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“How Terribly the Plow of History Plows...”: National and Cultural Identity In the Historiosophical Discourses of Lina Kostenko

Abstract

In the poetry of the prominent Ukrainian writer Lina Kostenko, the category of “historical memory” is conceptualized in ontological and philosophical dimensions: her philosophical discourses on history and the nation are built on this foundation. By “trying on” eternity (with the manifest: “I am floating into life from eternity”), she comes to philosophical self-awareness and artistic reflection of history, with vivid and convincing motifs / collisions / concepts / plots / images. In her epic poems, she measures human existence throughout epochs through the triad of the dominants of humanity / nation / family, giving each of them nation-building meanings. Her time is always anthropological, with an expressive psychological “face”, heavy with tragedy and endowed with a potential for the future. Her lyrical pieces have the same temporal tint. Through an integral conceptual sphere, in which the category of time remains fundamental (dramatic poems and ballads *Skifska Odisseia* [Scythian Odyssey], *Marusia Churai*, *Berestechko*, *Duma pro brativ neazovskyykh* [A duma on brothers other than the Azov ones], *Snih*

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u Florentsii [Snow in Florence], and a number of poems), Lina Kostenko tries to embrace the temporal and anthropological paradigm of **man-history-man** with her artistic imagination, where the problems of individual and national identity are given primary importance. In this context of the historically conditioned formation of national and national-cultural identity, she unfolds her own idea of a person's home within history, especially national history, while professing the principle of “simultaneity of non-simultaneities” (R. Kozellek) of a series of past events. The author examines certain “semantic circles” of the writer's narrative, discovering new semantic historiosophical projections that in Kostenko's works eventually form a coherent, verified anthropocentric conceptual model of the decisive role of the individual in the historical progress of the nation, showing, with the help of artistic and figurative means, how she creates the historical and psychological canvas of past events / collisions / interpretations that set the direction for the future. At the same time, the author emphasizes that the poet always upholds the position of the artist's ultimate accountability in the face of national history.

Key words

Lina Kostenko, history / historiography, time, personality, past / future, tragedy

The time of our presence on Earth is unique in that, according to the Ukrainian philosopher Serhii Krymskyi, the past “is becoming more and more relevant” (Krymskyi, 2008, p. 259) – and this thesis is “especially strongly revealed by the processes of national renaissance” on different continents. At the same time ...*maibutnie tomu i maibutnie, /shcho maye buty, shchob ne bulo* [...the future is therefore the future, /what is to come, whatever happens] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 110). As Lina Kostenko notes, *Konveier chasu – tilky vriznobich / ody v mynule, druhyi – u maibutnie. /Otak vsi y rozmynaiutsia navik* [“The conveyor belt of time runs only in opposite directions – one to the

past, the other to the future”] (Kostenko 1987, p. 190). And the mission of a poet – especially one who has the right to declare his or her own worldview in eloquent lines ...*ya u zhyttia iz vichnosti plyvu* [“...I am floating into life from eternity”] (Kostenko 1989, p. 60), is to reconcile both time streams, to the past and future, in order to extract the quintessence of truth and experience for the sake of a resulting sensible future. After all, national revival requires “the value assimilation of everything that is preserved in time, the awakening of stable values, the invariant content of the nation’s experience” (Krymskyi, 2008, p. 259). This is why *Istoriia prosytsia v sny nashchadkiv* [“History is asking for descendants’ dreams”] (Kostenko 1989, p. 550), convincing us every time that *Nemaie moria hlybshoho, nizh Chas* [“There is no sea deeper than Time”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 118). And only those with great talent can do what ordinary people are not capable of: to go beyond one’s own era and “probe” into epochs that have long since passed. In the context of “unbreakable eternity”, as defined by philosophers, national history with the central concept of historical memory (which defines national and cultural identity in all its semantic projections) is the “solar plexus” of the Ukrainian literature legend, the core of the author’s historiosophy, including national philosophy, that she nurtures. The latter concept (*natsiosofia*) refers here to the socio-philosophical subject of the study of the philosophy of nation, wherein “the concept of nation should be considered not only as a sociological phenomenon, but also as a subject of philosophical ethics through the ontology of feeling (aesthetics), as the actualization of the ethics of both a particular individual and a particular community” (Ihnatiev, 2010, p. 15). From this point of view, the assimilation of historical lessons (from victories to defeats) and rethinking the events of the past, the work of L. Kostenko is not only socially resonant, but also unique in terms of the assimilation of various layers of world culture, knowledge of national history, and the use of a wide palette of artistic and figurative means, where a subtle synthesis of creative intuition and productive logic gives rise to the word elevated to the level of aphorism (aphorism is one of the poet’s most prominent features). She is a prominent representative of the Ukrainian Sixties movement, which in the late 1950s and early 1960s challenged totalitarianism and demonstrated disobedience and resistance to the official Soviet

