

**ARTISTIC REFLECTION OF THE CONCEPT
“PLACES OF MEMORY” IN LITERATURE:
NOVELS BY MYROSLAV DOCHYNETS**

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary humanities, the problem of the interdisciplinary concept “places of memory” comprehension does not lose its actuality. The term first appeared in the early 80s of the XX century in the research by a French historian and anthropologist Pierre Nora “*Les lieux de mémoire*”¹ and became generally used. The researcher used it to denote any important phenomenon, material or not, which became a symbol for some community. Places of memory in the conception of P. Nora is not identified with specific geographical objects (it can be words, events, ideas, museums, archives, libraries, cemeteries, collections, songs, funeral speeches, holidays, documents, etc.), although the scientist does not deny that they can acquire “senses of memory”² and be regarded as centers of cultural memory, bearers of information about the past³. As the direct equivalent of “*lieux de mémoire*” (“space/sphere of memory”) was absent in other European languages, it caused misunderstanding of its essence by the scientists of other countries. Its direct translation as “places of memory” or “memorial places” became widespread, and that linked the notion to the space coordinates. Pierre Nora’s project provoked numerous discussions (which is proven, for example, by T. Judt’s research *A la recherche du temps perdu*, translated under the title “‘*Places of memory*’ by Pierre Nora: *Whose places? Whose memory?*”⁴ and opened new possibilities for multi-aspect studies. Places of memory was investigated by the philosophers P. Hutton, F. Yates, the historians G. Mink, F. Schenk, E. François, H. Schulze, the culturologists A. Assman, J. Assman, D. Zamyatin, the sociologists M. Halbrax, P. Connerton⁵, etc.

¹ Les lieux de memoire. I. La Republique; II. La Nation; III. Le Frances. Nora P. Paris, 1984-1992.

² Нора П. Теперішнє, нація, пам’ять. / пер. А. Репа. Київ 2014. 272 с.

³ Nora P. General introduction: Between memory and history. *Realms of Memory. The consruction of the french past*. Vol. 1. New York, 1996. С. 1-20.

⁴ Джадт Т. “Места пам’яті” П’єра Нора: Чьи места? Чья память? *Ab imperio*. 2004. № 1. С. 44-71.

⁵ Коннертон П. Як суспільства пам’ятають. Київ., 2004. 184 с.

Literary studies cannot stay apart from the problems of investigation memory in general and the concept “places of memory” in particular, because works of literature are: *“alternative to the historical ones, which, contrary to the historical language of facts, actively recodes the language of experience into the simple and intelligible language of modernity using images and associations”*^{6,7}.

Making use of the achievements of historical and cultural studies, linguistics, geophilosophy for the analysis of literary works, Ukrainian literary critics use the notions “places of memory”, “memorable places”, “memory places”, etc. that are not clearly distinguished (it is explained by the absence of well-established terminology in memory studies) and are mainly interpreted through the prism of M. Bakhtin’s chronotope theory as spatio-temporal coordinates – bearers of individual and collective memory. For example, basing on the conceptions of P. Nora, M. de Unamuno, and A. Assman, the researcher O. Mayevska explains: *“Such places can preserve and witness memory even after the phase of collective oblivion. After a certain period, when the tradition was lost, people, interested in the past, come back to remarkable places to find a landscape, a monument or ruins. Therefore, so called reanimation comes about, when a place revives a memory and a memory revives a place”*⁸.

The authors of the article are convinced that the attraction of the interdisciplinary approach while studying the representation of places of memory in the literary text offers new possibilities for its analysis, as it facilitates the detailed interpretation of character’s conception, the delineation of problem and thematic range, the investigation of the level of plot and contexture, it helps in defining the artistic and aesthetic value of a literary work, etc.

1. Scientific strategy for the study of concept “place of memory” in the novels by Myroslav Dochynets

Memory gains the priority importance for the reflection of characters’ inner world in novels by Myroslav Dochynets. Memory “organizes all the mental experience <...> providing the succession of chronotope, the dialogue between the past, the present, and the future”⁹. While studying artistic comprehension of places of memory in the novels *“Centenarian*.

⁶ Усі цитати перекладені автором статті.

⁷ Пухонська О. Літературний вимір пам’яті. Київ 2018. С. 9-10.

⁸ Маєвська О. Колективна й індивідуальна пам’ять у романах Мігеля де Унамуну. *Іноземна філологія*. 2018. № 131. С. 120.

⁹ Темирболат А. Категории хронотопа и темпорального ритма в литературе. Алматы 2009. С. 29.

