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**Mailing Address:** 61002, 29 Alchevskykh Str., H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, Kharkiv, Ukraine.

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**Contact e-mail:** serka7@ukr.net; astraea.journal@gmail.com

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## Introductory word

*“The world tried but never seized me”  
Hryhorii Skovoroda*



The editorial board dedicates this issue of the journal to its editor-in-chief – Ivan Prokopenko, who passed away on June 29, 2021.

Owing to Ivan Prokopenko’s tireless work, H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University became a real center that shapes the intellectual elite of Slobozhanshchyna and Ukraine as a whole. Ivan Prokopenko could be proud of the achievements of university graduates, including the Heroes of Ukraine, famous politicians, public figures, world-renowned scientists, outstanding athletes, artists and musicians. Their professionalism, perseverance and dedication have always met the needs and requirements of the time.



Ivan Prokopenko personally developed and put into practice a new concept of students’ education intensification, which served as the basis for developing new pedagogical technologies, alternative to traditional ones. The special feature of the educational system developed by Ivan Prokopenko is the development of the student’s personality and their creative potential. New learning technologies have attracted the attention of the pedagogical community and spread to many higher education institutions in Ukraine.

Ivan Prokopenko believed that the pride and extraordinary heritage of the university are scientific schools run by leading Ukrainian scholars, known far beyond its borders. They ensure the development of scientific research, integrating Ukrainian science into the European and global educational and scientific landscape.



In one of his interviews, Ivan Prokopenko said, “All these years, from the first steps in the corridors and classrooms of the university to the present, are echoed by the happy moments and beating hearts of tens of thousands of students, professors, staff and colleagues. These sounds have always filled me with energy and a sense of responsibility for everyone as well as allowed me to hurry to work as if it was a holiday”.

In his personal life, Ivan Prokopenko proved that dreams

of a profession come true, and success comes to those who work hard and constantly improve themselves. Pedagogical expertise and exceptional professional skills, national-scale thinking and a sense of responsibility provided Academician Ivan Prokopenko with a recognized authority and respect at his home university, in Ukraine and abroad.

Cherished memory...

The scientific section of this issue contains articles by Colombian scholars and teachers Miyiret Rua Cortes, María Trinidad Trujillo Castro, Henry Alberto Álvarez Guayara, Paola Julie Aguilar-Cruz on English language teaching techniques, including speaking skills that can be used by Colombian high school students and in other countries. We draw attention to sports disciplines in the system of vocational education in China, to the formation of patriotic mentality in educational institutions in China, where each individual must make a personal contribution to the development of the state.

We present the research by Belarusian researcher Volha Sudliankova, who interprets the novel by the modern Belarusian writer L. Rublevskaya in terms of research into trauma, emotional shocks, causes and consequences. We offer to consider rethinking of the novel by French writer Marc Levy by Ukrainian scholars Prykhodko Vira and Petrusenko Nina, who emphasize the illusory chronotope of the plot collisions: heaven and earth, life and death; bitter thoughts about the ephemerality of human life, optimistic belief in eternal renewal, the beauty of nature, love. We attend to the analysis by Ukrainian scholar Yuri Holoborodko of the legacy of marginal writer Arkady Averchenko at the late stage of his emigration to Europe, the Czech Republic, where the means of comic and ideological change correlate with the changes in his worldview and understanding of events that occurred in the world.

We present Olena Pogrebnyak's interpretation of the dualistic motif «white and black» as one of the most productive motifs in Ukrainian literature, painting and the cinema of the early twentieth century, which is interpreted as a manifestation of ambivalence and intermedia potential of artists D. Vertov, O. Dovzhenko, K. Malevich, M.I Zhuk, V. Vinnichenko, P. Tychyna.

The Fiction section features the poetry by Tetyana Varenko commented by Anna Rohozha, poems by Czech poet of Ukrainian origin Veronika Bagachanska, commented by Tetyana Safonova and Yulia Safonova, short stories by Krapivnyi Iliia, commented by Halyna Khomenko.

Life goes on... We will continue doing «good» according to our vocation *on the pages of Astraea*.

Yours sincerely, Editors  
*Yuriy Boychuk, Svitlana Kryvoruchko, Ilona Kostikova.*



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**CLASS DISCUSSIONS BASED ON CULTURAL  
ASPECTS TO FOSTER THE SPEAKING SKILL  
AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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**CORTES**

**Miyiret Rua**

**CASTRO**

**María Trinidad Trujillo**

**GUAYARA**

**Henry Alberto Álvarez**

**AGUILAR-CRUZ**

**Paola Julie**



**Miyiret Rua Cortes**

is a teacher of English Language,

[trinidadtrujillo9905@gmail.com](mailto:trinidadtrujillo9905@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4910-2465>

**María Trinidad Trujillo Castro**

is a teacher of English Language,

[miyiretruacortes2000@gmail.com](mailto:miyiretruacortes2000@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8547-0690>

**Henry Alberto Álvarez Guayara**

is a teacher of English Language,

Researcher, Master in English Didactics at

Universidad de la Amazonia and

Los Andes High School (Florencia,

Caquetá, Colombia;

[haalbat@gmail.com](mailto:haalbat@gmail.com))

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3203-1883>

**Paola Julie Aguilar-Cruz**

is a teacher of English Language,

Researcher at Universidad de la

Amazonia and Jorge Eliécer Gaitán

High School, Doctoral student in

Educational Technology at Central China

Normal University (Florencia, Caquetá,

Colombia; [paolaaguilarcruz@gmail.com](mailto:paolaaguilarcruz@gmail.com))

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8386-9104>



## ABSTRACT

This research study arose from the lack of opportunities students had to communicate and express their ideas regarding the content they had already learned using English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Speaking as a linguistic component in EFL is one of the most important skills in this context as it enables students to have better interaction and communication. This qualitative participatory action research study aimed at exploring the contributions that class discussions based on cultural aspects have on eleventh graders from Jorge Eliécer Gaitán High School in Florencia, Caquetá. Each intervention process in this research was developed using Argawati's (2014) cycle; the cycle was composed of three guidelines: greeting, main activity, and closing. The class discussions were conducted following the 'group investigation' method to give students more opportunities for participating and exchanging ideas. The surveys, field notes, and audio-tape recordings were the instruments to gather the data during the intervention. The findings suggest that it is beneficial to use class discussions based on cultural aspects in EFL to promote students' participation, and thus, evidence significant progress in the EFL speaking skill. Besides, class discussions based on cultural aspects make EFL learners be constantly practicing, requesting information, sharing ideas, and concluding regarding the cultural aspects, fostering a meaningful development of their speaking skill.

**Keywords:** class discussions, cultural aspects, culture, EFL speaking skill.

## АНОТАЦІЯ

### **Аудиторні дискусії навколо культурних аспектів у формуванні навичок мовлення серед учнів старших класів**

Це дослідження виникло через відсутність у студентів можливостей спілкування та вираження своїх ідей щодо змісту, який вони вже вивчали, використовуючи англійську мову як іноземну (EFL). Говоріння як лінгвістичний компонент в EFL є одним із найважливіших навичок у цьому контексті, оскільки воно дозволяє студентам краще взаємодіяти та спілкуватися. Це дослідження, побудоване на спільних діях, спрямоване на вивчення внеску класних дискусій, заснованих на культурних аспектах, одинадцятикласників середньої школи Хорхе Еліесера Гайтана у Флоренсії, Якета (Jorge Eliécer Gaitán High School in Florencia, Caquetá). Кожен процес втручання в цьому дослідженні був розроблений з використанням циклу Аргаваті (2014); цикл складався з трьох



рекомендацій: вітання, основна діяльність та завершення. Обговорення в класі проводилися за методом «групового дослідження», щоб дати студентам більше можливостей для участі та обміну ідеями. Опитування, нотатки та аудіозаписи були інструментами для збору даних під час роботи. Результати свідчать про те, що використання обговорення в класі на основі культурних аспектів EFL є корисним для сприяння участі студентів, і, таким чином, свідчить про значний прогрес у мовленнєвих навичках EFL. Крім того, класні дискусії, засновані на культурних аспектах, дають можливість учням EFL постійно практикуватися, запитувати інформацію, обмінюватися ідеями та робити висновки щодо культурних аспектів, сприяючи значущому розвитку їхніх мовленнєвих навичок.

**Ключові слова:** класні дискусії, культурні аспекти, культура, навички мовлення EFL

## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most important skills in the EFL context as it enables students to have better interaction and communication. According to Mart (2012), “speaking is being capable of speech, expressing or exchanging thoughts through using language” (p. 91). However, speaking is not a simple process since it requires much effort for those who are learning a second or a foreign language; especially when it refers to English (Sharma, 2018). Having said that, it is necessary to recognize the importance of implementing strategies that help students to enhance the ability to communicate orally. For that reason, this research study sought to foster the EFL speaking skill in students at a state school.

This study arose from the lack of spaces students had to communicate and express their ideas orally regarding the content they had already learned. In Jiménez’s (2015) words, the root of the problem is that “the learning environment which includes the teacher’s methodology and classroom environment in which the absence of an EFL speaking social context does not provide a natural content to stimulate communication” (p. 221). In the same vein, Bueno et al. (as cited in Rocío, 2012) pinpoint that although speaking is a very difficult skill for students, teachers tend to neglect this skill in the classroom spending more time teaching grammar, writing and reading just by tradition. Having this in mind, this research study aimed to provide opportunities in which students enhance the EFL speaking skill in the classroom; this



was done using class discussions as a strategy to foster this productive language skill. This article first presents the literature review and theoretical framework in which we based on research study. Then, it describes the methodology implemented, including the research context, research design, procedures, and instruments. Later, it relates the results and discussions in which we present relevant data that supported our research. Lastly, it reports the conclusions and add some recommendations for further research.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is devoted to review different studies concerning class discussions, culture, and the EFL speaking skill which are the constructs used in this study; this literature review is carried out to demonstrate the applicability of the constructs of this study in EFL contexts, whether regional, national, or international.

In relation to class discussions and the EFL speaking skill, Argawati (2014) conducted a classroom action research study to prove and describe how discussions can improve the students' speaking skill. To this respect, Argawati (2014) argues the use of class discussions is a good strategy to enhance the speaking skill in a foreign language. Furthermore, students can have the chance of using English between them confidentially, and at the same time, they are able to acquire new vocabulary. In terms of the speaking skill. The author points out that speaking is the most difficult skill to tackle since this is a means to both expressing ideas and making reflections on someone or something. Argawati's (2014) study findings revealed that class discussions generate a positive impact on helping students to increase their willingness to communicate orally. Moreover, class discussions expand not only the vocabulary and the motivation in students but also their speaking skill. In this way, it is possible to assert that class discussions have positive changes which make students able to have better oral production in their EFL interactions.

In the same line of thought, concerning the EFL speaking skill development through class discussions, La'biran (2017) conducted an action research study concerning the implementation of class discussions to help students improve their speaking skill. Accordingly, the author highlights the importance of practicing speaking skill in the classroom since this ability allows people to have interaction and exchange of verbal expressions. Besides, La'biran (2017) claims that the use of



class discussions encourages students to express their ideas and to be active in class. The study was conducted in a high school from Salaputti, Tana Toraja through pre and post oral tests as data gathering. The findings of the study reflected that the use of class discussions as a strategy to improve the speaking skill was useful for improving students' progress during the intervention. Moreover, the author concluded that class discussions as a teaching strategy enhance students' speaking skill and increase their learning outcomes. Finally, this study provides our research study with meaningful insights regarding the benefits that class discussions have in the development of participants' EFL speaking skill.

In relation to class discussions based on cultural aspects, Yildirim (2017) developed an exploratory research study to analyze the differences in class participation between international and American students. The author affirms that class discussions aid students to increase their involvement in the classroom as culture in this study was seen as a relevant component in the participation of the discussions. Consequently, Yildirim (2017) states that mastering a foreign language not only implies learning vocabulary and grammar but also the cultural aspects that have a wide range of uses for oral communication. The findings reflected the need of raising awareness of the different cultural aspects immersed into the classroom since this influences the development of class discussions, and at the same time in learners' oral participation and proficiency. Also, Yildirim (2017) found culture as a resource that can either make students more or less participative in the classroom. For that reason, the researcher suggests using class discussions focusing on stereotypes and cultural differences to create an integrated learning environment.

About the EFL speaking skill and culture, Rolong et al. (2018) carried out an action research study to improve students' speaking skills, reduce anxiety and mental blocking using local culture. Rolong et al. (2018) pinpoint that using local culture refers to the facts that surround students. This is an important aspect in the process of learning a foreign language since it helps students to foster the development of their language skills through creative and familiar content. Moreover, in terms of the EFL speaking skill, the authors claim that everything learned in the classroom (vocabulary, grammar, etc.) is essential when using this skill for having real-life interaction with others. The study was carried out at a high school with interviews as data-gathering instruments. In their findings, Rolong et al. (2018) highlighted the use of activities related to students' context and places in which they are immersed

as this is relevant to promote the use and development of their EFL speaking skill. Also, the researchers make the invitation to lay aside the usual books used for EFL learning and implement students' cultural background as the content of classroom-based activities.

Concerning the implementation of culture through customized lessons which favor the development of the EFL learning, Oviedo and Álvarez (2019) conducted an action research study to explore the benefits of using cultural content into the EFL learning processes. This was done by creating lesson with the purpose of developing the four language skills. Furthermore, the authors argue that one of the most valuable pedagogical activities for teaching English is the use of strategies that meet students' needs or likes. This involves the understanding of the concept that learning a language develops differently in each student. For that reason, the authors express the importance of joining language and culture to have more meaningful communication in EFL learning. Regarding Oviedo and Álvarez's (2019) findings, the authors identified that developing cultural understanding allows students to talk about aspects that they already know or even some aspects they are still learning; in other words, integrating culture into the EFL learning encourages students to have active participation during this process.

To conclude, this literature review concerning our constructs is useful and significant due to the fact that it provides relevant information for having a wider panorama of the theoretical and practical implications of our research inquiry. Moreover, the review process helps us to understand that the current research field is relevant at a regional, national, and international level.

### **AIM OF THE ARTICLE**

The aim of the research is to analyze and estimate the efficiency of various methodological techniques that allowed the development of the students' speaking skills.

#### **Class Discussions**

Class discussions as one of the main constructs that shaped this study, is integrated into the participative methods to enhance the students' oral production. In relation to this, Ewens (1986) claims that this method "is one in which the instructor and a group of students consider a topic, issue, or problem and exchange



information, experiences, ideas, opinions, reactions, and conclusions with one another” (p. 77). These aspects generate certain benefits that encourage students’ development as Gugglberger et al. (2015) could identify in their research study; it was evidenced that class discussions make students more participative since they can talk about affairs that are meaningful for them. Therefore, “with more practice in their oral communication skills, students will feel more comfortable in speaking. This oral practice and confidence in speaking should help to improve their speaking proficiency” (Tsou, 2005, p. 47). Thus, class discussions allow students to be active in the classroom environment, provoking significant progress regarding the oral production.

The development of oral production in students is essential when learning a foreign language, and to fulfill the different aims during this process is necessary to practice in the classroom; it means, to have a persistent interaction. In words of Hanum (2017) “interaction is needed in the classroom activity. It helps the teaching and learning process run smoothly and it can increase learners’ communicative” (p. 1). Hence, discussions enable “people enter into an interaction with a schema based on an accumulation of cultural and social knowledge and structural experiences” (Jones, 1999, p. 249). In other words, through class discussions teachers can promote spaces where students can interact with each other to handle topics linked to their background.

In this line of thought, class discussions face students to a collective agreement in which they are able to exchange several ideas through language. In this sense, across this strategy, students “are involved in negotiating, initiating, planning, and evaluating together. They are given the responsibility of creating a «learning community» where all students participate in significant and meaningful ways” (Garside, 1996, p. 218). Class discussions expose students to work together following cooperative learning which helps in one or another way the oral production. Therefore, “the discussion among students within cooperative learning situations promotes more frequent oral repetition of information” (Johnson, 1991, p. 15). In brief, the use of class discussions as a teaching strategy promotes not only the improvement of a skill but also the promotion of community learning.

To conclude, this research study portrays class discussions as a strategy in which students can promote interaction and at the same time, cooperative learning within the classroom. Moreover, class discussions can achieve a powerful influence

on students' production since they persuade students to a variety of experiences that entail common issues. In this way, students can evidence the cooperation in the classroom and share knowledge reciprocally to improve either their EFL speaking skill or their social interaction.

#### The EFL Speaking Skill

Speaking skill as the second construct to mention in the current study is an important aspect of the linguistic approach to master effective communication. Kaddour (2016) claims that "speaking is an interactive process of communication which is the basis of all human relationships within language learning" (p. 4). Therefore, for the communication between people the development of oral production is vital when learning a language. Having said that, it is necessary to emphasize the fact that speaking skill comprehends a set of sub-competencies that help people to have better proficiency. Consequently, Bahrani and Soltani (2012) state that individuals "should try to avoid confusion in the message because of the faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary" (p. 25). All in all, speaking as an interactive process in language covers a variety of factors that increase the interaction level in the community.

In the same way, focusing on speaking as a skill to handle during the process of learning a foreign language, it can be said that this process comprises a variety of challenges for students. For that reason, Rao (2018) argues that the main issue of learning EFL is to practice it effectively and proficiently since students must tackle topics regarding grammar and vocabulary to have the possibility of interacting with each other. In other words, "speaking does not cover just knowing the linguistic feature; linguistic feature of the message expanding oral communication requires more than memorized vocabulary and grammatical comprehension" (Derakhshan et al., 2016, p. 178). However, "teachers do not facilitate situations for real practice in speaking" (Derakhshan et al., 2016, p. 178). Thus, it is evidenced that the EFL speaking skill comprehends a wide range of sub-skills which need to be fostered by students in real contexts; it means, students need to immerse in spaces in which they can practice the foreign language.

Learning speaking skill as one of the main goals of teaching a foreign language, exposes both students and teachers to seek strategies to have progress in communicative competences. In fact, "along with the rise of the communicative era, oral communication has been considered as the ultimate goal of language learning and its adequate development has become the point of interest of both teachers and





learners” (Sim & Pop, 2016, p. 265). For that reason, it is necessary to have spaces of discussions in which students can support their oral proficiency since “having learners form discussion groups can be another strategy for encouraging learners to become more motivated contributors to the speaking activities” (Kürüm, 2017, p. 16).

Conversely, students can lose the motivation of speaking if they do not have a chance to express their idea orally in the classroom (Sim & Pop, 2016). Having said that, learning speaking skills through class discussions can also aid students not only to foster their linguistic features but also to encourage them to have a continuous process.

In summary, the current study establishes speaking as a way of sharing knowledge through language to have efficient processes of communication. Besides, this skill plays a relevant role during the process of learning a foreign language since students can feel more motivated when they are exposed to use this skill in the classroom. Consequently, fostering the EFL speaking skill through innovative strategies must become one of the main purposes of teaching a foreign language. For instance, strategies such as discussions in the classroom support the aim since it linked students with their oral skills. In short, to tackle the speaking skill in the classroom is a necessity for the EFL community.

#### Cultural Aspects

Regarding cultural aspects as a basis of this research study, this can be defined from different points of view. To this respect, Lebrón (2013) pinpoints that “culture is the unique characteristics of a social group; the values and norms shared by its members set it apart from other social groups and is influenced by conscious beliefs” (p. 127). Having this in mind, it is possible to assert that culture generates an overview of people’s thoughts and behaviors. In the same line of thought, Guo (2013) defines culture as “an abstract term that defines a broad range of activities in which individuals express themselves. Culture is important because it tells us in different degrees what we are expected to think, say, and behave in typical life situations” (p. 506). Hence, culture is an important aspect of having a better understanding regarding people’s thoughts and their different behaviors into society.

On the other hand, language is one of the aspects which is immersed directly into the culture since this is innate in each social group. Goldstein (2015) affirms there is a close relationship between language and culture, specifying that in the labor of teaching a foreign language, culture plays a significant role which cannot

be omitted in the classroom. It is said, “language is culture – culture is language. Culture and language are intertwined and shape each other” (Trosborg, 2010, p. 2). Likewise, talking about the way that people use language whether visual, spoken or written Kramersch (1998) claims that “through all its verbal and non-verbal aspects, language embodies cultural reality” (p. 3). In other words, although language works with plenty of varieties through verbal and non-verbal expressions, each one of them can reflect its own cultural aspects from a social group. In brief, during the process of teaching a foreign tongue, it is important to recognize that culture cannot work isolated from the language itself due to it takes part in the culture’s development.

In the same vein, culture not only embodies language but also involves a set of characteristics that are part of people’s identity, and this influences the learning process in one or another way. Talking about this issue, Altugan (2015) defines cultural identity as “individuals nature and nurture which includes their experiences, talents, skills, beliefs, values and knowledge, in other words, who they are, what their status is in their family, school, work, environment and country” (p. 1160). In other words, culture and identity are essential components for people’s development because “cultural identity is an important effect on learning” (Altugan, 2015, p. 1161). For that reason, working on topics out of context in the foreign classroom is a risk, and Goldstein (2015) affirms that the problem with the material which is far from learners’ context “is that it may be far removed from our students’ world and could even alienate a learner” (p. 8). Thus, it is important to emphasize on the fact that identity as a branch of culture has a big impact on the different processes carried out by EFL students in and out of the classroom.

To sum up, this research study takes culture as a wide construct which includes a series of features such as language and identity, both as elements that influence EFL learning processes. Furthermore, culture plays an important role in students since it allows them to contextualize the learning process through a reality immersed in their daily life. It means that the use of local aspects helps students to acquire knowledge and makes the classes more participative and significant. All in all, culture does not work alone because it is an integral concept which involves a variety of elements that encourage students to have better development in their learning process. It means culture needs to go hand to hand with elements such as language and identity to accomplish the teaching goals.

The aforementioned constructs shape the theoretical basis for the development



of this study. The different literature resources reveal the necessity of implementing those categories in the EFL context.

## METHODOLOGY

This research study was carried out following a Participatory Action Research (PAR) method. In accordance with Kindon, et al. (2008), PAR “is a collaborative process of research, education, and action explicitly oriented toward social change.” (p. 90). In the same line of thought, McTaggart (1991) claims that through PAR “individuals and groups agree to work together to change themselves, individually and collectively. Their interests are joint by an agreed thematic concern.” (p. 172). In other words, PAR provides a range of strategies for both teachers and students during the learning process to identify difficulties and work together on tackling them.

At the same time, this study was conducted through a qualitative design (Creswell, 2013), since it allows to “explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants ... and the significance of the meanings that they generate” (Mason, 2002, p. 1).

In this sense, the participatory action research following a qualitative design generated significant methodological and practical procedures for the development of this study. Accordingly, for the purposes of this research study, we decided to design and implement the following data collection instruments: surveys, field notes and audio-tape recording; these helped us to collect information before, during and after the interventions. These data collection tools were implemented to register students’ responsiveness, opinion, beliefs, and progress in relation to our research concern which was related to the implementation of class discussions based on cultural aspects to foster the EFL speaking skill.

Furthermore, the information is presented and analyzed in accordance with the qualitative research approach and PAR research design. This was done with the purpose of providing our research study with consistency, reliability and coherence among the research structure, information collected, research approach, data analysis procedures, findings, and pedagogical implications.

Moreover, this study was carried out following the PAR process proposed by James et al. (2008) which contains four phases; those are diagnose, act, measure

and reflect (See Figure 1).

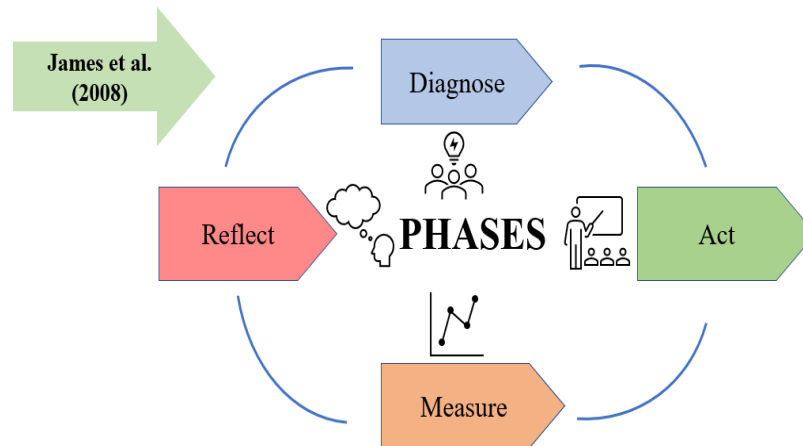


Figure 1.

PAR process in this research study (James et al., 2008).

In this vein, the first phase dealt with the recognition of the problem and concerns the process of identifying eleventh graders weaknesses, likes, and preferences regarding the EFL speaking skill and the cultural background; this was done by raising questions and collecting data through the Likert scale and the community visit. Considering the evidence presented in the results of the Likert scale implementation, we established the following research question to guide the research study:

What are the contributions of class discussions regarding cultural aspects in the development of the EFL speaking skill among eleventh graders at Institución Educativa Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in Florencia, Caquetá?

The second phase had to do with the actions that we took for developing the class discussions. In this sense, we selected the cultural aspects following students' concerns. Likewise, we established the order to follow during the class discussions, and at the same time, we designed and applied the material that supported students' knowledge. Thereby, we selected and implemented the data instruments for collecting the evidence.

In the third phase, we organized the information that we collected each week through the data instruments. In this way, we transcribed and selected the main information from the audio-tape recording, and we categorized and graphed the data to carry out the analysis. Finally, the fourth phase was oriented to reflect and interpret the data to explore the contributions that class discussions offered to students. The development and implementation of the aforementioned phases were meaningful for



tackling our research concern and answering the research question.

The participants involved in the development of this research study were 10 eleventh graders at Jorge Eliécer Gaitán High School in Florencia-Caquetá (six girls and four boys in the range of fifteen and seventeen years old). We could not involve more students in the study since this region was highly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and we had to change our teaching model from face-to-face to online environment in a region where internet connection is unstable and not all the students have access to it as reported by Rojas-Bahamón, Aguilar-Cruz, & Arbelaez-Campillo (2020).

#### Pedagogical Intervention

The participants involved in the development of this research study were 10 eleventh graders at Jorge Eliécer Gaitán High School in Florencia-Caquetá (six girls and four boys in the range of fifteen and seventeen years old). We could not involve more students in the study since this region was highly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and we had to change our teaching model from face-to-face to online environment in a region where internet connection is unstable and not all the students have access to it as reported by Rojas-Bahamón, Aguilar-Cruz, & Arbelaez-Campillo (2020).

For the development of the different stages of the intervention, we considered the Content-Based Instruction (CBI) approach, this supported the purpose of this research since it encourages the use of the language as a means for including participants' content of interest such as their culture. Besides, CBI is "An approach in which the teaching is organized around the content. Likewise, the principles of Content-Based Instruction are heavily rooted on the principles of communicative language teaching since they involve an active participation of students in the exchange of content". (Villalobos, 2013, p. 71).

In the same vein, "it involves the teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills. The students, thus, receive curricula information and do their academic tasks in the TL and, at the same time, acquire the L2/TL in a very natural way" (Madrid & García Sánchez, 2001, p. 115). Furthermore, Madrid and García Sánchez (2001) point out that CBI is the most effective approach to increase the students' language proficiency as it considers their needs and interests linking the previous information of the students with the new one. In brief, the focus of CBI during the intervention encouraged the use of the target language for communicative purposes through interesting content supporting the achievement of the goal in this study.



Accordingly, Figure 2 portrays an example of the activities implemented and Table 1 presents the pedagogical design implemented.

Table 1.

Pedagogical design.

Stages	Interventions	Data Collection Instruments
Contextualization	<b>1st Intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Surveys</li> <li>•Field Notes</li> <li>•Audio-tape Recording</li> </ul>
Exploration		
Acting	<b>2nd Intervention</b>	
	1st Class Discussion	
	<b>3rd Intervention</b>	
	2nd Class Discussion	
	<b>4th Intervention</b>	
	Final Class Discussion	
Reflecting	<b>5th Intervention</b>	

Figure 2.

Sample of the activities.

*2nd week*  
First Class Discussion



Retrieved from: <https://www.shutterstock.com/search/teacher-cartoon>

General Objective

'o talk about cultural aspects in groups using different resources such as web pages, dictionaries, etc.

Specific Objectives

- To recognize the pronunciation of words related to culture through the Lottery game.
- To read and search for information about the cultural aspects of the first-class discussion.
- To share orally information regarding the cultural aspect as a basis to create a mind map.

*2nd week*  
First Class Discussion

Lottery Game

Learning Strategy: Remembering a new word in the second language by generating easily recalled images of some relationship between the new word and the familiar word.

1. Be prepared for playing "the Lottery Game" by practicing the meaning of the following words:

Height	Long	Canoe	Village
Small	Short	Wisdom	Municipality
Walk	Sunset	Craft	

Topic selection

Learning Strategy: Relating new information to other concepts in memory.

2. Read and search information about your cultural aspect.



<https://www.google.com.co/webhp?tab=Tw&authuser=0>

First Class Discussion

Learning Strategy: Using print or non print resources to understand incoming messages or produce outgoing messages.

3. Use dictionaries, translators and web pages for speaking with your partners about your topic.



<https://www.deepl.com/translator>

<https://translate.google.com/>



<https://www.linguee.com/>



<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

4. Based on your partners' opinion make a mind map in GoConqr.



<https://www.goconqr.com/es>

Survey

Learning Strategy: Evaluating one's own progress in the new language

5. Develop the following survey for knowing your perceptions.



[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe\\_CAMGjdmazjZcyYop\\_vLLGomj7WYCfabrep1xvkaZQwvntormhuzoJ-link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe_CAMGjdmazjZcyYop_vLLGomj7WYCfabrep1xvkaZQwvntormhuzoJ-link)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As this is a qualitative participatory action research, it is necessary to implement appropriate data analysis procedures to validate the data we collected from the pedagogical intervention. For instance, we agree with Patton's (2002) ideas who claim that qualitative researchers always aim to "transform data into findings" (p. 432). In this respect, we followed Glaser and Strauss' (1967), and Freeman's (1998) grounded theory approach which allowed us to find salient patterns from the data collection instruments. As these commonalities emerged, it was necessary to establish research categories and subcategories which contributed to answer our research question.