system (Tarnashynska, 2007; 2013; 2019). This passionate generation of artists (re)actualized the historiosophical and national concepts of **people / nation** as the primary forms of human organization of life, laying out the foundation for society's stance on the priority of democratic rights and freedoms, the concepts without which a sovereign state cannot exist (Tarnashynska, 2022). Seeking a balance between national rhetoric (as a defense of worldview ideals) and aesthetic criteria (as distancing from the ideologically biased and devalued method of socialist realism) (Tarnashynska, 2014), they created a highly praiseworthy synthesis of life as creativity and creativity as life. Taking advantage of a brief “Khrushchev thaw” after the exposure of the cult of Stalin, the Sixties broke free of totalitarian ideological prohibitions, overcame the practice of constricted forms and means of artistic expression, and combined a responsible choice of freedom and a decisive act with the search for new artistic expressive means (Tarnashynska, 2013). The repressive measures of the official authorities against the creative intelligentsia gave rise to such unique socio-cultural phenomena of the twentieth century as dissidence (open / defiant and quiet / internal as a manifestation of escapism) and *samizdat*, forced creative silence and writing “for the drawer” (for example, Lina Kostenko's works were not published in Ukraine for 16 years) (Tarnashynska, 2021), on top of various forms of resistance / disobedience. *Strazhdaiu, muchus, hynu, a zhyvu!* [“I suffer, I struggle, I die, but I live!”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 33), the poet wrote during those difficult years.

The exquisite emotional word, embodied in a clear poetic form, enhanced by intellectual intuition and high artistic and figurative culture, awakened the longing for both the historical past and the poetic form of its reconstruction in Kostenko's many readers. As a result, she contributed to the formation of national and national-cultural identity, which “always included a moment of choice” (Lysyi, 2013, p. 33). Her aphoristic poetry, extremely consonant with the present, with the “nerve” of free choice in life / creativity and resistance to totalitarian ideology, with its extremely powerful historiosophical potential and the conceptual category of historical memory, appeals to history as an incremental progress of the people, because *Chas, velykyi dyryhent, / perehortaie noty na piupitri* [“Time,

the great conductor,/turns notes on the music stand”] (Kostenko, 2011, p. 232). Keeping in mind that *Chas ne nasha vlasnist* [“Time is not our property”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 27), the poet claims at the same time: *Nikhto ne smiie zupynyty nas./...Tym chasom my prokhodymo kriz chas* [“No one dares to stop us./...As time goes by, we are passing through time”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 6). On these foundations, she builds historiosophic / nationalist artistic discourses, the key ones being the concepts of individual / national identity, which can be decoded as discourses “about belonging to someone and about being someone” (Lysyi, 2013, p. 30), the latter implies, according to Anthony Smith, to changes that take place within “the boundaries defined by the culture and traditions of a particular nation...” (Smith, 2010, p. 26). Both concepts correlate with the notion of cultural national identity, since the poet does not think of culture outside the nation. In post-imperial Ukraine, such a look into the depths of history was effectively banned by the totalitarian authorities of the Moscow metropolis, so Kostenko appeals to oblivion as a particularly destructive feature of totalitarianism: *Ale chomu na zemliakh tsykh, de Kyiv / ishche do litopysnykh lykholit,/tak nache nam khto chornu dirku vyiv / u istorychnii pamiaty stolit?* [“But why is it that in this land, where Kyiv lies / even before the ancient chronicles / it is as if someone had made a black hole / in the historical memory of the centuries?”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 71). Her goal is to find answers to many questions, including the universal one: *Shliakh evoliutsii movnykh i etnichnykh / kriz mnohotu kryvavykh nespryan,-/vidlunnia slavy z napysiv runichnykh / chy ne vernulos imenem slovia?* [“The track of linguistic and ethnic evolutions / through a multitude of bloody adversities / an echo of glory from runic inscriptions / is it not returned in the name of the Slavs?”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 88). Therefore, she invites the reader to engage in active thought cooperation in “discovering” and re-reading the historical past: *Davai poplyvemo u te, shcho mynulos* [“Let’s sail into the past”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 181), after all, she herself has the right to confess to the ability to “see through time”: *...chui holos vymerylykh plemen* [“I hear the voice of extinct tribes”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 412).

