

DOCUMENTING WAR REALITY IN WOMAN'S EGO-NARRATIVE: A COMPARATIVE ASPECT (ASTRID LINDGREN AND LIUBOV DOLUK)

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Summary

The publication presents a comprehensive analysis of war narratives and the poetics of women's diary discourse as a significant component of military ego-literature (based on the notes of Astrid Lindgren and Liubov Dolyk). The study examines the diary entries of two civilian female authors, reflecting the boundary experience of living through World War II and the contemporary Russian-Ukrainian War. It explores the transformation of the texts' genre structure, capturing both traditional and innovative poetical elements. The author argues that the analyzed ego-documents adhere to classical genre canons, characterized by chronological linearity, daily dating, the effect of the present tense, first-person narration, as well as a high degree of authenticity, sincerity, and confessional nature. At the same time, individual deviations from the classical genre model are identified: Lindgren actively incorporates the accounts (narratives) of other individuals into the structure of her storytelling, while the Ukrainian author, Dolyk, employs retrospective excursions. War in the diaries of both diarists is presented not merely as aggression or an external danger, but becomes a full-fledged living space; its depiction bridges the macro-level of official news chronicles with the micro-level of private family history. The conclusions emphasize that the diaries of A. Lindgren and L. Dolyk serve as significant sources and essential ego-documents that organically integrate the subjective experiences of the individual (narrator) into the nationwide wartime dimension.

Key words: contemporary literature, diary, genre and stylistic dimensions, hybrid nature, modernization, ego-document.

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1. Introduction

In times of large-scale social upheavals and historical shocks, documentary literature acquires particular relevance and significance: diaries, memoirs, biographies, and chronicles. This is not surprising, since being in extreme conditions – in occupation, captivity, on the front line, or in the rear under constant shelling – encourages people to engage in profound reflection on their own experience. As a result, contemporary Ukrainian literature has been enriched with numerous new authors and books documenting the events of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

In the niche of contemporary war prose – both fiction and documentary – a powerful layer of women's writing is clearly outlined, in which the epistolary-diary form occupies a special place. This is confirmed by a whole series of landmark publications. Among them are *Private Diary. Maidan. War...* (2015) by Maria Matios, *Life P.S.* (2018) by Valeriia Burlakova, *Ferocious February 2022* (2022) by Daria Bura and Yevheniia Podobna, *Kyiv Symphony – 22* by Irene Rozdobudko, *War: Fire, Water, and Brass Pipes. The Year 2022* by Halyna Horytska, *Notes in the Margins of War* (2022), *Psalms of Love* (2025) by Liubov Dolyk, *The Diary of My War* (2022), *Captivity* (2024) by Valeriia «Nava» Subotina, and many others.

At the same time, despite the appearance of hundreds of such publications during 2014–2025, the women's war diary still remains an unfiltered segment on the periphery of literary studies interests. The lack of systematic analysis results in the fact that these texts rarely become the objects of comprehensive scholarly studies, mostly appearing episodically – most often in the context of theoretical discussions of ego-documentary literature or in brief cursory overviews of the literary process. Therefore, filling this theoretical vacuum determines the relevance of the proposed study, making it timely and in demand for contemporary literary studies.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study consists of the works of Ukrainian and foreign scholars devoted to the genesis and the typological and linguostylistic features of the diary genre. In particular, the distinction between the diary and related forms of documentary literature is made on the basis of the concept of Michał Głowiński (*Głowiński, 1997*) regarding genre boundaries, as well as the studies of Maria Gołaszewska (*Gołaszewska, 1984*), which reveal the aesthetic and philosophical aspect of ego-documents. The narrative specificity and nonlinear structure of the texts are examined through the prism of the theories of Hanna Merezhyńska (*Merezhyńska, 1986*). The communicative nature and linguistic parameters of diary discourse are analyzed on the basis of the works of Tetiana Radziievska (*Radziievska, 1993*), whereas the genre modifications and interpretative strategies of contemporary prose are conceptualized with consideration of the scholarly contribution of Tetiana Bovsunivska (*Bovsunivska, 2009*).