We organized and codified the data implementing Freeman's (1998) procedure for data analysis. According to the author, for developing research categories of analysis, it is necessary to go through four steps. The first step is *naming*; this procedure implies giving names to the data which is transform into codes. The second procedure consists of *grouping* the names for constructing research categories. The third procedure consists of implemented Dezin and Lincoln's (2005) data triangulation procedure to identify the salient patterns and *finding relationships* among them. And the last procedure is to *display the data*, setting the relationship between categories and subcategories (See Table 2).

Table 2.

Research categories of analysis

Research Question	Categories	Subcategories
What are the contributions of class discussions regarding cultural aspects in the development of the EFL speaking skill among 11th graders at Institución Educativa Jorge Eliecer Gaitán?	Class discussions as a means for fostering students' communication.	Promoting self-confidence to encourage students to speak in EFL.  Co-constructing a speech to speak in EFL.  Speaking in EFL about previously discussed ideas.
	Cultural aspects as the vehicle to promote students' speaking in EFL	Pondering upon the relationship between my previous and the new cultural knowledge.  Co-constructing cultural understanding during the process of the class discussion.

After establishing the research categories and the corresponding subcategories, we triangulated the data among the three data collection tools as a means of ratifying and validating the evidence we found while developing this project; triangulation of data implies taking “different perspectives on an issue under study” (Flick, 2009, p. 445). Given these points, we explored each category and its subcategories by providing finding, excerpts and samples supported with literature to answer our research question.

Class discussions as a means for fostering students’ communication.

This category deals with the incidences that class discussions have in the process of fostering eleventh graders’ speaking skill. As Prayoga (2018) states that a class discussion “is used as exercise to improve student’s self-confidence and a speaking skill in learning English ... By doing group discussion, students could share issues, opinions and making conclusions to the audiences or outsiders group and discuss it in English” (p. 40). in the same line of thought, Harizaj (2015) highlights that class discussions “promote speaking, language acquisition and an active learning... Developing discussion, students develop speaking skills, acquire fluency and develop positive effects towards friendship” (pp. 231-232). In this respect, the following subcategories arouse: *Promoting self-confidence to encourage students to speak in EFL, Co-constructing a speech to speak in EFL and Speaking in EFL about previously discussed ideas.*

Promoting self-confidence to encourage students to speak in EFL.

This subcategory deals with eleventh graders’ opportunities to foster their self-confidence to speak in the target language. In this respect, Prayoga (2018), Han (2007), and Harizaj (2015) agree that the process of generating a class discussion requires a preparation to foster students’ confidence to speak in EFL. The authors further assert this is done in small group sessions and this is generally seen as an informal talk in which students are able to practice the target language without pressure increasing their self-confidence. Correspondingly, Han (2007) highlights that increasing students’ self-confidence also represents an improvement on students’ English speaking development. This can be evidenced in the surveys conducted after each one of the class discussions which demonstrated that most of the eleventh graders were more likely to speak in English as they felt more confident (See Figure 3). That is to say eleventh graders’ confidence helped them to open a wide range of opportunities to participate generating the improvement of the EFL speaking skill



(See Table 3).

Table 3. Students' responses to the statement "*I felt comfortable and active to speak in class during the class discussions*".

<b>Intervention 2</b>	<b>Intervention 3</b>	<b>Intervention 4</b>
100% totally agreed	67% totally agreed	90% totally agreed

There is also more evidence of how eleventh graders' self-confidence was directly related to their commitment to speak in the class discussions. The following excerpts from the field notes demonstrated: "The class discussions make students talk actively and with confidence since they are adding more information that was not required. At the same time, it is evident that students are speaking in English without worries of making mistakes, something different from the beginning as they used to speak in Spanish to not make mistakes in the foreign language" (Researchers' field notes).

Moreover, it is noticeable in the last audio-tape recording in which eleventh graders made comments at the end of the last discussion expressing that there was a self-confidence improvement during the development of the class discussions: "Al principio tenía miedo a equivocarme como 'ay no qué pena decir una palabra mal enfrente de todos' ... Pero ahora ya uno se conoce con los otros, con los demás, entonces ya uno dice que equivocarse no importa, igualmente uno aprende. Uno no nace sabiendo eso. [At the beginning I was afraid of making mistakes like 'Oh no, what a pity to say a wrong word in front of everyone' ... but now we know each other, so we can say that making mistakes does not matter, likewise we can learn. We are not born knowing everything]" (Audio-tape recording transcript).

Thus, considering the aforementioned evidence, we can state that class discussions are beneficial for improving not only eleventh graders' speaking skill, but also their self-confidence to be able to express their ideas. In this way, it has been substantiated what Prayoga (2018), Han (2007), Argawati (2014), Steinert (1996), and Harizaj (2015) assert regarding class discussions and their benefits on students' feelings and attitudes when speaking.

Co-constructing a speech to speak in EFL.

The current subcategory is concerned with eleventh graders' preparation in small groups to contribute to the discussions using the EFL. In accordance with

Han (2007), Brewer (1997), and Lee (2009) class discussions encourage students to create small groups to have a previous preparation for supporting the discussions with concise arguments since “the more they knew about the subject matter, the more they were likely to contribute to discussions, and these participants often spent extra hours reading course materials to prepare for discussions” (Lee, 2009, p. 153).

In this sense, for co-constructing their speech, eleventh graders had to read the material that we gave them for brainstorming their ideas to gather precise and helpful information for discussing. In this respect, Florez (1999), and Harizaj (2015) state that for the development of effective discussions, it is better to use ‘brainstorming’ as a learning strategy to concrete ideas from the target topic. The effectiveness of this learning strategy can be evidenced in the survey that eleventh graders responded to since the majority concluded that brainstorming helped them to achieve the setting goals (see figure 3).

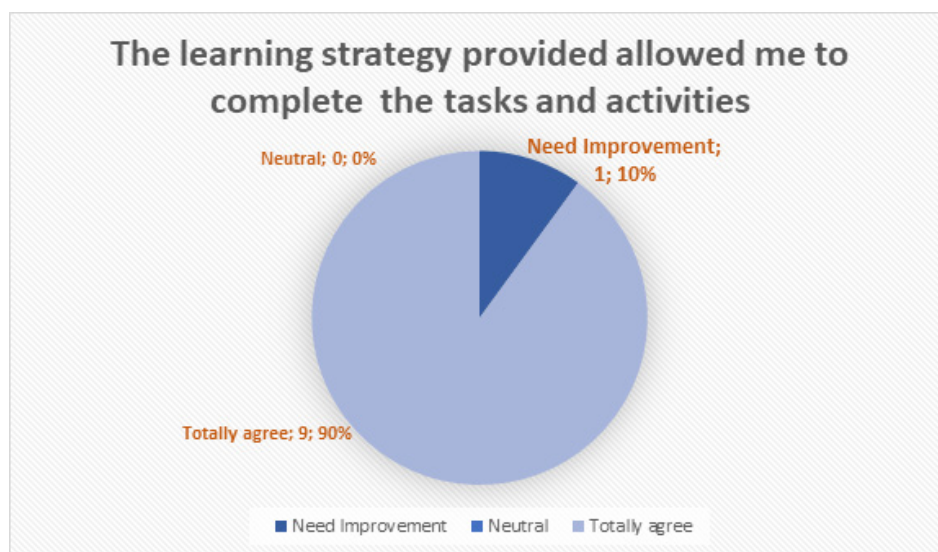


Figure 3. Eleventh graders’ perceptions towards the learning strategy

Furthermore, it is possible to evidence the influence of class discussions on students’ willingness to seek relevant information for co-constructing succinct ideas that helped to express themselves, this is evidenced in the following excerpt from researchers’ field notes: “The students are expressing interesting points of view. It is evident that they were looking for more information about the cultural aspects, and they are expressing the reasons why they wanted to have a previous preparation which was about selecting the best information from the flyers and other resources. The





mentioned reasons by students are the necessity of expressing and defending their points of view, the benefit of selecting the relevant information for discussing, to explore the topic deeply to have a better contribution for the main ideas “(Researchers’ field notes).

In this line of thought, it is evidenced in the audio-tape recording how class discussions enhance eleventh graders’ motivation to prepare themselves for giving opinions and points of view based on real and meaningful information. “Una de las causas que hacían como que uno investigara más o tal vez tradujera algo que quisiera hablarlo en inglés es el hecho de saber más de ese tema ... Uno siempre trata de defender la tierra de uno y uno busca hacerlo en inglés. Siendo así, esto lo motiva a uno a tratar de investigar y hablarlo o compartirlo en inglés a los otros compañeros. [One of the reasons that made me seek more information or maybe translated something that I wanted to express in English is the fact of knowing more about that topic ... Everyone always tries to defend the place where they live and tries to do it in English. Plus, it motivates us to try to seek and speak or share it in English with the other classmates.]” (Audio-tape recording transcript).

All in all, the previous evidence demonstrates that co-constructing the speech by means of small groups strategies such as brainstorming ideas helps eleventh graders to support their arguments to speak during the class discussions.

Speaking in EFL about previously discussed ideas.

This category is related to eleventh graders’ EFL speaking skill progress taking into account the benefit of using previously discussed ideas, during the development of the class discussions. To this respect, Scheidel and Crowell (1964), Shabani (2013), and Brookfield and Preskill (1999), agree on the fact that class discussions are a linear process which have a progress, and the previous discussed ideas are part of students’ improvement in the class discussions. In other words, the previously acquired knowledge helps students to enhance their EFL speaking skill throughout the class discussions development (Shabani, 2013). It can be evidenced in the final survey when eleventh graders after the process of discussing the previous ideas appraised their EFL speaking progress; the statistics demonstrate the significant progress that eleventh graders had during the development of the class discussions (See figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4. Eleventh graders' perceptions towards the speaking level

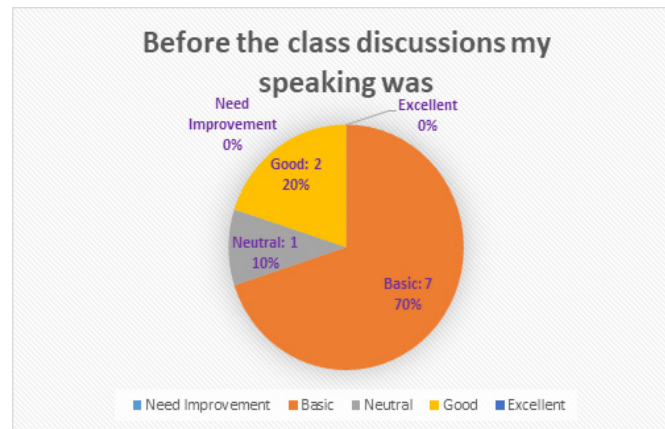


Figure 5. Eleventh graders' perceptions towards the speaking level



In the same vein, the researchers' field notes reflect the role that the previously discussed ideas played on eleventh graders' speaking skill during the process of the class discussions. "This is the last class discussion, and it is interesting to see how students have improved the speaking level as they are speaking more fluently, and they are not making so many mistakes regarding pronunciation. Moreover, it is noticeable that students are using the vocabulary seen in the previous discussions, therefore, it is important to highlight that the use of the previously acquired vocabulary has helped the participants to express better their ideas" (Researchers' field notes).

In this sense, the evidence demonstrates that eleventh graders had a progression in their EFL speaking skill through a process in which the previously discussed ideas were taken into account to enhance their participation in the class discussions. That is to say, the background that eleventh graders co-constructed during the sections of the class discussions had a positive effect on their speaking skill development.



Cultural aspects as the vehicle to promote students' speaking in EFL

The second category is regarding the use of cultural aspects to encourage eleventh graders to speak in EFL. In this respect, Álvarez and Bonilla (2009), and Basalama (2018) point out that students' own culture exposes them to participate or interact in the EFL classroom since culture is the means of engaging students into a collaborative and dialogical space. In other words, culture promotes EFL students' participation and "the more students participate, the better their speaking ability will be" (Hadisaputra & Adnyani, 2018, p. 14). Having this in mind, the following subcategories have arisen: *Pondering upon the relationship between my previous and the new cultural knowledge and Co-constructing cultural understanding during the process of the class discussions.*

Pondering upon the relationship between my previous and the new cultural knowledge.

The current category is related to the benefit of connecting eleventh graders' previous knowledge to the new one since it is the gap to find a relationship between the knowledge and the ideas in discussion. Compliant with Foster et al. (2009) the new cultural knowledge must have a connection with students' prior knowledge or with what they already know to enhance the communication between students. In other words, the use of new knowledge in relation to students' previous knowledge is a powerful factor in facilitating comprehension while communicating ideas. Indeed, "the more they have background knowledge about a topic, that is, the more they become familiar with a topic, the more they can talk about it, and the more their speaking ability improves" (Shabani, 2013, p. 31). It can be proved through eleventh graders' responses to the weekly survey how the previous or familiar knowledge upon the discussed topic helped them in one or another way to be motivated to participate in class (See Table 4).

Table 4. Students' responses to the statement "*I was encouraged to take part in the classes since the cultural aspects presented familiar topics regarding my region*".

<b>Intervention 2</b>	<b>Intervention 3</b>	<b>Intervention 4</b>
67% totally agreed	50% totally agreed	90% totally agreed

In the same way, the researchers' field notes showcase how the previous knowledge influenced eleventh graders' responses upon the selected topics: "It is the time of presenting the topics to discuss in the following weeks, and the participants are reacting in different ways taking into account the background knowledge that they have in regard to the mentioned topics. Some of the participants are mentioning certain characteristics of each cultural aspect, and it shows the influence that their cultural previous knowledge can have in the development of the discussions" (Researchers' field notes).

Consequently, eleventh graders' previous knowledge played an important role during the EFL learning process as they reflected and established a relationship between their prior knowledge and the new one; this goes in accordance with Ausubel and Fitzgerald's (1961) ideas which establish that individuals learn meaningfully when they can relate previous knowledge with a new one. Therefore, eleventh graders enhanced their participation level and at the same time their speaking had significant progress.

Co-constructing cultural understanding during the process of the class discussions.

This category is based on eleventh graders' co-constructing cultural knowledge processes during the development of the class discussions as it was crucial for fostering the EFL speaking skill. In this sense, co-constructing allowed eleventh graders to integrate their background cultural knowledge during the oral interchange in the class discussions. Therefore, the EFL speaking skill was a means of co-constructing new knowledge. To this respect, Cakir (2006), and Hardman and Hardman (2016) assert that the construction of the cultural understanding requires the use of the language to have access to others and own cultural knowledge. That is to say, "knowledge construction is a process of collective thinking; a process that is simultaneously personal and social that requires group cognition ... because knowledge is constructed precisely through negotiating personal and shared understandings" (Öztok, 2016, pp. 154-156).

Those ideas are evident in the researchers' field notes as during the observation we noticed the progress of eleventh graders' speaking skill through the co-construction of knowledge based on group opinions: "How interesting is seeing the participants' speaking with confidence about the cultural aspects sharing concrete ideas; the ideas reflect a mix of opinions constructing the cultural knowledge taking into account not



only their personal opinion but those that their partners gave. Thus, it is noticeable that students did an excellent job working in groups and interchanging opinions during the class discussions” (Researchers’ field notes).

Accordingly, eleventh graders’ audio-tape recording reflected the opportunity that the class discussions gave them to co-construct knowledge and understanding about the different cultural aspects interchanging information orally: “Entonces pues yo quise aprovechar la oportunidad, dar mi opinión acerca de este nuevo lugar turístico que fue donde me crié para que mis compañeros lo conocieran y se animen a visitarlo ... me di cuenta que en clases así donde uno participa, investiga y hacer cosas así aprende y practica, fue más un espacio de convivencia. [Then I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity and give my opinion about this new tourist place which was the place where I grew up to make my partners know it and encourage them to visit it ... I realized that in this kind of classes where someone can participate, research and practice things like this someone learns; it was more a space of coexistence.]” (Audio-tape recording transcript).

In brief, the class discussions allowed eleventh graders to develop a process of constructing cultural understanding using the EFL speaking skill through collaborative learning classes in which they interchanged ideas and developed a process of co-constructing cultural awareness and understanding.

## CONCLUSIONS

Having concluded the data analysis procedure, we can assert that class discussions based on cultural aspects contribute to the development of the EFL speaking skill. First, there is an improvement of self-confidence to speak in EFL since they have the opportunity to talk among peers. Second, the cultural aspects encourage students to relate the prior knowledge to the new one promoting the use of the EFL speaking skill in a meaningful way. Finally, the class discussions inspire students to co-construct a speech to be able to participate.

In terms of promoting the use and development of the EFL speaking skill, it is possible to affirm that the process of developing class discussions improves eleventh graders’ self-confidence to express their ideas while interacting among peers; this interaction enables participants to co-construct a speech regarding the topic proposed, involving their prior knowledge with the exploration of a new one. As a



result, during the whole process of the three class discussions, eleventh graders were able to actively participate and evidence a significant progress in the development of their EFL speaking skill.

Concerning the cultural aspects, including cultural content in the class discussions anchored on eleventh graders' reality demonstrated to be highly beneficial. Therefore, these cultural aspects enabled eleventh graders to reflect on their cultural background while relating it to the new cultural knowledge they were exploring; this involved a process of co-constructing cultural awareness and understanding. Consequently, going through this process encouraged eleventh graders to speak in EFL to express what they knew and what they wanted to know in relation to the culture. This resulted in a meaningful learning of the cultural aspects, and constant practice and progress of the EFL speaking skill.

Given these points, the class discussions based on cultural aspects are a successful strategy for improving the EFL speaking skill as it contributed with a substantial progress in eleventh graders' EFL speaking skill. This progress was evidenced through eleventh graders' need of looking for the linguistic resources to express their ideas, thoughts, and beliefs regarding the cultural aspects and co-constructed knowledge in a spoken way. Consequently, eleventh graders were constantly practicing, requesting information, sharing ideas, and concluding regarding the cultural aspects, fostering a meaningful development of their EFL speaking skill.

Consequently, we suggest EFL teachers to provide this kind of strategy to students, allowing them to practice the EFL speaking skill based on their background, cultural realities, and identities. Besides, it is important to have a sequence in the development of the class discussions as it guarantees a significant progress in students' EFL speaking skill. Thus, if the process is carried out in an organized and practical way considering students' learning needs, it will ensure successful results during and after the implementation of the class discussions.

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**LITERARY FEATURES OF THE COMIC GENRE IN  
ARKADY AVERCHENKO'S WORKS DURING HIS  
EMIGRATION TO EUROPE**

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**HOLOBORODKO Yuri**

Postgraduate Student at the  
Dept. of Foreign Literature  
and Slavic Languages,  
H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National  
Pedagogical University,  
[yu.holoborodko@gmail.com](mailto:yu.holoborodko@gmail.com),  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2255-6494>

**ABSTRACT**

The article analyzes some aspects of life and features of the work of the world-famous satirist writer of the beginning of the last century Arkady Averchenko at the last stage of his emigration – during his staying in Europe, in particular, in the Czech Republic. The themes and motives of the writer's works of this period of emigration, the characteristics of the characters, the main means of creating comic, changing the ideological direction and content of his writing in accordance with changes in worldview and understanding of events in the world such as the socio-political situation in the Bolshevik Russia and drastic changes in the lives of emigrants, who were forced to start a new, rather difficult, life, arriving in Europe after the October coup of 1917.

The genre peculiarities of the European period of Arkady Averchenko's work of 1922 – 1925 are determined. Despite the general satirical orientation of the writer, his previous humorous aesthetics remains relevant in the creative work of the writer. Thus, the collection «Children» published in 1922 is marked by sensitivity in the depiction of child psychology. However, the leading style remains tragicomic, which best realizes the motive of troubles of emigrants abroad. It takes place in a general atmosphere of nostalgia and longing for the lost homeland, a reappraisal of values caused by social upheavals, and an understanding of Russia's destruction.

The article considers the scientific reception of worldview changes in the emigration period of A. Averchenko in the studies of foreign and native scholars, as well as the phenomena of his work as the main dominants of the continuation of literary and artistic traditions. The creative phenomenon of Averchenko's prediction of the future was noted, in particular, predicting the foreign policy strategy of the Soviet state, which was set out to consist of the capture of other countries or uncivilized interference in their lives.

**Keywords:** writer, satire, comic, tragic, emigration, phenomena of creativity.

### АНОТАЦІЯ

#### **Літературні особливості комічного жанру у творчості Аркадія Аверченка періоду його еміграції до Європи**

У статті проаналізовано окремі аспекти життя та особливості творчості всесвітньо-відомого письменника-сатирика початку минулого століття Аркадія Аверченка на останньому етапі його еміграції – під час перебування в Європі, зокрема, у Чехії. Визначено тематику й мотиви творів митця цього періоду еміграції, характеристики персонажів, головні засоби створення комічного, зміни ідейного спрямування та змістовного наповнення його писемного доробку у відповідності зі змінами світогляду та розуміння письменником подій, які відбувалися у світі – як щодо соціально-політичної ситуації у більшовицькій Росії, так і кардинальних змін у житті емігрантів, вимушених розпочинати нове, доволі складне, життя, прибувши до Європи після жовтневого перевороту 1917-го року.

Визначено жанрові особливості європейського періоду творчості Аркадія Аверченка 1922-го – 1925-го років. Попри загальну сатиричну орієнтованість письменника, його попередня гумористична естетика залишається актуальною у творчому доробку митця. Так, опублікований 1922-го року збірник «Діти» відзначається чуттєвістю у змалюванні дитячої психології. Проте, провідним стилем залишається трагікомічний, що найкраще реалізує мотив поневірян емігрантів за кордоном. Відбувається це в загальній атмосфері ностальгії та сумування за втраченою Батьківщиною, переоцінки цінностей, спричиненої соціальними потрясіннями, а також розуміння руйнації Росії.

У статті розглянуто наукову рецепцію світоглядних видозмін

еміграційного періоду А. Аверченка в дослідженнях зарубіжних і вітчизняних науковців, а також феномени його творчості як основні доміанти продовження літературно-мистецьких традицій. Відзначено творчий феномен передбачення А. Аверченком майбутнього, зокрема прогнозування зовнішньополітичної стратегії радянської держави.

**Ключові слова:** письменник, сатира, комічне, трагічне, еміграція, феномени творчості.

## INTRODUCTION

Arkady Averchenko's work changed significantly during his life, in accordance with the objective conditions and realities of the time in which the writer lived, his worldview and attitude to the events that unfolded around him.

Averchenko's sensitivity and acutely empathetic perception of the smallest details of the surrounding world, inquisitive mind of a caring citizen and socially responsible personal attitude to changes in society could not but affect the literary features and genre characteristics of the famous artist himself. Gradually changing the ideology, directions, themes, ethical direction of the writer's work, and literary means of expression, manner and features of content, characteristics and typology of characters, defining criteria of funny and comic, expanding the limits allowed by Averchenko himself of sharpness and criticism, and sometimes even, some rigidity and ruthless categorical judgments. The latter even provoked considerable criticism on the satirist, accusing him of losing his good-natured and provoking laughter forever and turning into a bitter angry critic.

Of great interest is the study of the peculiarities of gradual, and sometimes quite drastic changes in the work of Arkady Averchenko, reflected in the literary publications of the time, his personal literary transformations – from cheerful and colorful humorist (and sometimes even good-natured buffoon) to critical, ruthlessly sharp and an acerbically-skeptical satirist.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The work of Arkady Averchenko during his emigration to Europe was the subject of research of many famous scholars, including A. Barshtein, I. Zhilenko, D. Levitsky,

V. Milenko, A. Khlebina, who studied some aspects of his work, in particular, during time of residence outside his home country, which the writer was forced to leave forever (Barshtein, 1972; Zhilenko, 2017; Levitsky, 1999; Milenko, 2010; Khlebina & Milenko, 2011).

Literary critics N. Egorova, D. Nikolaev, P. Pilsky, L. Spiridonova dealt in detail with the period of emigration of the writer and changes in the style of the author's satirical technique (Egorova, 2013; Nikolaev, 1993; Pilsky, 1994; Spiridonova, 1999).

Peculiarities of Arkady Averchenko's work of 1922-1925 were covered in his publications by modern foreign researchers E. Erinç, N. Hartmann, and in the works of Czech researchers, in particular, such as M. Hofmanová, A. Kopřivová, who studied the work of A. Averchenko according to new sources – open archives (including those in Prague) and home collections of Russian emigrants (Erinç, 2017; Hartmann, 1953; Hofmanová, 1968; Kopřivová, 1999).

The aspects of the analysis of the literary text developed by these scientists allowed to form a knowledge base, which not only characterizes the stylistic and genre features of a particular work or creativity of a particular author, but also their motives and conceptual basis.

### **AIM OF THE ARTICLE**

According to such a wide range of studies of A. Averchenko's work, the European period of his emigration deserves attention, and therefore the purpose of this article is to analyze the motives, themes and features of the comic writer related to the context of his staying in Europe in 1922-1925.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The obtained work results are based on the analysis and systematization of the literary sources and archives data. In the process of writing, the methods and techniques typical for scientific research in the field of literary science were used, such as analysis, synthesis, comparison and generalization of philosophical, psychological, culturological knowledge to identify the essence of leading motives and systematize the views of scientists on the literary features of Arkady Averchenko's works. Overall, the methodological instruments of the article are mixed: close reading technique,



comparative approach, synthesis and generalization.

## RESULTS

The period of emigration – first, after fleeing from northern St. Petersburg – to his native southern Sevastopol, and from there – to Constantinople, and then to Europe – was marked by great shocks and, one might say, really astounding changes in the artist’s understanding of historical and universal patterns of existence of the community, the state, the world as a whole. Everything that the writer was sure of, which did not cause any doubts in him, was destroyed in those years with insane speed. What was valuable to Arkady Averchenko, what he defended and fought for with the help of his extraordinary and strikingly accurate satire as well as insanely bright humor, suddenly began to lose social significance and meaningful weight in the destructive course of the new, so-called revolutionary government, after the Bolshevik-Proletarian leaders came to power due to the October coup in Russia at the beginning of the last century, in 1917.

It should be noted that despite the general satirical orientation of the writer, his previous humorous aesthetic remains relevant in his work. Thus, the short story collection “Children” published in 1922 is marked by sensitivity in depiction of child psychology. However, the leading style remains tragicomic, which best realizes the motif of displacement of emigrants abroad. Situations are described differently: marriage to the mistress of an apartment to get housing (“Looking for a room”), a man is calling himself a woman to marry a foreigner to leave for Greece (“The Secret of Marriage”). These situations are connected to the fact that at first the story is perceived as a humorous anecdote, but the finale is unexpectedly tragic (“Ordinary Woman”, “Lady in Gray”, “The Story of an Actor”, “Turkey with Chestnuts”).

In general, the fate of emigrants is perceived as tragic, which is due to the motif of the separation of the hero from the homeland. In fact, A. Averchenko describes the tragicomedy of his own life, despair at the loss of former orthodox and literary traditions (“Evolution of the Russian Book”, “Volodya”, “Cosmas Medici”, “Conversations in the living room”, “Literature lesson”, “Sentimental novel”), which unites him with all Russian emigrants in a tragic mood of hopelessness (“Russians in Europe”, “Destroyed Anthill”, “Snails”, “History of Two Suitcases”). Thus, the autobiographical aspect is mixed on the motif field, which reveals fundamental changes in his worldview – from

comic pre-revolutionary to tragicomic post-revolutionary – with the involvement of author’s reflections in the form of insert monologues about the fate of Russia.

In these works, there is a contrast not only in showing certain characters, but in general – in contrast of the old Russia (already dead) and the new (actually alive), where to return the former means to return to the specific (although it is already dead), and that is why black humor and tragicomic characterize the situations and images described by him.

At that time, the array of narrative techniques was boldly updated – for example, the image of a naïve, simple man (in A. Averchenko – “simple-minded”), whose reaction to the surrounding events arouses the reader’s sympathy.

Examining this technique, it is worth noting the creation of a paradoxical reality in the description of events, because such a naïve character is like an opponent of the general mass of people or their individual representative – and specifically in what has and expresses his own view of reality, that is beyond social standards – as opposed to tradition, standard consciousness. This ultimately reveals the spiritual conflict and incompatibility of these opponents.

If we consider such a simple-minded character as leading in the work of A. Averchenko, we should mention the imagery of children to whom he paid special attention, considering that the child’s perception of the world was closest to him, and children were those who best understand its intentions. The writer notes this understanding between him and the children in the preface to the collection of short stories “Children”: “With children, I pretend to be incredibly naïve, even a pathetic man who needs protection and defense. Maybe deep down the child will even despise me a little. Let him. But he feels his superiority, mercifully takes me under his protection, and his soul opens before me like a cup of a flower before the rays of the sun” (Averchenko, 2006).

Such a psychological connection between the writer and children can be seen in the example of his “children’s” works, determining the inconsistency of the inner children’s world with the external material world and the understanding of an adult who perceives the environment differently. And it is these inconsistencies that make up the comic in the artist’s works.

For Arkady Averchenko, children are the bearers of sincerity, purity, self-worth. Even in the title of the collection of short stories “About the little ones – for the big ones” this comparison is felt, where the child’s character is further analyzed in detail

(there are even relevant terms – for example, in the title of the story “About children” and individual phrases such as “images that form in their brains”). The conclusions are concrete and rhetorical: “revolution not only kills physically, it cripples spiritually”, “children whose childhood was taken away”, “despite all the horror of what is happening, the child’s soul retains its sincerity and purity” (Averchenko, 2006).

In this context, the most striking contrast is in the description: “On the young green grass walk boors in huge heavy boots, lined with nails. Passed – lay down, lay a crumpled, half-crushed stalk, warmed by the rays of the sun, and again he rose and under the warm breath of a friendly breeze rustles about his own, about the small, about the eternal” (“Grass, crumpled by the boots”). In the microtext we highlight the negatively connoted characteristic, where even the noun “nail” adds to the semantics of difficulty, cruelty and invincibility. This characteristic is contrasted with the image of green young grass, stalk, which under the action of this force first acquires a negative transformation (pressed and semi-crushed), and then – under favorable conditions (warmed by the sun; under the warm breath of a friendly breeze) – positive (rose). Thus, that brute force (we see the adult world in it) is opposed by a thin stalk, which reveals a childish feature (i.e., the small), which represents the truth (i.e., the eternal). It is worth noting that the writer turns to children’s themes and, in particular, positive images of children contrasting with adults, in order to move away from the depressed state of recent years, from aggression and deception of the world around him. Children are associated with flowers – bright and fragrant against the background of gray life. However, he concludes that children will still become adults, and compares their future with a tree (oak), which can become a university chair, a frame for a portrait, or gallows. The artist remarks sadly: “I would only recognize children as people”, because “an adult is almost always a bastard” (Nikolaev, 2006).

