

# БОГДАН ЛЕПКИЙ У ПОЛІКУЛЬТУРНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ ЄВРОПИ ТА АМЕРИКИ

## LITERARY DIVERSITY OF BOHDAN LEPKYI

Раїса Чорній

Тернопільський педагогічний університет імені Володимира Гнатюка  
Кафедра практики англійської мови та методики її викладання

### ABSTRACT

The article deals with the idea of portraying Bohdan Lepkyi as a talented writer who created his works based not only on the literary contemporary tendencies and art visions but also on national identity of his target audience, the Ukrainians, that later will be reflected in his poetry and fiction. The creativity of Bohdan Lepkyi is analysed from the perspective of the world tendencies in combination with Ukrainian authentic elements that empowered it with actuality in the Ukrainian society in particular and in the world of the whole.

Key words: Bohdan Lepkyi, national identity, modernism, literary authenticities, national consciousness, symbol.

В статті розглянуто постать відомого українського письменника Богдана Лепкого, творчість якого зосереджена не лише у контексті тогочасних літературних традицій, а й увібрала у себе мистецькі напрямки, рефлексивно репрезентуючи національну ідентичність свого читача. Світові тенденції у поєднанні з автентичними вкрапленнями української народності створюють образ українського суспільства зокрема, та світових настроїв загалом.

Ключові слова: Богдан Лепкий, національна ідентичність, модернізм, літературна автентика, національна свідомість, символ.

W artykule omówiona została postać znanego ukraińskiego pisarza Bohdana Łepkiego, którego twórczość osadzona jest nie tylko w kontekście ówczesnych literackich tradycji, ale również wchłonęła różne artystyczne kierunki, w sposób refleksyjny reprezentując tożsamość narodową swego czytelnika. Światowe tendencje w połączeniu z autentycznymi wtrąceniami ukraińskości tworzą obraz społeczeństwa ukraińskiego i nastrojów światowych w ogóle.

Słowa kluczowe: Bohdan Łepki, tożsamość narodowa, modernizm, autentyzm literacki, świadomość narodowa, symbol.

**Formulation of a research problem and its significance.** Bohdan Lepkyi (1872-1941) is Ukrainian writer, folklorist, translator, philologist, editor and popularizer of Ukrainian cultural heritage, public figure. His name was crossed out from literature by Soviet power, but not to efface from people's memory. According to R. Hromiak (1992) Bohdan Lepkyi came back to Ukraine by his magnificent oeuvre that perpetuated his incredible spirit [2, p. 211].

**Analysis of the research into this problem.** The phenomenon of Bohdan Lepkyi is reflected in scientific works of many Ukrainian researches (M. Zhulynskiy, M. Ilnytskyi, O. Myshanych, F. Pohrebennyk, V. Pratsiovytyi, L. Oliander, H. Aleksandrova, N. Bilyk-Lysa, etc.) but the important role in investigating of authentic texts denotes to the literary school of V. Hnatiuk Ternopil Pedagogical University presented by scholars (R. Hromiak, M. Tkachuk, O. Kutsa, O. Labashchuk, Z. Lanovyk, M. Lanovyk, N. Poplavska, P. Soroka, N. Kuchma, I. Papusha, etc.).

**The goal and the specific tasks of the article.** The relevance of this article is in celebrating diversity of Bohdan Lepkyi as a writer that presents in his masterpieces interrelations of literature and art.

**Statement regarding the basic material of the research and the justification of the results obtained.** Creative activity of Bohdan Lepkyi belongs to the period of difficult social and political processes. His talent, his creative intuition let him delicately feel the conformity of different kinds of genre with definite realia of time.

The talent of Lepkyi is developed under the influence of the traditions of the Ukrainian classics of the second part of the XIX century including the novels of manner and psychological ones, innovative prose of I. Franko, M. Kotsiubynskiy, V. Vynnychenko, V. Stefanyk, O. Kobylinska and the brightest representatives of the Polish modernism S. Pshybyshkevskiy, V. Orkan in particular.

