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### **PAVLO HOLOVCHUK'S OEUVRE: THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERCULTURAL INTERACTIONS OF UKRAINE AND THE BALKAN REGION**

The article analyzes Pavlo Holovchuk's oeuvre, whose works assert the ideals of intercultural interactions in the contextual understanding of this concept. The books of the Ukrainian-speaking poet, prose writer, journalist and publisher from Croatia Pavlo Holovchuk demonstrate the contextual background of Ukrainian literary interactions with the Balkan writings in modern conditions. In our view, it is beyond the dispute that literatures may therefore be compared and understood via a historical process. It should be noted that the problem of the intercultural interactions based on the works by Pavlo Holovchuk is not studied enough in the literary criticism. The dynamics of the perception of Pavlo Holovchuk's works in Ukraine and abroad is adjusted by the circumstances of the writer's living in the diaspora. However, it should be emphasized that the cultural interactions take place in present-day Ukraine as well as countries of the Balkan region, the conclusions and suggestions are applicable to a much wider context of interaction between people with different cultural background. The need for conducting this research is due to the fact that the perception by readers, especially in Balkan countries, of Pavlo Holovchuk's prose in comparison with the similar works of other authors is of exceptional importance in the process of popularization of Ukrainian diaspora literature.

*Keywords: Pavlo Holovchuk's oeuvre, Ukrainian diaspora literature, intercultural interactions, interactions of Ukraine and the Balkans*

Pavlo Holovchuk's oeuvre represents the cultural heritage of both the Ukrainian people and the peoples of the Balkan region, including Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia. It is a Ukrainian-speaking poet, prose writer, journalist and publisher from Croatia, whose works assert the ideals of inter-cultural interactions in the contextual understanding of this concept. Pavlo Holovchuk was born on July 5, 1940 in the village of Deviatyna, located in Bosnia and characterized by its Ukrainian features. It is situated between the towns of Banja Luka and Prnjavor. In search of a better fate, settlers from Bukovyna, Halychyna, and Zakarpattia came here in different epochs, but most of them – at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Pavlo Holovchuk's ancestor from the outskirts of Buchach (Ternopil province) also arrived in Deviatyna. In his father's house, prayers were often said: his father Andrii was a church clerk, and his grandmother Stefania (maiden name Nimashchuk) was constantly helping him. Pavlo also developed the habit of praying. Therefore, it is quite clear why their son became a student in the classical gymnasium of the Salesian fathers in Križevci, Croatia. Then he attended the administrative school and entered the Law Faculty of Sarajevo University. He did not manage to complete his studies there due to the lack of money. After 1956, the situation for the Ukrainians, who were forced by life's troubles to live in the countries of Central Europe, changed for the better. There emerged the socio-cultural societies of Ukrainians, including the cultural and artistic society named after Taras Shevchenko in Banja Luka. This is where Pavlo Holovchuk found himself and he became the life and soul of it. He was involved in all activities: he was delivering lectures on the history of Ukraine and working as the Ukrainian radio editor; he was also contributing to the „Nova dumka“ magazine which was published in the Ukrainian language and was organizing summer youth camps of „Plast“. This period also marks the beginning of his creative pursuits. He wrote his first works in Serbian and Croatian, but later completely switched to writing in Ukrainian. Here the factor of organic self-identification appears: when the author preserves the national priorities, although he functions in the foreign environment.

In the 1970s, Pavlo Holovchuk kept in touch with figures of Ukrainian culture from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Canada, the United States, as well as Ukraine, which he first visited in 1969. During that period he was personally acquainted with representatives of the Ukrainian elite – Iryna Kalynets and Ihor Kalynets, Mykhailo Osadchyi, Taras Melnychuk, Ivan Hel, Hryhorii Chubai. One can hardly overestimate his contribution to the independence of the Ukrainian State. For twelve years running, Pavlo Holovchuk's voice was heard on Radio Banja Luka. His interesting radio programmes were addressed to the Ukrainian listeners who lived in Bosnia, Cro-

atia and Serbia. And since the 1980s, he had been working at the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Hamburg for nine years.