Returning to the image of the “simple-minded”, we note that it was also transformed with a change in the creative guise of the artist in the period of late (stable) emigration. Arkady Averchenko in an afterword to “Notes of the Simple” marks about himself: “How strikingly has later changed the nature of Averchenko’s work! There is no more innocence in the expression on my face.” These sincere words of the writer are confirmed in the images of his characters, who often show akin features to the author, and this characteristic is associated by researchers with the literary device called “satirical mask”.

Thus, M. Bogdanova, researching the relationship between author and narrator,

notes that such a mask in A. Averchenko is expressive and embossed, although imaginary in its essence. It is manifested in the construction of phrases, the choice of vocabulary, but in general – determines the author’s view of the depicted events and the evaluative attitude to them (Bogdanova, 2000).

For example, in the collections “Notes of the Innocent”, “Boiling Cauldron” and the drama “At Sea”, the writer depicts the lives of emigrants, describing the various characters and means of survival and conducting business in new conditions for former Russians. And this happens through the prism of the narrator’s vision – “simple-minded”, similar to the author. These events are perceived somewhat differently through the eyes of a child (Children, 1922), where the writer reveals a deep knowledge of age psychology. In the last work – the novel “Maecenas’ Joke” (1923), published in Prague immediately after the death of A. Averchenko, the main character of Maecenas is compared with the author not only through external description but also through his speech and other verbal characteristics of the inner world.

Considering the theoretical and methodological aspects of the study of A. Averchenko’s work during the period of emigration to Europe, it can be noted that his works are divided into mostly humorous and mostly satirical, according to genre varieties – the everyday stories and humorous stories about the surrounding reality; stories, the plot of which is often created by the author’s imagination (dominated by grotesque, hyperbole, caricature); to create a comic the writer skillfully uses all relevant tools and techniques – irony, sarcasm, compositional features (including circular repetitions, elements of unexpectedness), descriptive (including mismatch of external features of the character to his essence, contrast), narrative (first-person narrative or omniscient eye), Author’s mask, transmission of the actual oral speech of the characters), lexical (comic professional phrases, antiphrasis, etc.); in the works of this period the writer contrasts two realities – pre-revolutionary (as already unattainable) and post-revolutionary (new both for those who remained in Russia and for emigrants who are already busy looking for a livelihood in the new conditions of their lives). In the general context of tragedy, the comic takes other forms – black humor and tragicomic. In such new conditions A. Averchenko remains true to his creative credo – satirical debunking of social evil, human stupidity, ignorance.

Considering the satirical concepts of Arkady Averchenko during his life in Europe in 1922-1925, it is worth noting the Czech period of the writer’s emigration. According to the chronology of the writer’s life and work, the last period was Prague,

but the capital of Czechoslovakia was only his home, from where the artist went to perform in other European countries. Exactly this context of his literary achievements of that time is under consideration, given the influence of European society.

Thus, among the motifs and themes of A. Averchenko's work during his emigration, a new motif is a purely positive attitude to Prague as a city that welcomed the emigrant writer, and the Czechs as a nation that differs favorably from the Russians in mentality (he compares two nations, for example, in the story "Prague"), where the former are characterized by calm, common sense, and the latter, getting to civilized Europe, behave like ignorant savages. Therefore, they must undergo "quarantine treatment" before settling in a different state; otherwise the refugees will simply not be able to adjust to a "normal, full life". It should be noted that Czechia also had a direct part in the First World War, and therefore the Czechs underwent the same trials, but compared to the Russians quickly recovered spiritually and materially, preventing radical social transformations.

Characteristic of Prague as a "beautiful old woman, dear to the heart of every artist", is perhaps a little rude in Russian, but it means its age (founded in the ninth century) and significance for artists: in the XIV century it was even the capital of the Roman Empire, and in the XVI – cultural center of Europe, where astrologers, magicians, scientists, musicians and artists gathered. In other words, Prague is probably one of the five most prominent European cities, and the Czech Slavs differ from other Slavic people due their centuries-old close contacts with the Germans, leveling their negative traits and gaining positive German ones.

So, we can say that for a short period of time in Prague, his soul rested (and will rest forever in the local cemetery) – he felt peace and material stability. Of course, this is all against the background of endless nostalgia and anticipation of change in his native Russia. During the three years of his life there (i.e., the last years of his life), the artist has done as much as many of his colleagues would not have done with their whole life: his works have been translated into many European languages, and he has successfully toured theaters including in Transcarpathia), but also Bulgaria, Germany, Poland, Romania, as well as the Balkan and Baltic countries. And everywhere his humor was perceived organically and with understanding. In Prague itself, A. Averchenko collaborated with the German-language newspaper Prager Presse and regularly organized creative evenings. During this period, about 20 collections of short stories and individual books were published (including "Nettle Rest", "Patron's





Joke”, “Notes of the Simple: I’m in Europe. Turkey – Czechoslovakia”, “Historical Teaching Stories”, “Pantheon of Tips for Young People”).

In the Czech artistic community, A. Averchenko was referred to as “Russian Hasek”, Mark Twain or A. Chekhov, but domestic researchers believe that the satirist was not like these writers, because he had his own creative style.

For example, in the preface to the first Prague short story collection “Paradise on Earth” (1922), the author explains his humor with the need to ridicule all strata of humanity – swindlers and those deceived by them, fools who love to obey, smart people who gnash their teeth, and want to “point to your neighbor meanness”. D. Levitsky analyzes the reaction of the European press to this collection, emphasizing some of its characteristics: “true stories about the Russian commune”, “humorous description of Russia under communist rule”. In particular, in Belgrade the reaction to the book was as follows: “if it were not for so much blood and suffering, no government in the world would have given so much material for satire and humor” (Levitsky, 1999, p. 304-305), noting its real semantic basis.

The stories of the Funny in the Scary collection describe the characters of people of new formations in the new Russia – either those who illegally use their unlimited power, or those who submit to such arbitrariness and do not even understand their sad situation. All this takes place in the absence of the old norms of culture and responsibility for their violation. It should be noted that this process continued for many years, and some of its rudiments surprise us today.

Considering the imagery analyzed above, with some new features added, it is worth noting the new situations – such as scenes of outright violence, infliction of physical injury – and not only to animals (dogs, cats and even mammoths), which people eat in starvation, but also to other people “Communion”, “Stanley”, “Experience”, “New Russian Reader”). With this technique, A. Averchenko emphasizes the differences between the new Soviet reality and the former imperial Russian reality, where he lived by everyday interests, creative and social ideas. Even now, his sharp criticism of the government is perceived with warm nostalgia, as in the episode of the story “Longing for the Fatherland”, where Russians in a Constantinople doss house recalls their St. Petersburg past, and even the story of a policeman who came to fine them for anti-government publications ends with nostalgic words about the desire to “cry together in a friendly way, as with their own.” At the end of the work, the author also gives the classic form of comparison “Is it rain?” “It’s raining in Russia!”

(Averchenko, 2006, p. 62), which can be analogous to the well-known phraseology “In the homeland even the sugar is sweeter.”

Compared to the style of the collection “Funny in the Scary”, which implies a tragicomic illusion (“Conversations in the living room”, “Drama at sea”, “My Uncle”), in the next collection “Pantheon of advice to young people, or the best ways to succeed life” (1924) A. Averchenko returns to the former light humor, where the tragic motive is already realized in another context – without sarcasm and irony. There is no traditional political satire for the artist. In the stories “The Story of an Actor”, “Out of the World”, “How to Hold a Funeral”, even death is taken seriously against the background of various curiosities of life, and it itself appears as a background for all sorts of absurd situations. So, in the last of the mentioned stories after collision of a hearse and the tram from the deceased got out of the coffin and began to scold inattentive drivers because of his bruised leg. This grotesque situation continued – the deceased went home, everyone left, the grave was filled up, part of the funeral dinner was ruined, and so on. (Averchenko, 2006, p. 163). No wonder fans of A. Averchenko’s work said that such a cheerful and peaceful person has the right to laugh at death.

In the preface to the above collection, the author doubts the usefulness of the knowledge taught in schools, because “secular life is a very tricky confusing thing, and not everyone can comprehend its capricious curves and curls.” That is why he wants to share his experience with young people in the tips indicated in the titles of sections of the collection – “Ability to keep yourself in society and at a dinner party”, “Tips for novice commanders”, “Economic advice”, “Easter advice”, “The art of humorous anecdotes”, “Tips on how to be successful with the charming opposite sex” other knowledge scattered as pearls of wisdom in the stories included in the book. Thus, the ability to tell humorous anecdotes is described in the feuilleton, which provides the following advice: “a humorous anecdote should be short, excellent in content and with an unexpected ending.” At the same time, a long anecdote “resembles the Eiffel Tower, which a person is forced to climb on foot, without an elevator” (Levitsky, 1999, p. 314-315). As we can see, the writer has played the role of a teacher or a senior mentor, who shares with the youth “scattered pearls of wisdom”, and does so not as a boring teacher, but with kindness and humor.

It may be noted that anti-Bolshevik motifs mostly fill the collection “Funny in the Scary” at almost the same level as “Boiling Cauldron” (1922) and “Cynic Stories”

(1925), although 18 stories of the first of them are related even to the Sevastopol period. Here it is also accurate to define situations of “black humor”, which are often hypertrophied to a state of satirical absurdity, which allows the reader to perceive death in a comic way (“Drama at Sea”, “My Uncle”, “Conversations in the Living Room”) – serve as the final chord in creating a grotesque image.

This includes a collection of feuilletons “Twelve portraits (in boudoir format)” (1923), the objects of ridicule in which are known at the time figures O. Kerensky, M. Gorky, F. Chaliapin, who are accused by the writer of not fighting against Bolshevism, as well as Lenin, Trotsky, F. Dzerzhinsky, and others who were directly connected with the revolution and subsequent events in Russia.

Since A. Averchenko was already a well-known theatrical figure in Europe at that time, as well as an author, administrator and performer, his works also needed a separate edition. Therefore, in 1923 a collection of plays and sketches “Oddities on Stage” was published from previously known works of the writer with the author’s remark that only he has the right to “mutilate his works” (i.e., to be a director and perform them personally on stage). These works are characterized by closeness to the realities of the artist’s theatrical activity.

In the story “Narrators” there are several portraits (for example, “a fat red-haired gentleman with a crimson face and bulging eyes”; “reddish, faded – his beard and mustache once and for all now go from left to right from frequent swiping of the palm from left to right, obeying the wave of the owner’s hand”, “a gentleman with raccoon eyes”, “a dry gentleman with a yellow Mongolian face and sparse hair on his mustache”) (Averchenko, 2006, p. 204-208). In addition, according to the theatrical tradition, the author uses after the portrait description a short nickname-marker of each of them – “man”, “lady”, “jumper”, “duck master”, “deacon”. From the listed portrait features it is possible to draw a conclusion about the predominance of negatively connoted units. And because they characterize men, it’s comedic. The same scheme is used in the story “Three Cases”, where there is also a “legend” – a story from three different people.

Analyzing the Prague period of A. Averchenko’s work, we note other collections published during this time. Thus, in 1925 the last collection of the writer’s life was published – “Cynic Stories” (28 pieces), which, along with the already known (“Rat on a Tray”, “Turkey with Chestnuts”, “Jiu-Jitsu”) included his new works “Fox Trot” and “Five Stories for the Reader”. The first story in the collection has the characteristics

of a preface, which is already indicated in its title – “Art and the public (instead of the preface).” And it was written in 1913 in St. Petersburg as a survey of the public for which works are written (Levitsky, 1999, p. 315) (“Mysterious close strangers – who are you?” – The author asks, pointing out to the reader to whom further stories are dedicated). Here he presents a characteristic dialogue of ignoramuses at the symphony concert: “tell me, is it Grieg? “I’m sorry, I’m new to the town” (Averchenko, 2006, p. 245). That is, A. Averchenko’s thoughts on the mental capacity of readers has remained relevant to him for over 20 years.

In the last year of the writer’s life, the artist’s only novel, “The Maecenas’ Joke”, was written in 1923 in Sopot, Poland. Parts of this work have already been published with a sequel called “The Whims of the Maecenas”, but a separate book was published only after the death of the author in 1925 (Levitsky, 1999, p. 315).

The genre of this work in literary studies is called “the novel with the key”, because its characters guess their true prototypes, including the author himself, and these are representatives of beau monde, among whom A. Averchenko spent his best years as a writer and editor. Finally, we have already noted that in the mood in which the life of artists, writers and journalists is described, there is sincere sadness and nostalgia for the pre-revolutionary life of St. Petersburg and friendly merry company. It should be noted that the genre and stylistic features of Averchenko’s work of the European period of his emigration in 1922-1925 characterize the writer’s obligatory observance of his own aesthetic and moral ideals, artistic skill in constructing stories, depicting images, and close connection of his works with literary traditions. Also, worth noting is the gradual transition of the artist from political satire to good (pre-revolutionary) humor, which was due in part to the positive conditions of his life in Prague.

## DISCUSSIONS

In general, the fate of emigrants is perceived as tragic, which is due to the motif for the separation of the hero from the homeland. In fact, A. Averchenko describes the tragicomedy of his own life, despair at the loss of former orthodox and literary traditions. Thus, the autobiographical aspect is mixed in on the motif hierarchy, which reveals fundamental changes in his worldview – from the comic pre-revolutionary to the tragicomic post-revolutionary. Black humor and tragicomic characterize the

situations and images he described.

## CONCLUSIONS

Considering the scientific reception of worldview changes in the emigration period of A. Averchenko in studies of foreign and domestic scholars, as well as the phenomena of his work as the main dominants of literary and artistic traditions, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of patriotism of the artist implies love for Russia not as a certain ethnic conglomerate, but as a vast empire uniting different peoples.

This perspective reveals his hatred of the Bolsheviks as the destroyers of his formerly prosperous life and his hostility to non-Russian nations, which is in line with the colonist's psychology. At the same time, there is a reluctance of the Russians themselves, who do not want to accept the local culture of the peoples. On the other hand, A. Averchenko perceives the Czechs (as well as other Europeans) positively, constantly comparing them with the Russians and even calling for their protection from the latter.

Within the phenomenon of A. Averchenko's childless love for children, which reveals the writer's knowledge of their psychology, his abilities of a teacher and psychologist can be recorded, and are based in his method ("simple trick") to gain trust from children: never show your superiority, status or power, in other words – to perceive a child as an adult.

Autobiographical works of A. Averchenko are manifested not only in formal features (first-person narrative) or informal (life motifs of the artist), but also in the similarity of some characters with the author – for example, Maecenas. This includes open, cheerful and optimistic attitude to life, wit, attentiveness, delicacy, politeness, which can be observed in this character. At the same time, there is a feature that is characteristic of the emigrant period of the writer's life – caring for others, which characterizes the hero of the novel "The Maecenas' Joke". There is also an external similarity, but only in a timely perspective, as well as the hidden desire of the author to become in the future a guardian not only creatively but also financially.

Worth noting is the creative phenomenon of Averchenko's prediction of the future, in particular, predicting the foreign policy strategy of the Soviet state, which was set to be the capture of other countries or uncivilized interference in their lives.



An analogy is noted with the events where the strategies described by the author were used – bribery, corruption, lies, exposing political fraudsters instead of the legal government, etc.

There was also a prophecy about the extermination (eviction) of Ukrainians (the story “Simple Fractions”), which could have been realized by Stalin 20 years after the completion of the story. In the predictions of researchers of the future of the writer himself in the event of continuation of his life – they projected Averchenko with the achievement of would have reached the fame of M. Twain – and noted that the Russian would have been still most worried about the fate of the homeland, and therefore all subsequent events in its territory would have motivated him to work with other than neutral (global) humor.

The analysis of Averchenko’s feuilleton (as well as humorous story) as a genre revealed that along with its actual basis and local temporal meaning, the author uses comic techniques, which form a kind of duality – versatile and one-sided (primitive) layers. At the first level there are deep associations and philosophical maxims, at the second – a visual description that does not require semantic analysis (mostly a description of the appearance or behavior of the character). At the same time, even at the second level, there are some signs of hidden analytical thinking.

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**FORMS OF SPORTS TEACHERS TRAINING THE  
SYSTEM OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN CHINA**

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**HAN Zhangliang**

**Han Zhangliang**

lecturerSports department, Lishui University  
(Lishui city, Zhejiang province, P.R.China)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6386-184X>

e-mail: 77834351@qq.com



**TERENTIEVA Nataliia**

**Terentieva Nataliia**

professor Department of Olympic and Professional Sport  
National Pedagogical Dragomanov University  
(Kyiv, Ukraine)

[https://https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3238-1608](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3238-1608)

e-mail: nataterentyeva@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

At the present stage of the Chinese society development, the education and training system of teachers in the PRC faced the need of updating the forms and methods of training students, including future teachers of sports disciplines. This article analyzes modern forms of pedagogical work that are used in the system of higher sports and pedagogical education in the PRC, both traditional (lectures, practicals, consultations) and those that are unique (professional online projects and platforms) or innovative (volunteer movements, social practices, etc.). The purpose of this article is to present the results of the above analysis and to introduce this new data into the space of Ukrainian pedagogical science.

**Keywords:** PR China; sports disciplines teachers; vocational education; teachers training system; high sports and education institutions.

## АНОТАЦІЯ

### **Форми підготовки вчителів спортивних дисциплін в системі професійної освіти Китаю**

На етапі розвитку китайського суспільства сьогодні система освіти й підготовки педагогів в КНР націлені на поновлення форм і методів навчання студентів, включаючи майбутніх вчителів спортивних дисциплін. Ця стаття аналізує сучасні форми педагогічної роботи, які використовуються в системі вищої спортивно-педагогічної освіти в КНР, як традиційні (лекції, практичні, консультації), так і ті, що є унікальними (професійні онлайн-проекти і платформи) або інноваційними (волонтерські рухи, соціальні практики тощо). Метою цієї статті є представити результати вищезгаданого аналізу і введення нових даних в педагогічний простір української педагогічної науки.

**Ключові слова:** КНР; викладачі спортивних дисциплін; професійна освіта; система підготовки вчителів; вищі спортивно-педагогічні заклади.

## INTRODUCTION

Globalization processes, which began to arise actively at the beginning of the XXI century, also pushed China to the need to reconsider approaches to the content of future teachers` education. Today the most important goals of Chinese students education (especially those who are going to work in educational sphere in future, both formal and informal) are respect for humanitarian values, following the spirit of progress and innovation, the ability to work in a team and the formation of a scientific worldview. With the beginning of the current stage of China`s development, there is an urgent need to improve the quality of teachers training who are to be not only professionals, but also conscious citizens of their own country. Therefore, pedagogical education faces the task of training professionals who could strengthen and improve the training of young people, raising the moral and ideological ideals of students, as well as promote cultural and intellectual development of the young generations in China. (Fu, 2018). Because of the increasing requirements for students of pedagogical specialties in the country, the principles of training future teachers were also revised. In particular, more and more attention is being paid to the principle of scientificity, which is based on a solid theoretical foundation of professional activity. Regarding the formation of professional competencies of future sports teachers, it became a





complex and long-term process, which consists not only of professional training, but also instilling in students an array of knowledge in social disciplines aimed at forming responsible citizens of the country.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Currently in Ukraine, the study of approaches to the organization of educational activities with young people in China is quite limited. Some aspects of the general system of education and the system of teacher training are covered in the works of N.Lavrychenko, N.Seiko, O.Bezpalko, O.Baidarova, V.Lofova, S.Zolotukhina, L.Kalashnyk and others. Interesting and useful information as to terms of studying trends in Chinese pedagogy at different stages of development of the state are presented in the developments of L. Kalashnik (system of training teachers to work with orphans), foreign Chinese scholars M.Baranov (features of teaching and adaptation of Chinese students to study abroad), E.Monoson (approaches to educational work with students in China), D.McGowan (issues of education of a noble person in the works of Confucius), M.Levenson (analysis of religious education in China), H.Krill (approaches to the education of ethical taste in students of Chinese schools during the Cultural Revolution), F.Ivanho (study of approaches to moral education of high school students in modern schools in China), G.Joyce (historical aspect of the formation and formation of the tutorial system in Chinese pedagogy and), etc. Among Chinese researchers, these issues are also reflected in the works of both purely educators (Zhou Ming, Li Wanxiao, Hu Da, Cao Tsai Tsai) and statesmen Mao Zedong, Jian Zemin, Li Wanyao and others.

### **AIM OF THE ARTICLE**

The aim of this article is to systematize theoretical ideas and generalize the practice future sports teachers training (its forms and methods) in Chinese vocational schools and universities to determine the possibility of creative use of Chinese experience in the Ukrainian educational space. The theoretical basis is the general provisions of the theory of scientific knowledge; conceptual ideas of psychology, philosophy, pedagogy about the individual as the highest value of society and the need to study them in specific conditions, pedagogical provisions on the importance of

combining sensory and rational in the cognitive process, stimulating human activity at any age to acquire knowledge

## METHODOLOGY

To achieve the aim of the article, the following set of research methods was used:

- theoretical (analysis, synthesis, comparison and generalization of the results of studying scientific, scientific-methodical, initial literature of domestic and foreign authors, normative-legal documents in order to establish the degree of scientific elaboration of the problem under study;
- prognostic – to identify opportunities for the implementation of constructive achievements of Chinese teachers on the research problem in the educational process of educational institutions of our country,
- empirical – observations, conversations, dialogues, discussions, discussions at conferences, round tables – to analyse the experience of training sports teachers in China;
- axiological—in order to identify the value significance of sport as a system that creates and promotes the expansion of national spiritual values;
- dialectical – which allows us to consider sport in motion, development and contradictions in the context of the transformation of traditions in the XXI century, to reveal its patterns and driving forces of development;
- retrospective and historical-pedagogical – in order to determine the peculiarities of the development and formation of pedagogical education in China, to identify stages of development of the problem under study;
- system-structural – to systematise the theoretical ideas of training teachers and generalise the experience of their application in China;
- comparative and pedagogical – in order to compare the theoretical provisions and practice of training sports teachers in secondary and higher education in China.

Historical and structural-functional approaches allowed to explore the features of the future sports teachers training in vocational and higher education institutions of China

## RESULTS

The article analyzes the main forms and methods of professional training of future teachers of sports in China. It is established that the training of sports teachers consists of both professional and general training. It is established that the main forms in training future sports teachers are lectures; practical and seminar classes; different types of student practice; participation in the work of volunteer groups; military training; educational conversations; participation in conferences, round tables and seminars; participation in various public events; voluntary work; visiting orphanages or nursing homes. The peculiarities of each form of training are analyzed, their peculiarities and specifics are determined and presented in the article.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the scientific literature, it is established that the main forms of training students-future teachers of sports in Chinese professional and higher educational institutions include:

- lectures;
- practical and seminar classes;
- different types of student practices;
- participation in the work of volunteer groups;
- military and extra-curriculum camps trainings;
- educational conversations;
- participation in conferences, round tables and seminars;
- participation in various public events;
- volunteering;

Lectures are currently the main form of work with student-athletes. The advantage of this form of future teachers in the field of sports education organization is connected, first of all, with a large number of students in an academic groups. It is quite normal when up to 60 students study in one academic group (this fact significantly complicates other forms of work). Lectures are divided into professional (aimed at forcing students with scientific information in the specialty, acquaintance with modern and effective methods of teaching sports disciplines, clearly defined concepts in the field of sports) and general (aimed at the general development of the personality of the future sports teacher, raising his/her general level of education,

broadening his/her horizons, gaining the possibility of interdisciplinary connections, etc.). Lectures on the specialty are also devoted to the development of the history of sports in China and the world, highlighting the basic methods, principles and forms of teaching sports (National seminar, 2018). It is believed that lectures as a form of work with students, direct the latter to the development of active cognitive and independent activities, critical analysis of information and the ability to draw appropriate conclusions, but they are not an effective means of forming practical skills of future sports teachers (Yi, 2011).

The logical continuation of lectures and at the same time an effective form of education of students-future teachers of sports are practical and seminar classes, which are closely related to and often repeat the topics of lectures. The combination of theory and practice in modern institutions of higher sports and pedagogical education is also achieved through the organization of discussions on relevant topics or the organization of role-playing games, during which students act out situations related to their future work and specialization. Particular emphasis is placed on the fact that students must act from the standpoint of a citizen and a representative of the country (Chong King Man Perceptions and Teachings: 130). During practical classes in higher sports and pedagogical educational institutions, teachers also use the method of micro-teaching, which allows students to feel like teachers, better understand the essence of pedagogical activity and acquire a certain level of pedagogical skills. The method of micro-teaching allows students to develop such qualities that are necessary in the implementation of pedagogical activities, as communication, the ability to speak to large audiences, empathy, pedagogical intuition, the ability to work with different people (Qing, 2007).

Additional opportunities for the training of students-future teachers of sports in educational institutions of China provide consultations, which are conducted mostly by teachers of pedagogy or socio-political disciplines. During the consultations, students can return to the material studied, find out the unclear points and make an action plan for independent work, look at topics that have already been studied in other disciplines, from a new angle. It should be noted that both group and individual consultations the content of which is aimed at taking into account the needs of students are held in institutions of higher sports and pedagogical education (Lu, 2019).

To understand the methods and principles of working with students-future teachers of sports in China, it is necessary to address the issue of their independent

work (self-study), because it is during such kind of educational activity comes out the understanding of mechanisms and principles of working with young people, improving theoretical training and identifying weaknesses in own future practice. During independent work, students have the opportunity to focus on those topics that require more attention and time. As a rule, questions for self-study are provided by the teacher, along with questions, students are recommended literature on relevant topics. During the self-study, students make tasks of a reproductive nature, when it is necessary to read and summarize the relevant educational material, while students receive creative self-study tasks during the preparation of a practical lesson or an educational event.

An important role in the training of future teachers-athletes in the system of professional education in China is also played by individual work, which consists of individual tasks and preparation of individual projects, watching relevant videos that help expand and supplement knowledge on the topic. From the educational point of view, individual work is aimed at finding out the level of understanding of students of the theoretical issues of the course, identifying unclear points in order to eliminate them. (Liang, 2019). It should be noted that due to the intensification of research work in Chinese universities, the involvement of students in conferences, round tables and seminars is becoming very popular.

The curriculum for future sports teachers includes pedagogical practice in various fields and levels. In particular, during training students undergo educational and methodological, pedagogical, industrial, social and sports practices that contribute to the enrichment of professional competence and demonstration of acquired knowledge and skills:

- *Educational and methodical* sports practice consists of several stages: the stage of observation of the lessons by a teacher of sports disciplines and the stage of performing theoretical and practical tasks with the children's team. During the educational and methodical practice, students also study the specifics of working with children's team, the peculiarities of planning the work of the team, methods of conducting classes in various sports.

- Another type of practice of sports and pedagogical students is *sports practice*, the purpose of which is to get acquainted with the national sports heritage of the country and the region, as well as with athletes-teachers who have worked or were born in this region.



- *The internship (industrial practice)* aims to introduce students to teach students to conduct classes in sports, using effective methods and conduct educational activities, including public education. It is the kind of a practice that creates optimal conditions for the formation of students' professional knowledge and skills, as well as skills that are necessary for the head of a sports club or section, qualities (Qing, 2007).

- *Social practice* is also a mandatory component of teacher training in China. Currently, social practice complements the course of classroom classes and is held during the winter or summer vacation of students. The Standard for Curricula for Teacher Education, published in 2011, focuses on strengthening the practical training of students of pedagogical specialties. It is also noted that the internship should promote the development of students' outlook, foster a sense of civic and social responsibility and the development of professional skills. (Standard of the curriculum). Social practice can be organized not only by universities, but also by the Association of Future Teachers. It should be emphasized that in contrast to pedagogical practice, social practice involves students of pedagogical specialties in various fields, faculties and courses. Then teams of students who study in different specialties are formed and peculiar pedagogical teams are formed. While working in teams, students socially develop steps and educational activities, make presentations, use game teaching methods and more. During the internship, «teaching staff» must solve two groups of tasks: conducting classes in basic school subjects and educational activities (Zhang & Cai, 2020). Future teachers-athletes are encouraged to undergo voluntary social pedagogical practice, which takes place on the basis of kindergartens, primary schools or directly higher education institutions. On the one hand, as part of this practice, students learn to work with different segments of the population, and on the other - receive additional bonuses for scholarships (Kalashnyk & Zhang, 2016). Pedagogical universities in China develop and implement programs to modernize practice, in many pedagogical specialties social practice is a mandatory component of education (Zhang, 2015).

One of the forms of involving students-future teachers of sports in practical activities is participation in volunteer groups and movements. The Western China Development Program, the State Volunteer Teaching Program, and other voluntary community service programs involve a significant proportion of Chinese youth, with the most active participation typically among students in specialized colleges and

universities. Such an active focus on involving university students in educational work is due to the fact that in the course of future professional activities, students will use mostly the forms and methods of working with young people that they once experienced. Teachers are convinced that such practical classes allow students to form the ability to use the latest learning technologies in teaching sports, as well as methodically correctly explain the theoretical material and put sports activities. Today, Chinese volunteer programs for sports students offer two types of volunteering: international (in poor countries in Africa) and in rural China. As for volunteer service, the main mission is to spread Chinese culture through sports, as well as to form a sense of pride for one's own country. Working in volunteer missions also allows students to develop a sense of social responsibility. To improve the volunteer movement in China, some efforts are currently being made to coordinate the actions of the government, educational institutions and public volunteer services. The country is also currently working on an interactive platform for volunteer services among educational institutions, governments, and social departments; planning and coordinating all the needs of society that could be solved by volunteers; integrating various social resources and providing opportunities for volunteer services from students (Wei, 2016).