Confession on the Pass of the Spirit”, “*Svitovan. Studies under the Tent of the Skies*”, “*The Digger of Wells. The Diary of the Richest Man of the Mukachevo Dominion*”, “*Highlander. Waters of Our Lord’s Riverbeds*”, “*Maftey. Book Written with a Dry Pen*”¹⁰ by M. Dochynets we appeal to 1) interdisciplinary understanding of memory as a complex psychological phenomenon, which permits a person to “*retain, keep and recreate images of perception and sensation, thoughts and notions, moves and actions, feelings and words, to accumulate the so-called individual mental experience*”;¹¹ 2) the widespread in the scientific discourse comprehension of the notion the concept “place of memory” as a “*coordinate system for the processes of sense creation, for a conditional localization of memory senses*”¹²; 3) the culturological conception of A. Assman, within which different types of places of memory are distinguished. These are *places of generations*, (certain places that have a long and lasting connection with family history), *places of memories* (places capable to reinforce and confirm personal or collective memories, they embody the continuity of epochs), *holy places and mythical landscapes* (the area of contact between a human and God (or people and gods)), *tombs and tombstones* (places of burial, which became the bearers of memory about the departed), *traumatic places* (sites keeping memories about tragic events)¹³. The particular attention of M. Dochynets to the entourage of the protagonists, the special accent on their genetic unity with the natural environment¹⁴ makes possible the analysis of chronotopic coordinates as an important factor of recreation of places of memory in his novels. Therefore, M. Bakhtin’s conception of chronotope is of primary importance for this research; his conception defines literary time and space as an inseparable unity able to influence the genre code of works, the compositional structure and to define “*the image of a human being in literature*”¹⁵. The author says: “*Place is very important. My teacher*

¹⁰ Далі використовуємо скорочені варіанти назв “Centenarian”, “Svitovan”, “The Digger of Wells”, “Highlander”, “Maftey”.

¹¹ Психологічний словник / авт.-уклад. В. В. Синявський, О. П. Сергєєнкова; ред. Н. А. Побірченко. Київ 2007. С. 107.

¹² Киридон А. Простір пам’яті: експлікація поняття. *Національна та історична пам’ять*. 2013. № 8. С. 28.

¹³ Ассман А. Простори спогаду. *Форми та трансформації культурної пам’яті*. Київ 2012. 440 с.

¹⁴ Іщенко О. Проза Мирослава Дочинця: проблематика і поетика. Дис. на здобуття наук. ступеня доктора філософії. Київ, 2021. URL: https://chtyvo.org.ua/authors/Ishenko_Olena/Proza_Myroslava_Dochyntsia_problematyka_i_poetyka/

¹⁵ Бахтин М. *Формы времени и хронотопа в романе. Очерки по исторической поэтике*. URL: http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:jjZC1EvzFHU:www.chronos.msu.ru/old/RREPORTS/bakhtin_hronotop/hronotop5.html&cd=4&hl=ru&ct=clnk&gl=ua.

Andriy Voron used to say that we are the people of place and wherever we go we are at home. This is a very profound philosophy, so you have to accept this place and then, it will accept you. You feel implicated when you are a part of a place, you feel replenishment and force"¹⁶.

That is why it is no coincidence that one of the basic principles, followed by *Centenarian* / Svitovan, Digger of Wells, Highlander, Maftey, is the pursuit of "one's own shore", "quiet water", i.e. the space where a person can feel comfortable and cozy. In the writer's novels, the interaction of the characters with certain elements of environment (mountains, a forest, a river, etc.) stimulates the process of *self-cognition*, *self-perfection*, and *self-actualization* and optimizes the necessary for inner world cognition reinterpretation of the past in the form of memories, confessions, visions and dreams.

Although M. Dochynets' works get more and more attention, becoming the object of literary studies by M. Vaskiv, S. Velychko, L. Horbolis, S. Kovpik, O. Talko and others, the peculiarities of representation of memory places in his prose remain poorly investigated by scholars, and this fact conditions the actuality of our research.

2. Places of memories

The process of reinterpretation of the past in the novels by M. Dochynets is conditioned by internal and external factors. The images of protagonists Andriy Voron (*Centenarian* / Svitovan), Highlander, Digger of Wells, Maftey embody the idea of a universally gifted personality, whose focus on transcendental, spiritual and physical self-perfection activates creative potential. For example, Andriy Voron from the novel "*Centenarian*", aged 104, feels the aspiration for writing. He notes: "*Paper has been long waiting for me. <...> All my life I have been satiating myself with books, I sifted their wisdom through my soul, leaving just a pinch in my memories – like salt that one takes for a short journey. Prophetic lines of words stand in front of my eyes; and I have a story to tell the world, I have what to extract from the bottom of my soul, and I must do that; and I ask for a benediction, force and vigor to do that, so that my writings might not lie down into the coffin of memory like a dead shroud, but so that they could become water of life for people's use and benefit*"¹⁷. The process of recreation of the past in characters' consciousness is also stimulated by external factors – the chronotopic

¹⁶ Дочинець М. Я беру скарби нашого Закарпаття і вкладаю їх у твори. URL: <http://unicum-zak.info/uk>.

