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DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UKRAINIAN MASHUP PROSE VS. AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN TRADITION

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The article is devoted to studying the popular cultural phenomenon of the XXI century – mashup (the distinctive characteristics: synthesis of a well-known text/historical context and elements of the mass culture, comical modus, simulacrization, absurdity, orientation toward the annihilation of canons). Attention is focused on determining the national peculiarities of the modern Ukrainian mashup prose by making a comparison with the achievements of the world literature in this field of art. The analysis of the available Ukrainian research works on the issue makes it possible to justify the topicality of the problem, whereas the implementation of comparative methodology allows specifying the distinctive features of the novels "Iz s′omoho dna" by Y. Bakalets, Y. Yarish and "Nechuy. Nemov. Nebach" by P. Yatsenko in comparison with the world tradition: a reference to emblematic events and figures of the national history, depiction of the struggle for national values, tragic and ideologically didactic nature, intelligence, the tendency for "humanizing monsters", attention to female characters, and peculiar simulacrization. The literary value and originality of the Ukrainian mashup have been proved. The Ukrainian authors' novels are, on the one hand, similar to the samples of the American and European mashup created according to the scheme "historical figure + monsters", but on the other hand, they reveal their own distinctive characteristics: they depict well-known events and figures of the Ukrainian history and culture emphasizing the importance of fighting for national values; they have a tragic and ideologically didactic nature along with complex intertext; they picture excessively anthropomorphic infernals; they give a special role to female characters and motives of substitution/pretense/irrecognition in the style of postmodern simulacrization. The Ukrainian-language mashup prose convincingly confirms there is a tendency towards a peculiar transformation which traditions of the foreign culture undergo following the demands of the Ukrainian society in the XXI century.

СПЕЦИФІКА УКРАЇНОМОВНОЇ МЕШАП-ПРОЗИ (НА ТЛІ АМЕРИКАНО-ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОЇ ТРАДИЦІЇ)

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Статтю присвячена вивченню популярного культурного феномену XXI ст. – мешапу (провідні риси: синтез відомого тексту/історичного контексту з елементами масової культури, комічний модус, симулякризація, абсурд, настанова на руйнування канонів). Увага зосереджена на визначенні національних особливостей сучасної україномовної мешап-прози шляхом співставлення з досягненнями європейської та американської літератури. Аналіз стану вивчення цього питання у вітчизняній науці дає змогу аргументувати актуальність проблеми, а використання порівняльної методології – чітко визначити специфічні риси романів «Із сьомого дна» Я. Бакалець, Я. Яріша та «Нечуй. Немов. Небач» П. Яценка на тлі зарубіжної традиції: звернення до знакових подій та постатей національної історії, зображення боротьби за національні цінності, трагічний та ідеологічно-дидактичний характер, інтелектуальність, тенденція до «олюднення монстрів», увага до жіночих образів, специфічна симулякризація. Доведено художню цінність і самобутність україномовного мешапу. Романи Я. Бакалець, Я. Яріша та П. Яценка, з одного боку, подібні до американо-європейських зразків мешапу, створених за схемою «історична особистість + монстри», а з іншого – виразно демонструють специфіку: змальовують події та постаті відомих особистостей української історії, культури, акцентуючи на важливості боротьби за національні цінності, мають трагічний та ідеологічно-дидактичний характер, складний інтертекст, зображують надмірно антропоморфних інферналів, особливу роль відводять жіночим образам, мотивам підміни/удавання/невпізнання в дусі постмодерністської симулякризації. Україномовна мешап-проза переконливо засвідчує тенденцію оригінальної трансформації традицій зарубіжної культури відповідно до потреб українського суспільства XXI ст.

Cross-genrism is one of the tendencies in the cultural development of the XXI century. Its vivid implementation is mashup, which means “mix”, “shake”. The term was first employed to characterize the novel “Pride and Prejudice and Zombies” by S. Grahame-Smith [1, p. 12].

