

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2022.54.06.25>

How to Cite:

Bondarchuk, J., Dvorianchykova, S., Vyshnevskaya, M., Kugai, K., & Dovhopol, H. (2022). Ukrainian literature in the English-speaking environment. *Amazonia Investiga*, 11(54), 264-272. <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2022.54.06.25>

Ukrainian literature in the English-speaking environment

УКРАЇНСЬКА ЛІТЕРАТУРА В АНГЛОМОВНОМУ СЕРЕДОВИЩІ

Received: May 3, 2022

Accepted: June 6, 2022

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Abstract

The article highlights literary models of perception of Ukrainian national literature by the English-speaking cultural community in general and literature as its phenomenon in particular. The principle of interaction between both literatures is subject to the concept of receptive communication. The contacts of English literary material and Ukrainian one with respect to each other are characterized by asymmetry, but there is also a mutual oncoming movement. A look at Ukrainian literature in the British Empire is marked by such concepts as exoticism, stereotypes, peripheral territory, national characteristics, post-colonial world, globalization, interpretation. A full-fledged parity dialogue between the two literatures, which develop on the Slavic and Anglo-Saxon traditions, respectively, has not yet taken place at the moment, but has the potential for successful development and presence in the European cultural landscape in the medium and long term. The article emphasizes that Anglophones read, perceive and comprehend Ukrainian literature differently compared to Ukrainian readers. Thus, one of the long-term goals facing Ukrainian

Анотація

У статті висвітлені літературознавчі моделі сприйняття української національної літератури англomовною культурною спільнотою взагалі та літературою як її феноменом зокрема. Принцип взаємодії обох літератур підпорядковується концепції рецептивної комунікації. Контакти англomовного та українськомовного літературного матеріалу характеризуються асиметричністю (виняток – творчість Тараса Шевченка), проте спостерігається і взаємний зустрічний рух. Погляд на українську літературу в Британській Імперії маркується такими поняттями як екзотика, стереотипи, периферійна територія, національні особливості, постколоніальний світ, глобалізація, інтерпретація. Повноцінний паритетний діалог між двома літературами, що розвиваються на слов'янській та англосаксонській традиціях, досі ще не відбувся, однак має потенціал до успішного розвитку та присутності на європейському культурному ландшафті в середньостроковій та довгостроковій перспективі. Закцентовано, що англофони читають, сприймають і осмислюють

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writers, cultural critics and literary critics is the development of aesthetic and semantic intentions, as well as the consistent and meaningful transmission of the ideas of national and state building.

Keywords: postcolonial literature, general models of perception, Ukrainian literature and culture, English-speaking world, dialogic relations.

Introduction

The general models of perception of any one national literature by any other national literature, as well as the individual components and mechanisms of these models that ensure their viability and functioning, are not particularly diverse. Certain fragmentary-situational, chronologically “linked” schemes as elements of a lower level than models that could be applied only to one and not to a number of phenomena, of course, exist, but the components which are similar in the vast majority of cases are not missing. Two completely identical receptive models do not exist, and obviously cannot by definition, but typologically close varieties, according to our observations, play a much more important role in the overall picture of the phenomenon in question.

If we look at the phenomenon of reception at the most general level, it should be noted that the reception can be of two types. In some cases, it takes the form of a counter-process (the first literature – into the second, the second – into the first), in other cases – a form of mostly unidirectional process (the first – into the second in large quantities, with significant consequences for the literature that perceives; in the first, in a small amount, without special consequences for the receiving partner). However, regardless of which type the reception will be assigned to in each case, it should be borne in mind that the process of perception of one national literature by another creates an idea not only of the literature that is perceived by others, but also to some extent characterizes the literature that is perceived.

The reception of Ukrainian literature in England and in the English-speaking cultural world probably belongs to the second type: there is much more literary material from them to us than from us to them, in addition, the nature of interpretation and the assimilation of the material that comes from them to us, Ukrainians, is

українську літературу інакше, ніж українські читачі. Серед довгострокових цілей, що постають перед українськими письменниками й літературознавцями: розвиток естетичної та смислової інтенцій і послідовне та змістовне транслювання ідей національного та державного будівництва.