¹⁷ Дочинець М. Вічник. Сповідь на перевалі духу. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2013. С. 4.

coordinates. Since M. Dochynets's prose is focused on multifaceted revelation of inner world of an outstanding personality, the dominant motif is the character's autobiographical retrospective narrative about the way of *self-cognition*, *self-actualization*, and formation of the main positions of life system, stimulated by his interaction with the elements of environment. In the novels "*Centenarian*", "*Svitovan*", "*The Digger of Wells*", "*Highlander*", "*Maftey*" the image of the protagonist is artistically modeled within three chronotopic dimensions with a distinct gerontological leitmotiv: 1) the character in his childhood; 2) the young protagonist gradually getting mature and approaching the period of ontogenesis (from the age of nineteen till the age of one hundred and four); 3) wise elderly person who judges the events of the past through the prism of life experience. The mentioned layers are stratified; they alternate, creating a complex chronotopic structure of the text. The story is fragmented, parts of memories are combined through associations, the accent is laid upon the moments, which became determinant for the formation of the conception of the character's service (the combination of the ideas of "*in-born, natural work*" by Hryhoriy Skovoroda and Christian methodology of "*acquirement the Spirit*"). This chronological inconsistency of memories is explained by Ovferiy from the novel "*The Digger of Wells*": "*My dear patient reader, the one, who reads these lines, the traces of my memory, do not be surprised that my thoughts are skipping on the paper like fleas on burlap. People resemble each other, but their characters differ. My life was cut in strips; I learned to think that way*"¹⁸. Fragmentariness and associativity in assembling of chronotopic layers serves as a proof of authenticity of memories, and the numerous appeals of the narrator create the effect of a "live" conversation with the character.

The episodes about the past of the kin of *Centenarian*, *Highlander*, *Digger of Wells*, *Maftey* are important for the understanding of the concept of the character. Recreating in memory the biographical information and key events from the life of close people, the characters recollect the circumstances and intimate details they just could not witness. Memories-visions of the characters about their own past and their relatives form the common space of family memory, where individual memory of the character is inseparable from the collective one. "*For so am I, like a drop, I am flowing with the river of my family, and can I be different from the river of my family?*"¹⁹, remarks the

¹⁸ Дочинець М. Криничар. Діярюш найбагатшого чоловіка Мукачівської домінії. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2016. С. 26.

¹⁹ Дочинець М.: Горянин. Води Господніх русел. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2013. С. 100.

protagonist of the novel “*Highlander*”, underlying the spiritual connection with his close people.

It is notable that every protagonist begins his autobiographical story-confession not with the moment of birth or his childhood, but with a certain event that directed him towards the way of *self-perfection* (which emphasizes the priority of the spiritual above the physical in the system of worldview). The place of “*spiritual birth*” is important for the formation of the conception of service. These chronotopic coordinates become symbolic for the characters, as they are bearers of personal memories and evoke a corresponding emotional reaction in their consciousness (*sites of memories*). For example, Andriy Voron from the novel “*Centenarian*” notices: “*Where should I begin from? One usually begins from the beginning. But where is the beginning? And what is the beginning? I know only that it is not where one leaves mother’s womb. For that is only a step into the sinful world. The birth is a call. The call you heard and recognized in the dense forest of empty voices*”²⁰ (Dochynets 2013a, 5). The character’s important events (his “*second birth*”) were the battle on Krasne Field for Carpathian Ukraine (March, 1939), defeat, captivity, escape, and hiding from persecution in the Black Forest. Having found himself face to face with the wild nature of the Carpathians, the character indulges in introspection and gradually gets closer to the realization of the mission of his life, as he helps others to perfect themselves physically and spiritually.

In the beginning of his stay in the Black Forest Andriy Voron remembers his childhood and close people: thus, he tries to overcome solitude, not to lose individual identity, to rehabilitate himself psychologically after numerous stress situations. Visions of the past appear in Andriy Voron’s consciousness not only under the influence of a certain emotional state. Images-memories are formed due to visual, gustatory and acoustic associations. The form of a mountain reminds him the features of grandfather’s face, and the sound of water in a mineral forest source helps to actualize in memory the events of childhood, because the character was born in the river (when his mother was rinsing hemp) and grew on its banks.

