, holiness, good intentions;
- black symbolises pain, suffering, death, evil (Ukrainians wear black vyshyvankas when a disaster happens in the family or to bury the dead).

In Ukraine, different embroidery techniques are used.

Cross-stitch is when threads are laid in a cross-shaped pattern, which is a talisman against evil forces and a symbol of Christ. It is one of the oldest techniques of Ukrainian embroidery.

Satin stitch embroidery is a technique in which stitches fill the entire surface of the fabric along the edge. This embroidery came to Ukraine from Eastern countries.

Merezhka (lace) embroidery is the highest level of skill for an embroiderer. The craftswoman has to pull some threads out of the fabric and then process the remaining threads with specific stitches. Merezhka always looks elegant and expensive.

Embroidery in Different Regions of Ukraine

There are many different regions in Ukraine, and each of them has specific features of Ukrainian embroidery.

The West

In western regions, geometric shapes are preferred: rhombuses, broken lines and stars. Although in Zakarpattia, Bukovyna and southern Volyn, floral ornaments are not ignored. However, each region has its own colour range. For example, in Khmelnytskyi region, black is the most popular colour, and in Bukovyna, a mix of black and dark red is used, which is additionally decorated with silver and gold threads. In Zakarpattia, more than ten colours are used. Another feature of embroidery in Prykarpattia and Zakarpattia is the depiction of mountains, because in these regions the Carpathian Mountains determine the weather, natural phenomena, and people's lifestyle. That is why ornaments resembling mountains are traditional here.

Central Part

In the central part of the country, the most common motifs are floral ones, symbolising the fertility of the land and the process of growing crops, which our ancestors have been doing for a long time. These are mostly bunches of grapes, roses, sunflowers, and poppies.

Often, images of flowers and vines are combined with geometric shapes, the most typical of which is the rhombus. Poltava embroidery is characterised by delicate colours and pastel tones. Most often in the Poltava region, floral or geometric ornaments are embroidered in white on white. People associated them with patterns in winter, when the temperature difference created an amazing ornament on the window. To increase the effect of the embroidery, ash-coloured threads were added to the white.

White (or white thread) embroidery is one of the most complex and original types of Ukrainian folk embroidery. It originated in Reshetylivka, Poltava region, and has become a landmark of this region. This embroidery contains ancient patterns that serve as amulets. By the way, Poltava embroidery often includes various laces or embroidered paths. They represent a person's life path, his or her life journey, which should be straight and honest. Poltava embroidery is very gentle and delicate. The canvas for this embroidery and the threads are thinner than in other regions. This is due to the fact that there is always a lot of sunshine in Poltava region, the natural conditions are very comfortable, and our land is very beautiful. Therefore, embroidery has long performed an aesthetic function, showing the magnificent beauty of the land.

The North

In the north of the country, both geometric ornaments and floral patterns are embroidered. The Kyiv region is characterised by ornaments depicting bunches of grapes, viburnum, hops, and roses. Mostly coral red and black colours are used in embroidery. The combination of red and black is also popular in the Zhytomyr region. Sometimes there are floral and vegetal ornaments: leaves, birches, hops, periwinkles. In Sumy region, you can also see images of

birds (eagles, swans, pigeons).

The East

In Kharkiv and Luhansk regions, people like to embroider shirts with coarse threads that create a relief ornament. Usually, the pattern is made with a half-cross or a cross. And in Donbas, complex floral motifs are valued: flowers, bouquets and trees. Images of birds are also common.

The South

In the South of Ukraine, floral motifs are preferred. In Mykolaiv region, shirts are decorated with ornaments with flowers, pine trees, oak leaves and hops. And in Kherson region, the embroidery still features the pre-Indo-European motifs of the World Tree, a symbol of the universe.

The main colours of embroidery in the Ukrainian South are black and red, but there is also white-on-white embroidery. A characteristic feature of southern embroideries is also the quadrangular neckline and loose sleeves without wrist ties.