Since 1989, Pavlo Holovchuk had been working in the capital of Bavaria – Munich, which is well known for its Ukrainian educational and cultural, church centers. It is particularly notable that, during this period, in the poems *To the Ukrainians of Bosnia*, *To My Bosnia*, *Nostalgia*, *To My Friends* he intends to bring the truth about the offended in Ukraine, as well as in Bosnia to the imaginary recipient. However, he is not only a poet, but also a prose writer, a thoughtful publicist and a journalist who took the challenging responsibility of actually performing the duties of the editor of the *Christian Voice* newspaper, one of the oldest foreign publications printed in Ukrainian, which was founded in January 1949. When he retired he settled in the town of Lypovliany, where his writing talent started to manifest more vividly. His editions are *Originally from Ukraine* (*Корінням з України*, 2000), *Colourful Dreams or Old Man Panas Bezdolnyi's Letters* (*Кольорові сни або листи діда Панаса Бездольного*, 2003), *Here I Have Heard My Native Word...* (*Тут я почув своє рідне слово...*, 2005), *Stacks* (*Стіжки*, 2007) and *Our Fates* (*Наші долі*, 2010). According to Mykola Mushynka, „Pavlo Holovchuk's book „Our Fates“ is a masterful description of the long-suffering life of Ukrainians in Bosnia and Slavonia from ancient times to the present“ (Головчук, 2010). Mykhailo Liakhovych who wrote a thoughtful preface to the book *Stacks*, highly praised his writing efforts. One can only regret that the name of Pavlo Holovchuk is far from being well known in Ukraine and beyond, since the sporadic publications placed on the pages of the periodical press rarely reached the general public.

During his life Pavlo Holovchuk had numerous meetings with prominent socio-cultural figures, in particular, Vira Vovk, a Ukrainian writer from Rio de Janeiro, Yulian Baranovskyi, her countryman from Bosnia who had to serve his sentence for 20 years in Siberia, Roman Kulyk from Lviv. Pavlo Holovchuk together with Petro Ovad (1941–2006) visited Zakarpattia in 1992; in Uzhhorod Mykola Zymomrya greeted him on behalf of the Zakarpatian regional the „Prosvita“ („Enlightenment“) Society and „The World of Culture“ association. Certainly, as a journalist and a passionate publicist Pavlo Holovchuk admitted that a closer acquaintance with Ukraine made an unforgettable impression on him.

The book *Colourful Dreams or Old Man Panas Bezdolnyi's Letters* (where, in fact, Bezdolnyi can be translated as Fateless) was particularly significant among Pavlo Holovchuk's works. It was edited by Mykola Zymomrya and published in Drohobych in 2003. The author started to use the name „Panas Bezdolnyi“ for signing, as a rule, his prose, dramatic works and publi-

cistic speeches. He willingly uses a letter form as an artistic means of enlivening a conversation – a kind of dialogue with the imaginary reader. This is, so to say, an original series of letters – Pavlo Holovchuk's public messages, which were heard in numerous radio programs broadcast on Banja Luka Radio from Bosnia. The writer worked as a literary editor here for ten years. Many of these letters-reflections were published in the „Nova dumka“, which gained wide popularity in Ukraine at the time.

Among his prose works, in addition to the aforementioned series of letters, collectively titled *Dear Countrymen!*, one should pay special attention to a satirical story *How Sophron Got Married and Lived His Life Happily*, humorous writings *The Scientific Work of Omelko Khvostomvertia* (*The Scientific Work of Omelko Wag-the-tail*), *Your Woman, Your Person, Love Letters* and others. Pavlo Holovchuk also managed to write a comedy – a one-act joke – called *Good Trade*, which is based on folk humor. Thus, works of different genres, reflections-meditations of biographical, lyrical and social dimensions are presented here. In this connection, we may talk, first of all, about the specific parallels regarding the use of the factual material in prosaic works by Pavlo Holovchuk and the ones by the famous Serbian writer Milisav Savić. Thus, the former author's works are worth comparing with the latter author's ones. There may be identified the principles that influence the process of choosing motives, their ordering and artistic reflections, for example, in his novel *The Loves of Andrija Kurandić* (1972), as well as in the collections of short prose pieces *Young Men from Raška* (1977) and *Uncle about Town* (1977). It should be noted that both authors were able to masterfully fill their text structures with parts from folk stories, legends, as well as author's additional comments, which were often humorous.