One of the most effective forms of training future sports teachers are defense and sports health camps (summer and post-school ones). The role and significance of this form of initial military training is determined by the fact that in such a camp the activity is as close as possible to the conditions in the army. All classes are usually held in the field, quite intensively, but in the form of games and with the involvement of real servicemen and athletes (Du, 2014).

Currently, the government of the country considers Internet resources to be an effective form of professional training for students of all specialties (including sports). In particular, specialized sites and forums for sports education and training of sports teachers are being actively developed. To implement patriotic and civic education of young people in the country there are such major Internet projects as:

- [searchingsystem.baidu.com](http://searchingsystem.baidu.com), which is one of the largest projects in the world. This project was developed in 2000, and in 2006 the project already had its own encyclopedia «Baidupedia», in which students can find information on sports as well;
- QQ, WeChat messengers help students to exchange information both with each other and with teachers, which greatly facilitates and optimizes the individual

and independent work of students;

- active promotion of sports forums, communities and blogs. In particular, Internet portals such as «Chinese Sports Education» and «Athlete's House» are very popular with students. (Yivanenko, 2018; Se & Kovryzhnyh, 2016).

The course on ideology and morality, launched by the Ministry of Education of China in 2011, is mandatory for higher education and emphasises that the essence of educating the younger generation is related to the state issues as education in China has historically been closely linked with the process of state formation and was called to build a collective identity, instill patriotism and loyalty to the nation. Also, during the lectures, students, including the Faculty of Sports ones, get acquainted with the issues of globalization, environmental change and human rights, because all these issues are closely related to the essence of the «ideal citizen». The course consists of three main blocks: personal development; the team and me; state, society and me. (Davies, Evans & Reid, 2015).

It is mandatory for all students in China to study law. Thus, students are introduced to such concepts as citizens, national identity, study what does it mean to be a participant of public relations. As a rule, this course consists of lectures and practical classes, in which students discuss and consolidate the educational material with which they became acquainted during the lectures. Interesting to get acquainted with is the practice of discussing real pedagogical situations that may arise during classes, national and international competitions, etc. in terms of «rule of law» and providing students-future sports teachers with skills how to explain to their students a situation like respond, etc. (Zhang & Cai, 2020).

A common form of educational work in Chinese universities, including educational institutions where future sports teachers study, is the oral and written characteristics of students, the award of diplomas, certificates, medals and prizes, or reprimand for failure to comply with certain obligations. It is also practiced to compile a rating of students, on the basis of which it is then determined which of the students receives scholarships and grants from universities, provincial, city, faculty, etc. Note that the rating is calculated not only on the basis of academic achievements of students, but also on the basis of activity of participation in various cultural and educational activities (Du, 2014).

There is also one direction of educational work with the future sports disciplines teachers in Modern China — self-identification of such kinds of educational workers.



Factors such as family and family traditions influence professional self-identification; school and out-of-school education; sociocultural context; professional education; economic and political context. Pedagogical self-identification is closely related to the reorientation of the personality's own psychological attitudes, the reassessment of one's place in space and the acquisition of one's own awareness as a subject of pedagogical activity. Pedagogical self-identification occurs in the process of mastering knowledge about professional functions, typical tasks and skills that a teacher should possess. It is closely related to the formation of professional competencies in young people (intellectual; technological; cultural; psychological; psychological and pedagogical; professional; social and psychological). Pedagogical self-identification in Chinese educational institutions occurs during the study of such disciplines as Pedagogy, Psychology and partly Foreign Language. Further formation of pedagogical self-identification of future teachers of sports occurs during pedagogical practice. It is found that during this type of educational activity, students should develop professional, practical and methodological knowledge. Main tasks of pedagogical practice (formation and development of professional knowledge, skills and abilities; development of need for pedagogical self-education and constant self-education; creation of interest in the profession of sports teacher; education of personality qualities necessary for the profession of sports teacher; study of the experience of other colleagues with the purpose of its creative use during teaching; study of the organization of the educational process in secondary school and high school. Pedagogical self-identification is also closely related to the formation of taste for pedagogical activity, which also refers to the psychological competence of the teacher. As for the pedagogical self-identification of teachers of sports disciplines, it is associated with a rethinking of the individual about his own role in society, in changing the emphasis from his own sports achievements to the achievements of his/her pupils.

Today in China there is an urgent need to form a corps of high-quality specialists in the field of physical education, who would identify themselves primarily as teachers, and less as athletes. The scientific community emphasizes the need to work with students of physical education departments in China and to train specialists who can successfully solve pedagogical problems in the classroom, to use a specially developed system of independent psychological analysis of the lesson. This system should meet the principles of developmental education common to pedagogy and

psychology and is conditionally divided into three areas:

- 1) educational work: the development of the student's personality, formation of his /her morality, worldview;
- 2) methodological work: substantiation of goals, content and organization in accordance with the level of students' preparedness, their intellectual development, age and individual characteristics;
- 3) the ability to use new teaching methods that contribute to the development of students' communication skills, their individual and psychological qualities (Liang, 2019).

Unlike persons who identify themselves with athletes, teachers of sports disciplines should be able to conduct a psychological analysis of the lesson, apply various forms of educational activities when conducting lessons, conduct analytical analysis and assessment of lessons. Sports teachers should be able to conduct a psychological analysis of the lesson, which includes drawing up a plan for a future lesson.

Another issue that requires attention and additional work in pedagogical educational institutions is work with children with special needs. It should be borne in mind that there are almost no trainers in the country who are ready to train physically gifted children with special needs. The trainers working with them now (especially at the regional level) are mostly invited foreign specialists. Many coaches working on the basis of non-formal educational institutions (both private and municipal) are not ready to work with sports gifted children with disabilities, either psychologically or methodically. Among the reasons for this position are the following:

- the need for special attention and approach during training;
- lack of special training to work with such children,
- the need to devote a lot of time to such students, on the one hand, and uncertainty about the ability to achieve high results on the other hand.

However, most coaches and sports teachers understand that if they really show good results in working with such a child, they can make a career as a good coach faster, but this will have to change specialization to work with gifted children with disabilities and receive medical education. According to the coaches, the balance between the effort expended and the expected result is almost unattainable.

The challenges facing the Chinese society at the present stage (providing quality education in physical culture in secondary education institutions; improving





approaches to working with gifted children; the need to involve people with special needs in sports; the need to develop Paralympic sports in the country). The solution of these tasks will be facilitated by the formation of a corps of teachers of sports disciplines who are well aware of the psychological and pedagogical foundations of working with children of different groups, who are able to work with children with special needs and athletes representing the country at the Paralympic Games. However, at present there are not enough specialists in the country who are ready to work effectively to solve the problems facing the PRC society.

At the same time, it should be noted that Chinese scientists continue to work on improving the system of youth sports education as a state strategy and professional training of future teachers of sports. Priority areas include work on expanding the tasks for pedagogical practice, creating experimental pedagogical platforms that will work on the territory of universities, conducting internships for students as assistant teachers, and so on.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

At the present stage of development of China, much attention is paid to sports, because it is considered an effective mechanism for both physical and harmonious human development, and the formation of patriotism and citizenship of the people. Sports as a compulsory school subject is due to the fact that practical classes contribute to the physical development of the child and the formation of children's social feelings, skills of collective interaction, and the theoretical component, during which students are introduced to the history of Chinese sports, traditions and legends. who surround him, with the formation of interest in the history of their own country and culture. Globalization processes, which began to develop actively at the beginning of the XXI century, also pushed China to the need to reconsider approaches to the content of training future sports teachers in higher and professional educational institutions. The most important goals of education of Chinese sports students during their own education and training are respect for humanitarian values, the spirit of progress and innovation, the ability to work in a team and form a scientific worldview, which are achieved by a set of methods and a variety of forms in Chinese educational space: lectures, practices, application of technique methods of education and e-learning, etc.

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**THE “WHITE AND BLACK” MOTIF IN  
UKRAINIAN LITERATURE AND ART OF  
THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY**

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**POGREBNIYAK Olena**

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv  
PhD of Philology, Assistant Professor  
Department of Slavonic Philology  
E-mail: [alenapogrebnyak@ukr.net](mailto:alenapogrebnyak@ukr.net)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7509-1352>

**ABSTRACT**

The article analyzes the dualistic motif of «white and black» as one of the most productive in Ukrainian literature, fine arts and cinema of the early twentieth century. An attempt is made to interpret this motif in the works of Ukrainian film directors, artists, and writers. It is proposed to interpret the motif of «white and black» as a manifestation of ambivalence and intermedia potential of the artistic search of an individual artist and significant for the cultural atmosphere of the time. The contrast between the darkness of the past and the bright future becomes the central object of black-and-white Ukrainian silent cinema (D. Vertov, O. Dovzhenko). This idea is realized in the suprematic compositions of K. Malevich in 1915, the works of graphic artists (M. Zhuk), the texts of writers (V. Vynnychenko, M. Zhuk, P. Tychyna). It was found that the peculiarity of the symbolism of white and black in the drama of V. Vynnychenko and the panel of M. Zhuk is the inverted semantics of the visual series. White for V. Vynnychenko, his hero, and M. Zhuk becomes the quintessence of the cold, pure, eternal. Instead, black symbolizes life on earth, the joy of creativity, a warm heart and warmth of soul, self-sacrifice and love. V. Vynnychenko in his drama brings this idea to the extreme: white and black become sacred symbols of non-existence / death and being / life, because the child’s life was placed on the altar of art. The

dynamics of the comparison of white and black in P. Tychyna's poetry is rooted in the deeply archaic layers of the worldview of the Ukrainian people, and therefore, it is projected on the traditional archetypal matrix of perception of good and evil. In the work of K. Malevich, as a representative of the avant-garde trend in fine arts, the motif of white and black is realized through the prism of revolutionary foreboding, through the absolutization of the contrast between two worlds, new and old, symbolizes the rupture of civilizations and times. It is established that the motif of «white and black» enriches not only individual works, but also the entire systemic space of Ukrainian culture of the early twentieth century, which is characterized by the search for new means of expression and ethical guidelines, experiment, syntheticity, contrast.

**Key words:** intermediality; «white and black»; V. Vynnychenko; K. Malevich; M. Zhuk; Ukrainian artistic avant-garde.

## АНОТАЦІЯ

### Мотив «білого і чорного» в українській літературі і мистецтві початку XX століття

У статті аналізується дуалістичний мотив «білого і чорного» як один з найпродуктивніших в українській літературі, образотворчому та кіномистецтві початку XX ст. Здійснюється спроба інтерпретації цього мотиву в роботах українських кінорежисерів, художників, письменників. Пропонується трактувати мотив «білого і чорного» як прояв амбівалентності та інтермедійного потенціалу художнього пошуку окремого митця та знаковий для культурної атмосфери часу. Контраст між темрявою минулого та світлим майбутнім стає центральним об'єктом чорно-білого українського німого кіно (Д. Вертов, О. Довженко). Ця ідея реалізується у супрематичних композиціях К. Малевича 1915 р., роботах художників-графіків (М. Жука), текстах письменників (В. Винниченка, М. Жука, П. Тичини). З'ясовано, що особливістю символіки білого і чорного в драмі В. Винниченка та панно М. Жука є перевернута семантика зорового ряду. Біле для В. Винниченка, його героя, і М. Жука стає квінтесенцією холодного, чистого, вічного. Натомість чорний символізує життя на землі, радість творчості, гаряче серце і тепло душі, самопожертву і любов. В. Винниченко у своїй драматургії доводить цю ідею до екстремуму: біле і чорне стають сакральними символами небуття / смерті і буття / життя, бо життя дитини було покладено на вітвар



мистецтва. Динаміка зіставлення білого і чорного в поезії П. Тичини вкорінена в глибоко архаїчних пластах світогляду українського народу, а отже проектується на традиційну архетипну матрицю сприйняття добра і зла. У творчості К. Малевича, як представника авангардного напрямку у образотворчому мистецтві, мотив білого і чорного реалізується крізь призму революційного передчуття, через абсолютизацію контрасту між двома світами, новим та старим, символізує розрив цивілізацій і часів. Встановлено, що мотив «білого і чорного» збагачує не лише окремі твори, а й увесь системний простір української культури початку ХХ ст., якому притаманний пошук нових виражальних засобів та етичних орієнтирів, експеримент, синтетичність, контрастність.

**Ключові слова:** інтермедіальність; «біле і чорне»; В. Винниченко; К. Малевич; М. Жук; український мистецький авангард.

## INTRODUCTION

The turn of the century in the European culture was marked by a radical rethinking of the aesthetic categories and tasks of traditional art, the collision of differently vectored directions and trends, dynamism, the desire for a radical renewal of canons, and artistic eclecticism. Ukrainian modernism (from the French word *'moderne'* – modern, contemporary) in its specific universal and nationally oriented manifestations (according to M. Nayenko – neo-romanticism, symbolism, expressionism, neo-classicism, avant-gardism, futurism, constructivism) (Nayenko, 2008) appeared as a contradictory and complex set of artistic phenomena that were often mutually integrated both at the stylistic level, showing the author's strategic readiness for a creative experiment, and at the micro levels: plot and themes, motifs and artistic means. One of the most productive motifs of Ukrainian literature and art of the early twentieth century is *the distinctly dualistic motif of "white and black" as a symptomatic manifestation of the inconsistency, ambivalence and intermedia potentiality of the author's artistic search and the atmosphere / spirit of the time.*

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to R. Movchan, Ukrainian literature "of the 1920s makes a wider and more free use of various visual forms and corresponding visual and expressive means

than, say, realism, even more so – it modifies their functional features” (Movchan, 2018: 88). The explorer associates this tendency with the rejection of total mimeticism, the fixation on conditional forms, and the syncretism of Ukrainian art of the early twentieth century as a whole. Verbal-visual and genre-and-stylistic manifestations of Ukrainian literature of this period were studied on the basis of the works by Y. Yanovsky (R. Movchan), P. Tychina (G. Klochek, Yu. Kuznetsov), A. Dovzhenko (A. Punina, T. Sverbilova), M. Zhuk (V. Velichko, L. Sokolyuk), V. Vynnychenko (G. Sivachenko, L. Pochinok), and many other Ukrainian writers and artists of the early twentieth century. Rich visual-semantic expressive means, ‘cinematographicity’ of Ukrainian prose of the 1920-30s, the use of the silent cinema stylistics and the principles of film editing to create an artistic portrait, and structuring the narration have become today the subject of discussion in connection with the intensification of intermedial studies in Ukraine (N. Bilyk, T. Gundorova, O. Dubinina, R. Movchan, O. Punina, G. Sivachenko, E. Tsikhovska, T. Sverbilova, and others). The term ‘intermediality’ is most often interpreted as a relationship between different media (Müller 1996) or a ‘heteromedial’ relationship between different semiotic complexes (Wolf 2005), as well as a method of interdisciplinary analysis. In this case, any artistic or literary work is regarded as a synthesis of “many conscious leitmotifs and unconscious archetypes. This mixture provides for the search and identification of the fundamental principles, which is exactly the task of the intermedia analysis,” as E. Tsikhovska notes (Tsikhovska, 2014: 57).

**THE AIM OF THE PAPER** is to study the motif of «white and black» in individual works of Ukrainian literature and art of the early twentieth century, and to prove the activity of its functioning and the inexhaustible potential of semantic differences from the interdisciplinary perspectives in the systemic dialogue of that time.

## METHODOLOGY

We use the concept of intermediality as an adequate tool for the analysis of inter-artistic interactions. If we regard the media as channels of artistic communications between the languages of different forms of art (Sivachenko, 2018: 447), the motif of “white and black” in Ukrainian literature and art of the early twentieth century should be interpreted as one of the dominant media of the visual

order. For more information on the terminological foundations and classifications of intermediality in Ukrainian literary criticism, see: (Tsikhovska, 2014); and on the interaction of media in avant-garde art and literature, see: (Gundorova, 2018).

## RESULTS

Following the chronological principle, the palm of primacy in the actualization of this motif in the polyartistic space of Ukrainian culture of the early twentieth century should be given to cinema and painting. The development of a kinoscope (motion picture camera) by a Ukrainian mechanical engineer I. Timchenko in 1893, and the demonstration of his films at the Odessa Hotel «France», the Kharkiv film shows by A. Fedetsky in 1896, the appearance of silent movies (Edison, 1894) and cinematograph (O. Lumiere and L. Lumiere, 1895) in general legitimized the processuality of the visual arts. This resulted in the penetration of the principles of organizing temporal arts into spatial ones, thus influencing the visual practices of surrealism, Dadaism, futurism, etc. Filmmaking, which occurred almost simultaneously in Western Europe and the Russian Empire, after the First World War, was focused on the avant-garde modus in the fine arts and photography, and later in literature and other artistic fields.

The documentary black-and-white footage that astounded the audience at the first film shows expanded the horizons of knowledge and the boundaries of art, paving the way for *Le Grand Muet* (the Great Mute – silent cinema), as its most popular form, to the pedestal of people's love. The monochrome cinema stylistics of the early twentieth century was inspired, first of all, by the radical idea of destroying the old world and building a new one, which resulted in the turbulent revolutionary events in eastern Europe, and also by new technical inventions of the industrialization era. Businessman Dmytro Kharitonov (1886 – 1946) was one of the first to start investing in the development of Ukrainian film production, the opening of cinema theaters in Kharkiv, Kyiv and Odesa, as well as in the shooting of Ukrainian films. The first film with the financial assistance of Dmytro Kharitonov – the Ukrainian vaudeville comedy *How They Were Courting, or Three Loves in Sacks*, based on the story by Nikolai Gogol Christmas Eve – was shot in 1909 by a Kharkiv director and actor Oleksiy Oleksiyenko, who also performed all roles in this film (sexton, Choub, Mayor, and Solokha). The name of Kharitonov is also associated with the fate of the



famous Poltava native Vera Kholodnaya (1893 – 1919), a star of the silent movie era.

The contrast between the past and the present, as two dialectically indivisible poles, and the rapid changes in the life of humankind and the Ukrainian people become the main subject and object of the Ukrainian Soviet white and black (in Louis Delluc terminology) – avant-garde cinema. Dziga Vertov (1895 – 1954) and Oleksandr Dovzhenko (1894 – 1956) are considered its main representatives. These directors represent two moduses of Ukrainian avant-garde cinema: urbanistic and rustic. Vertov's major film *Man with a Movie Camera* was shot in 1929, after the director had been fired from *Sovkino*<sup>1</sup> and moved to Ukraine. Dziga Vertov (born David Kaufman) lived and worked in Ukraine for more than three years. From the shots taken in Kyiv, Odesa, and Kharkiv, Vertov forms a single image of an absolute city – perfect, mechanized, and dynamic. David's brother, Mikhail Kaufman, acted in this film as both the cameraman and its hero. The film became one of the three documentaries of the European avant-garde cinema that poeticize the fashionable urban aesthetics. It is worth recalling Paris in *Rien que les heures* (1926) by Alberto Cavalcanti, Berlin in Walter Rutmann's *Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (1927), and the third was the perfect black-and-white city in Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (Hosejko 2001). In this city, billboards, posters, newspapers, and signs in Ukrainian and Russian coexist and blend with each other, couples register their marriages and get divorced, and the ubiquitous cine-eye records the entries in Ukrainian in the office books. This is a symbolic urban space, a utopian city that conditionally represents the end of the old and the beginning of a new lifestyle. Such was the ideological lining of cinematic symbolism, but for the director the main task was a little different. The author focuses on camera capabilities, the heroic actions of the cameraman, and experimental frame-by-frame editing, which are intended to create unusual visual effects, and to poeticize the everyday life of the modern city, and its accelerated pulse rate.

The achievements of the Ukrainian avant-garde cinema art are associated with the activities of the All-Ukrainian Photo and Cinema Administration (VUFKU), then the name of the Odesa Film Studios. It was here that the classic of the Ukrainian theater Les Kurbas and the director and writer Oleksandr Dovzhenko began their syncretic experiments. The latter, in particular, developed the original concept of shot-sketch and shot-poster, thus synthesizing painting art and cinema art, and initiated the genre

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<sup>1</sup> Soviet cinematographic organization and film company

of movie-essay in Ukrainian literature. In his film *Zvenigora* in 1928 (and two years later, in the film *Earth*), O. Dovzhenko combines the avant-garde cinema stylistics with poetization of Ukrainian history and mythology, and the farmers' work, and actualizes and metaphorizes the patriarchal-rustic toposes. This film became the first part of a movie trilogy. In 1958, the film *Earth*, the next after *Arsenal*, was recognized as one of the 12 best films in the history of cinema (Sverbilova, 2018: 493).

No less important line of the development of Ukrainian cinema in the early twentieth century is the close conglomeration with literature and theater, the filming of theatrical productions based on the plays of the classics of Ukrainian literature Ivan Kotlyarevsky and Taras Shevchenko (screen versions by directors Danylo Sakhnenko and Oleksa Oleksiyenko). At the premises of the Ukrainfilm Film Studios they started to shoot the films *Lies*, *The Black Panther* (based on the play by Volodymyr Vynnychenko), as well as the movies *Wind from the North*, *Karmelyuk*, *Black Council*, and others.

G. Sivachenko argues that the philosophical and aesthetic foundations in the works of Volodymyr Vynnychenko (1889 – 1951), Ukrainian writer, artist, and political figure of the time of the UPR<sup>2</sup>, were formed under the influence of German expressionism (in painting and cinema versions) and became an organic part of the writer's artistic palette: "The artistic techniques produced by expressionism turned out to be surprisingly adequate to the frame of reference of the Ukrainian author himself, who was forced to go abroad for good, where he essentially became an expatriate writer, in many respects departing from the national tradition and, at the same time, enriching it with new aesthetic discoveries adequate to the then European culture" (Sivachenko, 2018: 467 – 468).

The action of V. Vynnychenko's drama *Black Panther and White Bear*, written in 1911, takes place in Paris at the time of La Belle Époque, the times of the triumph of French cabaret, theater, cinema, and painting. It is devoted to the theme of the artist and the role of art in his life, as well as to various conflicts (artist and conscience, genius and boundaries of permissibility, love and self-sacrifice, man and woman, ideal and real, life and death, etc.). The problem of good and evil has numerous manifestations in V. Vynnychenko's drama *Black Panther and White Bear*, its visual polarization can be traced already in the title of the work: the names of the heroes of the drama

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<sup>2</sup> UPR – Ukrainian People's Republic, an independent state that existed in 1917-1921 in the territory of modern central, southern and eastern Ukraine, with Kyiv as its capital city.



with their declared black-and-white gamut evoke a reader's sense of inner opposition, binarity of worldview, and multifold conflicts, which is subsequently confirmed by both the storyline and the way of confrontation between the key characters of the play. The antithesis of white and black is manifested at the level of color symbolism as well as at the level of problematics and character formation, and is realized as the dominant idea of the work. The gradual development of this idea occurs, starting from the portrait characteristics of the central characters – artist Korniy Kanevich and his wife Rita Kanevich. He (White Bear) is «big, a little clumsy, sluggish, has long rich white hair like a mane»; she (Black Panther) is “very thin, willowy, dressed in black, her face has sharp features and developed jaws; a passionate face, almost wild and rugged, but sweet” (Vynnychenko, 1991: 273). According to L. Pochinok, «the traditional coloristic association of *good/white – evil/black* in the drama *Black Panther and White Bear* is consciously and experimentally addressed by the author, immediately creating the effect of paradoxicality of action that intrigues the reader and deepens the philosophical nature of the already extravagant play» (Pochinok, 2012). Another white and black couple in the play, the “dazzling-white” Snowflake and the dark-skinned young man Migueles, only confirm the author's reverse interpretation of the habitual semantic perception of the symbolism of white and black, because Snowflake looks and behaves like a “woman of easy virtue” usually condemned in society. Despite her accentuated “whiteness” (white as a symbol of purity), she tries to seduce another person's husband, her words and actions are immoral from the viewpoint of commonly accepted social norms and values: family, marital fidelity, parental duty, and the like. By contrast, Black Panther, who is an almost brutal biological embodiment of the material principle, the maternal instinct, the traditional relationship between a man and a woman in the bohemian circles, where the life of the artist and his wife revolves, appears to be understood and supported practically only by Migueles.

Is this the only way (as extravagant paradoxicality) to interpret the symbolic white/black balance in V. Vynnychenko's play? Given the «infinite semantic perspective» (Averintsev, 2007: 183) of the symbol and its dialogueness, as well as the philosophical and aesthetic orientations of the author, one should obviously take into account the multi-layeredness, the polyvalence of the immanent structure of this balance. *The visual symbolism of white and black unfolds in semantically loaded, enhanced through dialogical speech, oppositional-paired images – spatial, sensory,*

*gender, archetypal*. The idea of serving pure (white) high art is opposed in the play to the needs of earthly (black) real life. The writer constantly emphasizes the coldness of the “white” protagonists (the natural environment for white polar bears is known to be the cold northern climate and snow), and the high temperature and emotionality of the “black” ones (panthers live, as a rule, in tropical forests, and the homeland of the hot-tempered Migueles is a South European country – Spain).

The conflict between the spiritual and material values (the artist’s desire to finish the painting – a future masterpiece, and the need to sell urgently the unfinished canvas to earn money for the treatment of his sick son) is projected onto the level of binary opposition – male / female (White Bear and Black Panther). The juxtapositions within this oppositional pair: a woman-muse / a woman-mother ((“cold and sharp, like in the tundra of Siberia” Snowflake (Vynnychenko, 1991: 279) and passionate “hot” Rita)), as well as a man-artist / a man – “strong shoulder” – the head of the family (Korniy and Migueles), also work in contrast, including the use of plastic techniques, and achromatic visual accents. Let us not forget that the text was written on the expectation of its theatrical embodiment, hence, not only with a view to the internal reaction of the recipient-reader, but also to the instantaneous emotion and feeling of the spectator – both a witness of and a participant in the image creation. The symbolism of white and black, therefore, is intended to emphasize at all levels of perception «the other side of the same essence – going of the image beyond its boundaries, and the presence of a certain meaning, intimately merged with the image but not identical to it» (Averintsev, 2007: 180). Meant here is the so-called «mirror effect» when what is being portrayed is presented to the recipient through its own reverse image: what appeared (or wished to appear) as white is actually black and vice versa.

The archetypal graphic code in this drama permeates every motif, forming integral conceptual links both at the micro-levels (plot-compositional, image-semantic, artistic-stylistic), and at the macro-level (here we can talk about the cross-art artistic synthesis in the European art of the turn of the century; the total nature of the subject of artist and art in Ukrainian culture of the early twentieth century; the ambivalent worldview and the search by the Ukrainian intelligentsia for a universal social idea; the blurred, distorted essence of the concepts of “good” and “evil” in the



theory and practice of the revolutionary movements of the time<sup>3</sup>, etc.).

Regarding Ukrainian poetry as perhaps the most representative sphere of various inter-artistic interactions, the works of Mikhail Semenko (1892 – 1937) is indicative here. Non-objectivity and combinations of planes in Semenko's «supre-poetry» (Malevich, 2016: 15), his experimental «poetry painting» and «auditory poetry» (Literary Dictionary, 2006: 704), in terms of their intermedial strategies, resonate with the early works of Pavlo Tychina (1891 – 1967). The name of the latter is associated with the techniques of synesthesia, the so-called «vivid musicality» as the sign and the marker of purely Tychinian symbolism. In his collection of poems, *Clarinets of the Sun* (1918), he proposed a kind of worldview-aesthetic concept expressed through poetic means (assonance, alliteration, epithets, metaphors). According to M. Nayenko, the philosophy behind this concept is to “contrast the light with darkness”, and its purpose is to identify the phenomenon of man, who “appears in two contrasting substances: man – as the happiness of unity with the world, and man – as a threat to this unity” (Nayenko, 2008: 713). Synthetic interconditionality of color, sound, and emotion is saturated with typically Tychina's symbols of the sun, pigeons, fire, and music. Consequently, the conceptual opposition of white and black is embodied in the symbolic contrasting images, which the whole collection abounds in: light and darkness, singing and silence, the «sunny eyes» of joy and the «black chord» of sorrow. For example, in the poem *She Looked Clear* (1918) separation from his beloved girl causes in the soul of the lyrical hero a wave of plastic and musical associations, built on the technique of antithesis:

She looked at me *clearly* – *the violins started to sing!* -  
She hugged me for the last time – in my soul. –  
The forest *was silent in sorrow, in a black chord.*  
The violins started to sing in my soul!  
I knew, I knew: forever – the rays like eyelashes! –  
I will see no more – of the sunny eyes. –  
*I will forever be alone, in a black chord.*  
The rays like eyelashes of the sunny eyes! (Tychina, 2011: 134)

One of the most complex works in the author's legacy, but also one of the most interesting for interpretation remains to be the poem *Golden Clamor* (1917). The key

<sup>3</sup> The position and activity of V. Vynnychenko as one of the ideologists and leaders of the UPR government are still assessed ambiguously; he is accused of being close to the communist philosophy and betraying national interests. For more on this subject see (Jas 2003: 510).

to unraveling the ideological and artistic content of the poem may be turning attention to the synthetic nature of the work, the author's intermedial strategy aimed at the interaction of artistic codes of systems of different nature. The result is a complex structured narrative, in which the image-symbolic and semantic layers are formed by visual associations and strata:

*Black bird,*

*Black bird croaks.*

And all around –

Cripples.

In hours of *joy and laughter*

Who put them on their knees?

Who said they should be offered a hand,

What insane god – in the hours of joy and laughter? (Tychina, 2011: 334-335).

Further as the text goes:

I am the unquenchable Beautiful Fire,

The Eternal Spirit.

So greet us with *the sun, pigeons*.

I am a strong people! – with the sun, pigeons.

Greet us with our native songs!