Important significance for our exploring is held by contemporary scholarly studies, first and foremost the fundamental monograph of Oleksandr Halych *Ukrainian Documentary Literature at the Turn of the Millennium: Specificity, Genesis, Prospects* (Halych, 2001), as well as the works of Tetiana Cherkashyna (*Cherkashyna, 2014*) and Kateryna Tanchyn (*Tanchyn, 2005*), devoted to memoir-autobiographical prose. These studies provide a thorough conceptualization of the evolution of documentary writing and determine its genre hierarchy. However, a common feature of the aforementioned concepts is the denial of the autonomous status of the diary and its interpretation as one of the varieties of memoir literature (together with biography and autobiography). Although this approach makes it possible to trace the historical continuity of the tradition, it simultaneously actualizes the need to reconsider the specificity of diary discourse within the coordinates of contemporary ego-literature.

Special attention within the framework of our study is devoted to the scholarly studies of contemporary female researchers – Marta Varykasha (*Varykasha, 2010*), Anna Ilkiv (*Ilkiv, 2008*), Iryna Horiachok (*Horiachok, 2022*), Orysia Hrudka (*Hrudka, 2023*) and others. In their works, they propose the latest definitions and classifications of the diary genre, adapted to the challenges of the contemporary literary process. The researchers emphasize the genre diffusion of the diary and its determination by other media or artistic phenomena (in particular, blogging and network literature), and also interpret it as an open and dynamic structure that responds promptly to the challenges of the present.

Incidentally, it should be noted that certain aspects of the problems, narrative architectonics, and genre specificity of the war diary, in particular the peculiarities of its female

representation, have already become the subject of our previous scholarly studies; however, the appearance of new texts actualizes the need for further in-depth research (Herasymenko, N., & Kulinska, Ya., 2025; Herasymenko, N., & Kulinska, Ya., 2024).

2. Materials and methods

The methodological toolkit of the study is determined by the specificity of the object and subject of the analysis. In particular, the historical-biographical method is applied to explicate the connection between large-scale social cataclysms and the individual existential experience of the female authors. Comparative and typological analysis is employed with the aim of explicating the correlation between the classical genre canon and the latest transformational models of the contemporary diary.

In our study, we will rely on the definition of the diary proposed in the *Literary Encyclopedia* edited by Yurii Kovaliv, where this genre is interpreted as «notes of a particular author about events from life that made a strong impression on him, prompted him to record them, predominantly dated, presented in the first person in chronological sequence» (Kovaliv, 2007: 592–593).

This approach correlates with the definition presented in the Polish *Dictionary of Literary Terms* (*Słownik terminów literackich*), where the diary is described as “an autobiographical literary genre in which the author describes events from his own life” (Bryk, 2026).

The permanent unfolding of military actions in Ukraine causes the continuous replenishment of the national literary space with new ego-documents. Their female authors – direct participants in the events who have experienced captivity, occupation, being on the front line, or the military reality of the rear – record extreme psychological states and engage in reflection on trauma. This tendency actualizes the urgent need for a comprehensive theoretical-literary analysis of the contemporary war diary and for the expansion of the problem-thematic range of studies devoted to the transformational models of this genre.

The aim of our study is a comprehensive comparative analysis of the textual models of *War Diaries. 1939–1945* by Astrid Lindgren and the collection *Psalms of Love* by Liubov Dolyk. The study is aimed at identifying the specificity of the artistic-documentary nature of these ego-texts, determining their genre-stylistic and narrative parameters, as well as conceptualizing and integrating the phenomenon of the “women’s war diary” into the general context of contemporary literary studies discourse.

3. Results

3.1. A. Lindgren's Diaries as an Ego-Document of Wartime Reality

The war notes of Astrid Lindgren cover the time period from 1 September 1939 (the attack on Poland marked the beginning of the war and the keeping of the diary) and end on the eve of the new year 1946 – when a fragile peace had already prevailed in Europe.