Ключові слова: постколоніальна література, загальні моделі сприйняття, українська література та культура, англомовний світ, діалогічні відносини.

marked by much greater attention, respect, effectiveness in terms of inclusion in the national literary process than the interpretation and assimilation of our literary material in them. The process of acquaintance, on the one hand, of Ukrainian literature and culture with English, on the other hand, of English literature with Ukrainian, can undoubtedly be considered a movement in two directions, albeit asymmetrical, but a mutual action. However, this interaction is of a specific type, the counter-flows of material in it are markedly different in volume and, moreover, differ from each other in quality, as well as, and this is very significant in consequences.

Literature Review

The reception of Ukrainian literature and culture, in particular ancient literature and folklore, in the English-speaking world was considered, described, analysed, studied from different angles, in different contexts, by different researchers. To understand the peculiarities of the reception of Ukrainian literature in the English-speaking cultural area is fundamentally important, as well as to understand the previous attitudes, based on which the formation and fixation of ideas about Ukraine are in the consciousness of English and Anglophones.

Interest for Ukraine, Ukrainians, their spiritual culture, folklore, literature arises in the English-speaking world, and year after year is growing step by step during the penetration of the British Empire into. As contacts between the United Kingdom and Western Europe in general and their Eastern European neighbours intensify, diversify, and become more meaningful, the interest in question, without losing its original ethnographic basis, intensifies markedly. Its discoveries, however, for a long time remain mostly a natural reaction of Anglophone subjects to new realities, both for themselves and their

environment, not devoid of exotic taste and do not go beyond “national a priori” (Gachev, 2008). The desire for the exotic was the main stimulus for attracting European attention to Ukraine, it was exactly the thing that initially determined the direction of this attention.

The transition to a new stage which took place in the 1860s and 1880s was also most directly connected with the perception of the Ukrainian national space, on the one hand, as one that did not belong to the “spatial history” of Europe and, on the other hand, as exotic, as close as possible to the “mysterious East” and perceived as a cultural stereotype of the “African (or Indian) mentality”. It bears a clear imprint of an a priori desire to go to a “foreign monastery” with “its own statute” and is carried out in line with the outbreak of European interest in Europe’s new interest in new “Americans”, “Africans”, “Indians” much closer than real America, Africa and India. That is, in fact, one of the varieties of the phenomenon, which Said (1994) rightly describes as “Western vision of the non-Western world” (p. 20) with all possible consequences and connotations inherent for it.

According to a number of researchers, the English literature of the XIX century made little attempt to argue with the notions of “subordinate” or “lower” peoples and cultures common in the socio-political discourse of the time. There could be no question of any “cultural balance of power” (Geertz, 2000) between “one’s own” as “higher” and “a foreign one” – “lower”. With the help of such writers as T. Carlyle, J. Ruskin, C. Dickens, W. Thackeray, etc., he expressed such views on the colonial expansion of Great Britain, the relationship between the inhabitants of the metropolis and colonies. The understanding of Ukraine as another exotic land on the periphery of the world, the attitude of English speakers who showed interest in it, recording it in the form of various content and form of records and comments, was determined by features that stemmed from Eurocentric approach of the model characteristic for that era relationships between the modern Western European metropolis as a recognized “centre of the world” and its remote territories, deprived of its own identity and history.

The key to the perception of Ukraine and Ukrainian culture was the same approach, which one author describes as follows: “Being British or French in the 1860s, you would see and perceive India and North Africa as something familiar and distant, but never as something separated and sovereign” (Said, 1994, p. 438).

The peculiarity of Ukraine, as a rule, was hidden in the fact that it was perceived as something distant, not very familiar and, moreover, quite isolated.

Exoticism was interpreted as exhaustive and self-sufficient, one that does not require any additions and clarifications. The view of Ukrainians based on it did not presuppose that they had a separate identity as subjects marked by exotics, nor did it even suggest the very possibility of something like this. There are no attempts to think about the life style of Ukrainians as European, to understand Ukrainian culture as a phenomenon of European type, to see in it at least the embryonic state of the discursive way of constructing national cultural values, which has a decisive influence on the nation and nation-building processes.