Crimea

Crimean shirts are distinguished by the contrast of colours. The main element is the ornek, a national Crimean Tatar ornament. Also important are floral motifs, which are selected depending on gender and age. For example, young boys' shirts are decorated with tulips and girls' embroidered shirts with roses. Older people's clothes are decorated with carnations.

Embroidery in Poetry

In his poetry, Ukrainian poet Dmytro Pavlychko referred to the image of an embroidered shirt. Vyshyvanka (Ukrainian shirt) is an ancient Ukrainian talisman. It symbolises a mother's love and care, and an unbreakable bond with the motherland.

Dmytro Pavlychko was a Ukrainian poet, translator, and public activist. He was born in 1929 to a peasant family in the village of Stopchativ (now Kosiv district, Ivano-Frankivsk region). In 1944, in Kolomyia, where Dmytro was studying at the time, the Nazis shot his brother, so he decided to join the UPA, choosing the pseudonym Doroshenko. In 1945-1946, he was imprisoned by the Soviet authorities on charges of belonging to the UPA, but was released due to his age. In 1953, he graduated from the Faculty of Philology at Lviv University. In 1964, he moved to Kyiv, where he worked at the Dovzhenko Film Studio, later as an editor of the Ukrainian magazine "Vsesvit," and then as a secretary of the Writers' Union of Ukraine. In the 1980s and 1990s, he was involved in public activities. Dmytro Pavlychko became the chairman of the Taras Shevchenko Ukrainian Language Society and for a long time was a member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Dmytro Pavlychko was one of the authors of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine.

Dmytro Pavlychko is a Hero of Ukraine, a laureate of the Taras Shevchenko National Prize and other national and international awards. His fate is forever linked to the struggle for Ukraine's independence.

Dmytro Pavlychko's most famous poem is "Two Colours," which became a song. The music was written by composer Oleksandr Bilash. The Soviet authorities sought to ban the song because it used vivid colour symbolism: red and black, the colours of the OUN (Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists) flag. Dmytro Pavlychko was even summoned for

questioning about the song, accused of creating a “Bandera anthem,” but he assured Soviet officials that the song used the colours of traditional Ukrainian embroidery.

The Modernity of Vyshyvanka and Its Value

Every year on the third Thursday of May, the world celebrates World Vyshyvanka Day. This holiday is quite young – it is only 13 years old, but this year more than 60 countries have joined it. Vyshyvanka is a symbol that unites all Ukrainians.

That is why vyshyvanka is a talisman and a modern weapon against the enemy. During martial law on Independence Day, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wore a dark green embroidered shirt with oak leaves, which symbolises the steadfastness of the Ukrainian nation.

The meaning of vyshyvanka is very deep. It is a symbol of Ukrainian defiance, freedom, and Ukrainian solidarity. Ukrainian embroidered shirts are conquering the world, fascinating people with their identity and deep meaning of embroidery. Many world-class celebrities, including Claudia Schiffer, Nicole Kidman, Demi Moore, and Halle Berry, choose Ukrainian national clothes.

As long as Ukrainian women embroider shirts, putting their souls into them, and Ukrainian soldiers wear them, Ukraine will be invincible.

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Eugeniia Kosana, Mariia Boikiv, Yuliia Apetyk

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

UKRAINIAN CHRISTMAS: LITERARY REFLECTIONS ON TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Christmas in Ukraine

Christmas celebration in Ukraine is associated with various religious and cultural traditions. Our ancestors followed numerous authentic customs, and many of them have survived to this day.

The first things that comes to one's mind at the mention of a traditional Ukrainian Christmas is Vertep. During the Christmas season, groups of performers, often dressed in traditional costumes, move from house to house or perform in public spaces, presenting short plays or scenes that depict the Nativity story, as well as various folk tales and comedic sketches. Basically, the vertep typically includes a variety of characters, such as angels, shepherds, the Holy Family, and sometimes even fictional characters or animals. It must be noted that atheistic Soviet state severely persecuted religion and the associated elements of culture, and by 1930s the tradition of Christmas verтеps was virtually eliminated.

