

SECTION 5. COMPARATIVE LITERATURE STUDIES

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UKRAINIAN BESTSELLERS AS AN OBJECT OF LITERARY STUDIES: KEY NARRATIVES AND EXPLANATORY FEATURES

УКРАЇНСЬКІ БЕСТСЕЛЕРИ ЯК ОБ'ЄКТ ЛІТЕРАТУРОЗНАВЧИХ ПОШУКІВ: КЛЮЧОВІ НАРАТИВИ ТА ПОЯСНЮВАЛЬНІ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКИ

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A systematic and objective study of Ukrainian popular literature is a relatively recent phenomenon, emerging only in the 2010s. To date, the artistic features of many of its works remain insufficiently explored. Of particular interest are the bestsellers, which, due to their popularity, significantly influence the formation of the mentality and social identity of Ukrainian readers.

It is important to note that mass literature, particularly its bestsellers, is a unique phenomenon that is less constrained by established dogmas and canons than elite literature. It offers authors a vast range of possibilities for experimenting with genre, plot construction, and narrative techniques. Contemporary Ukrainian writers of mass literature enjoy a greater degree of freedom than their predecessors, as they are no longer limited by the ideological or censorship frameworks that once shaped the literary process. This freedom allows for the creation of a national literary space that is multidimensional, enabling a synthesis of genres and artistic approaches.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between author and reader, as well as the factors that shape the reader's decision-making process, it is essential to thoroughly examine the artistic elements inherent in contemporary Ukrainian bestsellers. Both mass and elite literature that becomes a bestseller significantly influences the collective

consciousness and cultural development of society, shaping the trajectory of its cultural space for years to come.

British researcher B. Gorski posits that bestsellers in the post-Soviet space have established a comprehensive system for data collection and interaction between authors, publishers, and audiences, leading to new forms of collective creativity characteristic of the cultural markets in capitalist societies. In the contemporary context, the reader's choice has become a key intermediary between literature and market forces, significantly influencing the formation of national literary culture.

As noted by researcher T. Belimova, bestsellers are works that skillfully tell captivating stories, able to fascinate, astonish, and evoke empathy in readers. In this context, examining the narratives of Ukrainian bestsellers is crucial, as narrative serves as the primary mode of interaction between author and reader. It not only reflects prevailing values and cultural attitudes but also shapes them during the creation and perception of a work. The distinctive characteristics of the narrative structure of mass literature significantly influence the consciousness of the contemporary Ukrainian reader, both in the short and long term.

The concept of "narrative" in literary studies is interpreted broadly. T. Kushnirova defines it as "the narration, the presentation of material in an individual author's myth" [3, p. 622]. She further explains that a literary narrative encompasses not only the type of narration (first or third person) but also the compositional structure, the degree of fiction, and the author's encoding of specific ideas and meanings.

The key characteristics of narratives in contemporary mass literature bestsellers can be summarized as follows:

- Versatility: Bestsellers often combine elements from multiple literary genres.
- Use of a "multiple narrator" (a term coined by T. Kushnirova [3, p. 131]), which establishes a sophisticated compositional and narrative structure.
- Structural similarities to a dynamic film plot, demonstrating intermediality.
- Original reinterpretation of traditional myths about the hero and the anti-hero.
- High adaptability to the peculiarities of reader perception, enabling deep interaction with the reader's emotional sphere [4].

Notably, contemporary mass literature is highly flexible in its narrative construction. It lacks rigid canons, and, as T. Belimova points out, each national bestseller is unique and inimitable.

The commercial aspect of mass literature is a significant factor in defining its specificity. The composition and artistic features of a text depend on the emotions and impressions the author aims to evoke in their audience. The narrative structure of bestsellers in mass literature is tailored to match the cultural level and tastes of readers, which in turn reflects the commercial success of these works. This process allows the reader to become a co-creator in the literary process alongside the writer, setting the modern era of literary development apart from previous periods.

Works addressing the Russian-Ukrainian conflict deserve particular scrutiny within the context of contemporary literature. The vitality and strength of Ukrainian popular literature are exemplified by poetry collections, novels, short stories, and anthologies that focus on the struggle of Ukrainians against Russian aggression, even amid times of war.

It is essential to emphasize that, despite its commercial orientation and focus on the reader as a consumer, mass literature holds considerable cultural potential. Contemporary Ukrainian authors, inspired by the classics, contribute to enriching the national literary space, a fact recognized both in Ukraine and abroad.

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