Methodology

The notion that the postcolonial theory aimed at understanding the imperial-colonial component of modernity and related various reflections and developed at the time as one of the additional tools for analysing the artistic culture of countries from the former colonial possessions of European states (mainly the British Empire and France), can be applied to the Ukrainian material, each year gaining more and more supporters both in Ukraine and abroad. This, we think, is explained, on the one hand, by a rethinking of the expansion and deepening of this theory itself, on the other hand, – the emergence and establishment of fundamentally different approaches to Ukrainian history, especially in the part due to the presence of Ukrainian lands in the USSR. Both objective and subjective factors influence this process. Among the first, there is a significant number of postcolonial impulses and models demonstrated by Ukrainian literature in particular and the literature of the post-Soviet space in general. The second should include the formation of a constellation of specialists of different scientific generations, who for one reason or another became interested in the problems of postcolonial studies.

In Ukrainian literary studies and, more broadly, in social sciences, postcolonial discourse – ideological, methodological, scientific, cultural – has declared itself in full force in the late 1980s and early 1990s and is now gaining momentum. If we take the science of literature, the “mainstream” of domestic postcolonial interpretive practice or, at least, practice related to elements of the postcolonial approach and postcolonial methods, was formed in the works

of Hundorova (2013), Syvokin (1984), Pavlyshyn (2013), Zborovska (2006), Riabchuk (2011). Their general review against the background of European and world experience is given, in particular, by Yurchuk (2013). The authors focus their attention, firstly, on the fact that all Ukrainian texts written in the stream of postcolonial theory, which saw the light of day in the 1990s, belong to scholars who were directly affected by the “imperial era” of Ukrainian existence, secondly, on the fact that the repeated and variable use of the term “postcolonialism” has not yet given rise to postcolonial studies in the field of domestic literary criticism. Currently, there are isolated attempts to comprehend the Ukrainian colonial heritage and postcolonial perspective. In our opinion, we can agree with the restrained assessment of the first domestic postcolonial studies. There are hardly enough grounds to claim that the postcolonial discourse in the domestic humanities and literature is already well understood, but there are obviously no reasons to deny its presence and gradually update the arguments.

Results and Discussion

The history of Ukrainian literature, understood in the postcolonial spirit, differs significantly from the history of the former “classical” colonies, far from Europe and the European cultural and civilizational space, both geographically and mentally. The “colonial boomerang” in Arndt’s understanding of the transfer of colonial practices of coercion and violence from the colonies back to the metropolis, where they originate, may not be too topical for Ukrainian material. But to talk about something like “colonial scissors”, when, on the one hand, there is a regular literary process on supposedly independent, equal to other principles, and on the other – contrary to all declarations, forced and forcible selection of names and texts, their censorship, adjustment to the criteria set by the dogma – in connection with it is not only possible but also appropriate, constructive, promising. One of the areas where the application of the basic postulates of postcolonial theory can provide a tangible positive result is, we think, the field of reception of Ukrainian literature in the national cultural environment of Britain as a former “empire of empire” whose historical experience also in the English-speaking world in general.

The specificity of the perception of Ukrainian literature in the Anglophone environment is, in particular, that it is not always interpreted here as national, often falling under the stereotypical

definition as one of the “hybrid” literature, i.e. such which has a special perception of both their past and present, and in a specific way is included in the global system of literary relations and in world literature. An analysis of the factual material provides sufficient evidence to suggest that Ukrainian literature, in order to occupy a more prominent place in the English-speaking environment than it currently occupies, must change from a national to a “hybrid” composed of several ingredients, and hence, denationalized, certainly losing a significant, if not the main, part of the national specificity. That is, the component that defines its special identity, national identity, making it Ukrainian literature with all the corresponding consequences that follow.

The significance and importance of the analysis of the relationship between Ukrainian literature, its perception in England, Great Britain, the United States and postcolonial criticism is due to the non-affirmative or negative answer to the question of whether Ukraine was a colony during its historical development can be applied to the Anglo-Ukrainian relations, at least in cultural discourse, the model that determines the relationship, on the one hand, the metropolis-centre, on the other, the colony-periphery.

