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**NATIONAL PHILOSOPHICAL VECTORS OF LINA KOSTENKO'S
RECEPTION IN WESTERN UKRAINIAN STUDIES**

**НАЦІОСОФСЬКІ ВЕКТОРИ РЕЦЕПЦІЇ ЛІНИ КОСТЕНКО
В ЗАХІДНІЙ УКРАЇНІСТИЦІ**

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The oeuvre of Lina Kostenko (b. 1930), a luminary within contemporary Ukrainian poetry and cultural circles, manifests as a cohesive amalgam of traditional Ukrainian literary legacies and her idiosyncratic artistic resolutions. The trajectory towards the readership for this poet, who occupies a venerated position amidst the cohort of the 1960s literary renaissance, was fraught with impediments. Following the publication of her seminal poetic collection *“Wanderings of the Heart”* (*“Мандрівки серця”*) (1961), Kostenko elected to engage in a form of tacit resistance against the hegemony of socialist realism pervading the literary landscape. A solitary poem entitled *“Wings”* (*“Крила”*) emerged in 1966, followed by the publication of seven new verses in 1967 within the pages of *“Literary Ukraine”* (*“Літературна Україна”*) journal. Subsequently, she disseminated the singular poem *“Kobzar, you know, it's a difficult era...”* (*“Кобзарю, знаєш, нелегка епоха...”*) in the esteemed periodical *“Dnipro”* (*“Дніпро”*) the ensuing year. The culmination of this phase arrived with the eagerly anticipated release of the collection *“Over the Banks of the Eternal River”* (*“Над берегами вічної ріки”*) (1977).

The deleterious effects of communist censorship, which fragmented poetic texts, consigning them to partial oblivion, resulted in the complete proscription of the aforementioned collection from print. Nonetheless, this punitive measure failed to attenuate or eclipse the innate talent of the artist. Throughout the era characterized by clandestine authorship, Kostenko's literary output found dissemination through samizdat channels, both within Ukraine and beyond, facilitated by the efforts of émigré communities. Noteworthy among such endeavors are the publications abroad, exemplified by *“Lina Kostenko. Poems”* (Baltimore-Paris-Toronto: Ukrainian Publishing House SMOLOSKYP, 1969) [2]. Additionally, select verses of the poet,

translated into English, are featured within the anthology *“Four Ukrainian Poets: Drach, Korotych, Kostenko, Symonenko”* (New York, 1969) [1].

Kostenko’s literary compositions proliferated through the circulation of homemade booklets, painstakingly copied and committed to memory. This phenomenon represented the resonant voice of the homeland articulated in the vernacular tongue, acquiring heightened significance amidst the exigencies of forced displacement. Such compilations assumed particular pedagogical utility within Ukrainian-language educational institutions in Canada and the United States, as well as within instructional contexts of Ukrainian language, literature, and academic institutions such as the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta or the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute.

Literary investigations into the oeuvre of Lina Kostenko began to emerge as early as the late 1950s, notably authored by the eminent Ukrainian poet, publicist, cultural scholar, and émigré academic Ievhen Malaniuk (1897–1968). Malaniuk, arguably the foremost figure in diasporic literary studies, was among the first to discern the talent of the young poetess, stating: “The matter lay not in thematic content, but in an excessively definite tone, an overly sovereign intonation, and an exceedingly vivid literary culture, which – retrospectively – accentuated the level of the 1920s, the neoclassicists, Pluzhnyk, and Janovsky, in short – betrayed the irrepressible process... And, alas, the poetess is authentic and endowed with her own style” [3, p. 226–227].

In American Ukrainian studies (Canada, USA), one encounters select comprehensive articles analyzing the works of Lina Kostenko within the broader context of the 1960s. More prevalent are articles dissecting specific motifs or themes in the poetess’s work, or individual compositions such as *“Marusia Churai”* (*“Маруся Чупай”*, 1987) or *“Scythian Odyssey”* (*“Скіфська Одиссея”*, 2020). Furthermore, there exist reviews of her poetry collections, exemplified by *“Selected Poems”* (*“Вибране”*, 1989) and *“Landscapes of Memory”* (*“Пейзажі пам’яті”*, 2002). Subsequently, we encounter isolated dissertational inquiries into Lina Kostenko.

The verse novel *“Marusia Churai”* (*“Маруся Чупай”*) (1979), honored with the highest state accolade, the Shevchenko Prize, reimagines the life of the legendary Ukrainian baroque poet and singer Marusia Churai (1625–1653). According to literary critic D. Struk, one of the principal elements contributing to reader favorability is the historical authenticity of the verse novel [6, p. 150]. Writing about Ukraine during the era of the Khmelnytsky Uprising was permitted only within the context of the theme of Ukraine’s reunification with muscovy. The myth of unity, meticulously propagated as the central motif of the era and the cornerstone of Ukrainian history, was actively disseminated and incessantly reiterated through ideologically sanctioned heroic narratives. This systematic

reinforcement facilitated the establishment of an institutionally regulated collective memory. Evidently, Lina Kostenko proposed alternative interpretations of Ukrainian history founded upon national ideals, the ideals of freedom, and the unity of Ukraine.

As an individual always belongs to a particular nation, with an awareness of the history, language, and culture of their people, one of the ways to understand oneself and the reasons for one's actions may be through the history of one's own nation. This idea is developed in the article "Restoration of the Self through History and Myth in Lina Kostenko's "Marusia Churai" by literary scholar M. Znayenko. While in prison, Marusia Churai engages in a constant dialogue with herself, seeking to understand the circumstances of Hryts' death, her own motives, and actions. Such introspection organically transitions into an exploration of the history of her people. Lina Kostenko's desire to speak about the past is connected to her deep emotional attachment to her homeland. Now, another character plays a significant role – the wandering deacon – an individual involved in the spiritual life of the people, possessing experience. He tells the lyrical heroine about the betrayal of Yarema Vishnevetsky, as a result of which a part of Ukraine's cultural heritage is destroyed [7, p. 170]. Just as Hryts betrayed Marusia.

Similar interpretive echoes are encountered in the reflections of researcher M. Romanets. The scholar emphasizes the presence of such motifs in the novel – romantic, psychological, criminal. The ideological center enabling the development of these themes, according to the researcher, is the national thought – reflections on the reasons for the loss of authentic historical documents, original texts. The wandering deacon speaks about the importance of transmitting spiritual cultural heritage through songs, thoughts, folklore in general. The material visible signs of the presence of history are architecture. The steppe topos occupies a prominent place in the novel as a marker of Ukrainian identity [5, p. 331].

The importance of understanding one's own history is discussed by reviewer G. Myhaychuk in the review of L. Kostenko's collection "*Wanderings of the Heart*" ("*Мандрівки серця*") (1961), noting the deep connection between the personal and the national: "Her examination of Ukrainian history, particularly the tragic struggle for freedom, becomes a means for understanding herself and for coming on her society" [4, p. 587–588].

It is worth noting that another verse novel, "*Berestechko*" ("*Берестечко*", 1999), also possesses a powerful national orientation. Written during 1966-1967, it was ultimately published in independent Ukraine. Lina Kostenko's first prose novel, "*Notes of a Ukrainian Madman*" ("*Зануски українського самашедця*", 2010), addresses the painful issues of the declared Ukrainian independence. However, these works are completely overlooked by scholars in American Ukrainian studies.

The richness of creative motifs and ideas in Lina Kostenko's poetry opens up great opportunities for reflection on the history of Ukraine, encourages nation-centric thinking, and cultivates respect for the development of Ukrainian language and literature.

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