It should be admitted that the Ukrainian writing generally develops in an organic connection to the artistic achievements of representatives of related and unrelated literatures. It is quite clear that many of its representatives stand for traditional approaches to the depiction of reality (Зимомря І., 2016). The talk is primarily about writers who seek to meet „ordinary“ readers' needs so that they might reflect on the essence of life and at the same time these writers create the basis for their own creative impulse with the projection on the recipient. Pavlo Holovchuk's individual style is just like the one described. It was formed under the influence of the traditions of the Ukrainian writing, as well as neo-realistic prose in the context of the literature of the contemporary Yugoslavia. During the 1960's and 1970's its representatives were such prominent writers as Miroslav Yosic-Vishnic, Dragoslav Mihailović, Živojin Pavlović, Milisav Savić, and Vidosav Stevanović. They started a neo-realistic trend, marked by a synthesis of modernist and realistic literatures (Василишин, 2012).

The literary generation of neo-realists strictly rejects social realism and they do not put up with various types of „escape“ from reality into the realm of the fantastic, abstract and generalized. However, Pavlo Holovchuk's texts are instructive. There he puts forth questions and answers them. In this form the author skillfully documented his thoughts on the facts that took place, the events that caused both admiration and protest against injustice, as well as on the phenomena that required explanation and appropriate interpretation. Here is an example related to *The Old Man Panas Bezdolnyi's Letter*, called *We are still worth something*:

„Під час візиту Папи в Україні про наш народ вогорив цілий світ. Був се триумф нової української гисторії. Свойов файнов мовов завстидав українських депуїтатів і богатъох нещасних перекінчиків... Міцно зрусифкований Київ чекає відновленє в душах своїх мешканців... А звідси – проханє: беріт приклад з Папи – поляка: він навчивсі нашої мови, аби два народи-сусіди жили у згоді-злагоді. Не забуваймо нашу мову!“ (Головчук, 2003: 5–6) („During the Pope's visit in Ukraine the whole world was talking about our people. It was the triumph of the new Ukrainian history. He used his language to make Ukrainian deputies and many worthless traitors feel ashamed... The strongly russified Kyiv is awaiting the restoration of its citizens' souls... He put forth a request follow the example of the Pope who was Polish: he learned our language so that the neighbouring peoples could live in harmony. Let's not forget our language!“ – translated from Ukrainian by I. Z., O. Z.).

It can hardly be denied that the imperatives of the old man Panas, like those of an old man Shchukar (Shchukar means a Pike Catcher) about whom Mikhail Sholokhov wrote, are not aggressive at all; The „worthless traitors“ live in the capital over the Dnipro, rejoicing about life, though their „service to the people“ is limited to their household intentions. As a rule, Panas's letters are aphoristic, they are full of delicate instruction which implies hope: the old man is ready to apologize if „the children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren“ of those „worthless traitors“ are able „at least to say a word!“ in the mother tongue.

The satirical-humorous writing does not refer only to the infallibly Ukrainian down-to-earth spirituality, though, of course, the Ukrainian tradition is present in its best dimensions. However, the quality of the authentic Ukrainian spirit, to which the reader is usually accustomed, is outlined mainly by motives: their pivotal axis is „laugh through tears“ and cry with a smile on their lips. Such humour, if properly disclosed in relation to the characters' adequate living conditions, also gives an impetus to the self-awareness of the really existing, not distorted or flawed truths. In this context, there are