The concept of “postcolonial literature”, like the term itself, appeared in Europe in the 1960s, spread to the “oldest” continent and beyond in the 1980s and 1990s, and began to be used with markedly increased intensity already in 2000–2010. Some researchers attribute this fact to globalization, which at the beginning of the XXI century is becoming not only a global phenomenon, but a dominant feature of world development, including cultural. The *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines “postcolonial literature” as: “a term that covers a very wide range of works from countries that were once colonized or dependent on European countries” (Baldick, 2015).

According to most of the scientific community, both in Ukraine and abroad, postcolonial studies gained final recognition and approval after the publication of Said’s famous monograph *Orientalism* (1977). Based on the concept of discourse proposed by Foucault (1970), the author showed in a wealth of factual material how, with which tools and means, the West artificially constructs the Orient Image instead of creating it according to the original.

According to Said (1977), the Orient Image in the reception-perception of the West is the result of two different discourses: orientalist and

postcolonial. Each of them turns out to be a construct, each of them deforms the real Image, which should be considered to correspond to the real state of affairs to the greatest extent, but does so in its own way, not in the same way as the other. In the mid-1980s, Said had a turning point: the position of cultural nationalism of the Third World gave way in his conception to a globalist position, which, in particular, implies the rejection of nationalism, national borders, nations as such. There are a number of important consequences from this turning point, which can hardly be considered a coincidence or the result of a situational coincidence. The first and most important of them points to the emergence of a new self-identification of the subject and a renewed identity, on the basis of which a new concept of national literature is formed, maximally adapted to the globalized world and global literary environment. The essence of this concept is a new combination of two basic elements of literary creativity: aesthetic and ideological – in rethinking the relationship between them, which is interpreted as optimal and desirable, and, finally, a new attitude to the literary canon of the West as such and the canon which is exported on behalf of the West to literary systems and environments of the “Third World”.

For the perception of Ukrainian literature in England, the views and approaches in question are of great importance, although they, of course, cannot be transferred to the background of Ukrainian-English literary contacts and relations unconditionally and directly. Preliminary idea of one or another example of Ukrainian red writing, one or another figure, one or another work is formed in the English and English-speaking cultural environment mainly on the basis of the “ideological and political” reading and understanding, which is denied, at least at the level of theory and declarations (Said, 1994, p. 79). This preliminary idea has a significant impact on the selection of material for inclusion in the reception process, as well as on the further interpretation of this material, which is carried out according to a predetermined, based on the principle of “own” – “foreign”, “higher” – “lower” model.

If we accept the logic of the postcolonial worldview and the postcolonial method as an interpretive strategy, as Hundorova (2013), for example, does in her famous book *Transit Culture*, and the relations between former metropolises and former colonies, we must admit that literary contacts and the relationship between such literatures as English and

Ukrainian is almost doomed to exist in an asymmetric format with a clear presence of an element of inequality, which is reflected in the spontaneous recognition and a priori tacit agreement of all stakeholders to distinguish and divide partner literatures on those that belong to the literature of the “center” and those that are among the literature of the “periphery”. Thus, the relationship between the two national literatures appears not just in another, but in a qualitatively new light: no longer as a relationship not between individual, self-sufficient phenomena, because of the national identity of each isolated from others, which are also closed in and due to bar defined as a factor of national origin, and as between the components of one common – world or, in modern language, global literature, appropriately structured and hierarchically organized.

Extrapolating the above provisions, in particular those concerning the concept of intercultural dialogue, its nature, specificity and features, the historical situation in the field of Ukrainian-English cultural and literary contacts, as well as the links of Ukrainian literature and culture with the literature and cultures of the English-speaking cultural area, it should be noted that a full dialogue between English and / or other English-language literature and literature in the Ukrainian state at the moment remains, in our opinion, a matter of the future. Having successfully passed the initial stage, the Ukrainian-English cultural dialogue settled on the next – middle stage, gradually accumulating the potential to move to the final stage, but not yet having enough and quality of this potential to make such a transition.