The poet is in constant dialog with Soviet historiography, whose apologists were guided by false views, optical semantic aberrations,

ideological templates convenient for the totalitarian government, deliberate distortions, and taboo interpretations. Such examples of the alleged “historical truth” were inspired and instilled in the minds of Ukrainians by ideological imperial propaganda. The writer’s main self-imposed goal is to give history back to her native land, where *Teche rika velyka Borysfen* [“The great river Borysfen flows”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 119). Therefore, by challenging the totalitarian system, she was forced to proclaim a truth that is universally understood in the free world, which at that time required a rethinking of reality in Ukraine at the cost of deep mental work: *Koly v liudyny ye narod, /todi vona uzhe liudyna* [“When someone has a nation, they become someone”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 38) to prove the allegedly paradoxical thesis “from the opposite viewpoint”: *My ye tomu, shcho nas ne mozhe buty* [“We are because we cannot be”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 6). Based on both an understanding of historical injustice and a sense of historical perspective, Kostenko, familiar with flashes of insight as *myt yakohos potriasinnia* [“a moment of some kind of shock”]: *pobachysh svit, yak vpershe u zhytti...* [see the world as if for the first time in your life] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 90), set herself a global supertask: to decipher *zoloti manuskrypty* [“golden manuscripts”] take a look *u vichi vikam* [“into the eyes of centuries”] feeling comfortable in different eras: *...za dva ikisy istorii zacheplena, /na sto vikiv rozmotuiu sebe* [“...caught in the number of the 20th century, I unwind myself for a hundred”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 411). Therefore, her work is characterized by a “simultaneity of non-simultaneities” (Reinhart Kozellek), a consideration of “different zones of experience” within one “studied” space (Kozellek, 2005, p. 221) – temporal experience (different epochs, different historical events and their consequences). Despite her manifested sense of the transience of time, its *Shaleni tempy...* [“the frantic pace...”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 27), her lyrical hero is present in different centuries at the same time: the author, for whom *Odna-dvi ery tilky interval* [“One or two eras are just an interval”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 115), constantly resorts to the convergence / mixing (*vsi viky zhyly vzhe bez adres* [“all ages have lived without addresses”]) of the past and the present (*Bidni sviashchenni byky boha Heliosa / de zh yim teper pastysia – / na raketnii bazi?!* [“Poor sacred bulls of the god Helios / where should they graze

now – / at a missile base?!”) (Kostenko, 1989, p. 30). This organic coexistence of different historical epochs, the different shades of historical events and details, which corresponds to the “presumption of simultaneity” (S. Meyen), helps to design the future, which is always the sum of what has been, is, and will be, and therefore, in her opinion, is the future, *u maibutnoho slukh absoliutnyi* [“the future has absolute hearing”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 8).

The vector of national historicism as historical memory and a glimpse into the day when we will finally find “Ukraine in Ukraine” (here I refer to the lines of the sixties writer Mykola Vinhranovskiy, *My na Ukraini khvori Ukrainoiu, / Na Ukraini v poshukakh yii* [“We in Ukraine are suffering with Ukraine, / In Ukraine, we search for it”]), is seen by her as a “tension curve” of national struggle. Through the focus of this painful search, national, and thus national-cultural identity is revealed: from *Duma pro brativ neazovskyykh, Horyslava-Rohnida, Drevlianskyi tryptykh* [The Drevlians’ triptych], *Kniaz Vasylok* [Prince Basil], *Liutizh* [Town of Lyutizh], *Chyhyrynskyi kolodiaz* [The well in Chyhyryne], *Chadra Marusi Bohuslavky* [The Veil of Marusia Bohuslavka], *Stara tserkovka v Lemeshakh* [The Old Church in Lemeshky], *Chumatskyi voz* [The Chumaks’ carriage] and other poems to the poetic epics *Marusia Churai* and *Berestechko*. Lina Kostenko, as noted in the history of Ukrainian literature, broke from the tradition of processing historical themes and created “her own personal tradition” (1995, p. 111), the temporal recoding of the present through the matrix of the past, such as the cognition / reproduction of the historical existence of the people, elevated to the pedestal of high poetry, where time sheds its veil of mystery and reveals itself through convincing vivid images as an object, saturated with creative potential, unmuddled by ideological clichés: *Yaki tut ne prokochuvalys ordy! / Yaka proishla po zemliakh tsykh bida! / Mechem i kroviu pysani krosvordy / nikhto uzhe povik ne rozghada* [“What hordes have not rolled through here! / What troubles have passed through these lands! / Crossword puzzles written with sword and blood / no one has solved them for centuries”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 72). Modifications of time, passed through a sensitive and “all-seeing” heart, acquire convincing details and emotions; in the poetic epic, particularly in dramatic poems, time takes on a distinctly epic dimension: slows down the flow, changes