At present there are two main mashup “schemes” in literature and cinematography: “classic text + monsters” and “historical figure + monsters” [2, p. 22]. The examples of the former scheme implementation are “Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters” and “Android Karenina” by B. H. Winters, “Pride and Prejudice and Zombies: Dawn of the Dreadfuls” by S. Hockensmith, etc. The implementation of the latter scheme is represented in “Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter” by S. Grahame-Smith, “Queen Victoria: Demon Hunter” A. E. Moorat, and others.

The distinctive characteristics of the phenomenon are as follows: synthesis of a well-known text/ historical context and elements of the mass culture (zombie horror, mysticism, cryptohistory, etc.), comical modus, simulacrization, absurdity, orientation toward the annihilation of canons, and others. According to researchers, the sources of mashup lie in the overall feeling of crisis, chaos of the world, understanding of tradition depletion, and distrust for "the official history" [3-4]. There are two approaches to evaluating the mashup: denial of its esthetic value and positive assessment of how a well-known plot is integrated into "the social context of the time" [5].

The Ukrainian humanitarian space is also engaged in following the specified cross-genre trends. The national literature is gradually adopting the popular genre of novels while the scientific community is getting involved in professional discussions [7-9]. A thorough analysis of the Russian mashup is being conducted by I. Chornyi [10]. A. Hurduz has attempted to cover the issue of the Ukrainian mashup prose as a sporadic phenomenon (the novel "Iz s'omoho dna" by Y. Bakalets and Y. Yarish) in comparison with the world tradition: it has been pointed out that there is a potential risk for the Ukrainian literature to "borrow excessively…the literary patterns, in particular, those from the West" [7, p. 101].

Having, however, such a new sample of mashup prose as the screen novel "Nechuy. Nemov. Nebach" by P. Yatsenko (2017), we can confirm that the researcher's fears have not proved to be right: the literary work by P. Yatsenko undoubtedly demonstrates that the Ukrainian literature of the XXI century has a distinct line of its own. It opens up new opportunities for comparative studies aimed at determining general development trends typical of the Ukrainian mashup which can be viewed as an original modern art phenomenon.

The Ukrainian Russian-language and Ukrainian-language mashup represent different variants of foreign pattern transformations. The former is created according to the scheme "classic text + monsters", whereas the latter uses the scheme "historical figure + monsters". The former is not associated with the national cultural tradition while the latter, on the contrary, offers an original perspective on the events of Ukraine's past as well as on the country's outstanding historical and cultural figures.

Y. Bakalets and Y. Yarish's novel describes the period of the Ruin, events in which Vygovskyi, Briukhovetsky, Somko, and others participate along with different evil spirits. In P. Yatsenko's screen novel, the action takes place in the late XIX – early XX century. The main characters are I. Nechui-Levytsky, P. Kulish, T. Shevchenko and others, on the one hand, and chimerical creatures (Galician ghoul, Immortal Players), on the other hand. In this novel, the mashup features seamlessly blend in with the characteristics of alternative biography.

The Ukrainian-language mashup prose demonstrates a great number of peculiar features that make it stand out against the world tradition.

Firstly, it has tragic rather than comical emotional coloring: the foreign mashup shows the ironic modus of perceiving the literary classics and "official" history, thus entertaining the reader with the help of an absurd mix of "high-flown" and "low-flown" techniques. In contrast, the Ukrainian mashup brings up memories of the hard times in the history of the Ukrainian people, makes the reader think about the issues related both to the past and to the future of the Ukrainian nation.