I am young! (Tychina, 2011: 336)

The dualistic nature of the symbolism of white (light, joyous, sunny, fiery, young life) and black (darkness, insanity, mutilation, death) is projected onto the level of philosophical generalizations, national myths, and events of historical significance to the Ukrainian people. The recurring images of the poem are paired, contrasting: «two black coffins, and one light»; «golden clamor», «Beautiful Fire», «pigeons and the sun» / «black bird», «black-winged flock»; «Beautiful Kyiv» / «two black coffins». The content of the poem, the laconic and at the same time extremely expressive pictures of the revolutionary era and eternity in it, and the concepts – vertical (heavenly-earthly, divine-otherworldly, sacred-profane) and horizontal (thousand-year history of the Ukrainian people – a historical turning point in the time of writing the poem) should be considered as a single artistic organism, to quote S. Averintsev, “through the mediation of semantic linkages”, and correlated “with the idea of the world entirety, with the completeness of the cosmic and human universe»



(Averintsev, 2007: 181).

Passion for plastic effects, and active use of coloristics by P. Tychina were not accidental. The poet was known to be a reasonably good artist; he studied drawing at the Chernihiv Theological Seminary under Mykhailo Zhuk, one of the founders of the Higher Art School in Ukraine – the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture. As for M. Zhuk himself (1883 – 1964) – a poet, writer, translator, a vivid representative of the Ukrainian secession in painting, graphic arts, decorative and applied arts, who was on friendly terms with B. Lepkiy, I. Nechuy-Levytsky, M. Kotsiubynsky and many other Ukrainian writers, never in his life did he break ties with his former student P. Tychina. The romantic relationships of the young poet with the Konoval sisters, Inna and Polina, inspired Mykhailo Zhuk to create the secession-style panel *White and Black* (1912 – 1914). Figure 1.



Figure 1. *White and Black* (1912 – 1914). Mykhailo Zhuk

The style of Ukrainian secession in painting (M. Zhuk, O. Murashko, O. Bogomazov, O. Novakivsky, and others), unlike the Austrian one, in the opinion of I. Gorbachova, in general became more ascetic and graphic, “thus raising the level of conditionality to a high stage” (Gorbachova). In the works of M. Zhuk, art critics notice a synthetic combination of realism and ornamentality, the influence of one of the greatest secession masters Stanislaw Wyspianski, who was the teacher of the Ukrainian artist at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. L. Sokolyuk, an explorer of



the oeuvre of M. Zhuk, considering the master's poetic world inextricably linked with his paintings, emphasizes the organic symbolism of his works, the drift of iconic and personally significant motifs from poetry to canvas and vice versa (Sokolyuk, 2018). The motif of white and black in the artistic legacy of the artist can serve as an example of such a "drift".

In 1908, M. Zhuk wrote the poem *White and Black*, to which he invariably returned throughout the entire "Chernihiv period" – it is this poem that became the epigraph to the manuscript collection *Poems* written in 1909. Again, we see this poem in the collection *Songs of the Earth*, which was published in 1912 and which included the poetry of previous years.

I would like to be white and black:  
To shine brightly in the night,  
And stand like a giant of misery in the day –  
Every heart hurts (Zhuk, 1910).

For Zhuk's lyrical hero, white is an unattainable ideal, a wonderful night dream, a fantastic daydream, as his «white world lives in a paradise of distant dreams» (Zhuk, 1912). Whereas black represents the world of imperfect reality, the earthly world, in which the poet himself is merely a «Slave of the Earth, its worn-out product» (Zhuk, 1912).

The symbolic mysteriousness the poet weaves into the dual nature of existence between the world of the ideal and the real, encoded in contrasting white with black, is reproduced in the largest panel of M. Zhuk *White and Black* (207 x 310 cm), which is now a part of T. Maximyuk's collection in Odessa, being actually a tetraptych conceived as a stained glass composition (Sokolyuk, 2015: 83). There are two angels in the focal point of the panel: black-winged and white-winged. In the first one, the viewers will recognize the young Pavlo Tychina, and in the second – his beloved Polina, who was strict with him and did not reciprocate the young poet's feeling. The black angel in the panel plays the reed pipe and resembles the ancient Orpheus, who with his magical inspired music was able to defeat death itself. Whereas the white angel is depicted as a young girl with her hands folded in prayer, with austere face and downcast eyes. The key opposition in illustrative aesthetics is enriched and further developed by semantic oppositions: male – female, hot emotion of inspiration – cold rationalism, poetry, and music of the «clarinetist» Tychina – and the prose of his life, the poet's ardent love – and the indifference of his beloved. These characters symbolize two

opposite worlds, and at the same time attest to the author's search for harmony in the combination of contrasts.

Around the same time, a cycle of new works by Kazimir Malevich (1879 – 1935) were put on display at the Zero-Ten exhibition in Petrograd, including his most famous painting, *Black Square on White Background*. Figure 2.

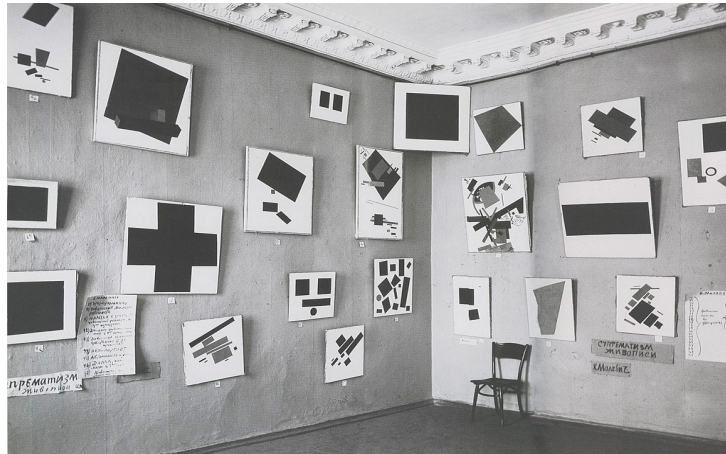


Figure 2. Zero-Ten exhibition in Petrograd. Kazimir Malevich.

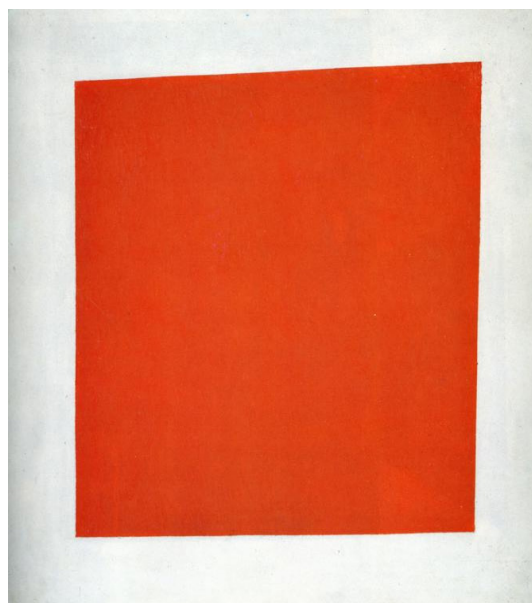
The non-objective fine art of the twentieth century (constructivism, futurism, cubo-futurism, and suprematism) proclaims contrast as one of its basic concepts. A native of the city of Kyiv, Ukrainian by his artistic training (he studied at the Kyiv Drawing School in the class of Ukrainian painter Mykola Pymonenko) and self-identity, Kazimir Malevich in 1915 exhibited a painting that shocked everyone with its ingenious simplicity and turned over the years into an icon of abstract art. Art explorers write about this period of his becoming an artist as the era of fascination with the concept of contrast, «pure» color and «pure» form, which resulted in *the philosophy of suprematism* based on three elements: square, circle, and interlaced planes (Malevich, 2016: 218). At the Kyiv exhibition in 1930, the same works were on display (*Black Cross, Black Circle, Black Square*, and others), created about fifteen years earlier. The background of each of these paintings is white. In his Kyiv lectures prepared for the KAI<sup>4</sup> during 1928 – 1930, he writes about this time: “Painting sensations in cubism are present only in its first two stages, but coming to the fore in the third and fifth stages are not only the sensations of painting tone and color, but also the sensation of contrasts of the latter two, that is, the sensations themselves”

<sup>4</sup> KAI (Kyiv Art Institute) – the name of the institution of higher art education in the UPR, functioned in the period 1924 – 1930, the successor of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts (founded in 1917) and one of the predecessors of the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture.

become elements of contrasts” (Malevich, 2016: 19). Challenging both tradition and innovative trends in the world’s fine arts, Malevich «offered humanity a new absolute, one that distinguishes human nature from the nature of other beings – the absolute of the concept,» wrote O. Savruk in the preface to the publication «Kazimir Malevich. The Kyiv period of 1928-1930.” (Malevich, 2016: 5).

Suprematism, as a new artistic style freed from all conventions and traditions of pictorial canons (the world as a clean, white page), materialized in a series of works: painterly geometric shapes on a white background. The non-objective figurativeness in Ukrainian avant-garde painting is regarded as an artistic movement that takes after the Ukrainian folk style in decorative and applied art, for example, black-red-white non-objective ornaments of traditional Ukrainian embroidery. And also as a manifestation of absolute freedom of spirit, when freedom is interpreted as the basis of Ukrainian national philosophy and the driving idea of the historical development of the nation. This opinion, in particular, is supported by the Polish art critic Andrzej Turtowski (Dzhulai, 2019). Ukrainian art critic Dmytro Gorbachov writes about the hybridity of the entire Ukrainian avant-garde, in which «folk and professional culture cross-pollinate each other» (Gorbachov, 2008: 11).

Malevich’s approach to contrast as a basic artistic concept, which allows visualizing the most complex symbolism, is also indicated by the painting *Red Square: Painterly Realism of a Peasant Woman in Two Dimensions* (1915). Figure 3.



The paradoxical title of the painting motivates art critics to try to find answers to these questions in the national identity of the artist and the anxious foreboding of the

artist – prophet, when the theme of the peasant tragedy in Ukraine during World War I, collectivization, dispossession of rich peasants, famine-genocide (which events the artist witnessed) calls for its organic embodiment on canvas. The embodiment that was immanent both in his personality, mentality and worldview, as well as in the artistic principles that he professed during this period and to which he remained faithful to the end.

### **DISCUSSION**

This palette – both literary and artistic – can be further complemented, since this subject cannot be exhausted within the limits of one article. However, the systemic nature of the inter-artistic dialogue of the early twentieth century and the intermedial discourse of Ukrainian culture of that period as a whole seem to be obvious. Outside this discourse, in our opinion, it is not worth exploring individual phenomena of Ukrainian culture. The ambivalence of the white and black motif in the Ukrainian cultural landscape and its scientific exploration remains one of the real opportunities to comprehend the stability of the above discourse. Potential methodological vectors of analysis - study of artistic and literary artifacts of the day in the stream of geopoetics and spatial rotation, emphasis on the European aspect of Ukrainian identity in the dilemmas «Ukraine – Europe» and «Ukraine – USSR», problematization and denial of common myths and distortions about the national cultural heritage in historical and cultural studies.

### **CONCLUSION**

The coverage in the literature of works of other forms of art and the portrayal of representatives of the art community became a ubiquitous phenomenon in the early twentieth century. Similarly, artists and directors turned to literary works and the images of writers. Avant-garde Ukrainian cinema visualized and actualized the black and white stylistics of the new era in the minds of a broad public audience, since cinema as a mass art occupied the largest segment of the socio-cultural space. The specificity of Vynnychenko's interpretation of the symbolism of white and black in his drama, as well as in the secession panel of M. Zhuk, is the reverse semantics, where the semantic accents contradict the expected semantic load of the visual imagery (white and black as the good and the evil). At the same time, such semantics seems quite natural from the point of view of the artist, whose sensory system responds

to colors and their shades in a different, more sensitive way. The white color for the artist (Vynnychenko and his hero, as well as M. Zhuk) becomes the quintessence of the cold, pure, eternal - the materialized idea of serving pure art, the idea of the superiority of the artist's calling, divine providence, the idea of a cold universe, inexorable eternal judgment, and the like. Whereas black associates with the other pole on the achromatic palette and temperature scale of the sensations, symbolizing earthly life, joy of creativity, fiery heart and warmth of the soul capable of compassion, self-sacrifice and love. Vynnychenko in his drama brings this concept to the absolute: black and white become the signs of life and death, the archaic sacred symbols of being and nothingness, because the life of an innocent child was laid on the sacrificial stone of art. As regards the poetry of Pavlo Tychina, the dynamics of contrasting white and black in his poems is rooted in the deeply archaic layers of worldview, and thus projected onto the traditionally popular, archetypal matrix of perception as the good and the evil. While in the works of Malevich, as a representative of the avant-garde trend of the world fine arts, the motif of white and black is realized through the prism of a revolutionary perception of the world, through the absolutization of the contrast between the two worlds, new and old, symbolizing the breakdown of civilizations and times.

Thus, the «white and black» motif enriches not only individual works, but also the entire systemic space of Ukrainian culture of the early twentieth century. Such polystylistics, as a rule, generates special artistic effects, polyphony of artistic codes, and a wide range of semantic associations. This saturates a work of art or literary text with deep content, encourages heterogeneity of interpretations, and opens up many opportunities for the recipients of the next generations. After all, the path to verification of what we understand today as the complex of Ukrainian culture of the 1920-30s passes through a meticulous detailed analysis of individual phenomena, motifs, and artifacts. It is exactly these elements that make up its (culture) heterogeneous, but undoubtedly nationally distinctive (in synchrony) and historically intrinsically valuable (in diachrony) artistic and literary integrity.

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**THE UNREAL WORLD IN THE NOVEL BY MARC LEVY “IF ONLY IT WERE TRUE”**

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**PRYKHODKO Vira**  
**PETRUSENKO Nina**



**Vira Prykhodko**

is a Habilitated Doctor of Philology,  
Associate professor at the Department  
of Ukrainian and Foreign Languages at  
Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture  
(61022, Ukraine, Kharkiv, Klochkovska St., 99; )  
[ukr.in.mova@gmail.com](mailto:ukr.in.mova@gmail.com)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3828-9121>

**Nina Petrusenko**

is an Associate Professor at the Department  
of Ukrainian and Foreign Languages at  
Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture  
(61022, Ukraine, Kharkiv, Klochkovska St., 99)  
[ninelpet25@gmail.com](mailto:ninelpet25@gmail.com)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3345-1222>

**ABSTRACT**

The paper is about the novel “Et si c’était vrai...” translated into English as “If only it were true” by a modern French writer Marc Levy who amazes readers with the extraordinary plot. Mark Levy’s novel “If only it were true” does not fit into the usual literary templates, it is permeated with an atmosphere of fantastic delirium, nightmares, hallucinations. The tragic collision of the novel is already revealed in the plot itself: heaven and earth, life and death. The aim of the article is to discover the real and unreal world in the novel by Marc Levy “If only it were true”. The problem analysis was used in the paper.

The results are the following. The heroes of the novel Arthur and Lauren went



through the faith, hope and love that make up the success in their lives, through the art of love for the world, which they have learned. The strength and feelings of the heroes of the novel are able to work miracles, returning them to a full life, but they would also be powerless before death, if not for their all-conquering love. In the novel one can find not only bitter thoughts about the transience of human life, but also an optimistic faith in eternal renewal, the beauty of nature, love.

To conclude it is necessary to say the value of M. Levy's book "If only it were true" is in high humanism, in the glorification of true beauty, the inner need for love for a woman, male friendship, growing stronger in a common cause for the sake of character's salvation. The spiritual life of the characters is depicted in details; the psychologism of the novel deepens the meaning of the fantastic events that take place.

**Key words:** Marc Levy, "If only it were true", science fiction, psychologism, spiritual life.

## АНОТАЦІЯ

### **Потойбічний світ у романі Марка Леві «Якби це було правдою»**

У статті йдеться про роман «Et si c'était vrai ...», перекладений англійською мовою як «Якби це було правдою», сучасного французького письменника Марка Леві, який вражає читачів надзвичайним сюжетом. Роман Марка Леві не вписується у звичні літературні шаблони, він пройнятий атмосферою нездійсненої фантазії, видінь, химер. Трагічна колізія роману розкрита вже в самому сюжеті: небо і земля, життя і смерть. Мета статті – проаналізувати реальний і нереальний світи у романі Марка Леві «Якби це було правдою». У роботі використано метод проблемного аналізу.

Результати дослідження наступні: герої роману Артур і Лорен пройшли через віру, надію та любов, що становлять успіх у їхньому житті, через мистецтво любові до світу, якому вони навчилися. Сила та почуття героїв роману здатні творити чудеса, повертаючи їх до повноцінного життя, але вони також були б безсилі перед смертю, якби не їхнє всепереможне кохання. У романі можна знайти не тільки гіркі думки про швидкоплинність людського життя, а й оптимістичну віру у вічне оновлення, красу природи, кохання.

У висновках стверджується, що цінність роману М. Леві «Якби це було правдою» полягає у високому гуманізмі, у прославленні справжньої сили



духа і внутрішньої краси, потреби в любові до жінки, чоловічої дружби, що міцніє заради спасіння головної героїні. У роботі детально зображено духовне життя героїв. Психологізм роману поглиблює зміст фантастичних подій, які відбуваються.

**Ключові слова:** Марк Леві, “Якби це було правдою”, наукова фантастика, психологізм, духовне життя

## INTRODUCTION

The modern French writer Marc Levy amazes readers with the extraordinary plot of the novel, in which science fiction is organically combined with philosophical overtones, lyrics and humor. The novel “Et si c’était vrai...” by Marc Levy translated into English as “If only it were true” (Levy, 2000) is deservedly considered a bestseller and has been translated into more than forty languages many times and sold in huge print runs.

Mark Levy’s novel «If only it were true» does not fit into the usual literary templates, it is permeated with an atmosphere of fantastic delirium, nightmares, hallucinations. Arthur, the protagonist of the novel, is in the “stream of consciousness”, which consists of various involuntary associations and memories, with a split consciousness. The tragic collision of the novel is already revealed in the title itself: heaven and earth, life and death. Life is presented in the tension of all its maximum forces precisely because it is faced with the death of the main heroine of the novel.

The film rights to the novel were acquired by Steven Spielberg and the film “Between Heaven and Earth” by Hollywood fashion director Mark Waters was released. The charming Reese Witherspoon played the main role, she herself is a survivor of a car accident. The film turned out to be fascinating, lyrical, believable, convincing, even despite the heroine’s ability to walk through walls, separating from her body part.

All the evidence about the paranormal and experiences in the film is not so important, and Mark Waters did not sensationalize them, but this does not mean that they do not exist due to the very nature of scientific and logical thinking: Lauren could not be far from his body without feeling extreme fatigue (Levy, 2017, p. 271). Masterfully exploring the relationship between religion and art, Mark Levy builds a gripping plot in which genuine human drama is bubbling.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Modern French literature (Kryvoruchko et al, 2021) discuss a lot of issues (Demchenko, 2021). Unfortunately, there are few Ukrainian translations of famous French novels (Kochur, 2008), (Tatura, 2008).

The contemporary writer Marc Levy is quite successful, he has many novels such as “Finding You” (Levy, 2001), “Seven Days for an Eternity” (Levy, 2003), “In Another Life” (Levy, 2004), “London Mon Amour” (Levy, 2006), “Children of Freedom” (Levy, 2007), “All Those Things We Never Said” (Levy, 2008), “The First Day” (Levy, 2009 a), “The First Night” (Levy, 2009 b), “The Shadow Thief” (Levy, 2010), “The Strange Journey of Mr. Daldry” (Levy, 2011), “Replay” (Levy, 2012), “Stronger than Fear” (Levy, 2013), “Another Idea of Happiness” (Levy, 2014), ”P.S. from Paris” (Levy, 2015), “Hope” (Levy, 2016), ”The Last of the Sanfields” (Levy, 2019) etc.

However, the peculiarities of discovering the real and unreal world in the novel “If only it were true” have not yet been the subject of the separate scientific study.

**AIM OF THE ARTICLE** is to discover the real and unreal world in the novel by Marc Levy “If only it were true”.

## METHODOLOGY

The methods of holistic research, images research and problem research were used in the paper. Basically, the problem analysis was used. It was used to analyze the creative structure of the novel by Marc Levy “If only it were true” in close connection with its content. The problem analysis helped to discover and solve different issues as the writer’s creative consciousness, as the literature development of the certain time period.

## RESULTS

As it is known, the famous scientist Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) investigated the human subconscious and foresaw that in a body in a near-death sleep or coma, inner life is preserved, and that communication between people is possible through the transmission of thoughts at a distance. Let’s not forget that logic and scientific methodology are not once created and since then unchanging systems,

but developing and dynamic processes.

Modernism and conservative art at the beginning of the last century is based on theories of subjective idealism, among which the most fashionable are Bergsonianism and Freudianism. Separating human consciousness from real life, Henri Bergson and Sigmund Freud argued that dark instinctive forces govern human actions, called on thinkers and artists to examine the “subconsciousness” of the life of an ordinary person, revealing a riddle in everyone. A hundred years have passed and mankind finally realized that it too deified scientific and technological progress and too unceremoniously treated the heritage of traditions, starting with the cultural and religious traditions of people and ending with the riches of the nature of mankind.

And now nature and culture are louder and more warningly reminding us that any intrusion into their fragile substance is fraught with irreversible consequences and an ecological catastrophe. The author plunges into the study of the complex spiritual world of a person whose thought is eternally awake in an effort to cognize the truth and achieve absolute perfection here on earth, and not somewhere “out there”. We are convinced that to understand and explain the ongoing events lie in the limitations of our current scientific and logical thinking, and scientists in the future will look at everything from a completely different point of view.

Today to transplant a heart, to make an airplane that weighs three hundred and fifty tons fly, to walk on the Moon, it took a lot of work, but the main thing, imagination (Levy, 2017, p. 233), says Marc Levy. It is difficult to disagree with the author of the book, and the author of the novel pushes us to this conclusion by his belief that life can be beautiful even “between heaven and earth” if imagination is enough. Life returned to normal for 86,400 seconds ... this magic bank is available to each of us, this is the time! (Levy, 2017, p. 273), but the bank can close the account at any time without warning; life can stop at any second, as happened with the heroes of the novel.

By its rhythmic and intonational structure, simple, restrained and at the same time expressive vocabulary, the novel is close to the modernist art of the last century. And no matter how dynamic the action in the novel is (unlike the multivolume epic of Proust “In Search of Lost Time” (1912-1922), or the multivolume narration of “War and Peace” by Leo Tolstoy, a fantastic plot in the novel “The Master and Margarita” by M. Bulgakov, it inevitably grows details, in its flow on the subconscious, intuition, dreams and dreams, visions



invade; lyrical themes are dynamically intertwined in it; before us are colorful descriptions of the abduction from the hospital of the body of thirty-year-old Lauren, the main character of the novel, who is in a deep coma, according to the police – “too beautiful to die”.

Arthur’s time and love brought Lauren back to life, but Arthur faced at least five years in prison for the abduction of her body. Even a close friend, psychologist Pilgez, does not understand the motive of the act itself and the abduction: “why?”, because the price of one body (or individual body organs for transplantation) is not worth such a risk.

To believe in what is happening, Pilgez explains this to himself by saying that it is not enough to be crazy, you have to be a complete nutcase. Doubt demanded a revision of events and phenomena from different points of view: Arthur is not at all crazy (Levy, 2017, p. 299). The abduction of Lauren’s body from the clinic and the return of the body, the search for an old ambulance, life under the supervision of the police, the suspicion of others (some thought he was crazy, others thought that he was a widower who did not want to come to terms with the death of his wife (Levy, 2017, p. 274), the author describes life in a society with consumer morality with maximum accuracy. Arthur appears in the novel as a person who has realized his opportunities, given to him by nature.

The most important thing in Arthur’s character is courage is the dignity of those who act for the good, those who come to the rescue. And Arthur acts exactly at the moment when one should act, and not calculate threats (Levy, 2017, p. 274). The combination of the image of the external appearance and the internal, psychological originality of a person is associated with the unique individual characters of the heroes of the novel, accompanying each step of their actions.

After spending the day in a new apartment, arranging books on the shelves, finishing the arrangement of the kitchen corner, bringing the apartment to an ideal state of cleanliness, which was not very characteristic of him before, awakened to life the irrational, mystical forces that Arthur only felt in this apartment: It seems that I have manic inclinations appear, he confessed to himself (Levy, 2017, p. 39).

The 21st century has shaped modern ideas about what life after death is like and what a person experiences in a coma. For the author of the book, the plot with which he had to work, in contrast to modernist art, is more concrete in sensations, questions, analogies, mysterious phenomena, visions, since the

study of the nature of the dying or comatose state of a person has become a global problem of all mankind, but is presented to the inexperienced reader in playful and fantastic form.

The plot twists and turns of the book are captured from the first pages: a beautiful unfamiliar ghost girl is sure that only Arthur can help her return to the world of the living. In the bathroom in the closet among the hangers, he saw a girl, mistaking her for a whore or as a playful “housewarming gift” (Levy, 2017, p. 41) from Paul’s “bosom” friend. The play of youth, freedom and a smile, reserves of unspent spiritual purity, the desire to show what a loving person is capable of – characterize the protagonist of the novel.

Light, taste, smells, everything is revealed to the reader in all its glory. Arthur often recalled his mother’s words: If you have some kind of power where you are now, open the doors of our world for him (Levy, 2017, p. 188). Most likely, it is our world that is closest to mental states that are far from the rational side of the human soul, the strength of feeling.

His mother taught him to love everything that can be loved by heart and soul: to admire the sunrise, to distinguish the smells of flowers, to contemplate the peace of the beginning of the day, to distinguish the aromas of his favorite roses, aromatic essences, to recognize the leaves of trees, the names of birds, she taught to determine the weather by the clouds and wind, and much more.

Artist Anthony, a family friend whose life was also based on harmony, warmth, and the ability to give, lived nearby and became not only a friend of the family, but also a close man to Lily, filled the void in Arthur’s life after the death of his father, the plane stayed on the stars (Levy, 2017, p. 174), in a poetic manner she explained to the little boy the death of his father.

Anthony outlived Lily for ten years, whom he loved all his life, but Lily, fearing condemnation, could not respond to his feelings: adults are afraid of old age, death, afraid of diseases, sometimes even a child’s gaze: they are afraid that they will be condemned (Levy, 2017, p. 177-178).

The tragic and early death of relatives and people close to him did not leave Arthur indifferent in an attempt to save the one who needed it: from now on, you are responsible for yourself and for those whom you will love. Don’t lose your dignity, his mother instructed him. The writer creates a number of thoughtful psychological portraits (Lillian, Arthur, Lauren).





Relying on an intelligent reader is manifested in the writer's penchant for introducing a very diverse material, reminding that: We are responsible for those whom we have tamed, as Antoine de Saint-Exupéry said.

Why Arthur? Not only because ironically, the lonely architect Arthur bought Lauren's former apartment from her guardian mother, who eventually agreed to the euthanasia of her daughter, but also because family and family values became the most important and defining in the life of a single teenager and young men, and the more freedom there was in Arthur's worldview, the more he received spiritual knowledge in childhood.

True love for the world is manifested only in the presence of freedom, which was filled with Arthur's life. He did not forget the admonition of his mother, with whom he had developed a spiritual relationship: Life sometimes makes us doubt everything. Never give up ... never lose a particle of a child's soul (Levy, 2017, p. 185-186), revealing new correspondences to your inner world.

The mystical plot of the novel is combined with real events in the mischief of fantasy and observation: after the death of Lauren, he remained in prostration for long days and even longer nights ... He wrote letters to the phantom ... (Levy, 2017, p. 278), he became disillusioned with life itself, and close friends fought for his sanity. The art of living largely depends on our ability to overcome our own impotence. This is difficult because powerlessness often breeds fear. It nullifies our strengths, reason, common sense and opens the way for weakness (Levy, 2017, p. 180), says Marc Levy.

It is written about M. Bulgakov's novel "The Master and Margarita" that science fiction encounters pure realism. Science fiction in Marc Levy's novel comes across quite real events and facts that unfold in the summer of 1996 in San Francisco. Lauren's way of life is emphatically real, this reality is special, sharply outlined, like her "old woman triumph" (English car), crashed into the immense window of the "Masiz" store together with the owner.

Like in a movie, but here everything is for real, the parking attendant will say the witness of the accident. The exact time of the accident is indicated: "Quarter to seven". Lauren's pace of work can be summed up in two words: "always in a hurry". Her work in the hospital is quite real, where everyone obeys the orders of the strict Professor Fernstein; Lauren was one of his students and the only one who was not afraid of him.

And Fernstein, violating every conceivable protocol of treatment and

rehabilitation, is trying to bring Lauren back from a deep coma to life. At the same time, the assistants seemed to gradually forget that they were operating on a clinically dead human being for five hours. The idea that we will not be able to fully understand this life until we pay attention to what is happening on the other side of it makes the reader more restrained in the events taking place in the novel: behind the window opening he guessed Lauren, her smooth movements, it seemed to Arthur that it scatters, becomes more transparent (Levy, 2017, p. 279).

He recalled Lillian's admonitions: The most beautiful thing that the earth has given us, that which turns us into human beings, is the happiness of sharing with someone. Anyone who does not know how to share is a cripple, an invalid without feelings (Levy, 2017, p. 181). Lily died of cancer when the boy was ten years old, faded away as gracefully as she lived, left with dignity, without disturbing those whom she loved (Levy, 2017, p. 183). On the morning of her death, the boy read the letter left to him as a "will of love".

In the novel we meet with the phantom of an invisible interlocutor, the living heroine Lauren, who asserts an active, effective attitude to life when she, being in a coma, goes on astral travel. After the accident, Lauren felt the value of every moment, every second of the "magical life".

In the center of the novel are the "eternal" universal human problems of freedom and lack of freedom, love and fidelity, devotion to each other, happiness. And happiness for all the characters in the novel is not a life's luck, but a simple, sincere manifestation of life, even if it is sad and tragic.

The trinity of good, truth and beauty clearly reveal Lauren's spiritual and moral life. Her appearance attracts attention with a combination of hidden, reserved inner kindness (each morning began with the preparation of breakfast for her pet dog Kali). Lauren Kline, an emergency room physician at a San Francisco hospital, had a strikingly beautiful apartment in a trendy, modern design; a dining room, as is customary in America and Europe, combined with a kitchen, the so-called "studio"; the underlined "big frog-shaped fridge magnet".

The detail takes part in creating the image of the heroine and becomes an integral part of the artistic world of the work, and not just a way of expressiveness, but also a way of revealing changes in the life of the heroes of the novel. A bedroom, a living room with a fireplace and a spacious bathroom with a window, all these details and the interior indicated a modern style of furnishings. The apartment is full of joy,



light and music: Peggy Lee sang the trendy “Fever”.

