

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-624-9-9>

## CHILDHOOD DURING THE WAR AS A SPACE OF TRAUMA IN ANATOLIY DNISTROVY'S *DAYS OF ANXIETY*

### ДИТИНСТВО В УМОВАХ ВІЙНИ ЯК ПРОСТІР ТРАВМИ У ЗБІРЦІ «ДНІ ТРИВОГ» АНАТОЛІЯ ДНІСТРОВОГО

**Urys T. Yu.**

*Candidate of Philological Sciences,  
Associate Professor,  
Associate Professor at the Department  
of Ukrainian Literature,  
Dragomanov Ukrainian State University  
Kyiv, Ukraine*

**Урись Т. Ю.**

*кандидат філологічних наук, доцент,  
доцент кафедри української  
літератури,  
Український державний університет  
імені Михайла Драгоманова  
м. Київ, Україна*

Anatoliy Dnistrovy is a Ukrainian writer, essayist, and translator, known not only for his prose and essayistic works, but also for his emotionally rich, highly condensed poetry. He is the author of poetry collections «Pokynuti mista» (*Abandoned Cities*, 2004), «Cherepakha Charlza Darvina» (*Charles Darwin's Turtle*, 2015), «Chorna piatnytsia. Virshi» (*Black Friday. Poems*, 2022), poems for children «Harmyder u Dnipri» (*Commotion in the Dniro River*, 2025), «Harmyder u Chornomu mori» (*Commotion in the Black Sea*, 2025), «Harmyder v akvariumi» (*Commotion in the Aquarium*, 2025), and others.

In May 2022, he joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which has significantly influenced his perception and focus in poetry, particularly in his collection «Dni tryvoh» (*Days of Anxiety*), published in 2023. The book became an important literary testimony to the first moments of a full-scale war. The works reflect on how war penetrates people's personal lives – the daily routines and thoughts of civilians and military personnel alike, and the lives of ordinary Ukrainian families. The poetry in the collection is distinguished by its documentary style (the poems are similar to diary entries), minimalism, and a combination of social reflection with deep personal emotion. And, despite the simplicity of the imagery, there is a sense of psychological depth, restraint, absence of pathos, and precise emotional resonance. His style balances between diary entries and poetic reflection, creating a sense of immediacy of the action unfolding on the pages of the book.

As critic Oleh Kotsarev notes, the collection is “partly in the spirit of a kind of ‘poetic diary’ of the first two years or so of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war. Many of the poems in the first two chapters, *Days*

of *Anxiety* and *The Glass Man*, are marked with specific dates and are related to specific events, impressions, and encounters,” and the texts themselves are “largely a search for paradoxes and a search for balance. Which, despite the subject matter and the disturbing atmosphere, unexpectedly has a kind of therapeutic effect” [2].

The author himself noted that the book contains two thematically and emotionally different blocks: “the first section of this book covers the first three months, which were very tense, dramatic, and shocking,” while “the second section is more or less even, when I wrote poetry as a mobilised soldier” [3].

The motif of children’s experiences of war is one of the central ones in the collection. Anatoliy Dnistrovy vividly depicts how the cruel reality of war penetrates their consciousness, distorting their perception of the world and blurring the line between the everyday and the traumatic. The images of children appear as witnesses to a tragedy that has forever changed their childhood.

The collection opens with a poem about anticipation and preparation for war, “misiats my chekaly na viinu” (*We Waited for War for a Month*), written under the impression of the beginning of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The main motif of the poem is the anticipation of war, which is reproduced through the image of a family preparing for possible danger. An ordinary everyday activity – drying bread as a reserve for a “rainy day” – symbolises the tense anticipation of a catastrophe, which may well be accompanied by occupation and famine. The children, however, perceive these rusks as ordinary treats. In this way, the author creates a peculiar contrast between childish innocence and spontaneity and the threat hanging over the whole of Ukraine, as perceived by adults. But when the preparations are finally complete, war arrives. And despite all these preparations, it comes “unexpectedly”: not as expected or imagined. The image of children in a verse poem symbolises hope for the future, which is threatened by the approaching war.

Another poem in which the image of children occupies a central place is “za horizontom znovu kanonada” (*Beyond the Horizon, Cannons Fire Again*). Here, they are the embodiment of past happiness and peaceful life, guides to a time “when we were happy” [1, p.11], to that lost reality with peace, home, and family comfort, which is not disturbed by the “cannonade” beyond the horizon. The slowing down of the action due to enjambement creates additional intonational tension and creates a corresponding emotional emphasis. Anatoliy Dnistrovy recalls only the traces of children, who, together with the image of the white road where they are left and the snowy evening, personify hope and spiritual purity, light even in times of darkness and fear. And alongside the sounds of cannon fire and the image

of a stranger, symbolising the process of invasion, there is a contrast: they are life, the future, war is death and destruction. The loss of home, happiness, peace, and tranquillity due to war runs through the entire textual framework of the work. The poet reflects on the profound break between the past, where there was happiness, children, and therefore hope for the future, and the present, overshadowed by explosions, military violence, and destruction.