Recollecting the past, M. Dochynets’s characters show the ability to remember sounds, smells, tactile sensations with astonishing precision. Thus, Andriy Voron in the narration about his escape from the captivity recalls not only images connected with the event, but he also describes in detail every emotional change of his consciousness: “*The thickets of the virgin forest were getting deep and dark; my eyes were dazzled by shades*

²⁰ Дочинець М.: Вічник. Сповідь на перевалі духу. Мукачєво: Карпатська вежа, 2013. С. 5.

of grey; compressed silence and closed space were oppressing the spirit. Brushwood, massive logs, blackthorns and heaps of rotten leaves were blocking my way. The birds stopped whistling and froze when I shuffled through the thicket, the beasts with glass eyes squinted from their hiding places”²¹. The events that the characters consider less important are removed from the narration or they are just mentioned without overburdening the story with details. “It is useless wasting the pen and tormenting my weak body with an ample description of what happened next”²², observes the protagonist of the novel “Maftey”. One more important reason for the presence of informational gaps in the memories of M. Dochynets’s characters is their reluctance to recollect events, circumstances, and feelings that can provoke negative emotions, disturb psychical balance of both narrator and narrated. For example, for *Centenarian* these are the memories about the arrest by soviet soldiers, numerous interrogations and tortures, and the arduous way to the Siberian camps, etc. He explains the absence of the detailed description of these events in the following way: “My sweet reader, while weaving this confession, I prefer not to sharpen but to blunt my pen, in order not to trouble your soul with unnecessary sadness. <...> For nobody needs that terrible experience I had. Why should I resurrect horrors for somebody, if I myself would like to forget them?”²³.

Andriy Voron was helped to struggle against troublesome memories by Kamchadal Tyku, who taught him the method of psychological defense: “Wind was blowing <...> when he made me come back into painful memories; he set up his ear against me to hear how anxiously my blood was circulating, how my heart was shaking. Now and again, hot grease was dripping on the top of my head, on my neck, on my wrists, knees and ankles. I was wiping burning streams – and burning thoughts were disappearing from my tortured memory”²⁴. Dissociating himself from negative, traumatic experience, getting absorbed in his inner world, actively interacting with the environment, the protagonist was capable to preserve his mental health in the severe conditions of Siberian camps²⁵.

²¹ Там само: С. 10-11.

²² Дочинець М. Мафтей. Книга, написана сухим пером. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2016. С. 336.

²³ Дочинець М.: Вічник. Сповідь на перевалі духу. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2013. С. 207.

²⁴ Там само: С. 207.

²⁵ Горболіс Л.: Погодження з природою як подолання травми (за романом Мирослава Дочинця “Вічник”). *Науковий вісник МНУ імені В. О. Сухомлинського. Філологічні науки (літературознавство)*. 2018. № 2. С. 22-31.

Every fragment of memories about the formation of worldview system of M. Dochynets's characters is followed by philosophical digressions-reflections, in which the truths, comprehended by the character in a certain period of his life (with a precise indication of chronotopic coordinates), are concentrated. For example, in the beginning of his stay in the Black Forest, Andriy Voron, who had not fully realized the laws of nature, ruined a snake's nest, and the snake took its revenge upon the offender using its deadly venom. The character managed to recover, actualizing in his memory knowledge and skills obtained from uncle Ferko, who was a snake charmer. This incident became crucial for the formation of Andriy Voron's worldview positions; it was his third mental birth, for he perceived himself as an integral part of the universe: "*As long as I am alive and live among men and beasts, I must follow this law. For I am not taller than a tree, not wiser than a bear, not cleaner than a fish, not more graceful than a roe. I am a whit of the living world, equal among equals; I am a part of a hidden mystery, a fruit of work of the Grand Master*"²⁶. It is important that the protagonist neither stresses the universality of the proposed pieces of advice, nor considers his way of spiritual and physical self-perfection as a unique one. He only seeks to motivate others to grow spiritually with his own example.

The associative combination of chronotopic dimensions and the fragmentariness of the narrative permit the characters of M. Dochynets to reinterpret the events of the past and their actions and convictions from different temporal positions, and that makes possible the comparison of *I-in-the-past* and *I-in-the-present* (retrospective self-analysis). Thus, Andriy Voron confesses that, when he, aged nineteen, left for Krasne Field to fight for Carpathian Ukraine, he did not realize the importance and possible consequences of this action. The character remembers: "*What did we, children, see before that? What did we know? Perhaps, we knew, when we were swarming in Khust, that we would have to die on that field near Tysa. But we did not know that it would be like that*"²⁷. Then, when he was young, he lacked knowledge, wisdom, life experience to recognize the significance of certain events and acquaintances, but now, having reached the maturity, he admits: "*From the bell-tower of my overripened age I look back in that bitter March and read through the store of knowledge: we have neither enemies nor friends among people, but each person is a*

²⁶ Дочинець М.: Вічник. Сповідь на перевалі духу. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2013. С. 65.

²⁷ Там само: С. 179.

teacher, big or small”²⁸¹; “That war was not a war, and we were not heroes – I do not know what it was, but I am sure that the sacrifice was not in vain. Not for the dead but for the living”²⁹². The character is convinced that all the events, even sorrowful and tragic ones were not in vain, as they hardened his body and spirit for future exploits.