By their genre nature, Lindgren's diaries are not homogeneous: several thematic layers can be distinguished in her texts. The largest is the socio-political (social-political) one: it is an extensive account of the world events of 1939–1945 and their prerequisites. The main theme is the course of Germany's military campaign, which the author reveals through local narratives: the European blitzkrieg and the fate of the occupied countries, the battles in Africa, the operations in the Pacific Ocean, and the events on the Eastern Front. Without exaggeration, these diaries are a unique historical document in which the Second World War is recorded with exceptional detail, systematically, and comprehensively.

Lindgren strives to be as well-informed and accurate as possible; therefore, in addition to her own entries, she cuts articles from numerous newspapers and pastes them into her diary; adds photographs; uses maps to mark the location of troops and depict the events about which she writes; reads world history and the works of her contemporaries, in particular *Winter of Glory* by Håkan Mörne and *The Tragedy of France* by André Maurois, attempting to record, analyze, and predict the development of particular situations comprehensively and systematically.

Astrid Lindgren's new position in the government correspondence censorship service (to which she transferred from a law office) enabled her to gain a deeper understanding of how people experienced the war both in safe Sweden and in the occupied countries. Although Lindgren quotes primary sources rather sparingly in her diaries, she records and reinterprets in detail the astonishing testimonies of civilian victims. She pays particular attention to the tragedy of the Jewish people, who found themselves on the verge of extermination, as well as to the horrors experienced by the population of the Baltic countries during the Soviet occupation. This bitter and, at the same time, deeply traumatic experience of millions of people Astrid carefully and consistently records in her diary.

For the citizens of neutral Sweden, the war was more a matter of everyday life with shortages and rationing. A ration coupon system was in operation, and these coupons could be used for shopping in stores. Products such as eggs or illegally slaughtered pigs had to be "obtained." Astrid Lindgren was no exception and also obtained and stockpiled supplies: "Today I arranged a small stockpile in a corner of the kitchen, to move it later to the attic. It contains 2 kg of granulated sugar, 1 kg of refined sugar, 3 kg of rice, 1 kg of starch, 1 kg of coffee in various packages, 2 kg of detergent, two packages of Persil, three bars of soap, five packages of cocoa, four packages of tea, and some spices. I will have to replenish it little by little, because prices will rise very soon..." (Lindgren, 2026: 24).

It would be a mistake to assume that Lindgren limited herself only to recording and analyzing the Nazi offensive and the events connected with it. The attention of the thirty-two-year-old woman was also focused on the Soviet Union (or, more precisely, Russia), whose aggressive actions caused her no less concern. She closely followed Moscow's geopolitical moves, clearly realizing that the totalitarian threat came not from only one side and that the Eastern Front and the fate of the countries neighboring Sweden depended precisely on the actions of the USSR. "The worst thing," she notes on 18 June 1940, "is that now there is no hope for Germany's quick defeat, because the Russians have started stirring again. During the last few days, under various pretexts, they have occupied Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. And a weakened Germany here, in the north, will mean only one thing – that Russia will come after us. And therefore I think that I would rather say "Heil Hitler!" all my life than endure the Russians here. It is hard to imagine anything more terrible" (Lindgren, 2026: 52–53).

It should be noted that the Swedish writer harbored no illusions whatsoever either about Nazi Germany or about the Soviet Union. On 28 June 1941, she notes: "National Socialism and Bolshevism are like two horrible reptiles that have engaged in combat. It is unpleasant to reconcile oneself with one of the horrible reptiles, yet for the time being there is nothing else left but to wish to press down the Soviet Union for what they have seized during this war, for all the evil they have inflicted upon Finland... < On the Eastern Front stand two armies, the largest in history..." (Lindgren, 2026: 109).