Arthur nearly fainted when he heard the unknown clicking of his fingers to the beat of the music coming from the closet and saw among the hangers a very real girl who sang along to the rhythm of the song. Her room continued to live with Lauren’s “spiritualized” phantom. In the life of Arthur, a strange feeling arises for him, because it is irrational, not subject to reason.

The feeling without an image and a name permeated Arthur’s worldview as a vague fleeting sensation of the human soul after parting with the soul of Lauren: His male body penetrated into Lauren’s soul, and her soul penetrated into Arthur’s body, for a moment of embrace... (Levy, 2017, p. 213), an attempt to explain the author esoteric postulates, when the subtle bodies, without physically touching, entered into interaction at the subtle level.

The strength and feelings of the heroes of the novel are able to work miracles, returning them to a full life. But they would also be powerless before death, if not for their all-conquering love. In a few weeks they became accomplices, lovers and companions in life, gained confidence that consciousness can exist independently of the body: Arthur plunged into the world of emptiness. Emptiness penetrated his veins, reaching to his heart. And the rhythm of the heart became more and more muffled every day (Levy, 2017, p. 277).

Breaking the traditional conventionality of the metaphorical language, the author’s poetic feeling penetrates beyond the bounds of finite things and phenomena into the transcendent mystery of the universe in attempts to study the paranormal phenomenon.

M. Levy, the author of the novel, is an example of a completely real person in his right mind, as if putting on a whole series of experiments, testing the fate of his heroes, the strength of their striving for goodness, beauty and harmony. In the novel one can find not only bitter thoughts about the transience of human life, but also an optimistic faith in eternal renewal, the beauty of nature, love: courage is your strength, but also your weakness ... loneliness is a garden where the soul dries up; the flowers that grow there are odorless. Love tastes wonderful; love. Remember: to receive, you must give; remember that you have to be yourself in order to be able to love (Levy, 2017, p. 186).

Arthur received a good education, after the death of his mother he inherited, a house in Carmel where he grew up, a small city apartment and a letter left in it,

already an adult Arthur: you will walk through the rooms filled with nostalgia, you will open the shutters, letting in the sunlight, which I will miss so much ... in the closet you will find a black suitcase, in it, “the past in the present” (a silver spoon, booties, an airplane, etc.). My mother’s frank confession: All these years we (Lily and Anthony) lived in the shadow of my lies, I was a hypocrite with life, and she did not forgive me for this.

It can be assumed that M. Levy is trying to delve into our self-righteousness of reason, confident that, freed from signs and superstitions, belief or disbelief in the afterlife, he can create a rational arrangement of all human relations.

The episode of the meeting of Lauren’s mother with Arthur was real: the usually shy dog caught up with Arthur and strangely froze in place, sucked in air, wiggling his nose and head. Then she approached Arthur, sniffed the edges of his trousers and immediately lay down, whining ... the animal was trembling with joy and excitement (Levy, 2017, p. 138) and later, when the dog recognized you, dog! I don’t know why and I don’t understand everything, but I owe you so much ... (Levy, 2017, p. 284).

Unreal, a clinically dead body was resurrected, which was impossible, but Arthur could not refuse to realize his intentions to bring it back to life, sitting at Lauren’s bedside for days on end, realizing his intentions quite realistically, creating new ones and changing the ways of their implementation (for hours studying the history of diseases in the library, meeting Loren’s mother, friendship with the dog Kali, etc.).

The heroes of the novel went through the faith, hope and love that make up the success in their lives, through the art of Love for the world, which they have learned (Prykhodko, & Petrusenko, 2021).

## DISCUSSIONS

It is a point for discussion. According to spiritual people, every meeting with ANY thing, phenomenon, event, and especially with a person, is a complex energy-informational interaction ... and there is always an interaction not only on the physical, but also on the subtle level.

We believe, the writer is in no hurry to draw final conclusions. He creates in the novel a subtle artistic atmosphere that opposes its tragic color. All the elements came together here: the funny and the serious, philosophy and satire, parody and



magic fantasy. Improbability of an event, a fantasy or “purely realism”, the perennial problems of human existence in modern society, forward-looking, and his uneasy sense, in an attempt to identify the difference between life and death of man, the eternal fear of death and resurrection for love and life, identically modernist art of the past century.

## CONCLUSIONS

The value of M. Levy’s book “If only it were true” is in high humanism, in the glorification of true beauty, the inner need for love for a woman, male friendship, growing stronger in a common cause for the sake of Lauren’s salvation. Not so much happiness fell to the hero’s lot, he experiences other people’s misfortunes and troubles as his own, and Lauren’s illness makes Arthur wiser, he deeper understands the meaning of life, defending eternal values: home, family and friends.

Thus, M. Levy addresses topical issues of a philosophical nature in the novel, they have many contradictions that reflect the thoughts and searches of the author. In the novel, the writer tries to answer the question: how to overcome the prevailing immorality and violence in the world, how to rise above the dark instincts. Thus, the author creates a detailed symbolic and philosophical picture of the world.

The spiritual life of the characters is depicted in details; the psychologism of the novel deepens the meaning of the fantastic events that take place. The theme of love runs through the whole novel, and it is interpreted as something fatal, mysterious, incomprehensible. It is no coincidence that M. Levy introduces into the fabric of the work many details-symbols that perform ideological and compositional functions.

Indeed, M. Levy’s novel testifies to the complexity and non-uniformity of artistic creativity. Thus, the novel is an expression of the authors’ attitude to global contemporary problems, the desire to raise important issues of personal life, solving life problems deeply, which contributes to the creation of the author’s innovative creative techniques.

The author marks the sharp contradictions of the modern world, deepening the processes of real and unreal. We see prospects for further research in the disclosure of elements of the real and the unreal in other works of the modern French writer Marc Levy.



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**TRAUMATIZED CONSCIOUSNESS IN  
LYUDMILA RUBLEWSKAYA'S NOVEL THE  
DAGUERROTYPE**

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**SUDLIANKOVA Volha**

**Volha Sudliankova**

is a Habilitated Doctor of Philology,  
Professor at the Department of World Literature  
at Minsk State Linguistic University  
(2200234, Belarus, Minsk, Zakharova st, 21)  
korsud@mail.ru  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0617-8657>.

**ABSTRACT**

With the tragic events of the 20th century investigation of trauma as a psychic phenomenon has acquired paramount importance. It is an interdisciplinary subject involving doctors, psychologists, philosophers, writers. The Lost Generation authors and modernists were the first to address the problem of emotional shocks experienced by their heroes during WWI. Since then trauma, its causes and consequences have been one of the essential thematic components of world literature and, consequently, trauma studies have become an object of scholarly interest in the last decades of the 20th century in various humanitarian spheres.

The present article addresses the way the contemporary Belarusian writer Lyudmila Rublewaskaya represents traumatized consciousness in her novel "The Daguerrotype" (2014). The novel draws its title from an old daguerreotype described in it. It was found by two contemporary young people together with a diary recounting the events of the late 19th century. The novel consists of two parts called "The Book of the Inner Circle" and "The Book of the Outer Circle" which are set in two interrelated time planes – the late 19th century and our time respectively. Through the intricately interwoven life stories of five personages the writer looks into various kinds of trauma, exposes their

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reasons, traces their consequences and describes her heroes' ways of overcoming the mental distress. The traumatic experience of the characters was either due to the socio-political atmosphere in Russia in the late 19th century, or to a combination of a tragic accident, superstition and manipulation, or to a clash of rough force and nobleness. The significance of unveiling a person's secret through narration for overcoming the traumatic psychic aftermath is illustrated in the novel, too.

**Key words:** trauma; injury; shock; revenge; consequences; folklore; werewolf.

## АНОТАЦІЯ

### Травмована свідомість у романі Людмили Рублевської «Дагерротип»

У зв'язку з трагічними подіями 20-го століття дослідження травми як психічного феномену набуло велику значущість. Ця міждисциплінарна галузь привертає увагу медиків, психологів, філософів, письменників. Саме автори втраченого покоління і модерністи першими звернулися до проблеми, зображуючи емоційні потрясіння, які відчували їхні герої під час Першої світової війни. З тих пір травма, її причини та наслідки є однією з важливих тематичних складників світової літератури, й дослідження травми стало предметом наукового інтересу в різних галузях гуманітарних знань в останні десятиріччя 20-го століття.

У цій статті розглядається те, як представлена травмована свідомість у романі сучасної білоруської письменниці Людмили Рублевської «Дагерротип» (2014). Назва роману походить від знайдених двома молодими людьми, нашими сучасниками, старого дагерротипа та щоденникових записів, які зображують події кінця 19-го століття, що стає зав'язкою дії. Роман складається з двох частин, які названі «Книга внутрішнього кола» та «Книга зовнішнього кола», дія яких відбувається в двох взаємопов'язаних часах пластах – наприкінці 19-го століття та в наші дні відповідно. Через тісно переплетені життєві історії своїх героїв письменниця зображує різні види травм, розкриває їхні причини, простежує наслідки та окреслює засоби подолання персонажами душевних потрясінь. Травмований досвід героїв було викликано абосоціально-політичною атмосферою в Росії наприкінці 19-го століття, або сполучення нещасного випадку, забобонів і маніпуляцій, або зіштовхненням грубої сили

та шляхетності в наші дні. У романі також зображено важливість розкриття глибоко захованої таємниці для подолання психічної травми.

**Ключові слова:** травма; ушкодження; шок; помста; наслідки; фольклор; перевертень.

## INTRODUCTION

The tragic events, experienced by millions in the 20th century, and their traumatic aftermath made the study of trauma of paramount importance both for scientists engaged in various areas related to a human being and for people working in the field of art and literature. The growing interest in the phenomenon was accompanied by a shift in the meaning of the word “trauma” itself which initially meant a wound. The shift may be exemplified by the definitions of the word taken from two editions of the Oxford Dictionary. While the 1929 edition defines trauma only as “a morbid condition of body produced by wound or external violence” [The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1929); 1308], in the early 21st century issue an accent is made on the psychic facet of trauma: “a mental condition caused by severe shock, especially when the harmful effects last for a long time” [Hornby (2005); 1634] while its physical aspect is relegated to the third place in the entry. According to Roger Luckhurst, the transfer of meaning from the physical to the psychic was due to the recognition by medical people “that accident victims could escape physical injury completely, yet suffer persistent forms of mental distress long after the event” [Luckhurst (2006);498]

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of trauma and traumatic effect was initiated by Z. Freud in the early 20th century. In their “Introduction” to the book “Ethics and Trauma in Contemporary British Fiction” J.-M. Ganteau and S. Onega write “...it is Freud’s name that inevitably crops up most often in literature on the subject, with “Moses and Monotheism” (1939) as the most quoted of the texts. Earlier essays like “Thoughts for the Time on War and Death” (1915) and “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (1920) are also widely recognized as having played an essential part in the definition of the psychic trauma as different from and, in principle, unrelated to physical trauma” [Onega (2011); 9].



Freud laid the foundation of trauma theory which was taken up and developed by other psychoanalysts, Carl G. Jung among them. As a result of his observation of psychiatric cases Jung came to the conclusion that, as a rule, a patient has some secret story unknown to others, which he described as “the rock against which he is shattered” and asserted “If I know his secret story, I have a key to the treatment” [Jung(1965); 117]. Jung considered that psychiatric treatment should begin with unveiling the secret, which could be done through narration. It was this idea that, practically, paved the way for literary investigation of trauma and its effects. J.-M. Ganteau and S. Onega point out that “it is this narrative aspect of trauma that makes the findings of trauma studies so relevant for creative writers and critics alike” [Onega (2011); 12].

In the last decades of the 20th century trauma studies became an object of scholarly interest in various humanitarian spheres. In their article “Trauma Studies: История, репрезентация, свидетель” (Trauma Studies: History, Representation, Witness) O. Moroz and E. Suverina make a brief survey of investigations of the traumatic aftermath of the XX century catastrophic events by the world eminent scholars, pointing out that the works of Sh. Felman, E. Santner, C. Caruth and others have become classical texts on the theory of trauma and ways of their representation [Moroz, Suverina (2014)]. The 2009 substantial (903 pages) collection “Травма: punkty” contains articles by the above mentioned and other scholars who, according to its compilers, analyze trauma as an event which not only radically changes a person’s life but continues to affect his/her attitude to the past, present and future [Ushakin (2009); 7]. The authors of the essays look into various cases of trauma experienced on individual, personal, collective, community, state levels and represent ways in which people learn to live with traumas – “neither suppressing, nor ousting their negative effects but finding place for it in their lives and narratives” [Ushakin, (2009); 8].

A similar compilation of essays on trauma seen from various –psychological, philosophical, ethical and other perspectives – is presented in “Trauma in Contemporary Literature: Narrative and Representation” (2014).

Though the critical theory about the cultural and ethical implications of trauma in fiction started to intensively develop in the late 20th century, literary practice, that is, description of various cases of trauma and traumatic effects on a person’s psyche by men of letters began much earlier. It was boosted by the tragedy of the First World War and became manifest, first and foremost, in the works of modernists like

V. Wolf or W. Faulkner with their profound interest in human psychology. All kinds of traumas and traumatized consciousness are often dealt with in contemporary literature, too, which, consequently, has led to a number of critique publications examining the representation of traumatic experience by today's writers and poets. In her work "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History" C. Caruth points out that fiction is an adequate tool for reproducing traumatic experience where the real victims fail, i.e. in the situations of the so-called unspeakability [Caruth(1996); 9]. On the one hand, literary works may offer very valuable material for trauma studies, on the other, trauma theory may influence literary criticism. C. Caruth substantiates this interrelation: "If Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing, and it is at this specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the psychoanalytical theory of traumatic experience and the language of literature meet" [Caruth (1996);9]

The recent decades have witnessed a great number of research publications on literary representation of trauma. One of them is the abovementioned volume "Ethics and Trauma in Contemporary British Fiction" which contains a number of essays on individual writers (P. Barker, M. Amis, I. McEwan, J. Winterson and others) seen from the perspective of trauma representation. One of the most recent publications on the subject is the book "Trauma and Literature" (2018) edited by J. Roger Kurtz, where twenty-one essays offer an overview of the origin and development of literary trauma theory and trace the evolution of the concept of trauma in literary studies.

### AIM OF THE ARTICLE

Belarusian literature is rich in works highlighting the tragic events of the country's history. Suffice it to mention the play "Raskidanaye Hnyazdo" (The Ruined Nest, 1913) by Yanka Kupala with its heroes' unavailing striving for land ownership, or the tragic war stories by Vasil Bykau, or the books by the Nobel Prize winner Svyatlana Aleksievich documenting the tragedy of WWII and Chernobyl disaster to see how traumatic the life experience of Belarusian people has been. However the issue of trauma representation in the national literature has not been devoted enough attention to in the literary studies. The aim of the present article is to throw light on the way this problem is dealt with in the novel "Daheraty" (The Daguerrotype,

2014) by the contemporary Belarusian writer Lyudmila Rublevskaya.

Hardly has this well-known and prolific author of a number of adventure and quasihistorical novels had the problem of trauma in her mind as an object of artistic investigation while writing “The Daguerrotype”. Yet this work presents a fairly appropriate and substantial material for the study of traumatized consciousness.

## METHODOLOGY

The research has been carried out on the basis of combination of various scholarly principles and methods which include a brief survey of trauma studies and their history and a review of several publications on the subject. The historical approach was used to analyze the events of the novel from the perspective of the late 19th century political atmosphere in Russia, while the life story of one of the principal characters demanded a study of some folklore elements, namely the beliefs and superstitions of the werewolves myth.

## RESULTS

Like most of Rublevskaya’s novels “The Daguerrotype” presents an intricate combination of various genres. According to V. Barowka, Rublevskaya belongs to those contemporary Belarusian writers who are actively engaged in formal experimenting by modifying traditional genres [Barowka (2018); 92]. First and foremost “The Daguerrotype” is an adventure novel as it has a fairly dynamic and entertaining plot with rapidly changing scenes and episodes. It has elements of a historical novel, too, for the action takes place in the late 19th century and a number of real events are recalled – the assassination of the Russian czar Alexander III, the 1863 anti-Russia revolt in what was then known as the North-Western Province of Russia and ensuing exiles of its participants to Siberia, the Jew pogroms, etc. The two main characters are terrorists who call themselves ‘the inquisitors of the revolution’ and are planning an assassination of a member of the czarist family. This plane of the novel is interwoven with a philosophical one: on many occasions the personages conduct heated arguments on validity of terrorism, on human nature and social order, on the ways of reforming an individual, etc. It also has a detective line for there are attempts at and actual murders. The novel also contains a love subplot which ends

tragically because of the treacherous act of one of the personages. The last but not the least in determining the multigenre nature of “The Daguerrotype” is presence of gothic elements in it – an old gloomy manor with its scary cellar and rooms full of mysterious artefacts, all dealing with charms, curses and other witchcraft things.



The novel is permeated with intertextuality: besides historical references there are numerous literary ones – to “The Red Riding Hood” and “The Queen of Eels”, to Shakespeare’s characters and Calderone’s “Life as a Dream”, to Flaubert, Dostoewski, Conan Doyle and others. The writer builds the life story of one of the main characters on folklore myths and legends of werewolves.

The genre eclecticism, intertextuality and complicated plot structure give us the right to consider the novel a specimen of postmodernist writing. “In the novel



devices of a realistic novel are masterfully intertwined with postmodernist poetics, elements of adventure and analysis. The leitmotif of the writer's novels is the idea of preservation of historical memory, which prevents a contemporary person from turning into a being without kith or kin" [Barowka (2015);173-174].

The novel has a framing structure – it has two time levels called “The Book of the Outer Circle” and “The Book of the Inner Circle”, the former dealing with our times, the latter set in the late 19th century. In the first part of “The Outer Circle” a journalist student girl nicknamed Simka and a young biologist Haliash, both living in today's Minsk, spend a week reading Haliash's great grandmother's diary which they occasionally found, together with an old daguerreotype, among the old things stored in the latter's flat. The story which unfolds in the notes constitutes the contents of “The Book of the Inner Circle”. The findings make the two young people go and visit the scene of the events described in the diary. Their adventures during their visit to the village of Zhuhavichi form the other part of “The Book of the Outer Circle”.

“The Book of the Inner Circle” is set in Belarus in 1893 and is centred round three people: a middle-aged photographer Varaksa Nihel, his adopted daughter Bohuslava and Earl Shyman Kahanetzki, an heir to an old noble Belarusian family and owner of a manor named Zhuhavichi. All the three main characters experience shocks of various kinds which impact their lives, predetermine their behaviour and shape their views on life, on themselves and on the surrounding world.

Varaksa Nihel is a pseudonym of a fictitious terrorist Yan Ranarych. In his childhood he witnessed an act of extreme injustice and violent humiliation inflicted on his father, a very skillful watchmaker and an idealistic believer in freedom, by a drunken wealthy landowner. The rich client suspected the watchmaker of stealing his property and called for the police. Later he recalled his complaint but the father was so severely beaten by the police that he was brought home unconscious. The emotional trauma that the boy experienced had an everlasting effect on him. “I ran after him when they were taking him to the police station but I did not cry because I knew that crying was shameful. Five years later both my father and I joined the insurgents. And then I became a citizen of the world” [Rublewskaya (2014); 73-74]. The shock fostered in Nihel a desire for revenge and turned him into a ruthless, merciless person who stopped at nothing to annihilate anyone who, in his views, stood in his way and betrayed the cause of struggle for social justice. Hence, his pseudonym which bears a hint to the movement of Nihilism, which “eventually deteriorated into



an ethos of subversion, destruction, and anarchy, and by the later 1870s, a nihilist was anyone associated with clandestine political groups advocating terrorism and assassination” [Pratt (2001)]. Nihel became one of those staunch fighters against the czarist regime who considered terrorism a justifiable means of doing away with it. All his actions served one aim – to do away with injustice. Even his seemingly charitable act – sheltering a little orphan girl – was aimed at it, too. He adopted her only to make her a cover and a tool for accomplishing his terrorist plans.

His adopted daughter Bahuslava (Bahuta) had also experienced an emotional trauma in her childhood. Nihel had found her in a boarding school where she, a 13-year-old orphaned daughter of a Polish officer exiled to Siberia, was constantly teased and humiliated by other girls. He encountered her at the very moment when she was in a state of trance because, led to the extreme by the abusers, she had just, as she thought, killed one of them. The image of her victim lying prostrate on the ground would haunt her for many years after; again and again she would recall the scene of the assumed murder. L. Rublewskya offers her readers access into her heroine’s mind during the traumatic event which conveys her subjective perception of time and reality: “Bahuta can’t recall how it all happened. Though the events of that May day still turned in her memory like a witch’s spinning wheel” [Rublewskaya (2014), 41]. When her victim fell down she felt as if she were in a desert, with silence ringing in her ears. She was transfixed with horror at the thought that she was a murderer.

Nihel skillfully and cynically made use of the girl’s state by praising her and offering her his protection. On the one hand, he saved Bohuslava from an inevitable severe punishment and managed to help her overcome the shock and dragged her out of the imminent depression which might have come through her possible repeated mental reenactment of the murder. On the other hand, true to his political fanaticism, he instilled in her the idea that she was an inborn killer, made her his accomplice and taught her all kinds of skills necessary for concealing and accomplishing terrorist activities. Under his guidance she cultivated various skills necessary for an assassin and at times even prided herself on it. A good psychologist and manipulator, Nihel channelled her persistent sense of guilt into a belief that performing terrorist attacks for political reasons was her mission. This belief, as well as the constant fear of punishment for the murder, mixed with a natural sense of gratitude to Nihel, turned her into an obedient tool in his hands even though at times she was shocked by her foster father’s monstrosity in relation to alleged enemies. Thus, the emotional trauma

led her into a sort of moral dead alley from which she exited only when she learned that her victim had survived and realized that Nihel had concealed it from her in order to maintain her sense of guilt and to manipulate her.

While Nihel's and Bohuslava's life stories look quite probable and realistic, Shyman Kahanezki's line of the novel is invested with mysticism. Like the other two Shyman was also traumatized in childhood, but his trauma was of a more complicated nature. It was a combination of a physical wound with an emotional shock which eventually developed into a sort of psychosis. When he was five he and his mother were attacked by wolves which killed the woman and wounded the boy. "I told you", said the earl, "that my mother was killed by wolves when she was coming home through the forest in a carriage. The matter is that I was with her. The driver died immediately. I saw a wolf seize him by the throat and pull him to the ground. I remember the horses wheezing and blood pouring from their wounds. Mother covered me with her body. That's the last thing I remember" [Rublewskaya (2014); 90]. Shyman's story made Bahuslava suppose that the accident was the source of the local legend that the earl had been bitten by a werewolf. According to the popular belief a man who had a contact with a werewolf was likely to turn into one himself now and then. By elaborate manipulation and fraud of his late father's relatives Kahanezki was made to believe that he had this propensity, too.

The combination of the physical wound and psychic shock brought about his nervous breakdown and caused epilepsy from which the boy was cured by his stepmother's brother, Dr. Bounar. But the doctor treated him with mescaline, a remedy made of some plants, which caused delusions. The Bounars made Shyman believe that every year on the day when his mother was killed and he bitten by a wolf he had his fits of lycanthropy, went berserk and murdered people, his own father among them. They convinced him that on such occasions he should come to his family estate and lock himself there so as not to harm anyone. By skillful manipulation and fraud they planned to eventually place Shyman in a lunatic asylum and take over his property, thus taking a revenge on the Kahanezki family for a century-old feud. In a conversation with Nihel and Bahuslava the doctor assured them of Shyman's malady as a mania dangerous to others: "I think you know about the horrible accident with wolves that Shyman experienced in his childhood. In addition there are family legends – you must have seen a wolf in the Kahanezkis' coat-of-arms and heard horrifying local myths. No wonder that the poor boy developed this mania", [Rublewskaya (2014);

139] said Dr. Bounar.

L. Rublewskaya complements the story of Shyman's trauma with popular beliefs and legends of werewolves. His case seems very adequate for illustrating C. Jung's idea that we cannot understand the very essence of neurosis and psychosis without mythology and history of culture. [Jung (1965); 65] The writer elucidates the story of Shyman's traumatized consciousness by providing various details of the lycanthropy beliefs. She introduces into the plot a number of elements associated with the lycanthropy myth: a belief that a person bitten by a werewolf may turn into one himself, that the transference usually occurs on full moon nights, that a werewolf may be killed only with a silver bullet marked with a cross, that a werewolf may recover a human shape when severely scolded by a human, etc. In "The Daguerreotype" the folklore legend of a werewolf serves to weave a story of crime, treachery, revenge and manipulation.

It might have looked strange to other characters of the novel and it may seem unbelievable to contemporary readers that, being a professional zoologist, Shyman Kahanezki was 'infected' with the mythical belief about himself as a potential werewolf. In our opinion, the fact may be accounted for by the following idea of Sergei Ushakin: "the posttraumatic state has nothing to do with a desire to forget the trauma. On the contrary, the striving to weave its traces into the structure of one's everyday existence becomes the essence of posttraumatic life<...> In the case of the posttraumatic syndrome "post" is not an indicator of overcoming what has occurred ("post" as "after") but an evidence of its insurmountability: one's biography and identity become impossible without narration about the trauma" [Ushakin (2009); 8]. Obviously in Shyman's case his trauma became "not a starting point but rather a number of dots, a trajectory, a chain of events and worries". [Ushakin (2009);7]

Shyman's traumatic experience became part of his life practices. What aggravated his situation was the fact that he had no one to share his problem with, he had to keep his reminiscences to himself, again and again reenacting the traumatic episode. S. Ushakin writes "The story of trauma is, as a rule, a story of silence, of suppressed, of unspoken, of wordless horror" [Ushakin (2009); 35]. It is not by chance that Shyman's conversation with Bahuslava in which he recounted to her the shocking episode of the wolves' attack became a starting point in his psychic recovery. Probably for the first time in his life he narrated the story of his trauma and thus made the first step on the way to overcoming the posttraumatic distress syndrome. What enhanced the



remedial effect was Bahuslava's criticism of his belief in lycanthropy. The situation corresponds to what C. Caruth described as "the way in which our own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way in which trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another's word" [Caruth (1996); 4] Bahuslava's own traumatic experience evoked her profound empathy for Shyman's state which eventually led to their love.

The two young characters from "The Outer Circle" also experience an emotional shock but of another nature. The second half of this part of the novel treats of Haliash and Simka's dramatic adventures in the countryside where they went to see the estate which, as they had learnt from Haliash's great grandmother's narration, had belonged to his great grandfather Shyman Kahanezki. In the solitary place where they found the abandoned and half-dilapidated house they were assaulted by three villains who threatened to rape the girl and beat the boy. Here L. Rublewskaya again weaves the werewolf motive into her narration. Haliash had previously told his girlfriend that he used to feel strange on full moon nights and tried to avoid any confrontation for fear of going violent. It so happened that the dramatic encounter took place on an early full moon night. When attacked and seeing Simka in the arms of one of the hooligans Haliash went berserk. He violently dealt with the abusers, biting one of them and striking the other two severe blows which made them frantically retire. What intensified the assaulters' fright was Haliash's loud wolflike howling which stopped only when Simka managed to bring him back to his senses. It was on that day that Haliash first realized his origin and heredity. Previously he had been absolutely unaware of his roots, of the family legends, of his ancestors' coat-of-arms which had an image of a wolf in it.

Obviously the fact that Haliash thus gave vent to his fury was lucky for them both for it helped him overcome the shock and avoid its possible repercussions in the future. The revenge did not have to be postponed as it was in Nihel's case, but was accomplished on the spot which evidently facilitated Haliash's rehabilitation. Luckily, too, the abusers were not seriously wounded and fled for their own safety so that he did not need to live through the fear of punishment or experience the sense of guilt for the murder as Bohuslava, his great grandmother, had done. Now that he knew his ancestors' life story he would not let anyone manipulate his propensity for violence. The assault incident made him realize his own ability to effectively use his physical strength in case of extreme necessity. The lucky outcome of the incident, Haliash's

repulse to the abusers makes readers believe that the shock Simka experienced would not have a lasting traumatic effect on her, either.

## DISCUSSIONS

While writing “The Daguerrotype” L.Rublewskaya did not aim at making a literary research into the problem of trauma but involuntarily it turned out to be one. The prominence given to the traumatic experience of the heroes adds a psychological dimension to this multi-genre novel. It traces the process of shaping characters, analyses the effect of circumstances on human nature and behavior and exposes the ways of manipulating people’s minds.

## CONCLUSIONS

The motive of trauma is one of the stable thematic components of Lyudmila Rublewskaya’s novel. The writer presents five traumatic cases with different causes and ways of overcoming their consequences. Three of them are brought about by dramatic or even tragic accidents which the personages of “The Inner Circle” of the novel either witness or experience in their childhood. Nihel’s and Bahuslava’s traumas are rooted in the political atmosphere of the time, while Shyman Kahanezki’s traumatic case is the result of a combination of an accident, mystification, or, rather superstition, and manipulation. The two personages from “The Outer Circle”, our contemporaries, are victims of today’s atmosphere of violence, of an, unfortunately, widespread belief in the rightness of the strong. Luckily they manage to rebuff the offence and thus jointly overcome their traumas.

In “The Daguerrotype” Rublewskaya intricately elaborates a plot where themes of violence, revenge, trauma, guilt, love, superstition, discovery, jealousy are closely intertwined to expose the motives behind the characters’ behaviour and to evoke the readers’ empathy for some of her personages and resentment for the others.