The conclusion according to which the relationship between Ukrainian and English literature in general and the perception of Ukrainian literature in England and the English-speaking cultural area in particular should be considered in terms of primarily dialogic relations between partners, currently seems controversial. The fact of cultural and literary exchange in its certain forms and volumes is indisputable, but whether this exchange can be considered a real, full-fledged dialogue is, in our opinion, a question that needs further analysis. The statement that the dialogue has already been established seems to outline a certain perspective, but it is not entirely relevant and sufficient to characterize and describe the current state of affairs. At the same time, there are hardly any serious grounds to deny that the dialogic characteristic is an integral part of both Ukrainian and English literature and culture, and due to this circumstance, the possibility of forming dialogic

relations between them should be considered as objectively determined and quite real, not only in the long run, but in the medium or even short term.

If we look at the problem of Ukrainian-English dialogue and reception of Ukrainian literature in the English-speaking cultural area from the point of view of the convergent-divergent approach developed by American Kincaid (1979), according to whom any national culture and literature is an open information system that is constantly evolving and is updated and within which there are two opposite directions of each of them, but approximately equal given the intensity of each of them principles: “convergence” and “divergence” – it will be possible to state a certain advantage of the second principle on the first. Convergence reflects the degree of coincidence or consonance of the system of values and worldviews of different cultures. Divergence is the degree of difference between them. Recently, we presented the results of our research on effective means of developing intercultural communicative competence in general and in the conditions of training philologists in particular (Dvorianchykova, Bondarchuk, Syniavska & Kugai, 2022).

To understand the nature, character, peculiarities of Ukrainian-English literary relations in general and the reception of Ukrainian literature in England and the English-speaking cultural area in particular, in our opinion, it is necessary to have a clear understanding that the place and role of English and Ukrainian literature on the literary map of the world, as well as in the structure of world literature are different. Equally important is the understanding of the fundamental fact that the British and Anglophones face a number of objectively determined difficulties and obstacles based on the affiliation of two literatures and cultures – Ukrainian and English – to different civilizational systems and different civilizational and cultural traditions: the first of them to the European, Slavic in its Eastern Christian, Orthodox, version (Ukraine), the second – to the Anglo-Saxon (Great Britain). As a result, despite the considerable amount of common and similar features and elements, i.e. all that forms a platform for contacts, in many ways different from each other both the cornerstones of literary creativity as a component of national cultural activity and the basic features of their – literary creativity and cultural activity – the subject is revealed. All this together has a significant impact on the receptive discourse in which Ukrainian and English literature act as partners.

In this context, in our opinion, such an aspect of the problem as the unequal role of English and Ukrainian literatures in the formation of world literature and the different places that each of them occupies in this literature cannot be overlooked. The problem of the place of modern Ukrainian literature on the world literary scene in recent times with a regularity that could only be envied, attracts the attention of experts. The issue directly related to it was, for example, highlighted as the focus of a roundtable discussion organized by BBC-Ukraine as part of the *20th Publishers' Forum in Lviv* (2event, 2013). The range of answers was surprisingly large, the number and content of the proposals were impressive.

In Ukraine in the XIX and, even more clearly, in the XX century, especially in the second half, hardly anyone could consider himself a cultured, educated man, if he had never heard of England, English literature and culture, did not know at least something about one of the outstanding, world-famous Englishmen – scientists, philosophers, writers and others. In England, the situation was different. Here, knowledge about Ukraine and Ukrainians in no way influenced the assessment of the degree of culture or, conversely, uncultured, educated or uneducated. They did not and could not influence, by and large, given a number of circumstances. The following example is illustrative in this respect. In the autumn of 2013, two English theatre critics discussed the novelties of the theatre season on one of the authoritative English television channels. Among other things, we talked about the opera *Boris Godunov* by Modest Mussorgsky in the words of Alexander Pushkin, which was staged in one of London's theatres by the famous English theatre director Graham Vick. The discussion acquired a specific, clearly defined, clearly and consistently expressed “Anglocentric” form, in which the English material, the English motive, after all, anything English in all conditions and circumstances is interpreted and presented as the primary, most important, key, while everything that is not, has a priori derivative, secondary value. Critics did not mention music at all, immediately moving on to the libretto. All that was said about him was that the plot “written off” by Shakespeare from the tragedy *Macbeth*, reducing the whole conversation, in fact, to the discovery in the culture of “barbarians” of something that they – “barbarians” – borrowed from the British (Yefimenko, 2021).