In general, she closely followed Moscow's aggressive policy from the very first days of keeping her diary in 1939, and her conclusions at that time proved to be absolutely discouraging. Lindgren was deeply outraged by the aggression of the Soviet Union (Russia), which, under the

cover of Soviet ideology, committed the same war crimes as Hitler. Analyzing the events on the geopolitical stage, she clearly perceived the threat that the USSR posed to the entire free world and uncompromisingly recorded every step of Soviet expansion: "Today the Russians invaded Poland 'to protect the interests of the Russian minority'" (*Lindgren, 2026: 25*), and further: "The war continues in its ordinary course. Poland has capitulated. Complete chaos reigns there. Germany and Russia have divided the country between themselves. It is difficult to believe that something like this could have happened in the twentieth century. Russia has the greatest gain from this war. While Germany crushes Poland, Russia marches in and receives its share, and a considerable one" (*Lindgren, 2026: 26*).

On the pages of her diary, Astrid Lindgren records in detail the attack of the Soviet Union on Finland in the winter of 1939, in particular describing the methods of waging war: massive bombardments of peaceful cities, the use of prohibited weapons, and the animal-like cruelty of Russian soldiers. In addition to official news, an invaluable source of information for her becomes the vivid, uncensored accounts of Finnish refugees and Swedish acquaintances whose relatives found themselves at the epicenter of the hostilities. Through these private testimonies, Astrid describes the essence of the Soviet occupation machine, recording horrifying details about the destruction of Finnish homes and the tragedy of the civilian population. For example, under 1 February we read: "Yesterday evening I met Gunnar, who had just returned from Finland... < He admires the ordinary Finns, who remain calm although the Russians are dropping countless bombs on them. Gunnar says that the aircraft machine-gunners deliberately hunt women and children. Moreover, he told the story of how an aircraft pursued a woman and two boys. The woman was shot, although the boys, astonishingly, survived..." (*Lindgren, 2026: 37*). And further: "I met a Finnish woman at Elsa Gullander's, who told horrifying things about the Finnish War and about the Russians' treatment of prisoners. Her own brother had recently returned from captivity and said that he had been beaten until blood flowed from his ears, nose, and mouth. Another man was kept in a small room with a hundred bright light bulbs until he became blind. ...< What struck me most was that the Russians drove Polish women and children ahead of them. Some Finns could not bring themselves to shoot at them and surrendered voluntarily—now they are awaiting a tribunal in Finland" (*Lindgren, 2026: 53*).

Lindgren does not avoid in her diaries the uncomfortable, painful topics that were taboo for the society of that time. In particular, she meticulously documents the horrifying episodes of the Holocaust, about which she learns from foreign letters that passed through her hands in the course of her service. On the pages of the diary appear the first testimonies of the mass persecution, deportations, and systematic extermination of the Jewish people by the Nazis. Despite the shock caused by what she read, she records these testimonies of crimes against humanity in detail, becoming the voice of those whom the Third Reich sought to erase.

For example, on 27 March 1941 she notes: "I received a very sad letter from a Jew... he was writing to his blood relative in Finland, informing him about the mass departure of Jews from Vienna to Poland. It seems that about 1,000 Jews are being expelled from the country every day under inhuman conditions. The notices are sent by post, but they must arrive with a sum of money and a small amount of luggage. ...< His brother was among those unfortunate people. Hitler probably intends to turn Poland into one huge ghetto where the poor Jews will die sick and hungry. ... < Poor, poor people! Why is the God of the Jews not hurrying to defend them? How can Hitler do such things to fellow human beings?" (*Lindgren, 2026: 96*).

Part of Lindgren's notes is not only a record of wartime realities but also her own observations and reflections, such as: "Germany most closely resembles a ferocious beast that periodically emerges from its lair to hunt another victim. There must be something wrong with a

nation that approximately once every twenty years sets itself against the whole of humanity" (Lindgren, 2026: 48); she also expresses general reflections such as "Human stupidity is boundless" (Lindgren, 2026: 55) or "The sun is shining, it is warm and beautiful. The Earth could be a wonderful place to live" (Lindgren, 2026: 22), as well as her own fears, doubts, and other inner experiences directly at the moment of their emergence: "I will never be able to trust a regime that creates concentration camps in Oranienburg and Buchenwald, supported the pogroms of 1938, and, they say, imprisoned a Norwegian girl for a year for tearing up a portrait of the Führer" (Lindgren, 2026: 74).