In their monologues-confessions the protagonists of M. Dochynets address the problem of fugacity of life, irreversibility of time, which provokes the desire to leave a trace in people’s memory, for “*How fast an hour passes. How fast a day elapses. One has no time to realize, that it was not a day, but a life*”³⁰. Analyzing the changes in their bodies and souls, caused by time, the characters make up advice on overcoming difficulties in the period of ontogenesis. They believe that the negative effects of aging can be overcome with the help of “*natural work*” that one discovers for oneself as a young person; this work favors self-actualization in any period of life. For instance, *Centenarian* / Svitovan, as well as Maftey, considers his mission to treat people using his gift of healer, his acquired knowledge of environment, and his life experience. Ovferiy from the novel “*The Digger of Wells*” regards the sense of life as constant *self-discipline*, work, and increasing of material weal for building up his native town. The pledge of his life success is active work helping him to feel useful, that is why he takes aging quietly as a sacred law of the Universe. Another character of M. Dochynets, the Old Man from the novel “*Highlander*” is convinced that the environment helped him to overcome negative effects of aging, as the forest preserved his eyesight, “*its everyday green world, that greased the eyes with healing tallow*”³¹, water from the river and mountain air make body healthy.

The proximity to the nature, the ability to sense its slightest changes make M. Dochynets’s characters think about the course of time, its cyclicity; the comparison of human life to natural phenomena (germination of a grain, change of seasons, etc.) encourage the comprehension of existence as a circle of recurrences, returns, rebirths: “*The world goes in circles, and so do we, its living particles*”³². This theme is especially clear-cut in the novel “*Maftey*”, in which the

²⁸ Дочинець М.: Вічник. Сповідь на перевалі духу. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2013. С. 9.

²⁹ Там само: С. 179.

³⁰ Дочинець М. Криничар. Діяріюш найбагатшого чоловіка Мукачівської домінії. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2016. С. 100.

³¹ Дочинець М.: Горянин. Води Господніх русел. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2013. С. 7.

³² Дочинець М. Мафтей. Книга, написана сухим пером. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2016. С. 199.

protagonist, searching for vanished girls, gets convinced that the answer to this riddle can be found in the depths of his memory. Certain circumstances, events, things (a resuscitated dead tree, threads, salt from Maramorosh, the legend he heard about Irsad, etc.) arouse Maftey's memories and make him relive the past. The result of the search is the realization that the kidnapper is his former sweetheart Ruzhena, who, dreaming of grandeur, imagines herself Mary, Mother of God, Lady of the Dead Tree (she needed the girls as servants). The character's revelation becomes a serious psychological trial, because once again he meets the woman he loved all his life and realizes that she is still not indifferent to him. The character finds out: the time has no power over such a strong feeling as love. *"Every desire consumes itself, but love lasts eternally"*³³, concludes Maftey. Memories help the character to explore his inner world, to persuade himself that he did the right life choice, and to realize that people do not change with time course, but just become themselves, revealing their hidden nature.

It is typical that the actualization of the past in the novels by M. Dochynets is provoked not only by sites of memories, but also by objects connected with them. For instance, in the novel *"Svitovan"* the portrait of Andriy Voron is such a catalyst for the protagonist. Contemplating this work of art, the journalist-biographer recollects the *"blessed summer"* of his youth, when he lived on Popova mountain (Priest's mountain) in the company of the folk healer: *"The moon that rose above Lovachka silvered the picture with its oblique ray. And in that cool vivid light he perked up. First, hoary tufts of hair and a beard, then eyes, and finally, a mouth, which seemed to move: "Have a good time!" That was the way he usually greeted people"*³⁴.

Although this novel, as well as *"Centenarian"* is focused on the person of Andriy Voron, the author chooses another angle of artistic representation of his worldview system. Memories are directed to the tracing of the psychological influence of the spiritually oriented, *self-replenished* personality on the journalist, emphasis being laid on his reinterpretation of values and life priorities. Andriy Voron suggests the young journalist his system of retrieving mental balance, the essence of which is active interaction with natural environment and physical work (the characters work in the garden and in the kitchen garden, gather herbs, etc.) Svitovan affirms: *"Every day, move till you feel a pleasant tiredness. This is the mainspring of life. A sweetly tired body means fresh thoughts."*

³³ Там само: С. 347.

³⁴ Дочинець М. Світован. Штудії під небесним шатром. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2014. С. 8.

Our belly is fed by our hands. And our head is fed by walking legs. The best thoughts are brought by travelling"³⁵.

Life postulates of the folk philosopher turned out to be effective, and within a short period (the memories embrace one summer) the narrator notes irreversible changes in his world-perception. Thus, for example, he confesses that he cannot pluck a plant without reason, because *"it would look like a violation of a hidden law"*³⁶, an invasion the balance of the world. The character gradually learns to feel joy of simple, everyday things (walks outdoors, tasting of mushrooms baked in fire).