Perception by one national literature (in our case – English) of another national literature (in our

case – Ukrainian) implies the integrity of the idea of the latter, which is formed within the first, or the integrity of the image of the second literature in the first. In our opinion, it is premature to speak about the integrity of the perception of Ukrainian literature and culture by English literature and culture and, in general, in the English-speaking cultural area.

The exoticism of Ukraine and the Ukrainian national and cultural space in the eyes of the British was interpreted as exhaustive and self-sufficient, one that does not require any additions and clarifications. The view of Ukrainians based on it did not presuppose that they had a separate identity as subjects marked by exotics, nor did it even suggest the very possibility of something like this. There are no attempts to think about the life style of Ukrainians as European, to understand Ukrainian culture as a phenomenon of European type, to see in it at least the embryonic state of the discursive way of constructing national cultural values which has a decisive influence on the nation and nation-building processes, – in the English world at that time was not observed.

From the point of view of readiness for exoticism and focus on it, the Ukrainian Cossacks, of course, attracted special attention of Europe and Europeans. The Cossacks are one of the brightest, unique realities of Ukrainian life, which had no analogues either in the Anglophone or in the Western European world in general. The fascination with the Cossacks at that time had a tradition in Europe, it was perceived as something completely natural, based on what really took place in real life. Collective and individual images of the Cossacks were already known in world literature. Cossacks in Europe were considered a symbol of military strength and victory, as warriors capable of defeating even the Turks, who caused fear in Europeans. In 1569, the Kingdom of Poland inherited the Cossacks together with Ukraine from Lithuania, which relied on them to protect its southern border from the Crimean Khanate, – explains the situation, although looking at it from a slightly different angle, Snyder (2003). Poland found out that the Cossacks were of great military importance not only for defence but also for attack. For a time, the Cossacks filled this niche, demonstrating their value in the wars with Sweden in 1610–1602 and the Ottoman Empire in 1621. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth gained its greatest fame when its Polish and Lithuanian knights fought side by side with the Ukrainian Cossacks (p. 143).

Increasingly intensive and effective inclusion of Ukrainian ethnic territories in the process of formation of national early modernity, and later – the beginning of the formation of modern Ukraine on the perception of Ukrainian literature in the English-speaking world had almost no effect. The view of it and all that is connected with it remained stable, based on the understanding of it as an archaic world, hopelessly frozen in the stage of prehistoric social development. This view did not change much when the first manifestations of the Ukrainian national spirit and Ukrainian patriotism began to appear on the Left Bank in 1820–1830, or when “in the middle of the XIX century to the left-bank defensive patriotism was added a romantic sense of guilt of some right-bank landowners, which led to the formation of a populist movement in Kyiv with elements of national character” (Zorivchak, 1993, p. 153-154), nor when, thanks to Taras Shevchenko’s poems, the Ukrainian idea received a response not only in ethnic Ukrainian lands, but also in other parts of the world.

The first steps on the way of acquaintance of the British and other representatives of the Anglophone world with the Ukrainian spiritual culture were, as it is known, made before the appearance of Taras Shevchenko and regardless of his figure (Snyder, 2003, p. 151-154), but it is with the work of Kobzar a new era in the history of the reception of Ukrainian literature in the English-speaking cultural environment. The reception remained exclusively a reception, an acquaintance, without turning into an interpretation of the poet’s own works, as well as the problems of his place and role in Ukrainian literature, as well as in the formation of a new Ukrainian national identity. Taras Shevchenko’s understanding in the English-speaking environment was simplified. Kobzar’s role as a Ukrainian national genius, whose achievements “paved the way for modern Ukrainian politics, where culture was theoretically and practically combined with the peasantry” (Snyder, 2003, p. 154), as well as a world-class artist and thinker, remained for the entire Anglophone cultural area not only incomprehensible, but also, in fact, unknown, indecomposable.