The second dimension of Lindgren's diary text is domestic, but no less significant. Here, the author appears first and foremost as a mother, wife, and daughter. This is the disclosure of the theme of a civilian who suddenly found herself in new wartime realities, albeit deep in the rear. Just as carefully and thoroughly as the course of large-scale military campaigns, Astrid describes cozy family evenings, holidays, and everyday family life. Through this prism of everyday concerns ("And yesterday we were given hot water" (Lindgren, 2026: 60)), descriptions of birthday presents for her daughter ("She (*daughter Karin – N.H., Ya.K.*) received glasses, a raincoat and underwear for the doll Margaret, a little doll on a chair, a cake, money from Grandma, Grandpa and Grandma, a little doll in a doll's pram from Anders, a silver spoon and chocolate from Matte and Elsa-Lena, sweets from Pelle Diden and Linnea..." (Lindgren, 2026: 50)), illnesses and achievements in the children's studies, misunderstandings with her teenage son, descriptions of summer holidays and bicycle rides, and so forth, there emerges the author's desperate desire to preserve at least a drop of peaceful, normal life while the entire familiar world around her is rapidly collapsing.

At times, these two layers overlap; then social and family events intertwine and peacefully coexist within a single text, as in: "In the evening I went for a walk with Ann-Marie and Stellan. We walked around Stora Essingen under the full moon, breathing in the fragrance of blooming linden and cherry trees. Wonderful, wonderful! But the Germans are advancing rapidly; nothing can stop them" (Lindgren, 2026: 50).

Despite Lindgren's desire to present information objectively, judiciously, and neutrally – as befits a true chronicler who seeks to document the wartime reality for posterity – passionate emotions occasionally break through on the pages of her diary. For the most part, this acute emotional pain and anger concern particular historical figures and situations that brought mass death and destruction into the world. The writer cannot remain indifferent to the horrors of war; therefore, her restrained tone as a chronicler periodically gives way under the pressure of sincere human compassion for the victims and uncompromising condemnation of those who unleashed this global bloodshed: "The world has gone mad!" (Lindgren, 2026: 29), "Despair and tears!" (Lindgren, 2026: 101), or as in the entry of 6 September 1941: "May he (*Hitler – N.H., Ya.K.*) be strangled! I wish him to die alone! I was glad to hear that he suffers from insomnia and, they say, almost died the other day from an overdose of sleeping pills" (Lindgren, 2026: 116).

A. Lindgren keeps her diary with extraordinary diligence, adhering to a clear chronology and sequence. All the entries are carefully dated, and the author is guided not only by the usual civil calendar but also by traditional church holidays: the Day after Christmas, Good Friday, Trinity Sunday or Holy Spirit Day etc.

However, the most interesting transformation takes place precisely at the level of the diary's narrative structure. According to the canons of this genre, the narration must be purely subjective and conducted only in the first person. In Lindgren, the voice of the "I-narrator" indeed remains central. However, her personal perception is constantly supplemented and expanded by an entire polyphony: the remarks of relatives, the memories of children, the stories of friends,

acquaintances, and random passers-by, whose testimonies she carefully recounts. In addition, the text is visualized by numerous newspaper clippings and photographs, which the author pastes in as indisputable evidence of historical truth.

As follows, a unique polyphonic structure is formed according to the principle of “Call and Response.” The direct authorial narration acts here as the soloist who introduces the main theme, while the voices of the surrounding people, media materials, and photographs become the powerful chorus that enters at certain points to confirm and reinforce this solo. Such a responsorial approach considerably expands the boundaries of the traditional diary genre, transforming intimate private notes into an objective, multidimensional, and large-scale canvas of the era.