In fact, during the Soviet era, all Christmas celebrations were suppressed, as the government aimed to diminish religious influence. In Ukraine the suppression of Christmas was part of a broader effort to undermine Ukrainian culture and identity. Despite this, many Ukrainians continued to observe Christmas traditions in private, adapting to the circumstances.

Speaking of Christmas traditions, it is impossible to omit Christmas Eve, known as "Sviaty Vechir" in Ukrainian. Christmas eve is a special and cherished time in Ukraine, filled with unique traditions and customs. It would be a mistake to think that this eve is all about food and drinks, because it is the other way round. This is the time that symbolises deep connection to our ancestors, nature, and of course God. Before the meal begins, the head of the household typically offers a prayer and breaks bread, which is then passed around to each family member. The images of traditional Ukrainian Christmas Eve can be seen in various pieces of Ukrainian literature. One of the most prolific writers on this topic is Mykola Hohol, famous for his novel "Christmas Eve" or "The Night Before Christmas". The story takes place on Christmas Eve. On this evening, Christians prepare 12 meatless dishes, gather with their families, and say prayers. It has long been believed that magical transformations, unusual events, and encounters with evil spirits that walk the world on this evening can take place. The most important dish is kutia.

In fact, Ukrainians cannot imagine their Christmas Eve without Kutia, which is a ritual dish made from boiled wheat, honey, poppy seeds, and sometimes nuts. It holds a symbolic meaning, representing the unity of the family and the wish for a sweet and abundant life. Kutia is a symbol of well-being and a talisman, made from the gifts of nature. After dinner,

kutia is left on the table for the souls of the dead overnight, as it symbolises unity with God.

In some regions of Ukraine, there's also a tradition to bring Kutia to your godparents on Christmas Eve. This tradition can be traced back to Olena Pchilka's short story "The Embarrassing Supper," where a boy brings a poor peasant kutia instead of his godmother, a young landowner.

These traditions and customs prove that Ukraine has a rich tapestry of authentic Christmas traditions that have been passed down through generations. These traditions are deeply rooted in Ukrainian culture and often have both religious and cultural significance.

Christmas Eve Tradition in "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" by Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky

Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky is a prominent Ukrainian writer. Kotsiubynsky's early stories were described as examples of ethnographic realism; in years to come he evolved into one of the most talented Ukrainian impressionist and modernist writers. His most famous work is the novella "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" ("Tini Zabutykh Predkiv"), published in 1889. This work is considered a classic of Ukrainian literature and explores the life of the Hutsul people in the Carpathian Mountains.

Hutsuls are a Ukrainian ethnographic group living in the Carpathian Mountains. Their culture combines both Christian and Heathenish traditions. The novella combines elements of folklore, mysticism, naturalism, providing a vivid portrayal of the traditions of the region. The work was written more than one hundred years ago, however, some traditions are still being followed.

In the morning of the day before Christmas, a husband sets up a live fire, and takes some of it to the oven, where his wife prepares food. The wife cooks 12 traditional Ukrainian dishes. The table is covered with various cereals. The man is to give a little bit of each dish to the cattle. The cattle should be the first to try the festive food.

"Ivan was always in a strange mood on Christmas Eve. Imbued with something mysterious and holy, he would reverently perform all the actions as if serving Mass. Striking up a living fire so that Palahna could prepare the supper, he would spread hay over and under the table, mooing like a cow, bleating like a sheep, or neighing like a horse with complete faith to make the livestock prosper. He would fumigate the house and the sheepfold with incense to drive away wild beasts and witches, and when Palahna, her face flushed from bustling about, would announce in the smoke-filled room that all twelve dishes were ready, he would carry a little of each dish to the cattle before sitting down. The cattle had to have the first taste of the cabbage rolls, plums, beans, and barley gruel that Palahna had painstakingly prepared for him."