According to modern philologists, Bohdan Lepkyi was a great representative of a new type of Ukrainian culture artist on the border of 19th and 20th centuries. He belonged to those integral figures whose encyclopaedic knowledge and outstanding erudition successfully combined philosophy and versatility of the conception of the world, clearly defined the peculiarities of individual and social values [6, p. 3-4].

Poetry of Bohdan Lepkyi belongs to the first manifestation of modernism tendencies in the Ukrainian literature in the first decade of the XX century and leads this literature to the new aesthetic horizon introducing it in the context of general European literary development. As a poet Bohdan Lepkyi was associated with group of young writers "The Young Muse" (Moloda Muza) emerged in 1906. Bohdan Lepkyi's creativities were based on the realism background. His ideal wasn't "art for art sake" not avoiding social issues, he dealt with "art for living" that means "art for people". According to V. Kachkan early Ukrainian modern was caused by the national idea and volitional impulse for strengthening and development of the mental characteristics in the literary work [3, p. 32].

Bohdan Lepkyi as a greater writer together with his talented contemporaries indicated the European vector in the Ukrainian history and in the development of the Ukrainian art [6, p. 4].

His brilliant knowledge of foreign languages (Polish, German, Russian) gave him the opportunity to enrich the world literature with the greatest samples of Ukrainian culture. Thus the works of T. Shevchenko, I. Franko, V. Stefanyk, M. Kotsiubynskii were represented by Polish and German interpretations of Bohdan Lepky. The Ukrainian readers were introduced to the artistic world of Heinrich Heine, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Maria Konopnicka, M. Hohol, V. Korolenko, M. Lermontov, O. Pushkin.

Moreover Bohdan Lepky was the editor who published more than 20 volumes of Ukrainian classic literature abroad (Poland, German) and used his skills of painting in publishing (preparing and issuing books), designing covers, illustrating picture books of yours and other authors.

Bohdan Lepky mentioned that if he weren't a writer, he would be a painter. Though he wasn't a professional painter all his life Bohdan Lepkyi was greatly inter-

ested in this kind of art. His artistic oeuvre consists of portraits his dearest and nearest (father, mother, grandfather, grandmother), portraits of renowned Ukrainian writers (Taras Shevchenko, Lesiia Ukrainka, Olena Pchilka, Marko Vovchok, Hryhorii Skovoroda), historic figures (Princess Olha, Volodymyr Monomakh, Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, Ivan Bohun, etc), set of landscapes, numerous drawings, icons. Today one of the collections of Bohdan Lepkyi's paintings (created in 1885-1937) that is presented in the Bohdan Lepkyi Museum in Berezhany contains 81 works [9]. He tried to paint since his early childhood. His father, a pseudonymous writer, Marko Murava, supported the artist aspiration of Bohdan Lepkyi: "Let Bohdan paint, we need historical artists..." [7, p. 617].

In his "The tale of my life" (*Kazka moioho zhyttia*) Bohdan Lepkyi wrote that he was greatly attracted by painting. Ordinary irreplaceable landscapes were the source of his artistic enjoyment. He was enticed by colours either by their harmonic variance or multiple tints and tinges. He perceived and enjoyed the beauty of each colour as purple created smile, green comforted nerves, blue incited to dreams [8].

As a scholar Bohdan Lepkyi tried to show that the Ukrainian literature creates its own themes, figurative ingenuity, genre and style of writing in correlation with the world literary movements. Bohdan Lepkyi manifests his nationality in his works where the author reflects the national spirit making an impression and influence on the life of nation, rousing consciousness up, spreading love to native land, to people, to the people's past, to people's fate, people's fortune and misfortune — so he can be considered as a national writer who manifests his nationality in his works.