Special attention should be paid to the author's utmost sincerity and uncompromising frankness. Recording the harsh realities of the time – total food shortages, the introduction of the ration card system, and numerous everyday restrictions – she simultaneously honestly admits that her own family does not suffer from them. Lindgren notes in her diaries her relative prosperity, although it becomes for her a source of remorse and a manifestation of the “survivor syndrome”: “Today I went to the cinema with my well-fed children... < We live in a warm and cozy apartment. Yesterday we had lobster and pâté for dinner; today – beef tongue with red cabbage; hard-boiled eggs with goose liver as an appetizer... < I am tormented by guilt when I think of those 200 g of French butter per month. I earn 385 kronor thanks to the war. Sture (*Astrid's husband – N.H., Ya.K.*) (thanks to the war) is practically the director of the National Association of Car Owners, and his official appointment is only a matter of time. At the board meeting on the 27th, the issue of increasing his salary will be considered. These are very good times for us now” (Lindgren, 2026: 66–67).

It is precisely this discreteness of the diary entries that creates an astonishing feeling of fragmented, “torn” time, where the measured reflections of the author are suddenly interrupted by rapid wartime action. This, in turn, sets in motion a dynamic alternation of the rhythm of the entire narration. The recipient finds themselves in a space of constant oscillation between two dimensions. On the one hand, there is the accelerated, purely reportorial “external” world, filled with dry facts about the aggressive military operations of the Hitlerites and the Soviet army. On the other hand, there is the slowed-down, deeply philosophical “internal” microcosm of the writer herself, where existential fear, painful doubts, and reflections on the total unpreparedness of the European society of that time to realize, accept, and comprehend the catastrophe of war prevail.

It is quite evident that Astrid Lindgren's war diary performs a unique dual function. On the one hand, it is a strict and objective documentation of global events, intended to preserve the truth for future generations. On the other hand, it is an instrument of self-therapy, the author's desperate attempt to preserve her inner peace and protect her mind from the destructive influence of war. In this context, family, a cozy domestic life, and everyday rituals become for the writer a truly reliable island of stability amid a turbulent, cruel, and unstable world. By recording ordinary household concerns, Lindgren does not merely document existence but constructs a psychological shield that protects her private microcosm from the chaos of the global catastrophe.

3.2. L. Dolyk's Diaries as an Ego-Document of Wartime Reality

Liubov Dolyk's diary *Psalms of Love* represents the authentic experience of a civilian woman who, as a result of the global socio-historical upheavals of 24 February 2022, was forced to adapt to a new wartime reality. The desire to record the transformed reality prompted the author to make daily notes of the events that became the foundation of her new life experience.

The narrative structure of L. Dolyk's diary is characterized by heterogeneity. According to its content, the recorded facts – similarly to the wartime chronicles of Astrid Lindgren – are clearly differentiated into two levels: the socio-political and the private.

The author reproduces both layers of reality with equal thoroughness and deep emotional involvement. The macrohistorical component encompasses a chronicle of the nationwide scale: L. Dolyk traces the dynamics of military operations, interprets information flows, and records acts of vandalism and crimes committed by the Russian army (such as the destruction of the Hryhorii Skovoroda National Literary and Memorial Museum in the Kharkiv region). At the same time, the microhistorical level is represented through the detailed reproduction of the intimate everyday life of her family. Such a combination provides an organic synthesis of an objective chronicle of the era and a reflection on personal tragedy.

The socio-political segment of the diary is centered around the wartime realities that entered the new reality after the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. In contrast, the private-domestic dimension records how radically the everyday life of an ordinary family changed. This new reality is rendered more distinct in the text through descriptions of the appearance of military personnel and military equipment on the streets of the city, the presence of families of internally displaced persons from the east and south of the country, as well as through the recording of massive Russian shelling of the civilian population (“...I saw a small silver object flying across the sky. I saw it fall. I saw a black tree of smoke grow in that place...” (*Dolyk, 2025: 146*)). The tragedy of wartime is emphasized by funeral processions for the fallen defenders, among whom familiar names appear ever more frequently (“Viacheslav was killed today... It is so impossible to comprehend. Ten hours ago he was still writing on Facebook, asking for help to raise money for a vehicle...” (*Dolyk, 2025: 60*)). In addition, the author carefully records nationwide Ukrainian news that directly or indirectly influences the course of the war and the lives of civilians, constantly accompanying it with her own analytical comments and reflections.