In the poem “vesiani ptakhy shchebechut...” (*Spring Birds Are Chirping...*), war is seen through the eyes of a neighbour girl who is engaged in traditional children’s activities – drawing with markers – but the content of the drawings reveals a deeply rooted sense of anxiety and fear. She depicts “yak u nebi / litaiut / chervoni valizy i chorni bomby/ syni valizy i zeleni bomby/ korychnevi valizy i zhovti bomby” (“how in the sky / red suitcases and black bombs fly/ blue suitcases and green bombs / brown suitcases and yellow bombs”) [1, p. 21]. Suitcases symbolise forced evacuation and loss of home, while bombs represent a direct threat to life. However, they are brightly coloured, which emphasises the distortion of the child’s imagination as it tries to comprehend the catastrophe it is experiencing through the means available to it – drawing and imagination. Moreover, the author emphasises the time marker – the girl “uzhe dva tyzhni ne vidvolikaetsia” (“has not been distracted”) from her activity for two weeks, and instead of playing carefree, she “shchodnia/ flomasteramy retelno maliuie” (“every day / carefully draws with markers”) [1, p. 21], recording her anxieties, which she cannot overcome in any other way.

The poem “pered snom vyishov iz synochkom na vulytsiu” (“Before bedtime, I went outside with my son...”) depicts another tragic transformation of a child’s perception. The father shows his son the starry sky and introduces him to the constellations (“malu i velyku vedmedytsiu/ orion i leva” – “the Little and Big Dipper/Orion and Leo” [1, p. 22]). But the child sees “iak shvydko rukhaiutsia/skhozhi na zirky/dvi rakety” (“how fast they move/like stars/ two rockets”) [22]. This scene reveals the depth of the trauma experienced by Ukrainian children – their consciousness has adapted so much to the realities of war that they associate the sky not with stars, but with rockets. For children, the sky is no longer something mysterious and enigmatic; now it is a place of danger. Gradually, rockets have replaced stars, and war has replaced childhood.

The motif of children’s experiences of war becomes a powerful emotional core of the collection, revealing an extremely important humanistic problem for our future. The fragility of life and the illusory nature of “preparation” for tragedy, the intrusion of war into reality, not only through rockets, but also through ruined childhoods, destroyed homes, and shattered lives. Anatoliy Dnistrov’s poetry demonstrates how war

changes not only lives, but also worldviews, especially those of children. Instead of growing up in an atmosphere of security and love, they are forced to adapt to new conditions dictated by war, weapons, constant danger of death, and possible evacuation. War is gradually becoming an everyday reality not only for adults but also for children.

### **Bibliography:**

1. Дністровий А. Дні тривоги. Київ : Віхола, 2023. 152 с.
2. Коцарев О. Птахи та бійниці у дні тривоги: нова поезія війни. *Читомо*. URL: <https://chytomo.com/ptakhy-ta-bijnytsi-u-dni-tryvoh-nova-poeziiia-vijny/>
3. Славінська І. «Дні тривоги» Анатолія Дністрового – діалог з «Днями» Євгена Плужника. Час інтерв'ю. *Радіо Культура*. 2023. URL: <https://ukr.radio/news.html?newsID=102675>

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-624-9-10>

## **THE IMAGE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE TEXTS BY L. KOSTENKO**

### **ОБРАЗ НАРОДУ В ТВОРЧОСТІ Л. КОСТЕНКО**

**Yurova I. Yu.**

*Candidate of Philological Sciences,  
Acting Associate Professor  
at the Department of languages,  
Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky  
Academy of Music  
Kyiv, Ukraine*

**Юрова І. Ю.**

*кандидат філологічних наук,  
в.о. доцента кафедри  
гуманітарних наук,  
Національна музична академія  
імені П. І. Чайковського  
м. Київ, Україна*

Шістдесятники, як поети, так і прозаїки, у своїх творах активно зверталися до зображення народу – як загальної історичної єдності, так і одиничних його представників. Не стала виключенням у цьому плані й Л. Костенко. Відповідно завданням нашого дослідження буде розглянути особливості зображення поетесою образу народу у її текстах. Одразу варто зауважити, що образ народу в творах Л. Костенко має дуже широке трактування та втілення, як позитивне, так і негативне. Позитивне зображення відбувається переважно у текстах малого обсягу, натомість у великих творах (поєми, романи у віршах) образ народу переживає глибоке філософське осмислення, відповідно його зображення достатньо неоднозначне. Крім того, у своїй творчості