humoresques that feature real and extra-ordinary qualities of common sense. These are humoresques which are based on figurativeness and picturesqueness, which do not so much clarify, as point to contradictions, single out comic true stories. The latter actualize the aesthetics of laughter and testify to the non-textual all-encompassing principles that relate to a certain depth of the landmark story. Hence the ironic, comic-ironic or tragic-ironic spectrum of satire-humorous pathos that deepens the ethical rootedness of old, outdated, or new habits in human life. The names of Ostap Vyshnia, Oleksandr Kovinka, Stepan Oliynyk, Dmytro Bilous, Stepan Voskrekasenko, Fedor Makivchuk, Mykyta Hodovanets, Pavlo Hlazovyi, Yevhen Dudar, Oleh Chornohuz, Yurii Shyp and others became prominent the Ukrainian humoristics. We are talking about those who wrote their works in the genres of satire and humor, who in different epochs and under different conditions that accompanied the twentieth century, established the standards of the satirical genre, the defining manner of this artistic writing, provided we mean mainland Ukraine (Мушкетик, 1981: 14–15; Зарпбелный, 1981: 261; Лыныцькый, 1987: 41–42; Марко, 1987: 32; Зуб, 1991: 27–29).

Undoubtedly, we should not forget about the heritage of the Ukrainian diaspora that has always been an integral part of Ukrainian culture in general. So, for example, the outstanding literary scholar, writer and translator Ihor Kachurovskyi, who has been destined to live in Munich for more than half a century, convincingly evaluates twelve genres of Ukrainian diasporic humoristique, including: a comedy, a sketch, a literary parody, parodic mystification, a parodic paraphrase, a newspaper feuilleton, a radio feuilleton, a short story and a novella, a satirical poem, a satirical tale, an epigram, a poetic humoresque and a poetic joke (Качуровський, 1992: 152). They were written by various authors whose names, unfortunately, are still little known in Ukraine. Among them there should be mentioned, first of all, Avenir Kolomyiets (*The Trial of Don Juan*), Ivan Kernytskyi (*By the Gypsy Roads*), Ivan Antypenko (pen-name Martin Zadek; *Interplanetary People*), Hanna Cherin (*The Crafty Makitra*), Vasyl Chaplenko (*Isko Hava*), Vasyl Onufriienko (*Stalin in Hell*). It is undeniable that these people created unique models, story moves with reflections, laughter, a varied genre-style humoristique. It is high time we got to know the experience of the aforementioned authors and drew readers' attention to their satirical-humorous appreciation of life, artistic and aesthetic condemnation. In this respect to the classic sources belong, first of all, Ivan Kotliarevskyi's notorious poem „*Aeneid*“, which is rightly regarded as a model of artistic and aesthetic laughter with its parallel substantive and subtext, or rather, beyond textual pathos. The similar parallel content-richness is characteristic of Pavlo Holovchuk's works. With his *The Old Man Panas Bezdolnyi's*



*Letters*, he confidently mastered the forms of witty-humorous, substantive-ironic, non-stereotypic-satirical prose.

Pavlo Holovchuk's works are not long and have a clear storyline that incorporates unexpected twists, the peculiar way of addressing similar to „a dialogue“, witty jokes or ironic cues for a deeper disclosure of morality. The best works of his include: *The Fine Horses*, *The Old Talker*, *Colourful Dreams*, *It's Hard to Contemplate Ukraine*, *Babylon*, *Ukrainian Identity*, *Hell*, *The God's Hornbeam*, *A Little More About „Us“ and also about „Them“*, *The All-Knower*, *Our Rights*, *Chornobyl*, *The Jester*, *Baba*, *Looking Like a Sinner*. They contain fresh details despite the fact that they have a similar presentation style, that is, the form of letters. Collisions are disclosed in such a way that laughter does not leave a trace of insult, it is only an artistic illustration of the portrayed and ridiculed. There should always be an equilibrium everywhere based on the truth, which is in the inner layers of folk humor. This was characteristic of the works of Mykola Gogol; even on his monument in Nizhyn, this content-emotional balance comes from the words: „I look at the world through laughter visible to the world and tears invisible to the world...“ (translated from Russian by Ihor Kachurovskyi). To examples of sophisticated humor in Ukrainian literature belong works by Ostap Vyshnia, Hryts Zozulia, Mykola Ponedilok, Yevhen Dudar, Pavlo Hlazovyi, Yurii Shyp, Oleksandr Irvanets. By the way, Pavlo Holovchuk repeatedly singles out the names of Mykola Gogol, Edward Kozak (Hryts Zozulia), Mykola Ponedilok, as well as Yurii Vynnychuk. They move the old man Panas Bezdolnyi every time when it comes to „making a little joke on our people“. After all, „there were the times when it was done by such unsurpassed people as Hryts Zozulia (Edward Kozak) and Mykola Ponedilok, and I, the unfortunate one, I have wished to imitate them for some reason“ (Головчук, 2003: 53–54), – says the author of the letter entitled *Division*.