Then the man enters the house, where his wife prepares a bowl of kalach, a special bread, as well as two jars of honey and water. The host takes this bowl, an axe and goes to the yard to invite evil forces, wild animals and the storm to the Holy Supper. So he does three times. The man says that if they do not have the strength to come to God's Holy Supper, they should not come to his house for the whole year.

“He also had to summon to the holy supper the hostile powers against which he had guarded all his life. Taking a bowl of food in one hand and an axe in the other, he would go outside. Dressed in white mantles, the green mountains listened attentively as the gold of the stars rang in the skies and the frost flashed its silver sword, cutting down the sounds in the air, and Ivan extended his arm into this winter-clad loneliness and invited all the necromancers, sorcerers, astrologers, wolves, and bears to share the holy supper with him. He called the tempest to accept his invitation to sumptuous dishes and brandies, but it did not accept, and no one came, although Ivan asked three times. Then he adjured them never to come and sighed lightly.”

The man enters the house, locks the door, smokes the family with incense. After that, the family prays for the souls of strangers who drowned, were killed, executed, who are in hell, whom no one will remember, so that God would let them join the people for the Holy Supper. At the same time, they ask God for everything to be fine in the household, thank Him for being in peace during these holidays, and ask them to live the same way until the next year.

“Palahna was waiting in the house. The embers in the stove sizzled quietly; the dishes rested on the hay, and a Christmas peace filled the dark corners. Hunger called Ivan and Palahna to the table, but they did not dare sit down yet. Palahna looked at her husband, and they knelt together, begging God to allow the souls nobody knew, the souls of people lost or killed at work in the forest, or crippled on highways, or drowned in deep waters to come to their table.”

Before sitting at the table, the host takes a bowl with food for souls and invites both righteous and sinful souls to the Last Supper, so that they would eat in their world as people do on the Holy Evening. If someone wants to sit down after dinner, they have to blow on the bench so as not to crush the soul that might be sitting there. After dinner, the owners make fortune-telling so that everything will be fine with the cattle and the apiary.

“Blow on the bench before you sit down!” Palahna cautioned him. But Ivan knew what to do without being told. Carefully blowing clear a place on the bench to avoid crushing a soul, he would sit down to the supper.”

Christmas Projects during the War

Throughout the war, Ukrainians continue to demonstrate an unwavering commitment to artistic innovation while also maintaining their cultural heritage. Despite the constant blackouts due to shelling and missile strikes, Ukrainians persist in composing Christmas carols that serve as poignant symbols of resilience. These carols, infused with modern themes and perspectives, capture the essence of contemporary Ukrainian life. Below, you will find Ukrainian Christmas carols along with their English translations, offering a glimpse into current way of life.

NATIONAL CULTURE OF UKRAINE AND JAPAN

Carol, carol, caroling!
Winter cold is not an enemy!
Quicky open house's door,
Hearing generators' roar!

Коляд, коляд, коляда!
Холод взимку – не біда!
Двері швидше відчиняйте,
Генератор запускайте!

Carol, carol, a joyful sound
Our victory's all around!
To every home, bring cheer and glee,
A year that's happy, rich, and free.

Колядую, колядую,
Перемогу нашу чую!
Хай приходить в кожную хату
Рік щасливий і багатий.

Ethnomusicologist and folk singer Oleksiy Zayets has created his own carol dedicated to the valorous Armed Forces of Ukraine. After each verse, the chorus was repeated: “Give, Lord, to our army health and strength in battle.” It demonstrates that carols are not confined to antiquity but can embody modernity and relevance. Most importantly, they are another testament to the vibrant Ukrainian culture. Ukrainians in times of war try even harder to preserve their own traditions and culture. The world already knows our “Shchedryk” or “Carol of the Bells,” that is why modern artists are trying to popularize others.