3. Places of generations

The places of generations, which testify to the genetic connection of the protagonists with the genus, acquire importance in the artistic reproduction of memory in M. Dochynets's novels. This is the father's house and the things that fill it, the closest natural environment (geographical location of the building). The problem of a person's mental connection with the living space of the family is the most fully realized in the novel *"Highlander"*, the plot of which is centered on the character's desire to save the *"family nest"* and the riverbank with ancestors' tombs (*place of generations*) from destruction by natural disaster, and, thus, to preserve memory about them. He repeatedly visits the cemetery to overcome solitude and to feel the support of his relatives, who, having passed away, continue watching his life. While fighting against the River the character repeatedly appeals to the ancestral knowledge and skills (he bakes *"mother's"* bread, cooks kvasivka according to his grandmother's recipe, uses agricultural implements that belonged to his relatives, etc.). For example, from his grandfather Mykula he inherited not only physical strength, but also the skill of a carpenter, necessary in working with larch for bank protection. *"It was conceived and established in him, just like juice in a tree hardens to amber resin"*³⁷, explains the narrator. Uncle Tymko's advice, which supports the character in psychological trials and guides him on the path of spiritual *self-improvement*, becomes especially important. Thus, after one more defeat, the old man loses confidence in himself, but, having remembered the instructions of the family sage (*"If fate puts us on our knees, it means we must pray... And then, get up and go on. And we will find the strength to go till the end"*³⁸), he finishes the struggle. It is noteworthy that the solution to

35 Дочинець М. Світован. Штудії під небесним шатром. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2014. С. 30.

36 Там само: С. 22.

37 Дочинець М.: Горянин. Води Господніх русел. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2013. С. 103.

38 Там само: С. 291.

the problem is suggested to the character by his grandfather, who appears in his dream and advises to direct the River in its former riverbed. The narrator notes that at the key moment, when the character's goal was almost achieved, in the reflections of fire on the rock he sees the faces of his relatives – grandfather Mykula, grandmother Ruzhika, mother, father Yonko-Ivanko, uncle Tymko, father's brother, aunt Hafia, wife Kalyna, daughter Vasylyna and others. Thus, the author lays stress on 1) the spiritual unity of the character with the family; 2) emphasizes the protagonist as the guardian of ancestral memory.

The anthropomorphized image of the River near the protagonist's parental home acquires special importance for the reproduction of ancestral memory in the novel *"Highlander"*. The old man was born and raised on its shores; from his ancestors he inherited respect for it as a powerful living being, with which he peacefully shares space. For the protagonist, the River and its banks are the symbols of ancestral memory, as *"Here, near the old man's farmstead, the strait became a river. Here, very near, their ancestral homes – his and the River's – were situated. That is what reconciled them, brought them closer, and united them"*³⁹. Highlander repeatedly addresses monologues to the River, in which he recalls the key moment of the past. His story, like that of *Centenarian*, Well-Digger, Maftay, begins with an event (the force of nature took the life of his wife, damaged his house, and gradually takes away the shore where the family cemetery is located), which becomes a motivator for spiritual search and self-actualization.

In the novel *"The Digger of Wells"*, the return of the protagonist to his hometown after a long journey, intensifies the process of retrospective self-analysis. Interaction with places of memories (the Well, Palanok Castle, city streets) helps the character to comprehend the changes that have taken place in his worldview over twenty years. Having come back to Mukachevo, the character gradually enters the rhythm of the town, begins to feel kinship with its inhabitants, because *"The image of the native land, unique for each person, i.e. a settlement, its surrounding landscapes, historical and cultural environment in general, the important component of which is monuments, acquires importance as one of the determining factors in the formation of the feeling of the Motherland, the spiritual community of people, their national and state mentality"*⁴⁰. Ovferiy begins to write a diary, in which he recreates his way of life and leaves advice on how to become successful and rich. Despite his success in life, the character does not feel completely happy, because he grew up

³⁹ Там само: С. 15.

⁴⁰ Дочинець М. Криничар. Діярюш найбагатшого чоловіка Мукачівської домінії. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2016. С. 7.

an orphan and does not remember his family. His mother, who was a circus dancer, died in childbirth. Her body was given to Latorytsia. Well-Digger admits that he often wanders along the banks of the river to find a place to build a bridge: *“I think to myself, and my eyes look into the depths, grabbing snags, stones, grassy fords. As if they want to see something familiar, close, to meet all-seeing eyes. And my ears listen to the splashes, to the noise of the roar – someone is calling, someone is talking, someone is asking for something. The River is talking to me. The River has something to tell me”*⁴¹. So, there is another reason for his visits to the shores of Latorytsia – this is how Ovferiy communicates with his mother. The return to his hometown partially compensates for the character’s lack of family, as he reunites his spiritual mentor, the priest Symeon and the painter Zhyha, whom he calls “pater”, identifying as the dearest person.