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**CONTINUITY OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS  
IN SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONS IN CHINA: CITIZENSHIP  
EDUCATION**

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**XIE Fei  
KALASHNYK Nataliia**



**Xie Fei**

is a lecturer, at the Department of Arts and Music  
at College of Minorities attached to Lishui University  
(Lishui city, Zhejiang province, P.R. China)

[lsxf1890@163.com](mailto:lsxf1890@163.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3940-2993>

**Nataliia Kalashnyk**

is a professor at Donetsk Regional Institute  
of Postgraduate Pedagogical Education  
(Ukraine, Kramatorsk)

[nataliia.kalashnyk@gmail.com](mailto:nataliia.kalashnyk@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0314-6091>

**ABSTRACT**

At the present stage of the society development, China plays a significant role in global and regional processes, turning up over the past few decades from a poor underdeveloped country to the world's leaders in economic and science. In turn, this has led to significant political and socio-economic changes, which are associated with both government policies and subjective factors. The ideology in China is built in such a way that each individual considers it his/her duty to make a personal contribution to the development of the state. Civic (citizenship) education, which is aimed at forming love and respect for the Motherland, developing a sense of duty to the state and other citizens of the country, respect for other peoples, is given much attention at any level of education, from preschool to self-education. The article aims to make the analysis

of the citizenship education process and its reflection over all stages of secondary and high education of China, reflecting the continuity principle.

**Keywords:** PR China; citizenship education; students; state; University.

## АНОТАЦІЯ

### **Послідовність навчального процесу у середніх та вищих навчальних закладах Китаю: громадянське виховання**

На сучасному етапі розвитку суспільства Китай відіграє значну роль у глобальних та регіональних процесах, за останні кілька десятиліть перетворившись із бідної слаборозвиненої країни на одного зі світових лідерів в галузі економіки та науки. У свою чергу, це привело до значних політичних та соціально-економічних змін, які пов'язані як з політикою уряду, так і з суб'єктивними факторами. Ідеологія в Китаї побудована таким чином, що кожна людина вважає своїм обов'язком зробити особистий внесок у розвиток держави. Суспільному (громадянському) вихованню, яке спрямоване на формування любові та поваги до Батьківщини, почуття обов'язку перед державою та іншими громадянами країни, поваги до інших народів, приділяється велика увага на будь-якому рівні освіти: з дошкільного віку до самоосвіти. Метою статті є здійснити аналіз процесу громадянського виховання та його відображенню на всіх етапах середньої та вищої освіти Китаю, представляючи це за принципом безперервності.

**Ключові слова:** КНР; громадянське виховання; студенти; держава; університет.

## INTRODUCTION

The leading role in the educational process of the younger generation in modern China is given not to the family, as it is in most Western countries, but to the state and educational institutions. Start from kindergartens educational institutions are to conduct with their students educational activities aimed at forming a respectful attitude to the state, respect for other people and cultures, respect for nature and other necessary qualities of a responsible citizen of the country. Increased attention to civic education takes place in China due to the processes of democratisation and the emergence of multiparty politics, departing the country from the Chinese traditions and



the spread of Western ideas among young people which have led to the weakening of traditional values originated in ancient times and considered unacceptable for the country like China.

Civil education of the younger generation in European and Ukrainian science occupies a leading position, since it is this aspect that guarantees the stable development of the modern society. Today it is the object of attention not only of scientific schools of different directions and affiliations (pedagogy, sociology, political science, jurisprudence, etc.), but also the sphere of activity for state structures, youth and volunteer organisations.

China's experience is poorly studied and scientifically interesting, because in this country the civic position of the population in general and each person in it is clearly defined and most Chinese put the interests of the state above personal ones. China has constant revision and modernisation of approaches to the implementation of educational work on civic education, improving the forms and methods to achieve a specific result over this issue.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Both Ukrainian and Chinese scientists have repeatedly addressed the issues of organizing the educational process with students of pedagogical specialties. In particular, various aspects of educational activities are covered in the works of A.Bazarova, I.Bekh, N.Bibik, O.Vasilieva, N.Dzhgun, Du Yanyan, T.Shevchuk, N.Li, H.Feng, D.Ao, Z.Chengju, H.Wang, Y.Yu, S.Fu and others. Interesting and useful as to studying trends in Chinese pedagogy at different stages of development of the state are presented in the researches of L.Kalashnik (system of training teachers to work with orphans), foreign Chinese scholars M.Baranov (features of teaching and adaptation of Chinese students to study abroad), E.Monoson (approaches to educational work with students in China), D.McGowan (issues of education of noble people in the works of Confucius), M. Levenson (analysis of religious education in China), H.Krill (approaches to the education of ethical taste in students of the Chinese schools during the Cultural Revolution), F.Ivanho (study of approaches to moral education of high school students in modern schools in China), G.Joyce (historical aspect of the formation and formation of the tutorial system in Chinese pedagogy and), etc.



## AIM OF THE ARTICLE

The article aims to make the analysis of the citizenship education process and its reflection over all stages of secondary and high education of China, reflecting the continuity principle. The most important goals of civic education of Chinese youth are respect for humanity values, the spirit of progress and innovation, the ability to work in a team; formation of scientific worldview; promoting the development of active citizenship and practical opportunities to raise the country to another qualitatively new level; encouragement to take appropriate action, as civic education must go far beyond the classroom and be implemented in everyday life.

The methods according to which civic education in Chinese higher education is carried out are revealed: methods that form humanistic consciousness; methods that form a human attitude; methods that encourage human treatment of other people; methods based on a personal-role approach to the organization of the educational process. Such universal goals and methods make it possible to be recognised and realised at all stages of educational process of the PR China.

## METHODOLOGY

The theoretical and methodological basis of this study are seen in the general provisions of the theory of scientific knowledge; conceptual ideas of psychology, philosophy, pedagogy about the individual as the highest value of society and the need to study them in specific conditions, pedagogical provisions on the importance of combining sensory and rational in the cognitive process, stimulating human activity at any age to acquire knowledge; modern pedagogical provisions on the development of the national system of education in China; historical and pedagogical aspects of the educational process organisation, achievements in the field of modern pedagogical technologies, the concept of cultural education in China. The study also used historical and structural-functional approaches to the formation and increasing of future dance teachers` level of readiness to conduct activities on civic education in educational institutions in China.

## RESULTS

The article highlights the continuity of the educational process at all levels of

education in China as a basis for training future teachers to conduct activities in civic education. Purposeful formation of conscious citizens takes place in China at all levels of education. Work programs are developed by educational institutions independently and can differ significantly from each other, but the state controls their work and provides recommendations on the content of education, the organization of the educational process, the dominance of the civic component over others in the educational work with children and youth.

In China, civic education is associated with the formation of high civic consciousness in young students, their involvement in various social activities, the development of knowledge and skills of civic behavior. It is under the condition of the existence of civic education in society that it is possible to unite different ethnic groups and regions in order to build and improve the country. Following the Confucian principle «everything starts with the teacher» and the state direction «the teacher is the representative of the state, the leader of its ideology, the implementer of the tasks and goals of the state, and the key to continuity in the ideological and social development of the Chinese nation». China and China traditionally begin with teacher training for this type of work.

Based on the position that patriotism, citizenship, social competence are not innate qualities of man, including teachers, the Chinese education system pays close attention to the conscious and purposeful formation of these personality traits in its citizens, starting from kindergarten. In the system of professional training of teachers of the country from 30 to 48% of academic disciplines (depending on the specialization and direction of training) are in one way or another related to the subjects of the civic cycle. The subject «Ideology and Morality» is studied in primary school; in incomplete secondary school - «Ideology and Politics». In high school, Politics is a required subject for all students. As can be seen from the names of the disciplines, civic education in the modern Chinese school is carried out in close connection with the political and ideological.

The experience of organizing events aimed at civic education of young people in primary school («I am a citizen of my country», «China today», «Famous people of China», etc.), participation of students in the Organization of Young Pioneers of China in high school, involvement of youth in participation in summer and after-school camps makes the basis for forming the basic civic and patriotic ideas of the Chinese children that are to be developed on higher levels of education. It is

established that the forms of work in higher education (educational conversations, participation in volunteer activities, participation in thematic conferences and seminars, film screenings) are identical to those used in secondary school and, in part, in primary school, which ensures continuity. Civic education is a mandatory and central component of educational activities at any level of education in China, and the opposition to Westernization is the task of educational institutions in the field of civic education of young people in building respect for other nations, cultures, and so on.

## DISCUSSIONS

In modern conditions, when changing ideologies, building a democratic society, one of the main goals of civic education is to educate an active and thinking person with a high level of civic consciousness, a developed sense of self-worth, focused on spiritual values, independent thinking and responsible decision making. Education of a conscious, humane, civic active personality is a necessary condition for the development of modern society, because only a person who is brought up in compliance with the rule of law, respect for their own and other countries, state symbols, a person who respects the rights and freedoms of others. , traditions and cultures of different peoples can be considered a full-fledged citizen who can benefit other people and make a significant contribution to the development of their own state.

The Chinese education system can be considered the first in the world to define civic education as a method and goal of educational work in general. In any historical period in this country, education should have been aimed at making a person a patriot of China, a worthy member of the local community, part of society, a unit whose physical and moral qualities correspond to the general idea and social requirements of the Chinese state. In other words, civic education was and is the basis of educational work in China.

The main guidelines for educating Chinese youth are clearly defined by the government, and youth development is the basis of school ideology. Chinese schools must strictly adhere to the guidelines set by the Chinese government, otherwise they are not allowed to engage in educational activities. At the same time, Chinese educators emphasize that the process of education should be aimed primarily at

the development of personality, because the personal goal is higher than the social one. They emphasize that a social goal has value only when it promotes personal development. Emphasis is placed on the fact that most people are born with healthy potential instincts, and the task of education is their development. However, scientists note that the development and education of the individual depends on society, its moral guidelines

It should be noted that today in the socio-scientific field of China there is a transfer of the concepts of «civic education», «public education», «patriotic education» and a number of other terms, which is due to the specifics of Chinese as a hieroglyphic and related to the transfer of meaning and the choice of a researcher.

The list of types of work of the Universities on inculcation, formation and activation of civic competence of future teachers has expanded somewhat today due to the activation of the research component, which today mostly takes the form of preparing scientific reports and speeches at conferences. The practice of organizing schools and courses for high school students in the structure of higher education institutions allows prospective students after the first year (compulsory) and in their free time (optional) to act as mentors for younger students and pupils. An important element of such work with students is the student's educational activities with them on various topics, including civic and patriotic education. In recent years, the practice of volunteer movements has also spread, thanks to which students of pedagogical free educational institutions get the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in practice on the introduction of educational influence during the organization and leisure of various segments of the population, to develop their own organizational skills.

According to the Law on Compulsory Education of the PRC, all children, regardless of gender, nationality or race, who have PRC citizenship and have reached the age of six are required to go to school at their place of residence. The law states that the goal of the education system is to educate the younger generation in accordance with the development of the ideals of socialism, equality, peace, tolerance and tolerance (religious, national and racial), respect and freedoms of other citizens, their own traditions and the characteristics of people's lives in other countries.[Standard, 2011]. A special role in the education of these qualities is given to primary school, because it is where the basis for the formation of personality takes place.

The primary school curriculum (6 years) compulsorily includes Chinese, one

foreign language (in most cases English), mathematics, science, art and choreography (as an independent academic discipline or as part of a physical education course). At the same time, the curriculum of the PRC emphasizes the need to develop not only the knowledge and skills of students in these disciplines, but also pays attention to educational work with students, especially in the field of patriotic, moral and civic education. Therefore, every day at school begins with the national anthem, and from the fourth grade of elementary school, extracurricular activities are held once a week aimed at fostering civic consciousness, love for the homeland, respect for the socialist state system, way of life and cultural values and traditions of the national minorities of the PRC. etc.

Secondary school is divided into compulsory (3 years) and upper secondary school and also lasts six years. Children of 12-13 years enter the secondary school of the first degree. At this stage of secondary education, students continue to study Chinese and one foreign language, music and choreography, geography, natural sciences (mathematics, computer science, physics, chemistry and biology). Since then, more attention is paid to civic education and the education of the younger generation, which takes place in the studying of socio-political disciplines: basics of politics, history, ethics and morality [Ministry of education, 2014].

The following forms of work with students as to civic education are used here and after on:

- encouraging students to express their own point of view on the problem being studied;
- dividing students into groups to discuss the material being studied;
- preparation and reading of materials on the topics studied;
- discussion of ways of practical application of knowledge that students received during classes in real life;
- encouraging students to take responsibility for the implementation of social projects;
- generalization of key concepts for memorization;
- use of videos and websites [Mei, 2015].

In Chinese schools, much attention is paid not only to the provision of knowledge in the particular specialty, but also to active educational work. Moreover, the educational process in educational institutions is organised in such a way that guarantees the continuity of tasks, goals, forms and methods between all levels of



education, starting with primary one and up to Universities and PhD programs. The peculiarity of the Chinese educational system is that it is educational institutions, not parents or family, that act as fundamental institutions for the socialisation of youth. The educational process of primary school students is primarily the responsibility of the class teacher, whose responsibilities include conducting educational discussions and activities on civic education as well. [Zhang, 2016].

Children are also invited to make thematic drawings depicting their homeland, state symbols, nature of the country and more. During such educational activities, students are also provided with information about the history of their homeland and prominent people. Civic education at this stage is also facilitated by meetings with prominent representatives of the area the school is set in and the children live at [Su, 2011; Wu, 2017]. University students who are on their pedagogical or educational practice are also invited to such extracurricular activities to prepare them for future educational activities in civic education.

When entering secondary school, educational functions are entrusted to junior teachers. Junior teachers are usually graduates of pedagogical universities, who work in pairs with more experienced colleagues, acquire knowledge and skills in teaching methods of a particular discipline, as well as trying up the role of a teacher including the civic education activities. [Su, 2011]. Common forms of educational work on civic education at this stage include conversations and extracurricular activities. At the same time, new forms of educational work are added: watching and discussing films and movies (the main characters of which are true patriots of their country), discussing political news, individual and group work of students with newspapers and periodicals to form politically aware individuals, taking part in conferences, which discuss issues of civic education and citizenship. At this stage, there is a significant expansion of forms of civic education of young people, which is associated with a more mature age of students and the existing base of civic education, which took place during the primary school. [Huan, 2013; Cao, 2014]. As in the primary school, those students who conduct pedagogical, social and educational practice are actively involved in the organization and conducting these events. Moreover, if in primary school the educational activities of future teachers did not differ from all other students` ones, at this stage their educational activities for particularly future choreography and dance teachers are manifested not only in organizing the above mentioned activities, but also in staging patriotic dances, which also contribute to

civic education of children. [Jiang, 2011]. At this stage, the Organization of Young Pioneers of China also plays an important role in the educational process of civic education [Cui, 2016].

The practice of post-school and holiday camps, which in particular have a military-patriotic orientation, is widespread in modern China. After school, children take part in various interesting activities at the camp, which are mainly aimed at their civic and patriotic education. The activities are mainly related to military sports, the purpose of which is to promote teamwork, cultivate problem solving skills and at the same time improve self-esteem and self-confidence. All educational summer camps are aimed at developing discipline, courage and leadership in young people. Each student realises the importance of teamwork and entrepreneurship, and at the same time acquires valuable leadership skills that will give him/her an edge in future. [Fü, 2010; You, 2016; Hu, 2013].

The general system of formation of civic competence at all levels of the educational process is subject to the following basic principles, which all institutions of educational services must adhere to during the education of citizens.

- humanization and democratization;
- self-activity and self-regulation;
- systematicity;
- complexity and interdisciplinary integration;
- continuity and continuity;
- cultural conformity;
- interculturality. [Standard, 2011]

Further formation of true citizens takes place at the level of higher education. It should be noted that pedagogical education in China can be obtained both in pedagogical universities and institutes, as well as in higher pedagogical schools. Students of these educational institutions can be those young people who have a certificate of secondary education, graduated from the upper secondary school and passed a the common state exam. After graduating from a higher pedagogical school, where the study lasts two or three years, graduates can work as primary school teachers and teach some subjects in secondary school. [Cui, 2016; Zhen, 2016]. Pedagogical universities graduates can work in secondary and high schools according to specialization, as well as in upper secondary schools, that prepare its students to enter a university. The term of study at universities is four years. Graduates of

pedagogical universities work as subject teachers (physics, mathematics, foreign languages, biology, etc.), or receive such specializations as education management, psychological education, school education, work with children with deviant behaviour. Prerequisite for training is pedagogical and industrial practice [Cheng, 2013].

Higher pedagogical institutions of the country try to maintain the continuity of the civic educational process: the forms of organization of educational work have almost no difference with those of upper secondary school`s (educational conversations, taking part in volunteer activities, thematic conferences and seminars, watching movies, etc.). The country`s leadership believes that the high degree of student involving in educational activities allows them on the one hand actively and interestingly spend free time not only for themselves but also in many cases for other citizens, and on the other - develop skills on conducting educational and pedagogical activity.

The formation of the continuity of the educational process between schools and higher education institutions was also facilitated by adopting in 2001 the Civic Morality Program, which substantiated the importance of moral and ideological education and identified the main directions of the Chinese Communist Party. The document emphasises that young people should neglect moral principles, civic and social responsibilities to the country, rules of etiquette, which requires a strong response from both the state and educational institutions. [Standard, 2011]. It is noted that many of the values that need to be formed in young people have their origins in traditional culture. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out activities dedicated to Confucianism at any stage of education. It is this direction that should allow young people to develop such virtues as honesty, openness, justice, the ability to prevent conflict situations, the desire to help others and so on.

The Program also emphasises that collective interests, the interests of the nation dominate over personal ones in the Chinese society. The basic spiritual principles of a personality development are also proclaimed as following:

- practice is the only criterion of truth;
- spirit of bold creativity and renewal;
- moving forward despite difficulties;
- spirit of hard struggle;
- spirit of selfless service to the state

The Program also states that during the five thousand years of its existence,

the Chinese nation has created a national core, which is based on patriotism and unity of the nation, diligence and courage, and it is in this direction that educational work should be carried out at any stage, starting from primary school and up to universities [Standard, 2011].

At the same time, it should be noted that at the present stage of the country's education system development there are problems in the field of patriotic and civic education, which are of concern to the state leadership and social activists. In particular, the country's leadership is concerned that young people are heavily attracted by American and Western films, values, morality principles and so on that do not conform to China's moral and civic institutions. And it is this Westernization that educational institutions must actively oppose in their educational work. The main sources of «Westernization» in the country include:

- foreign companies that produce products in China or import goods;
- Chinese government agencies that regulate the influx of foreign culture into China;
- Chinese intelligentsia and other cultural elites involved in the processes of cultural globalization [Tan, 2013 ].

Also, at all levels of education, certain methods are used, according to which civic education is carried out among young people in China, and which are also guided in their use by the principle of continuity. They can be divided into the following groups:

- methods that shape the humanistic consciousness: discussion of humanistic problems; analysis of the components of humanism; conducting conversations and stories about humanism; discussion of options for solving social problems from the point of view of humanism; organization of observation of the development of humanistic qualities of personality; independent work with literature on humanism; business and role-playing games; issue of almanacs on humanism; explanation of the content of psychological and pedagogical management methods;

- methods that form a humane attitude: respectful treatment of teachers and parents; ability to listen to any interlocutor; positive mood; respect for others' opinions; friendly tone of communication; ability to admit one's own mistakes; creating conditions for growth; humanistic orientation of the teacher's personality; organization of reflection; creating a favorable psychological climate; adoption of Codes of Honor for teachers and students; demonstration of methods of humanistic activity; collective creative activity of teachers, students, parents; helping each other

to master humanistic skills of behavior, etc.

- methods that stimulate humane treatment of other people: sincere recognition of the merits of other people; approval of the luck of others; encouragement to perform a particular type of work, etc .;

- methods based on the personal-role approach to the organization of the educational process, which is manifested in the participation of students as subjects of the pedagogical process, in adjusting, organizing, planning their own education, performing some social roles under the guidance of a teacher, priority of activity development [Zhang, 2016]

Therefore, the country's leadership, represented by educational institutions, is working to strengthen national self-awareness and faith in Chinese culture, to show concern for cultural security, to build the country's soft power and to strengthen the influence of the Chinese culture in the world. Such a policy is based on the understanding that economic power is impossible without raising the sense of patriotism and citizenship of the Chinese society. Today, following the historical and educational traditions of their country, the Chinese perceive civic and patriotic education as the main part and task of pedagogical work in the country, aiming at the system of teacher training and their preparation for work in the field of patriotic education.

## CONCLUSIONS

In modern conditions, when changing ideologies, building a democratic society take place all over the world, one of the main goals of civic education is to educate an active and thinking person with a high level of civic consciousness, a developed sense of self-worth, focused on spiritual values, independent in thinking and responsible in decision making . The Chinese education system can be considered the first one in the world to define civic education as a method and goal of educational work in general. In any historical period of the country, education was and is aimed at making a person a patriot of China, a worthy member of the local community, part of society, a unit whose physical and moral qualities correspond to the general idea and social requirements of the Chinese state. In other words, civic education was and is the basis of educational work in China. In this country civic education is associated with the formation of high civic consciousness in students of any age, their



involvement in various social activities, the development of knowledge and skills of civic behaviour. It is under the condition of the existence of civic education in society that it is possible to unite different ethnic groups and regions in order to build and improve the country. It is for the implementation of the above tasks in the country that a system of patriotic and civic education of children and youth was created and reflected at all levels of education and in all forms of educational institutions on the basis of the continuity principle.

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**MODERN FICTION**



**POETRY**

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR VERONICA  
BAGACHANSKAYA**

doi: <https://doi.org/10.34142/astreaa.2021.2.2.08>



**BAGACHANSKAYA Veronica**

E-mail: [veronikaalijeva2501@gmail.com](mailto:veronikaalijeva2501@gmail.com)

Veronica Bagachanskaya is a poetess. Veronica began her creative path of poetry in 1989. For the first time of her thirty-three years she has been publishing own poems. They're meditative and transformative. These three poems were getting from the collection named: «A bird colored Ultramarine». They are demonstrating the beginning of her Spiritual growth, the beginning of the knowledge and realizing herself as a part of the Whole. The main thread of her poems is to tell you that there is always a way out of any difficulties in this life! You will feel how the Soul of the author reacted and lived through all the trials and hardships of life!

Her main appeal to the reader: «Don't be afraid to start all over again and search own way! I wish You all the brightest and purest in Your life and destiny!»

Tatiana Safonova  
PhD of Agricultural Sciences  
Julia Safonova

9.05.93

**Everyone can sing this song**

I'm singing and want you to hear it  
The voice of the Soul is high and low  
A part of it in everyone will respond  
We are get together and all one on the earth!  
Baby's voice, listen to it mother!  
It is so simple and clear.  
There is breathing, crying, his gesture  
This is the joy of nature.

Just like between the high mountains  
The waterfall flows carefully and quietly  
Also, our joys and troubles - not haphazard  
Everything goes conversely.  
In this endless stream  
of our daily life, all worldly worries  
don't get lost or to forget  
You are one, and God will save you.  
And don't you dare in the minute of weakness  
To let them rule above you, people  
Never forget humanity and faith  
And they will always help you.

17.10.93

**...Breath of the earth**

Oh the breath of the earth,  
Oh the play of the wind,  
I am in blossom again and  
Always warmed by your ray.  
Oh my dear Earth,  
Nature without limits!  
To sing you and so forever





Yes, I know you've been singing for thousands of centuries  
And Pushkin, Goethe and Dostoevsky  
People who were sing for you, the earth,  
But I have my own sonata too.  
This is a guardian of disasters!  
The impulse of happiness, the wave of sadness,  
I wish to talk to you,  
I really want to integrate with you.  
To comprehend these latitudes  
I need these long open spaces  
My dear Almighty you are the Mother  
In the name of God.  
Forgive our fluster,  
Forgive our slander,  
Sorry, we can't hear the moan  
Sorry, we can't hear the ring of bells.  
And on this day, and at the moment.  
Does it so matter?  
We do not want to be sensible of ourselves.  
And I will always be at your side.

7-8.07.05

**The unity of Faith**

I reborn with a new strength,  
I swear to myself,  
How long I will live  
Faith in God - is first of all.  
I will walk through the world - with faith.  
I will carry belief throughout the world.  
Like a drop in the desert is faith.  
Like a dawn to meetings - belief.  
And raise your children with the faith,  
That everything is one,  
You should honor of your parents,

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**FICTION**



**PSYCHOANALYSIS OF CHILDHOOD  
FEARS, OR BEHIND GRANDFATHER  
FREUD`S BACK**

**IN THE FRAME OF ANXIETY / AT THE  
STAGE OF PHANTASMS**

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astraea.2021.2.2.09



**KRAPIVNYI Iliia**

E-mail: [galkhom12@gmail.com](mailto:galkhom12@gmail.com)

This text may be of interest to both proponents of intellectual literature in general and sympathizers of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis in particular. However, the promise of an intellectual game is already implied by the title of the story: the terrain 'behind Dr. Freud's back' concerns those psychoanalysts who have transformed his teachings in many ways. Their traces accompany both the scriptor and the character of his session, a child at a crisis age (six and a half years old): in the aspect described by the author of philosophical (structural) psychoanalysis Jacques Lacan, those who behind Freud / after Freud, emerging in the mirror stage of child's development behind their back, turn out to be possible analogues of that universal symbolic Other, which, in relation to the Ideal Self and the Self-Ideal, brings to the stage their fantasy about the most important loss / the greatest desire to return – the agalma. As a parallel to mother's womb, it has a figurative equivalent in the story, that is an abandoned, waterless pool. The mirror never emerges in the text, but here is its main effect, the objectification of what could not be revealed in any other way, what a

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Being could never know about himself, as well as it's impossible to see his own

eyes without a mirror, a view from the side, within limited limits, for a short time, before the eyes of the stormy world, under the circumstances of control deprivation / prohibition by adults, in anxious anticipation of the elimination of domesticated / humanized feelings by the breakthrough of the avalanche of horror. That works as the Freudian Unheimlich. In the story, this hidden position behind Dr. Freud allows the interpretation of various psychoanalytic stereotypes (Oedipus complex, antithetics / war of Έρωσ and Θάνατος, castration complex as a traumatic experience of helplessness etc.) in a new, more complex way. The story belongs to the category of those texts that provoke the anxiety of micro-interpretation, attracting it and at the same time questioning its effectiveness: the territory of the story is a place reminding the ruins of the pool / drying the moisture of the unconscious under the fire of consciousness. A possible basis and impetus for micro-interpretation could be given by J. Lacan, whose 10th book of seminars, held at the turn of 1962/1963, is available to everyone in Alexandr Tchernoglazov's Russian translation: "L'ANGOISSE" / «ТРИ-БОГА» / "Anxiety"\* (2010).

Halyna Khomenko  
PhD (Philology), Associate Professor, L. Ushkalov Department  
of Ukrainian Literature and Journalism,  
H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University (Ukraine)

### **Psychoanalysis of childhood fears, or behind grandfather Freud's back**

#### Scene # 1

A resort town with tourists, with their number is four times the population of it. We learn about it from the newspapers, carried by the wind along the deserted street. A storm warning. You are about six years old. She's about the same age. You are sitting in an empty pool near an abandoned boarding house, the name of which has been erased from your memory by the time. The pool walls are high and slippery. The ladder which helped you go down is lying next to you, yellow with rust. You are sitting with your elbows on the slippery cold wall and your friend's head rests on your lap. She's crying, and you're trying to calm her down. You say that soon someone will come and find you. You take a deep breath. You run your hand through her long hair. You're trying not to look at her right leg, the skin on which seems stretched and



red bump. You're trying not to look there, but you fail. You notice a bump, a little

red bump on her leg. This is where the fragile child's bone broke. Creepy. You feel sorry for her, but you find yourself being glad to stay with her in this pool. You're glad to touch her hair. And keep her head on your lap. But you keep repeating that soon someone will find and save you. Get you out of here. You're whispering this, and understand at the same time that you want to extend this day, even at the cost of girl's pain. You don't want to be found and you admit it to yourself. But not to her. And she's waiting. You're giving her hope. It's drizzling, all right.

The pool in which you're sitting is designed for both children and adults, or rather, for adults with children. This is due to its middle-sized construction. The pool is an artificial reservoir and you know about it even in your six-something. You are trying to keep your childish mind from thinking that the feelings you have for your captive are also artificial. Yes, she is your captive, only with the difference that she does not know that she is in captivity. The storm warning has locked tourists in hotels, hostels, local homes and no one will come to your aid. You understand this, but after repeating the phrase «They will come, they will find and take us out of here» several times, you forget about it and you yourself begin to believe in your lies. Nobody will come. Rescuers are searching along the coastline. Nobody will come. Adults are drinking in their rooms so that an extra day of their well-deserved vacation wouldn't associate with boredom and lack of memories. They are engaged in creating memories of a fabulous vacation by the sea and they have forgotten about you. Nobody's coming. But you've already stopped believing in it. And when you believe, you are afraid and lie again.

### Scene # 2

Have you made up your mind to build a pool in your backyard? Our company will help you choose a pool and make the best choice. Building a swimming pool today is a reality! Make your dream come true right now by calling +38 (098) 62-65-4 \*\*

### Scene # 3

You are still stroking her hair. And she is crying. Your meeting began with her tears. But she's crying over and over again. She takes breaks. Stops. Approaches. And then again she's overwhelmed with self-pity, and tears start dripping onto your short shorts. The fabric darkens because of tears. It forms small circles. But they're growing larger and larger with each of her thoughts about the hopelessness of the situation and with your every breath of pleasure. Yes, you're happy – for the first time under



pressure. She is unhappy for the first time for the same reason. This is how your

childhood will be remembered. And also that phrase: everything will be all right.

By the way, as for the phrase. By uttering these words of comfort, you're imitating your father. When you were a little younger, he told you that everything would be fine, that everything would work out every time you'd been crying. And you believed him. And you stopped crying. But it doesn't work now. She doesn't stop. And you don't know what to do next. You just don't know other words. Once you were running, very fast. It seems like you were running from an angry dog. And you fell. You fell on the asphalt. You bruised the skin on your knees and palms. There was blood flowing. But for the first time you felt you could endure pain. You didn't like it, of course, but you could put up with it. And you didn't cry for the first time. You didn't cry and your father didn't tell you anything. So now you don't know what to say to her next. Her leg is very swollen. It scares you. But you don't tell her anything. Both of you are too short to climb out of the pool without the ladder that literally fell apart as you descended. First, She fell, and the ladder fell on Her. A rusty shard of stairs of a non-operating pool, located by an abandoned boarding house, and you still do not remember its name.

#### Scene # 4

The rain. Now it leaves his marks on your shorts. The drain is clogged with what looks like a dead cat, but you're scared to walk up and check. Moreover, you do not want to leave her for a single moment. The first puddle forms in the far corner.