Ukrainian writer Maryana Savka's musical “Write Letters to St. Nicholas!” embodies a powerful narrative centered around a family and their neighbors coming together to weave a camouflage net for the Armed Forces, despite interference from malevolent forces. In the heart of the story, angels intervene to protect the endeavor, transforming the net into a magical symbol of unity and resilience. This tale is brought to life by over 150 artists including the esteemed national choral band “Dudaryk” and the symphony orchestra “INSO-Lviv,” carries profound significance. Notably, the role of St. Nicholas was played by the actor Oleksiy Kravchuk, who was a sniper from the beginning of the full-scale invasion. His call sign is “Saint Nicholas.” After the injury and rehabilitation, he returned to the artistic life and is engaged in volunteer work. His story symbolizes the indomitable spirit of the Ukrainian people in the face of adversity, reinforcing the musical's message of hope, community, and the enduring power of resilience.

Ukrainian culture now exists thanks to our military, who even on the front lines put up a Christmas tree, wear Santa Claus hats, or hang St. Nicholas socks next to children's drawings. Christmas is a symbol of unity and wonder, so in such dark times for us, it gives light to our souls, because good always triumphs over evil. As Maryana Savka said, “I understood, starting with a full-scale war, that a miracle happens every day and is created by people whom the Lord weaves into unions and associations.”

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Yuhei Nakaigawa

Saitama University

DISCUSSING JAPANESE SCHOOL UNIFORMS FROM GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

In this paper I would like to focus on Japanese gender-free school uniforms and problems associated with this issue. Firstly, I would like to introduce some information regarding Japanese school uniforms.

The basic style of school uniform, stand-up collar uniform for male students emerged in 1879. With regard to female school uniforms at that time, they were worn as a *Hakama* at first. Then, sailor type school uniforms started to be popular among schoolgirls from around the 1920's. Around the 1960's, blazer style uniforms appeared along with student movements. This type of uniform was adopted by many schools from around the 1980's. Since the 1990's, school uniforms have become more and more fashionable. More recently, there are variety of different styles of uniforms which have become popular (Kankoo, 2021).

From this history, I would like to focus on gender free type school uniforms. Uniforms introduced in many Japanese schools used to be slacks for boys and skirts for girls. But in recent years, more and more schools are allowing girls to choose slacks. On the other hand, not many schools have allowed boys to choose skirts. While outside of school, gender-neutral clothing is common, in a school environment it is not. I believe that skirts for boys should be allowed as well. In this presentation, I will discuss some reasons for such differences and consider how Japanese schools and society should recognize the diversity of gender. My question is that why a skirt type of school uniform for male student is not widespread.

The Reason Why Slacks for Girls Was Introduced

Firstly, the reasons behind the introduction of slacks for girls will be examined. There are basically three reasons: Functionality, presenting more choices and dealing with students with Gender Identity Disorder. About functionality, according to a study of risk/benefit attitudes of female college students regarding pants and skirt styles, many felt that slacks were a benefit in terms of aspects such as ease of movement and resistance to getting cold, issues that are more problematic with the wearing of skirts (Hashimoto, 2007). Also, many felt that the many colors/patterns and femininity of the skirts were a benefit. Then, let's think the reason why skirt should be introduced to boys. Although skirt's functionality can be replaced by short pants, perspective of making more choices, and dealing with Gender Identity Disorder Students is still an important reason.

Students' Attitude to Gender Free School Uniform

In consideration of creating gender free uniforms, what kind of things do students regard as important or relevant? A survey which researched high school students' attitudes toward the uniform choice system showed that while 70% of students wanted to use the system, they indicated that the eyes of those around them would be a hurdle if adopting such a system (School General Election Project, 2021). Especially boys who want to use skirts, the idea that it is not common for men to wear skirts in today's society may be a biggest hurdle. From the start, why is it common for men to wear only pants while women wear pants and skirts? As a hypothesis, I thought that skirts and trousers, now considered to be opposites like histogram of toilet, were not inherently completely opposite.