4. Holy places

In his novels, M. Dochynets repeatedly emphasizes the interaction of Andriy Voron, Highlander, Well-Digger, and Maftey with sacred places, and that lays stress on their orientation to the sphere of the transcendent. For example, in the novel *“Centenarian”* the protagonist, exploring his new home, the Black Forest, finds the home of the monk Lavr and his incorruptible relics. Andriy Voron remarks that the presence of the saint in the cell filled his heart with joy, because he felt special energy: *“A familiar, till an ache in the chest, golden-warm face broke through the soot on the board. I took off my hat and crossed myself, feeling the familiar pleasure flow through my body”*⁴². The character was brought up in a family where the Christian tradition was respected, so he was familiar with its basic postulates since the very childhood. Seeing here, in the thicket of the Black Forest, an icon, a lamp, a wooden cross, a candle, after a long solitude, he felt a connection with his family, the comfort of his parental house. Andriy Voron bowed to the ascetic’s body and read prayers, took the icon and a notebook with reflections and teachings of the monk, which helped him to determine the vector of further existence – to serve people and God. *Centenarian* thinks: *“It was amazing that I seemed to follow in his footsteps. Was it a coincidence? Did his spirit hovering over the forest make me listen to reason? I had no answer. And I did not strive for it. As they say: “Do not look for yourself – you were found long ago...” Thank you, Father, for the crumbs of wisdom. And give me a blessing for this fate”*⁴³. Later, monks founded a hermitage near the Lavr’s cell, and Andriy

⁴¹ Там само: С. 21.

⁴² Дочинець М. Вічник. Сповідь на перевалі духу. Мукачєво: Карпатська вежа, 2013. С. 183.

⁴³ Там само: С. 187-188.

Voron actively communicated with the priests, which contributed to his spiritual establishment.

In addition to the sacred places associated with the Christian tradition, landscapes associated with ancient Greek mythology are artistically recreated in the novel “*Centenarian*” Andriy Voron recalls that during his imprisonment in Siberian camps, he met a Greek accused of espionage, Zakharios, who invited him to visit Greece after his discharge. The island of Crete, the treasury of the cultural memory of mankind, made an unforgettable impression on the character: “*I walked barefoot by the sea, and Homer’s hexameters emerged from the muffled boyish memory <...> The sea shimmered with silver scales, and on his elastic body gray moles-islands. My footprints on the sandy shoal licked the tongues of the sea and carried, like mysterious messages, to Poseidon*”⁴⁴. The character finds himself in a completely different, slow and harmonious rhythm of existence. Each element of the environment preserves the memory of the epic past and former greatness of Hellas. Andriy Voron gradually realizes that the measured way of life of the Cretans is determined by the landscape and geographical location of the island, because it is located “*in the sharp salinity of the sea, in the clear sky, in the calm wisdom of the stones*”⁴⁵. He concludes that it is no coincidence that this land has given the world so many sages, because its nature encourages reflection on eternal philosophical problems. His stay in Greece, as well as his stay in the Black Forest and taiga, was a new stage for the character on the path to identifying himself as an organic part of the universe.

5. Traumatic places

In his prose, M. Dochynets does not only artistically recreate places that evoke positive impressions in the minds of the protagonists. Focusing on the depiction of strong-willed personalities, the writer emphasizes their inner strength, which is opposed to such traumatic places as the camps in Siberia, kennels in Mukachevo in the 18th century, the Auschwitz concentration camp, etc. In the writer’s novels, the image of Palanok Castle, a symbol of human suffering and death, repeatedly appears. For instance, in “*Maftey*” the protagonist has to visit the castle to find out whether Oleksa, who was arrested, is guilty of kidnapping the girls. The protagonist remarks the horror he felt as soon as he entered the prison: “*Blood go to my head; nausea and fear squeezed my viscera; I was afraid that the gate would close and I would not get out of here. A slingshot-dungeon! Here I am in an infernal pit, about which I only heard eerie*

⁴⁴ Дочинець М. Вічник. Сповідь на перевалі духу. Мукачево: Карпатська вежа, 2013. С. 246.

⁴⁵ Там само.

*legends*⁴⁶. What he saw evoked Maftey's philosophical reflections on human inner nature, physical and psychological weakness, inability to counter the ruthless system that destroys both the prisoner and his executioner. The protagonist concludes that the worst thing that awaits a person there is not torture and death, but the loss of mind.

The protagonists of M. Dochynets are convinced of the possibility to overcome the negative impact of traumatic places on the human psyche due to collective memory. For example, in the novel "*Centenarian*" Andriy Voron, guided by the instructions of the monks of the Black Forest ("*The one, who dies for the body before is resurrected in spirit*"⁴⁷), declares a protest to the enemy system, because he decides that he has nothing to lose, except human dignity. After his refusal to work in uranium mines, he was locked up in a punishment cell, where "*Icicles froze on the wall like stalactites, and ice was under his feet. A narrow bench served as a bed. That was all. Instead of a window there was a jailer's peephole. A chest of the dead*"⁴⁸. The genetically inherited "*individual, family, ethnic experience*"⁴⁹, and trauma overcoming helped the protagonist to survive in these conditions. Collective memory is reproduced in his mind in the form of psychologically supportive songs and prayers. Ageless managed to maintain his physical and mental health using the experience of survival among the wildlife of the Carpathians and the skill of healing.