"I'm afraid of dying," She declares. For the first time in her short life, She felt the presence of Death. - I am very afraid of dying.

"I'm not," you say. And you are telling the truth. While She first thought about Death, you first thought about Love. You really think that you are in love with Her, but you are not sure yet, because you have often heard from adults that Love is not as simple as people think about it. And it turns out that Death is known to you only by one of its facets - Love.

#### Scene # 5

It's a theatre stage. There is a projector on it. A video is projected onto a white canvas - your childhood, distorted exactly as much as your memory could distort it. You can't see your face or torso, only two clumsy baby hands, legs in beige sandals (your mother liked this color) and a small shadow. You found a chick. It was lying under a tree. You never liked birds. Couldn't know whether you like them or not. But



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was never interested in them. And you liked this chick. It attracted you not by

its gray feathers, not for the sharpness of its beak, but by its helplessness. You could protect it from the outside world. You could feel your importance. Perform a selfless act of kindness. And your hands lifted a fluffy shaking body from the ground. They pressed it to your chest. To the chest where a kind child's heart was beating. You ran home. You imagined how your mother would be delighted with this creature. How you'd feed it pizza and chips together. But the chicks don't eat pizza or chips, your mother told you. Chicks have no place in an apartment. Take it back. Immediately! You tried to argue. Nobody listened to you. Neither your mother, nor your father. No one. You were not allowed to do a good deed. You were denied your act of mercy. You had no choice but to take the dark side, or so you thought. There were no more colors in your world except for black and white. Either yes or no. All or nothing. You will be with me or no one else. And you killed the chick. You buried it under the tree where you'd found it. Your hands were cold. It was getting dark. You took a large stone. So big it was hard to hold. And you dealt with it in three fatal blows. In fact, the chick died from the first. You will forever remember how his wings, not fully formed yet, were shaking. No, mom, please let me leave it, you begged. You see, it's just fluff on its head, it's not from disease, just fluff. But she glanced upon you with her stern look, which filled you with fear. And you killed the chick. Now it's always yours. But you didn't save it. Now it belongs only to you forever.

### Scene # 6

What are 6-year-olds talking about? At this age, they actively imitate the adult world in their role-playing games. You will be my husband and I will be your wife. I will be your boss, and you will work for me. Yellow fallen leaves will be our money. Tear off a piece - this is your change. What about the salary? Buy a plantain from me, sooner or later you will fall and cry! But you don't cry from the bruises anymore. You endure. Your parents tolerate your naive questions. Sometimes it amuses them. Sometimes it's a bit irritating. But they put up with you. You endure pain. They hurt each other in a different way. All adults for some reason hurt each other. This is their game. Such a game. With abstract rules. Sometimes they play and replay. They forget that this is a game. They don't play at all. But they endure. Adults often have to endure. They expect too much from the world. Therefore, they are often disappointed. Come up with alcohol. Come up with vacations. Get drunk. You never liked it when your parents got drunk. But you put up with them. And the world tolerates them,

Life is tolerable. There is another word - bearable. But usually 6-year-olds don't

know this word. Let's build sand castles! Shall we? But there is no sand in the deep pools. Artificial reservoir. Artificial senses in an artificially created situation. A storm warning. You have the ability to save me. Just save me. But you want to wait a bit. A little. Just a little bit. Life is bearable. And you say that you can play doctor and patient. You have no idea how to imitate the hospital, when one of the toys turns out to be real blood, slowly flowing over the tiles, flowing into a small puddle at the feet of your captive. Or a patient. You see the rain aiming at this red spot of your general helplessness. Bloody tunnels form at the joints of the tiles. Red threads. Smooth red threads. 90-degree turn. She says she doesn't mind you trying. Says you are courageous enough to be a doctor. Then she doubts. Asks if a doctor should be courageous. And you know the answer. It comes off your bright red lips. Your voice sounds: «The doctor should be able to endure, even if he does not hurt.» Passable. You have defended your right to be her attending physician. This cannot continue. She lifts her head from your lap and you get up. You feel a slight tingling sensation in your feet. Numbness. Everything will be alright. The pool of blood scares you. Everything will be alright. You are standing. You think this is probably what the Red Sea looks like. But your resort is located by the Black Sea. Although it is not black at all. Adult games are comprehensible only for adults. Overcoming disgust, you touch her leg, right by this red bump. She groans. She's in pain. You immediately move your hand aside. You put it behind the head. You are already touching your hair. You don't know what to do next. She doesn't know either. The walls of the pool are treacherously silent. You first get acquainted with Love and watch how helpless it is. You don't even know if you want to love. To play Love - yes. But love? You want it to be you who saved her. Who pulled her out of this pool. To whom she would be grateful all her Life. Someday you will grow up and you will live in a big house. By that day, everything will definitely be fine for a long time. Words have an expiration date. You will definitely build a pool in your backyard as a reminder. For her. You are such a dreamer. But that is why in the back pocket of your children's shorts there is an ad with the text: « Have you made up your mind to build a pool in the backyard of your house? Our company will help you choose a pool and make the best choice ...»

Scene # 7

Doctor, please do your best, your mother cries. Her persistence comes from cruelty, and her cruelty comes from helplessness. Your throat hurt. Your throat was



...The doctor said the tonsils should be pulled out. You were scared. Your

childish hands were shaking. As much as the unformed wings of the chick you'd killed. The father said: «Everything will be fine.» You have already learned to endure pain. You didn't need those words anymore. And for some reason he repeated them. Then you thought something was wrong with your father. Why does he always say the same thing? Before the surgery, your parents promised that they would take you to the sea when you recovered. And you loved that promise. You agreed. You imagined yourself going into the salty sea water and you wanted to get to the surgery faster so that you could begin to recover as soon as possible. The operation was not long to come. It was painful. And you could endure this pain. But it was the most severe pain you had ever endured in your 6 years. You cried. But you didn't want anyone other than the doctor to see those tears. You didn't want to hear your father's voice and see your mother's eyes. You felt like a chick. You thought it had been in pain. But you saved it. Now it's your turn to receive a portion of the forced salvation. This is just a game. You almost felt like an adult.

### Scene # 8

Her body, damp from the rain, was sweating. You made a second attempt to touch her broken leg. She screamed. You were at a loss. Something broke in you. You didn't know what to do. The third attempt also ended with a scream. With a crash. And you hit her. Slapped her face. The skin on her cheek turned red. You watched the scarlet color of her cheeks change shades. Getting brighter. More noticeable. More reproachful. You took a step back. You were ashamed. You took off your shirt. Without saying a word, you moved a piece of rusty staircase. It was heavy. You tied her leg to it. You apologized. She pretended not to hear. But you knew she had heard it. You knew that.

### Scene # 9

In this scene from your childhood, the wind noticeably increased. Trees, the tops of which were visible from the bottom of the slippery pit, swayed from side to side. The trees creaked. I'm scared, She said. You were scared, too. You repeated that everything would be fine, and you promised yourself not to repeat these words again. You didn't want to be like your father in anything. He pushed you away. You didn't trust him. He always spoke to you in templates. You didn't know the word «template» yet, but you already realized how unpleasant it was. Your mother cried at night. He spoke with templates with her, too. You still had to grow up and choose frames for

you're in, put them together in a cozy house and never go beyond its limits. You were

free now. But as soon as Marya Nikolaevna dictated the definition of freedom at the Russian language class, you'd understand that you had lost it. Yet now you have it. The cold pool walls give you a new memory. Impression. You will protect it. And cherish. First, you will become its master. Then – its slave. Then you will try to take it out on someone. You will pretend that nothing like this has ever happened at all. You will try not to notice deep in yourself the masochist who held this helpless little girl captive. You will fail. And you will know what vice is. You will fall even deeper. This will be the bottom of your imaginary pool. Why are you keeping her here? Because you think you love her? You can jump high enough to grab the edge. You could pull yourself up and climb up. You could find rescuers. You know that all the lifeguards are searching along the coastline. Now. But you don't. Jumping, you do not give all the best. You pretend the floor is too slippery and the edge is too far away. At the moment of the jump, your arms are bent. But She does not notice it. You are the only one who happened to be with her at this moment. And she trusts you. You are her savior. An angel. She thinks she couldn't have held out here long enough without you. She needs your presence. She thinks that if you weren't here, she would go crazy. Drowned in my own tears. The wind is getting stronger. It's getting dark.

Scene # 10

It's getting dark. But it is not yet dark enough for parents to come to their senses, tear themselves away from plastic cups with alcohol, from the fun and noise of a good mood, and remember their children. It is not yet dark enough to remember responsibilities. Not dark enough to try on a stressful outfit. It's not dark enough yet to sober up and go to the rescue. Even if this help ruins your son's dream of a large private home with a backyard pool.

Scene # 11

When you asked your mother to describe 5 happiest moments of her childhood, she said she couldn't do it. It surprised you. Childhood was in your hands, you felt happy, but you did not want to believe that it would pass and that one day you would not be able to remember it. Like your mother. But time passed slowly. Time seemed to be something viscous and endless. One event created a day, and that day dragged on for weeks. Empty cells were filled with new events. You felt like a character of a very long film. You wanted to tape your life. You told your parents about it. And they gave you a video camera. And you filmed. You filmed how you spend your day. Your





parent loved watching your films. It gave them peace of mind. You thought you had

talent. You filmed your friends. They were shy of the camera. You weren't, but you were the director. You loved the rain. You found the rain beautiful. You liked getting wet under it. But it upset you that the rain looked no better than the TV interference on the recording. This is how you learned to be disappointed. And now you knew that your future home, the house that you are building in your imagination, in reality may turn out to be completely different. But you were ready to buy a home with a very small pool. You were ready.

### Scene# 12

When an impromptu splint was applied to the leg. When the resentment for the slap faded away. When dreams of a fabulous future became clear, like reality. The rain intensified and made Her shiver with cold. You tied her leg to the ladder. On the one hand, it was first aid. The role of the doctor had been successfully fulfilled. On the other hand, these were shackles and a guarantee of her non-escape. Anchor. You liked being in control of the situation. Your father and mother fought so often. You never understood why they did it. Your mother yelled at your father for turning on the light in the corridor when he goes to the toilet. He said he did it automatically. Reflex, he explained. And she chided him with the electricity bill. You thought that you would not quarrel with Her. You didn't give a damn about electricity and your bills. You wanted to love. Love Her. Only Her and no one else. Perhaps your mother. But definitely not your father. Everything will be fine, dad. Everything will be fine.

### Scene # 13

Your bedroom will be on the second floor, you dreamed. And you'd hang blinds on the windows. White ones. And there will be cacti everywhere. Lots of thorny cacti. Of all the houseplants you loved only them. But what did She love? You have never asked this question. You had the answer. She loved everything that you love. This usually happens in films. If She didn't love cacti, you would not have a desire to keep her in this pool. But you kept Her. «When are they coming for us?» She asked in a childish voice. You took it as an insult, but still squeezed out a smile and replied: «Soon. Of course, they will come for us soon.»

### Scene # 14

This «for us» meant that they would come for Her. They will come to tear you apart. It scared you. The opposite frightened her. You have not expressed your desires. There was a wall of misunderstanding between you. This is how it should

Her thought, this is how it should be. Different motives for doing the same thing.

And in your case that was waiting. You have been waiting for different events. Your dreams. Her ordinary salvation. But for some reason it seemed to you that the house with the pool would happen much earlier than the lifeguards who accidentally would come here from the beach or adults. No one will save us, you thought, because there is nothing to save us from. Meanwhile, more and more puddles were forming in the pool.

Scene # 15

Apart from the bedroom, your study will be located on the second floor. Your father had one. You thought that every man should have a similar place where he can read newspapers with an intelligent look. You could imagine your future study in the smallest detail. You've always had a good imagination. When you go to school you will write wonderful compositions. You will be praised by the teachers. You will light up a new dream - to become a journalist, but that will come later. Now your beige sandals are splashing in the puddles in the pool. You cannot find a place for yourself. What color will the cactus pots be? You are puzzled. You go in circles. It annoys her. She asks you to stop. But you don't hear Her. Your dreams speak louder. Brown ceramic pots add a touch of coziness to your home. And the white plastic ones are strict. Stop walking in circles, She screams. You stop. You're surprised.

Scene # 16

Never shout at me, you say rudely. Your tone scares Her. She feels even more unprotected than a minute ago, although even then it already seemed to her that She was near the line. Why do you think you can yell at me?! You're not my mother! He needed to be in charge. Even as a child, his voice had a salty taste of tyranny. Little Hitler in wet shorts stuck at the bottom of the pool. Nobody can yell at me! (Especially if that someone is my property). You played husband and wife. She didn't notice when this game started. You didn't give a warning when you started. Didn't announce the title. Didn't say start. Forgot. You were scared. According to the rules, she must obey you. This is what happens in ordinary families. You are the doctor's wife. You are a journalist's wife. You are Hitler's wife. Therefore, be so kind as to close your little mouth!

Scene # 17

The rain has intensified. Has turned into a downpour. Where was your camcorder that day? You wanted to capture these events. What a pity that it is impossible to film



your beams, you thought, and it upsets you. Project your fantasies onto the white

surface of the screen, onto the mirror. Alas. Over the past half an hour, all the puddles at the bottom of the pool have merged into a big one. This is how oceans form, you thought. This creates an ocean of pain, she thought. The pain is white. This means that this ocean should also be called white. The White Sea. The water is clear. The tears are transparent. Little things rule the world. Both of you have made a silent journey from a teardrop to the ocean and back. How long does it take for the pool to fill up with rainwater and put an end to it? An hour? Two? The whole night? How long could you play? Continue your wicked game. Parents would not approve of this. If they knew what you were doing right now, they would definitely put you in a corner. But they won't know, you think. You're a hero. Without you, a certain someone might have gone mad. You are her only connection to the rational world. This is how it looks from the outside. You play several games at the same time.

Scene # 18

She asked to help her up. To sit down so that she would be leaning against the wall. She couldn't stand. She couldn't lie, either. You helped her. It was an excuse to touch her body. And you did it with pleasure. The water was almost covering her legs. Ten centimeters, you thought, maybe a little more. These must be ceramic pots, you have made your choice. Comfort is more important. And blinds can be replaced with curtains. Beige. Your mother loves this color and it was not for nothing that she made you buy these sandals. So, all the girls like beige. All the girls you like.

You watched her shiver. You listened to her teeth chattering. The skin of her hands was covered with small dots. You hardly distinguished them in the darkness, but you were still able to see a bit. She didn't look at you and you asked her why. She did not understand what you were asking about. She couldn't read your mind and that surprised you. Your mother always knew what you were thinking. Knew what you wanted. She had always indulged your desires. But she didn't. It upset you. But you thought that time would fix it. Another template from your father. You graciously talked to him when the mother was somewhere in the vicinity and fell silent when she was away. You wanted to please your mother. You knew she was pleased to see you get along well with your father. But you didn't care what your father thought. You didn't believe he could make up his ideas in any other way. Everything will be fine. Time cures. Everything will be alright. Time will pass and everything will fall into place. Sorry, dad. He was that chick of yours. You wanted to be kind to him, but your mother

not let that happen. You wanted to be nice to your father, but if your mother no

longer needed it, you'd gladly take him to the same tree and finish him off. You'd even be happier without a father. You could take his place in the double bed. You liked sleeping with your mother. If your father were suddenly gone, you wouldn't need to hold this pretty hostage here at all. You would play completely different games. Since mother will never die. She knows everything, and even the recipe of the eternal youth. She's very beautiful. Why did she choose your father? Where did she get it? Why does she need him? You could replace him, you thought, still walking in circles. The water made it more and more difficult to walk. Every step you took formed a wave. You were these waves. They crashed against the pliant body of the captive. But she never asked you to stop again. She was afraid to speak.

Scene # 19

The evening was noisy. You were silent, but nature spoke for you. The rain with all its body was falling on the smooth surface of the clear water, it had formed itself. The drops were falling quietly, but fought off the invisibility of the liquid surface with the noise of an indignant housewife who had lost Love in the dust, the liquidation of which she herself had devoted her entire period of maturity. Drop. Time is running. Drop. Running away like water. Drop. There is nothing left but to endure. Drop. No one will come to an aging abandoned housewife or to you.

Why aren't our parents looking for us, she found her voice. Because nobody believes in storm warnings, you thought. But you said something else: "Don't worry, they are looking! Just let them save us. «She kept silence for a moment, deeply lost in thought. This "let" was taken out of context with a tinge of ambiguity. Let me be with you for a little longer. Let me save myself this way. Let my dreams stay alive. Let me extend this game.

Water. She worried both her and you. The water was coming. The water lasted for hours. The water was time. Look what this hole is clogged with, she asked. You didn't realize right away that she was referring to the drain hole. And when you did, you were not happy with her request. You didn't want to leave her. You were not afraid of her escape, though. The ship was stopped with an anchor. You were afraid of something else and could not understand what of exactly. But still you made up your mind. You managed a short trip of ten baby steps to the opposite side of the pool. It seemed to you that the drain hole was clogged with the corpse of a cat. Turned out it really was. The corpse of a cat. Fucking cats. A thin one. Death had mutilated its body.



Not cute and fluffy anymore. Empty eye sockets. Looks like your father when he's

drunk. That's how you saw him. That's what he looked like in your mind. As a skinny corpse of a cat. As a slain chick. Death and its reverse side which is Love. Father and his reverse side which is mother. The two make up a whole. The whole wants to change. Otherwise to destroy. Mutilate. So what is there, she asks you. You've been standing there for about a minute. You didn't do anything. Just watching. It's a dead cat, you say. And you are telling the truth. You finally tell her the truth. She begins to cry with renewed vigor. A cat? She asks this again. You don't answer, just mentally pronounce the answer – ever so slowly: «Ca-a-a-a-at.»

Scene # 20

Try to pull it out of there, she asks. That's rude. It Rude it is to ask someone to touch the corpse of a cat. It is impudent to ask someone to touch the body of Death. If Life is something common and bearable than Death is something purely individual. It's a shame to ask for this, even if you're a six-year-old girl. I will not do it, you say. But I will drown in here in this water, she says. Don't you want to save me? With this phrase, she aims straight to your heart. To save in order to be saved is what you want. Or not. It's too hard. You are small. You are entangled in your desires. But you decided to give it a try. You needed at least to pretend to make an effort. To improve the image of the savior with another fake attempt to change the course of events. The cat's thin belly stretched out like a hairy liana and fell down into the drain hole. From one side its head is shaking, from the waves that you'd created with your steps. On the other side there's its shabby tail, like a giant worm, unhealthily white, with a tinge of blue and of course death. What is better to grab, you're pondering, the head or the tail. The choice is not easy. Usually, when you were faced with a choice, you wondered what your mother would do in a similar situation. And it worked. Always. But not now. You could not imagine what your mother would choose in this situation: the head or the tail. Your path to Love goes through Death. Don't be sad, just a short touch. So, what's up? She asks, in a hurry. The water and the freshness of the evening air in stormy weather makes her shiver from the cold. But you're standing there, not able to make up your mind and act. What if it works out, you think. What if you grab that damned cat and pull it out. The drain hole will be used as intended. Sooner or later, someone from the world of adults will find you and your dream will come to an end, leaving you alone, face-to-face with the corpse of a tattered cat in your hands. No, it won't work, you think. Believing in yourself is for weaklings, your pitiful ego asserts itself. And you're bending over. She sees it. You choose the tail. You can already feel



Put your hands. Grab. Pull. Hold some strength for rescue. Look like a hero. Be the

villain. No, be yourself. Be a little boy who fell in love for the first time. A boy who fights for his Love with Death. No, with his own father. No, with water and with time. Sorry, it didn't work out, you say, leaving your attempt to pull out the corpse of a street animal, a wanderer. And you wonder why you said sorry. She asks to try again. And you try. But you're trying like an adult. Like an adult because you're actually acting. Overacting. And you fall. The floor is too slippery. Your left beige sandal is torn apart. Your mother loves these sandals. Your mother loved these sandals. Especially their beige colour. And you blame your captive for this unfortunate situation. She doesn't even say sorry. One short word. Sorry. She doesn't say it. It makes you angrier and angrier with each and every passing second. This way you will find out why some husbands beat their wives.

Scene # 21

We will die, she says. It's easy to hear the overtones of an irreparable tragedy in her voice. We are going to die, I can feel it. You're looking at her carefully. With a bit of caution. You know you have to comfort her. Again. But you don't. You're sick and tired of her constant crying. Why do girls cry so often? You have already learned to endure pain. It surprises you that she hasn't learned it yet. You are the same age. You could be at the same school next year. In the same class. Sitting at the same desk. And never part. But water will come. You know, the water will come and wash everything away. You've already played doctor and patient. You are still playing husband and wife. But it seems to you some playful moment is missing, the precious moment for her to be able to escape from the inevitable. Let's play house, you suggest. It's like we are husband and wife and we are building a house for us. You're embarrassed. You've voiced your dream for the first time. You and her are husband and wife, and – what is the most important – the house. You are building your own home. OK, let's, she agrees, and you're happy about that. She starts. She says it should be a two-story house. You're happy about that. You hear the word «two-story». This is how you imagine it yourself. She then says that your bedroom should be on the second floor. Cacti, you add. Let cacti grow on all windowsills. But she says she likes ficus plants. Cacti are prickly, she explains. It makes you sad. You suggest that the ficus plants should grow in ceramic pots. You say it will create comfort. She agrees with you, but says that she likes plastic white ones better. You clarify with displeasure that yes, it will give the house austerity. You look away from your imaginary house and onto



your backyard lawn. You ask what about the pool. She is laughing. For the first time

today, she's laughing and says that after this incident with her leg she will never get into the pool again. But this is the place where our Love began! You suddenly lose your temper. Your scream makes her scared again. She says it might not be a good idea to play house. And the house is crumbling. You can clearly hear how someone drives a huge eraser over your dreams. You're giving up. You're sitting down into a puddle. This pool is the biggest puddle you've ever sat in.

Scene # 22

You will kill your father someday. At least this idea has visited you more than once. What if you stop trying to find a replacement for the mother? What if you just stay with her? Love her the way children can. Love her the way adults are able to. Live with her in a house with a swimming pool. In a house with a pool and without a father. Without bringing any chicks into the house. From now on and forever. Becoming moderately obedient. Pleasing her with high grades. Asking to pat your back while watching a movie. Buying her favorite brand of cigarettes. Dancing with her to her favorite music. Going to the cafe. Reading books. Together. One day, she will teach you how to smoke. How to take a vacation and get drunk in your room. You will never even start a conversation about a child. Your mother doesn't need a husband or a child. She already has you. You are her whole world. Five minutes before the start and five minutes until the end. Some games that have turned into reality, which have incorporated into reality, are destined to stay the reality for good. You throw invisible dice on the invisible table. Heads or tails. Kill your father or love your father? So easy. Ultimately easy. If your father could read your mind, he would have died of a heart attack. The ideal weapon against a person you love is to expose the wires. Allow a short circuit to happen. Walls. Concrete. Wires. Water. No, we will definitely die here, she says again. No home, no you either, you think. Silence. The rain. Water fills the vessel. You don't say anything. You wanna see your mum.

Scene # 23

You wanna see your mum. Your warm home mummy. Your mummy who smells like milk. Whose hands are tender. And the hair is smooth. Mummy, who will hide and protect. Mummy who's built a nest out of her life. For you. The only child in the family. You are spoiled. Too much warmth and care for a single person. This is how good bears evil. Hitler in baby shorts. You will be my revelation. If the game does not become life, then the game will have to die. The water tickles your knees. You want

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to get out of the pool, but you don't know how. You want to press the stop button and exit the

game. The game in which you feel like an actor on the stage. It's time to improvise. You want to approach the cold pool wall. Grab the edge. Pull up. And just walk away. Exit the game. Save your progress. But you don't do it. Otherwise, the image of the hero will turn into a liar. Your mother will disapprove. She will stop loving you. Love is the key word. Feelings are encoded in your every move. The father will be delighted. You hate your father. And she ... come what may.

Scene # 24

Trees bend in the wind. You can hear them crunch. Trees are malleable. There are a lot of them. They are faceless. Their green leaves will soon turn yellow. They will fall. It's a fact. And you can't do anything about it. Your mother is sleeping drunk, embracing your drunken father. They're lying in a hotel room not thinking about you. At least that's how you're imagining them at this moment. You're unable to know what they're thinking about you right now. And this is also a fact. And the broken leg of your captive is also a fact. As well as the high walls of the pool. As well as your hatred for your father. And your love for your mother – for that matter. As well as the attempt to replace the mother with a captive. As well as the water that's slowly creeping up to the girl's breast, which has yet to grow and find peace in the lacy serenity of the first bra.

Scene # 25

Now you reckon you're in the need of help. You're disappointed. Your fairy-tail house is to collapse any moment now. And you are waiting for them to come and rescue you. Someone, anyone from the world of adults. It would be nice if it were mummy. But for some reason she doesn't come. And neither do they. Now you feel like a captive. Your foot is not attached to the anchor. Your anchor is your lie about not being able to get out of here. You could try again and you would succeed. But it feels like something completely implausible. Two anchors - two ships. And a storm warning in the area of a swimming pool.

Scene # 26

I've got you through, she started unexpectedly. I know you can get out of the pool. These words have shocked you. You just don't want to leave me here alone, do you? No, it's not true, you deny. I know you are also afraid of Death, although you do not speak about it. Not true! You are, I know. No, I am not afraid. You're lying! Why would I? I can hear the fear in your voice. Not true! Not true! Not true! I just



wait to make sure, she said. They both grew older that night. Not one day older,

but several buckets of rain.

Scene # 27

Talk to me, she asked after about half an hour. This pool has completely deprived you of your time orientation. You didn't answer 'cause she is no longer your mother.

Scene # 28

The water's reached the level of her shoulders. You kindly untied her leg from the ladder. Your T-shirt was stained with yellow - with rust and watered blood. She stood up, leaning on your arm. The courtesies ended there. You realized that you'd begun to hate her. Her touch was unpleasant. Being in the same water felt disgusting. It resembled two straws in a cocktail with arsenic. She couldn't stand on her own without holding on to you. You didn't want to hold her. You didn't love her. Love is not that easy. The adults were right. I can't swim, she said. And you let her go.

Scene # 29

She fell into the water. It's the inevitability of a cigarette butt thrown from the window of a block of flats. It's a pity for the flower in the trash bin. To the puppy in the well. To a chick that has fallen out of the nest. She tried to grab onto the life. She was looking for it in the water, along the slippery walls. In you. But you pulled away – further and further. Cheers to you, oh Lady Death. The other side of Love opened its arms. Help me, she screamed in a frantic voice. Six-year-old girls don't scream like that. Six-year-olds don't act like that in other people's dreams. They do not demolish two-story houses. They don't overshadow someone's mothers. You see, it had to happen. It's unavoidable. You were born to die. So do it here and now. You haven't learned to swim for this very reason. This day was destined for us. We must admit and accept it. Let it settle in our hearts. Let this cold rainwater seep into your lungs. Fill them up. Tear them apart with its aloofness. The water doesn't care. Don't spit it out - drink it! Absorb like cacti that haven't grown on those not our windowsills. Absorb all the moisture that you did not give them. You are to blame for their non-existence. You are to blame for my mother. You don't even know what you have done just turning out here. Just being present in this swimming pool. Why are you here? To die. So absorb the water to become it. Possess Death to taste my Love for you. This pool has become a vessel for the two of us. Don't stop there! Now it's your turn to become a vessel. Come loose! Do it at the cellular level. Step over the edge we couldn't reach. Step over the edge!

Scene # 30

All boys should go in for sports, your parents' reasoning had been somewhere along those lines when they'd signed you up to the school swimming club. And you didn't mind. You didn't care. Here. Now. You had been swimming around a child's corpse for an hour. Around the corpse of your first big unfulfilled dream. What have you done?! You didn't realize it yet. You were just swimming around her immobilized body knowing for sure that if you now got out of this pool and went straight to the hotel room, where your parents were waiting, no one would ever convict you of a lie. You will learn about the death of your captive from tomorrow's newspapers. «The storm took away one child's life,» you'll read the headline. Perhaps more than one. You won't need to explain anything to your parents. Your mummy will not know anything, which means she won't be angry. You will ask her to stroke your back. In the bus. On your way home. And she will be sitting next to you. And she will stroke you. Pat your back. Never knowing about your cheating. You will feel like your father. The father you hate. This is how you learn about self-loathing. And a good bus will take you straight to a cozy family nest.

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## POETRY

### ABOUT TATYANA VARENKO'S POETRY

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### VARENKO Tatyana

E-mail: [t.k.varenko@gmail.com](mailto:t.k.varenko@gmail.com)

Tatyana Varenko's poetry is enchanting and inspiring. It reads like a song while gently touching upon what is important in life. Thus, for instance, her *Awesome World* is a reminder that the world around us is a wonderful place to live in and to enjoy every bit of it. In our busy bustling problem filled life, it is a call to remember that happiness can be found even in simple pleasures and tiny things. All it takes is merely looking around and treating everything this world has to offer with the same fascination and awe a child would.

Anna Rohozha  
Postgraduate Student,  
H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National  
Pedagogical University (Ukraine)

### About the Author

On quite a lovely summer morn,  
Yes, once upon a time  
Tatyana Varenko was born  
To spread the word sublime.

### Awesome World

The world is awesome if you dare  
To let your eyes be filled with awe,  
To take the time to simply stare  
Around you and see much more.

Just open up your heart to feeling  
The magic airborne and free,  
Embrace the prospect of fulfilling  
Your destiny the way you see.

Just let yourself, if for a moment,  
Awake the child inside of you  
That for a long time has been dormant,  
Suppressed by chores and deadlines due.

Indulge yourself by simply living  
At least a day the way you please,  
It's liberating and relieving  
To act at whim or of caprice.

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**Contact information:**

H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National  
Pedagogical University  
Alchevskykh Str, 29, Kharkiv 61002, Ukraine

serka7@ukr.net  
astraea.journal@gmail.com

**Editor-in-chief**

Boychuk Yuriy

**Deputy Editors:**

Kryvoruchko Svitlana  
Kostikova Ilona

**Technical Editors:**

Kornienko Larissa  
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Chaus Dmitry  
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