The novel "Iz s'omoho dna" depicts the images of the Ukrainian people's sufferings: "…infernal cries of the dying, women's lamentations, children's weeping…The hell itself is perplexed by such a carnage. So much blood there is that it has already soaked through the earth and is dropping onto your heads!" *(...pekel'ni kryky konayuchykh, zhinoche holosinnya, dytyachyy plach…Same peklo dyvom dyvuyet'sya vid takoyi boyni. Krovi stil'ky, shcho vzhe prosochylasya kriz' vsyu zemlyu y kapaye vam na holovy!)* [11, p. 223-224]. The devil shows the future of Ukraine: Ukrainian mothers are crying and lands are being depleted. "Moscow warriors were treading upon Cossack roads and from the other direction Polish hussars were riding astride " (… Moskovs'ki ratnyky svoyimy chobit'my toptaly kozats'ki dorohy, z inshoho boku verkhy yikhaly pol's'ki husary.) [11, p. 384]. But it is not the fate destined for Ukraine by God's will: "There was Ukraine which was strong, independent, and well-off. It had survived the hard times, broken free from the Moscow and Polish chains, and risen from its knees. By its side there was the Cossack spirit, Christian faith, and bygone glory. The Ukrainian land had flourished and there was no better state in the world" (…Tam bula Ukrayina syl'na, vil'na, zamozhna. Vona perezhyla strashne lykholittya, vyrvalasya z moskovs'kykh ta pol's'kykh kaydaniv ta vstala z kolin. Stoyav bilya neyi dukh kozats'kyy, vira Khrystova, slava mynula. Rozkvitla zemlya ukrayins'ka, i ne bulo krashchoyi derzhavy na sviti) [11, p. 385].

P. Yatsenko's screen novel pictures suppression of the Ukrainian language, describes representatives of the Chorna Sotnia, and reflects a severe fight for national cultural values. Emblematic is already the phrase proclaimed at the secret meeting of the Ukrainian artists: "Beasts have become human and the people are becoming the nation" (*Zviri staly lyud'my, a narod stane natsiyeyu)* [12, p. 121].

Secondly, the Ukrainian-language mashup prose has an ideologically didactic nature (aimed at establishing the national idea and certain moral

principles), which is absolutely at odds with the total postmodern scepticism characteristic of the world tradition. Devil Nedolia's numerous maxims (of religious content!) are quite symbolic. "Look for a sin neither in books nor even in us, but in yourselves" (Shukayte hrikh ne v knyzi y navit' ne v nas, a v samykh sobi) [11, p. 27]. "God gives each person a choice, whom to obey, and everything depends only on yourself, on how strong your spirit is" (Boh daye kozhniy lyudyni vybir, koho slukhatysya, i vse zalezhyt' til'ky vid tebe, naskil'ky syl'nyy tviy dukh) [11, p. 69].

The text of P. Yatsenko's novel openly conveys a message glorifying the Ukrainian language and literature: his characters give their full support to the national cultural heritage defending it from the forces that want to destroy it (from the Archeological Committee – a secret service of the Empire).

Thirdly, the Ukrainian mashup prose does not target the mass audience (unlike the American and European prose does), but rather at the intellectual reader who is familiar with the best literary products. I. Chornyi pays attention to that when analyzing the intertext of the Russian-language "Sherlock Holmes…" [10]. It concerns the Ukrainian novels as well. The authors of "Iz s'omoho dna" make the reader remember not only "The Divine Comedy" but also numerous plots typical of the literary demonology; the motive of the mechanical heart relates P. Yatsenko's screen novel to T. Pollard's "The Minutes of the Lazarus Club", a depiction of writers' secret meetings – to a Masonic novel; a walking stick handle of a gentleman from the West which is shaped as a chimpanzee's head is reminiscent of a puddle-shaped cane handle belonging to Bulgakov's Woland.

Fourthly, in contrast to most American and European samples of the mashup, Ukrainian-language novels do not picture culture heroes as fighters against infernals: they play another role, which is fighting for national values. And though there is no avoiding interaction with creatures from the other world, the real antagonists are people, enemies of the Ukrainian people, rather than fictional monsters.