There is no doubt that Pavlo Holovchuk is quite knowledgeable of the plot and compositional qualities of a humoresque. His stories are frequently arranged in such a way that the reader „notices“ the ethical rootedness in the autobiographical beginning. Hence the titles are formed as questions: *How many of us are there?*, *Who are we?*, *Colourful dreams (When was it much better?)*, etc. There can be drawn a typological parallel with the chronical-humorous work of Olexander Kovinka (1900–1985) *Why Ain't I a Falcon?*...

Yet, a noteworthy detail is that the characters' words come from the mouths of Mykola Ponedilok, Hryts Zozulia, and Pavlo Holovchuk, they talk to the world in an abstract, undifferentiated, artificial-literary language. It acquires the original sounding in view of its peculiar dialect. In the case with the old man Panas Bezdolnyi, the language features play an additional

important role. This tool has been recently used by Dmytro Keshelia (*Hosundragoshi*, 1994; *Thieves' World*, 1997; *The Offender, or There Will be no Movie*, 1999), Roman Solylo (*Bibrka Narratives*, 1991) and others. In a word, as Pavlo Holovchuk noted, „the old man Panas Bezdolnyi is the prototype of a man's healthy mind“. There is also traced here the connection with the work of Serbian writer Dragoslav Mihailović, who through the authentic language of his characters, sought to demonstrate to the reader the effective and functional use of various kinds of alive, vernacular language, jargon and dialects. To expand the compositional characteristics of the narrative Pavlo Holovchuk uses socially and dialect-marked language.

„His thoughts and moods, – Mykola Zymomrya emphasized in his afterword to the above-mentioned edition, „should be considered through the prism of the language beauty, in fact, as the organizing component of the old man Panas Bezdolnyi's Letters“ (Зимомря, 2003: 187). Other textual components, such as facts, events, socially important accents are subject to this component. In this respect, there can be drawn an additional parallel at the level of comparing the images depicted by P. Holovchuk and Dmytro Keshelia's imagology. He made his debut with prose in 1978, when the „Carpathians“ publishing house published a collection of stories *The Tree of Green Rain Tree*. In the preface „May Destiny be Hallow'd and Happy!“ I. Chendei noted the keenness of observation, emotional inspiration, the feel for a language, imaginative thinking (Чендей, 1978: 3). These features are especially typical of the stories *While There is Sunlight*, *Like the Autumn Grass*, *Letters*, *A Cabin in the Bright Garden on the Hill*, *The Wild Dove*, *All Seasons*, *Road Home*, *For the Wet Summer*, *The Hot Land*. Orienting on the best traditional achievements in the field of small prose, including Laszlo Balla, Luka Demian, Oleksandr Markush, Mykhailo Tomchani, Ivan Chendei, D. Keshelia made a significant contribution to the development of the epic genre. This is confirmed by such books as *The Cradle of the Sun* (1982), *And the Earth Revolves after all* (1985), *The Time of Mushroom Sadness* (1988), *The State Head, or Letters to the President* (1993), *Hosundragoshi* (1994), *Thieves' World* (1997), *The Offender or There Will Be No Movie* (1999), *Whatever Ladies and Gentlemen may be entertained with, the Main Thing is to Avoid War* (2003), *And the Death Had Your Eyes* (2004), *The Autumn of the Great Heavens, or the Characters of Pryrychchia* (2005). In all these positions, an additional significant role is played by the stylistically coloured linguistic features of the characters. Their dialect, which lexically absorbed a number of borrowings from Hungarian, Slovak, Czech, is enriched with grammatical constructions that are not peculiar to the Ukrainian language.