The private-domestic segment of the diary is broader in its content and is internally differentiated into two levels: the author's professional activity and the intimate life of her family. The working space of L. Dolyk is marked by descriptions of her daily public service and overcoming the challenges of wartime, in particular the performance of urgent official duties under the conditions of prolonged blackouts following Russian attacks. A separate place is occupied by the writer's creative self-realization: participation in nationwide book fairs, exhibitions, and presentations of her own works and the publications of colleagues (“... We traveled to festivals. We discovered Ukraine and the world for ourselves...” (*Dolyk, 2025: 260*)), which reflects the dynamics of the national literary process. An important component is also L. Dolyk's volunteer activity – weaving camouflage nets, sewing underwear for soldiers at the front, and holding poetry meetings with Ukrainian defenders.

Another level of this segment is devoted to the family's microhistory, which unfolds against the background of extreme trials. The author records the specificity of wartime everyday life: preparing food under conditions of power outages, working on the household plot as an effective means of psychological relief, as well as nightly air raid alarms and concern for the safety of her children and grandchildren during massive shelling. At the same time, the narrative records the family's traditional commemorative practices and life cycles – celebrating Christmas and Easter, the birth of another grandson, the tragic news of the death of a relative, as well as walks and worldview conversations with the older grandchildren.

Military discourse and its destructive consequences are articulated by the author in practically every diary entry of L. Dolyk, named directly and clearly: “...and fades from the grief

that the war has brought to us all..." (Dolyk, 2025: 62); "Yesterday I had such a magnificent celebration, and today missiles from the Muscovites are flying..." (Dolyk, 2025: 110); "during the full-scale war... $\diamond$ And the mad Muscovites are destroying our energy system. And plunging us into the darkness of their world" (Dolyk, 2025: 77); "...war, war all around, war in every single manifestation of existence..." (Dolyk, 2025: 272); or it is recorded indirectly through comparisons: "Evening falls swiftly upon the city like the fragments of a downed Russian missile" (Dolyk, 2025: 70), "...where the earth trembles in its sleep like a soldier after battle..." (Dolyk, 2025: 192), or through a system of associative connotations and marker-images that constantly remind one of the hardships of war: "Mother in a black down jacket. The child – in a khaki-colored stroller. These colors hurt me so much. War" (Dolyk, 2025: 218), not allowing one to forget the new reality even for a moment.

Each diary entry of L. Dolyk is marked as a symbolic victory over the destructive chaos of the wartime era. Her narrative strategy is characterized by precision and composure, and this creates a lasting therapeutic effect of balance amid a ruined world. Constant appeals to God and the intertextual dialogue with the tradition of psalm singing form a special rhythmic cyclicity. Prayerful refrains, hope in Divine Providence, and motifs of gratitude sacralize the diary space, giving it a distinct liturgical resonance.

In her notes, L. Dolyk generally adheres to the classical genre canon: she records events in chronological sequence without prior compositional planning, actualizing the effect of immediate presence ("here and now"). The narration is conducted in the first person, enabling the author to sincerely and truthfully reveal her own existential fears, doubts, and anxieties.

At the same time, within the structure of *Psalms of Love*, isolated concise retrospective excursions can be traced. For the most part, these are memories from the family's past life, which serve the writer as an additional resource of psycho-emotional support during the hardships of wartime. Although such insertions somewhat violate the classical requirements of the diary, it is precisely they that testify to its contemporary genre transformation and expand the boundaries of the traditional ego-document.

4. Conclusions

In times of socio-historical upheavals, documentary genres traditionally acquire particular relevance. For thousands of Ukrainians, the ego-document has become the most accessible and the most effective instrument for recording extreme experience: this concerns both being on the front line/in captivity and surviving in occupied territories/rear cities. As we can see, the reflections of the civilian population under the conditions of martial law are increasingly interpreted in contemporary literary studies as a borderline wartime experience, since, in terms of the intensity of psycho-emotional tension and commemorative value, it is not inferior, or is only slightly inferior, to the testimonies of direct participants in military operations.