The History of Skirts and Trousers

Then, let's examine the history of skirts and trousers. Until the medieval times, both men and women wore long scroll robes or loin kind cloths. Since medieval times, a gender difference that men wore pants and women wore skirts was born. In the 15th century, the *pourpoint*, a short jacket for men, appeared, and the *chausse* appeared as its leg cloth. Originally, the *pourpoint* was a cloth worn by men under their armor. Meanwhile, a women-only costume *robe* was also introduced at this time. It is thought that the fashionable nature of the robe itself was considered more important than its functionality. More recently as women entered the general workforce from the early 20th century, women's skirts have been replaced by pants. In other words, it can be said that from the original garment, the trousers emphasized functionality, and the skirt emphasized the meaning it represents in itself. It is possible to assume that the reason why women easily began to wear trousers is that they are not really recognized as an item of clothing without being associated with masculinity.

How School Uniforms Have Been Represented

Then, how about Japanese school uniform? I'll show how those have been represented. Research has shown that "the stand-up collar design symbolized the school spirit of *patriotism and valor, fidelity and soundness, and diligence and thrift*. The sailor-type uniform was favored as a design that symbolized the school spirit of *obedience, chastity, and neatness* that the school demanded of its female students" (Banba, 2018).

Schools used to be places that trained people to contribute to the nation, and only children from privileged classes could attend. Thus, the uniform was a sign that a person was a member of society's elite. The uniforms projected the image of the human being that the state wanted to cultivate (Banba, 2011).

Problems of School Uniforms

English artist Eric Gill wrote about clothes and gender in his writing: "Skirts are not for ladies only, nor pants for gentlemen. Was the kilt-wearing Scotsman weak and feeble? Were Turkish women who wore trouser-like clothing manly? Is there no gender just because Indians wear neither pants nor skirts?" (Kitakata, 2019). From these facts, it can be said skirts and

trousers themselves originally had no meaning, and meaning is determined depending on the gender perspective at specific times in history. That is to say if the view of gender changes, those meanings can be replaced. So it is entirely possible that the idea that men can wear skirts may become common. In fact, since women began to wear trousers, a gender difference that men wear pants and women wear skirts was broken. However, it's not easy to change people's view of gender. In the first place, it is supposed to say the uniform itself, differentiated by gender, reproduces the meaning of skirts, slacks and other uniforms connected with masculinity and femininity. Banba (2018) showed that research in 1989 showed high school student's images for collar-type uniform is strongly connected with masculinity. On the other hand, around the 1990's, there had been a lot of model change of school uniform and female school uniforms became fashionable. Then, it began to be recognized strongly connected with cuteness.

From these issues, the problem is the school uniforms themselves, which specify different outfits for men and women. Therefore, one possible means would be to stop limiting uniform bottoms to two types: skirts and slacks. Then, it is expected that by adding forms of uniforms that are not similar to ordinary school uniforms, such as short pants or trouser skirts can help student to wear whatever they want including skirts same as outside of school, because, it will not only make skirts and slacks as one option, but also be a chance to change the way of reproducing. As this picture showed, a trouser skirt is important because it represents less cuteness.

Conclusion

To sum up, the reason why skirts for male student is not widespread is that our thoughts of clothes and gender has not changed yet. I came to two conclusions. Firstly, skirts and slacks are not opposites. That is why slacks are easily accepted by women, and skirt is hardly accepted by men. It can be said the meaning of skirts as feminine and trousers as masculine is added. Also, meaning is determined depending on representations of gender at specific times in history. Our perspective of gender changes a lot now so it can be replaced at any time. Secondly, to reduce student's hesitation when using uniform choice system, it is needed to change gender views in society. Changing school uniforms, which specify different outfits for men and women, will be a chance to change our thoughts about the relationship between clothes and gender. Students may be less concerned about the eyes of others by doing so.

The process that men begin wear skirts generally will be unlikely the process as when women started wearing pants, so it is hard for GID student to wear skirts. As I mentioned before, however, I believe that it is essential to deal with those students.

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