The prose collection *And the Earth Revolves after all* by D. Keshelia consists of five stories (*The New Year's Prelude*, *Mytsko and Solovyikha!*, *Two*



*Drops of Sadness, Autumn with the Eyes of a Country Girl, And the Earth Revolves after all*) and the story *The Characters of Pryrichchia, or the Biography of the Aborigines of the Immortal Village*. It is remarkable – in the light of the studied theme – by the content concept, the subject matter of the depicted events, the interaction of characters, the images of theirs and the others with the environment. The correlation of content and formal dimensions serves as a genre-defining feature of the author's attitude towards the depicted, for example, at the level of connection of each component with the holistic context of the work (Зимомря О., 2016).

The texts are written within the framework of Ukrainian folklore in Zakarpattia and the choice of words is typical of the verbal treasures of folk poetry. They are based on the evolution of conflict, the escalation of relationships between characters. However, not all parable stories are embedded in the story-biography of the „aborigines of the immortal village“ with such a conviction as there are shown the characterological, personality peculiarities of a peasant, for example, in the dilogy *The Swan Flock and Green Mills* by Vasyl Zemliak (1923–1977). Attention is paid to the episodes-situations with the goat Clara in the story *The Characters of Pryrichchia...* by D. Keshelia; they unequivocally resonate with the scenes in which the billy goat Fabian acts, the story about which was written by Vasyl Zemliak. However, the relationship in „The Nohavychkys“ family skillfully reveals the parallel coexistence of the past and present worlds. The key idea was not lost among the bizarre interpretations and reflections on „the house and border of the two warring states“ represented by „Mr. Peter“ and „Mrs. Helen“ (Кешеля, 1985: 23). The story is grotesque and D. Keshelia proves that the border can separate not only the states but also the souls of people.

It can be admitted that D. Keshelia in his humorous passions, like P. Holovchuk, does not cross the border with respect to tact. Each of his characters is an embodiment of the one with the unfolding internal conflict. However, its duration in time is of fundamental ideological significance. Therefore, the title of the book *And the Earth Revolves after All* is viewed figuratively, meaning the struggle with the old, something that outlived its relevance. It is imbued with philosophical meaning, and we come to the conclusion that a person will not disappear without a trace if good memories of him / her remain for the present and future generations. D. Keshelia and P. Holovchuk delved into the complex psychology of man in order to reveal the inner worldview of the „I-person“.

Pavlo Holovchuk's oeuvre demonstrates the contextual background of Ukrainian literary interactions with the Balkan writings in modern conditions. The dynamics of the perception of his works in Ukraine and beyond is adjusted by the circumstances of the writer's stay in the diaspora.

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**STVARALAŠTVO PAVLA HOLOVČUKA:  
KONTEKST MEĐUKULTURNIH SARADNJI  
UKRAJINE I BALKANSKIH ZEMALJA**

Članak analizira stvaralaštvo Pavla Holovčuka, čija djela potvrđuju ideale međukulturalnih saradnji u kontekstualnom razumijevanju tog pojma. Knjige pjesnika, prozaika, novinara i izdavača iz Hrvatske, Pavla Holovčuka, prikazuju u savremenim uvjetima kontekstualni temelj ukrajinskih književnih saradnji s autorima književnih djela iz balkanskih zemalja. Smatram da se suština tih interakcija vidi uspoređujući osobitosti historijskog procesa. Treba napomenuti da problem međukulturalnih interakcija na primjeru stvaralaštva Pavla Holovčuka nije dovoljno proučen u književnoj kritici. Percepcija stvaralaštva Pavla Holovčuka u Ukrajini i u inozemstvu promatra se u okolnostima života pisca u dijaspori. Međutim, treba naglasiti da se kulturalne interakcije koje se odvijaju u savremenoj Ukrajini, kao i u balkanskim zemljama, mogu primijeniti na mnogo širi kontekst saradnje ljudi različitih kultura. Potreba za ovakvim istraživanjem uvjetovana je time da je percepcija proze Pavla Holovčuka, u usporedbi sa sličnim djelima drugih autora, kod čitaoca, posebno na Balkanu, od iznimne važnosti u popularizaciji ukrajinske književnosti u dijaspori.

Ključne riječi: *stvaralaštvo Pavla Holovčuka, ukrajinska dijaspora, interkulturalne interakcije, interakcije Ukrajine i Balkana.*