Bohdan Lepkyi's aspiration for Europe directed process and intensive inclusion of the Ukrainian culture to the world cultural process, his popularizing of the Ukrainians' spiritual work among the Poles plays one of the most important things [1, p. 122]. As a great and active popularizer Lepkyi did his best in glorifying Ukrainian cultural achievements abroad. In 1930 he compiled the first manual of "The History of Ukrainian Literature" (*Narys literatury ukrainskiej*) in Polish where the success of the Ukrainian masters of word were represented in the context of cultural and historical process [3, p. 36].

Bohdan Lepkyi's role in perpetuating of the national spirit of the Ukrainians, their cultural and historical memory is great. His works deal with the most important problems of Ukraine and its people and are tightly connected with historical past of Ukraine, national liberation struggle of the Ukrainians, moral and ethical activity, spiritual and cultural development, our customs and traditions. Being on the top of the world culture he didn't break his rule based on the principles of own national identity, originality of the Ukrainian artistic merit. Having left behind his historic time, he could unite (bring together) past and future by his themes, motives and images and became either the herald of deep ideas and inner striving of the Ukrainian nation or the embodiment of the prophetic word refers to the irresistibility of the Ukrainian national ideas [6, p. 12].

National idea is the principle of the Ukrainian modernism with organic adaptation of the European tradition. According to M. Ilnytskyi the peculiarities of Lepkyi's poetry include modernist features which are neither in opposition to realism nor tradition, they are based on this tradition moreover they enrich it with new motives, images, forms [4, p. 5]. Thus Lepkyi's modernism grew from the tradition, the writer tried to synthesize new approach and methods.

The category of ethnic is the principal one in the prose of Lepkyi. It is expressed by the concept of "ideal" hero and by combining social and national tenden-

cies simultaneously as the noticeable feature of influence on the writer's world-view. According to Y. Kuznetsov, the aesthetics of romanticism and neo-romanticism on the one hand and impressionism on the other were impacted on the creative activity of Bohdan Lepkyi [5, p. 115].

As Bohdan Lepkyi spent much of his life in exile abroad the motif of numerous of his works is penetrate with a feeling of listlessness and general dissatisfaction resulting from forsaking the native land. His poetry represents author's feelings, thoughts and dreams. They are penetrated by immeasurable ennui for dearest Ukraine, for Halychyna. The problem of abandoning native environment is brightly represented in the following works as "Tykho. Tykho, niby lykho", "V svit pishly my, I teper nam...", "Ne plach koly znivetchyt dolia..."; "Chuzhe pole nohy kole...", etc.

The poem "Zhuravli" (Cranes), published in 1910 in one of Lviv's literary magazines was put to music by Bohdan Lepkyi's brother. This poem soon became a popular song among "Ukrainian otherlands" (N. Khanenko-Friesen). A concise form of this poem-song depicts the experiences of departure, distance and separation of the Ukrainians, especially those outside of their homeland: "Do you hear, my brother, my friend,/ how the stocks are leaving for better lands,/ calling 'croo, croo, croo / I will die in the alien land,/ flying over the ocean, / and wearing out my wings, croo, croo, croo". According to N. Khanenko-Friesen, this poem-song was subjected to true folkloric fine-tuning when its lyrics were changed and it became known by the title "The Storks Song" rather than by the original title assigned to the poem by Lepkyi himself [11]. This powerfully created poem became a symbol of Ukrainian otherlands. Throughout the twentieth century the crane metaphor associates with as migrants, emigrants, and overseas kin where "ennui is a realized category of tragic, it isn't as invariable motive of Lepky's prose. It is the combination of writer's philosophical comprehension of the Ukrainian people's destiny with the heroes' mystic and religious convictions" [10, p. 197].

#### **Conclusions and prospects for further research.**

Literary heritage of Bohdan Lepkyi contains the pluralistic tendencies of wide range combinations of art in literary form. His creativity synchronises national identity within the frame of the world phenomena. Further research is in investigating the creativity of Bohdan Lepkyi's works in the English-speaking receptions.

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