In this context, the women's diary constitutes a subject of particular analytical interest for military studies, since it is focused predominantly not on the strategic planning of military operations or the specificity of weaponry, but on the anthropocentric dimension of the tragedy – the human being at the epicenter of war. In particular, women diarists meticulously document survival strategies, the mechanisms of preserving humanistic values, and the transformation of the ethics of sociocultural relations. This specificity of testimonies "from within" enables scholars to study the desacralized, "non-ceremonial" side of armed conflicts. In this way, "women's" ego-documents differ significantly from the traditional "male" wartime canon, since they partly deconstruct the established stereotypes of patriarchal military discourse.

The diaries of both writers – both the Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren and the Ukrainian writer Liubov Dolyk – represent that dimension of women's wartime writing in which war appears as the immediate space of everyday existence. Both publications testify to the unique transformation of the diarists – the transition from peaceful life to the recording of military reality. Common to both authors is the very nature of their notes, which are clearly differentiated into socio-political and family-domestic planes. With the same degree of mental and emotional involvement, the writers analyze global geopolitical shifts (the Second World War in A. Lindgren and the Russian-Ukrainian war in L. Dolyk) while at the same time meticulously recording private family everyday life. In this way, the large-scale macrohistorical context is organically integrated into the coordinates of the family chronicle, thereby marking the distinct anthropocentric dimension of both texts and determining their focus on “small history.”

Thus, both authors meticulously analyze how, under the powerful influence of existential challenges, the existence of the rear space is transformed and record the destructive consequences of the military syndrome for the whole of society. Particular attention is focused on the distinct sociocultural contrast between the tragic realities of the front line and the relatively stable, normalized everyday life of families in the rear of neutral Sweden or Lviv, distant from the zone of active hostilities. The ethical tension caused by this rupture makes more distinct the total fragility and illusoriness of peaceful existence, where, alongside the chronicle of a great war, everyday affairs constantly emerge, collectively symbolizing the indestructibility of the flow of life.

It should also be noted that both diaries constitute a distinct form of the authors' ethical resistance: through trivial everyday rituals and metaphysical practices, they protect their inner world from destruction by chaos. This is manifested particularly vividly in the diary of L. Dolyk, which even gives her narration a prayerful-meditative tempo-rhythm. For both writers, in general, keeping diaries is an effective therapeutic practice that helps preserve a rational comprehension of catastrophic events and resist depressive states and psychological exhaustion.

Another important common denominator of both ego-documents is the reflection on the literary activity of their authors. In the diary of A. Lindgren, work on her literary texts is mentioned, including her future world bestseller *Pippi Longstocking*, while in the text of L. Dolyk free-verse poems are presented directly, serving both to record news content and to facilitate profound self-analysis. This layer of the ego-texts attracts particular attention and is of interest as a representation of the writers' “creative workshop,” which may serve as a separate object of future literary studies.

Special emphasis should be placed on the fact that the notes of both authors are based on the classical requirements of the diary genre: the recording of events in the present tense, the effect of immediate presence, obligatory dating, the chronological and linear sequence of presentation, as well as first-person narration. Their texts are marked by a high degree of truthfulness, sincerity, and confessionality. At the same time, certain departures from the traditional genre canon can be observed in the ego-documents under study. In particular, in the diary of A. Lindgren, numerous newspaper clippings and photographs are incorporated to confirm and expand the author's narrative, while other people's dialogues and oral accounts are retold, forming a unique polyphonic structure according to the intertextual principle of “Call and Response”.

By contrast, the structure of L. Dolyk's text contains concise retrospective excursions, which, however, not only make the described events more distinct and detailed but also often serve as a key to understanding the present. In this case, in our opinion, it is not a matter of memoir prose, but of a specific architectonics in which the linear nature of the diary is complicated by elements of retrospection. Although such insertions somewhat violate the canonical

“purity” of the diary form, they simultaneously make it possible to regard the ego-texts of A. Lindgren and L. Dolyk as examples of a modernized genre that organically combines documentary recording with profound autobiographical reflection.

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