Fifthly, images of fantastic beings undergo substantial transformation (excessively grotesque humanization). Nedolia's description of the hell proves that the inferno has quite worldly customs (there is slander, envy, careerism, etc.). The devil not only uses the human body as a disguise, he begins to feel and think like a human being. "Without realizing it himself, I began to transform into a human being! I longed for home coziness, I came to love working, I even conceived a desire to have a child" (Sam toho ne usvidomlyuyuchy, ya pochav peretvoryuvatysya na lyudynu! Ya khotiv domashn'oho zatyshku, ya polyubyv robotu, navit' zakhotiv zavesty dytynu). [11, p. 264]. Ghouls are depicted as common people with thin hair and "red meaty faces of average vendors", "the clothes on them looked clumsy, like jackets on seals" (chervonymy m'yasnymy oblychchyamy torhovtsiv seredn'oyi ruky, odyah na nykh lezhav nezhrabno, nache pidzhaky na tyulenyakh) [12, p. 20]. They constantly drink and play cards. Three Immortal Players (possibly, an allusion to the three tsars), on the contrary, are dressed opulently, in good taste. The fantastic creatures are vividly nationalized: there are both "Galician" ghouls from Lviv and well-known characters of the Ukrainian folklore – forest dwellers, werewolves, and others.

Sixthly, female characters are worth special attention as well. It is typical for the foreign mashup to picture the images of strong women (the heroines of classic novels, historical figures) who courageously fight against the dark forces (for example, J. Austen's characters or Queen Victoria). The authors of the Ukrainian-language mashup prose also give great significance to women. However, those women do not get involved in a fight with infernals, but take an active part in quite "male" activities. Nedolia is pleasantly surprised by Kateryna's desire to accompany him: "This is a real woman, wife! She is ready to follow her husband to the ends of the earth, share all his hardships and misfortunes" (Otse spravzhnya zhinka, druzhyna! Vona hotova za svoyim muzhem khoch na kray svitu pity, rozdilyty z nym usi yoho trudnoshchi y bidy) [11, p. 331]. Natalia rides in the saddle like a man, "has quite liberal views, in particular, concerning love and gender equality" (… maye dosyt' vil'ni pohlyady, zokrema, na kokhannya ta rivnist' statey) [12, p. 69]. "We call for the women's right to get educated on an equal footing with men!...We can work on equal terms with men! A woman need to provide for herself and her children without any assistance, and she should not depend on any man!" (My vystupayemo za pravo zhinky otrymuvaty osvitu na rivni z cholovikamy! ... My mozhemo pratsyuvaty na rivni z cholovikamy! Zhinka povynna zabezpechuvaty sebe ta svoyikh ditey sama, i v ts'omu ne buty zalezhnoyu vid cholovika!) [12, p. 91]. Both novels have a motive of a woman dressing into men's clothing: Kateryna gets dressed like as a Cossack and Natalia, like as a hussar.

Finally, emphasis must be made on the issue of simulacrization. The ironic attitude to literary traditions and "great history", inherent in the foreign mashup, determines its carnival code. In contrast, the Ukrainian works seem to follow the masquerade tradition to demonstrate the discrepancy between what is real and what is seen (see the difference between carnival and masquerade styles): there reigns an atmosphere of play where travesty, metamorphosis, disguise, pretense/irrecognition (devils pretend to be human beings, Satan dresses up as a woman, a mechanical thing hides behind a living creature,

writers disguise themselves with animal masks, etc.). The reality turns into an illusion whereas the illusion claims to be the truth.

To sum up, the Ukrainian authors' novels are, on the one hand, similar to the samples of the American and European mashup created according to the scheme "historical figure + monsters", but on the other hand, they reveal their distinctive characteristics: they depict well-known events and figures of the Ukrainian history and culture emphasizing the importance of fighting for national values; they have a tragic and ideologically didactic nature along with complex intertext; they picture excessively anthropomorphic infernals; they give a special role to female characters and to motives of substitution / pretense / irrecognition in the style of postmodern simulacrization. The Ukrainian-language mashup prose convincingly confirms there is a tendency towards a peculiar transformation which traditions of the foreign culture undergo in accordance with the demands of the Ukrainian society in the XXI century.

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