CONCLUSION

The creative work of the contemporary Ukrainian writer M. Dochynets attracts attention with its intellectual, philosophical, psychological gist, its original style, but, most of all, with its original conception of a character, which demands substantial and multifaceted research with the use of both traditional and modern approaches to the analysis of the work. The writer's novels are notable for their polysynthetic genre (they combine the features of a parabolic novel, a novel-confession, a novel-diary, and a novel in stories) with the predominance of features of a hagiographic novel that, undoubtedly, influences the narrative, the specificity of which is the retrospective structure of the narration in the form of a memory, a confession, diary entries, etc. The novels are structured according to the principle of internal chronotope that artistically recreates consciousness, way of thinking, and inner world of a person.

⁴⁶ Дочинець М. Мафтей. Книга, написана сухим пером. Мукачєво: Карпатська вежа, 2016. С. 118.

⁴⁷ Дочинець М. Вічник. Сповідь на перевалі духу. Мукачєво: Карпатська вежа, 2013. С. 210.

⁴⁸ Там само: С. 211.

⁴⁹ Пухонська О. Літературний вимір пам'яті. Київ, 2018. С. 5.

In order to understand the concept of the character in the novels “*Centenarian*”, “*Svitovan*”, “*The Digger of Wells*”, “*Highlander*”, “*Maftey*” by M. Dochynets we use the concept “places of memory” – significant coordinates that bears information about protagonists’ past, their relatives and close people and that serves as a catalyst of the process of individual identification, *self-improvement*, and self-actualization. In the writer’s work we find 1) places of memories, which due to the emotional response in the minds of the characters acquire a symbolic meaning for them; 2) places of generations that reveal the connection of the characters with the representatives of the family (home and its environment); 3) tombs as bearers of memory of the dead; 4) places of personal memories of the characters; 5) holy places and mythical landscapes; 6) traumatic places, in which the negative energy caused by human suffering is concentrated. The interaction of the characters with these symbolic centers allows the interpretation of images through confessions, memories, reflections, dreams, visions, instructions of the inner world of *Centenarian* / *Svitovan*, *Highlander*, *Digger of Wells*, *Maftey*; it helps to trace how the characters realize the laws of the universe, how they form their philosophical system, their original sensation of the world, and their moral and ethical values; finally, it emphasizes the problems, genre specifics, compositional features of the writer’s novels.

The protagonists of M. Dochynets are represented as psychologically formed personalities with a rich inner world, who, given the respectable age (from seventy to one hundred and four years), feel the need to comprehend the changes that have taken place in their minds over time, to pass on life experience, knowledge and skills to the next generation. Reinterpretation of the past contributes to the *self-actualization* of the protagonists, helps to preserve their identity in a difficult period of life, as each of them is waiting for the most important moment in his life: 1) feels the approach of “transition” from the earthly life to the eternity (Andriy Voron); 2) makes a difficult life choice between the past and the present (Maftey); 3) begins the “entire life’s work” (Highlander, Digger of Wells).

We believe that this article will not only help to fill lacunas in the studies of M. Dochynets’ prose within the contemporary literary criticism discourse, but it will also present prospects for further research helping to effectively integrate literary criticism into interdisciplinary field and to form positive experience of term formation.

SUMMARY

This article, based on the conceptions by P. Nora, A. Assman, and M. Bakhtin, reveals the peculiarities of artistic reflection interdisciplinary concept “place of memory” in literature on the example of novels in the

novels “*Centenarian*”, “*Svitovan*”, “*The Digger of Wells*”, “*Highlander*”, “*Maftey*” by a contemporary Ukrainian author M. Dochynets. We found out that place of memory in his works is the symbolic chronotopic coordinates that facilitate the interpretation of the concept of a character. The protagonists of M. Dochynets are representatives of individual and collective memory – folk philosophers, healers, public people, who have lived a long eventful life and in the venerable age aspire to pass on their experience and the main ideas of their philosophical system to the next generation in the form of memories, monologues-confessions, diary entries, exhortations, dialogues, etc. It is proven that place of memory actualizes the process of reinterpretation of the past according to the values, aesthetic, moral and ethical priorities of *Centenarian*, *Highlander*, *Digger of Wells*, *Maftey*. We singled out and analyzed the artistic representation of different types of places of memory – sites of memories, places of generations, tombs, holy places and mythical landscapes, traumatic places. It was found out that with the help of interaction with this space the writer artistically recreates the process of protagonists’ individual identity formation (the characters comprehend themselves as defenders of ancestral memory, national and family traditions), as well as the creation of their original life system; he carefully draws their complicated inward life, representing the originality of the world sensation and way of thinking.

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