Zorivchak’s (2010) conclusion is full of optimism and positive pathos that “now wider readers of the English-speaking world are accustomed to perceive T. Shevchenko’s work as an artistic embodiment of the historical memory of the Ukrainian people, as one of the brightest pages in world literature” (p. 120) – is perceived in this regard, of course, with understanding and

commitment, but gives the impression of exaggeration, dictated by non-scientific factors, looks desperate (and quite natural) attempt to idealize the situation, pretending to be real.

To some extent, generalizing the system of assessments and ideas accumulated in domestic Shevchenko studies in the past, Dziuba (2008) notes: for the present omnipresence, omniscience and omniscience has always been and will always be far away. "Shevchenko as a great and eternally living phenomenon is inexhaustible, infinite and uninterrupted" (p. 5). Such Taras Shevchenko was not known in Great Britain or in the English-speaking world in general, and the very possibility of searching for interpretations of his work in this direction was not even suspected. We, Ukrainians, as Dziuba (2008) rightly writes, "appreciate the spiritual and aesthetic richness of his creative world, admire the ideological avant-garde ... and other precious qualities associated in our consciousness with his name" (p. 5). Whereas for the British and Anglophones these features of Shevchenko's figure and creativity, or at least a significant part of them are irrelevant.

However, we think there are reasons to agree with Hnatiuk (2005), when she claims that "Drago Yanchar's words about the identity of his people, which was claimed "culture and literature" due to "lack of real historical and political forces", can be applied to the Ukrainian situation" (p. 39). And to further support her decision to start a list of Ukrainian examples that should serve as an illustration for this conclusion, namely from the poetry of Taras Shevchenko.

According to the tradition, which began with the first steps of the penetration of Ukrainian literature and culture into the English-speaking cultural area, the interpretation lagged behind the reception. There was nothing unusual or extraordinary during the reception process. Virtually everything that happened took turns depending on the way in which objective and subjective factors were formed at one time or another. The subjective factor usually prevailed. At some point, representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom began to play a leading role, which left a certain imprint on the whole process of perception of Ukraine, Ukrainian literature, and culture.

In the general flow of reception of Ukrainian literature in the English language and cultural area, the focus is not only on perception but also on full-fledged assimilation, i.e. the actual

interpretive component, appears in the second half of the XX century under the influence of the desire to include Ukraine in the renewed picture of Europe, which began to take shape under the influence of changes and shifts that took place in the twentieth century. Another feature of acquaintance of English-speaking readers with Ukraine and Ukrainian literature is that the image of Ukraine was not so much formed through acquaintance with beautiful literature, as it was mainly introduced, so to speak, from outside, from history, politics, international "mythology" and others.

The nature of the evolution of the image of Ukrainian literature in the English-speaking world, stages and steps of this process is clearly seen in the example of how the development of English Shevchenko's work developed and changed, as well as understanding it and its significance for Ukrainian culture and nation. From the point of view of understanding the nature and peculiarities of the reception of Ukrainian literature in general, the reception of Taras Shevchenko in the English-speaking cultural area is indicative. Later, it became an interpretation without or outside the reception, one of the brightest examples of which is Grabowich's monograph *The poet as mythmaker* (1982), published in English in the USA in 1982 and published in Ukraine in Ukrainian translation in 1991.

Conclusions

The English and Anglophones in general read and understand Ukrainian literature, perceive and comprehend it differently and not as Ukrainians know it. And, perhaps, not in the way that Ukrainians would like, given their desire to once and for all take a deserved and suffering place among other nations and peoples of a united Europe.

If we try to look at the problem of reception and interpretation of Ukrainian literature in England and in the English-speaking environment in terms of not only quantitative but also qualitative criteria, we will obviously notice the fact that the deep meaning of Ukrainian literature in its historical development as a holistic and consistent metanarrative (superscript), which would unite the whole literary process in the unity of its semantic and formal, aesthetic and conceptual (ideological) diachronic and synchronous intentions, revealing, among other things, its highest as actually artistic, and the nation- and state-building goal – remains so far undisclosed to the British and Anglophones.

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