the optical angle of vision so that the reader can take a closer look at historically significant events, find historical parallels, and comprehend them. In such narrative structures, there is a clear **reconstruction of time**, a reproduction / reflection of its former dimension in the present one (Tarnashynska, 2011), what can be called the restoration of the past or “extrapolation of a person into the future” (Volodymyr Panchenko), as seen in the poem “Zatinok, cutinok, den zoloty” [“Shadow, twilight, golden day”]. *Mozhe, tse vzhe cherez tysiachu lit / ya i ne ya vzhe, rozbudzhena v henakh, / tut na zemli ya shukaiu khoch slid / rodu moho u plachakh i lehendakh* [“Maybe it’s a thousand years later / I’m not me anymore, awakened in my genes, / here on earth I’m looking for at least a trace / of my people in laments and legends”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 15) is how the poet manifests her creative guidance. Her well-known aphoristic statement *Dusha tysiacholit shukaie sebe v slovi* [“The soul of millennia seeks itself in the word”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 91) voices the extremely present dimension of creativity, which is deepened in the Logos as essential being. The poem “Bilia stoianky pervisnykh liudei” [“At the first people’s campsite”] is indicative, where the Rubicon River, a real and symbolic boundary between the present and the past, provokes a mnemonic paradox: *...i vsi viky zhyly vzhe bez adres* [“...and all the centuries they lived without addresses”], because *“Bulo do nykh rukoiu nam podaty, / i yim – lysh richku pereity ubrid* [“We were only a hand’s reach away from them, / and they only had to wade the river”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 351).

Her *Skifyska odisseia* [*Scythian Odyssey*] (written in 1983–1986) can be called a kind of prelude to the historical themes developed by the author in the form of the immortal past, which lays the foundation for national identity: this poem-ballad is an example of the unmistakable intuition of creative choice from the cosmos of Ukrainian prehistory in order *aby khoch krykhtu istyny znaity* [“to find at least a crumb of truth”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 68). After all, the past has always been for Kostenko not only a compendium of facts, events, impressions, and experiences, but also an “intellectual temptation”, to use a phrase from the creative heritage of Serhiy Krymskyi. The writing of historical works is not an attempt to “rewrite”, “correct”, or “order” the past, to dot the i’s and cross the t’s, to “justify” or “embellish” certain events,

but rather a great deal of intellectual research, work with documentary sources, and rethinking the theses around which the debate is taking place. First of all, the poet has to overcome a short-term doubt about trying to read history through the lens of her own research and insights: *Chy nam sudylys poshuky natkhnenni, / znannia yakis novi i nestemenni? / Chy tilky smutok zolotoi zghadky / z nemirianoho obshyru zahadky?* [“Are we destined for inspired searches, / knowledge of some new and unnatural kind? / Or is it only the sadness of a golden memory / from the immeasurable scope of a riddle?”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 88). *Skifska odisseia*, written after the 1983 publication of the book *Skifskyi step* [The Scythian Steppe] by the Ukrainian archaeologist and poet Borys Mozolevskyi, a member of the same passionate generation, sets the context for the general interest of the Ukrainian Sixties in Scythian themes. According to Ivan Dziuba, one of the most prominent representatives of the Sixties, a statesman, scholar, and cultural critic, Kostenko’s artistic and figurative appeal to the vision of Scythia is a model of contemporary cultural experience of Scythia, “in solidarity with historical memory, free from ideological exaltation” (Dziuba, 2007, p. 542). This ballad is an internal / latent polemic with the Russian poet Alexander Blok’s poem *Skify* [The Scythians] as “a kind of ultimatum to historical forgetfulness” (Panchenko, 2005, p. 22). Claiming to be a “masculine response”, but using feminine, “soft”, artistic and figurative means, Lina Kostenko contrasts (according to I. Dziuba) her own view of the historical past with the views of O. Blok with his vision of “the messianism of Russia, which allegedly carries a renewed charge of nomadic-revolutionary energy of a new ‘Scythianism’ that will destroy the false culture of bourgeois Europe” (Dziuba, 2010, p. 200). This topic has a deeper historiosophical dimension: without a constructive delving into this issue, it is impossible to talk about the formation of national and national-cultural identity as the self-awareness of the people. The poet engages in a dialog not only with the idea / interpretation (after all, also with Bloc himself), but also with time, which is comprehended from a cross-cutting perspective: *Use ide, ale ne vse mynaie / nad berehamy vichnoi riky* [“Everything flows, but not everything passes / over the banks of the eternal river”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 108). She does not intensify the narrative structure by deliberately injecting emotions / arguments /

anti-assumptions, but rather conducts a narrative reconstruction of the past in a reasonable manner, without external overdrive, with her own research and artistic “tools”, since the ancient “Scythian reality” has come down to us in the form of “crossword puzzles” written with “sword and blood”, in the “dimensions of legends” / conjecture / insinuations. However, its position “beyond time” is clear and transparent: *Yaki b tut ne buly stovpotvorinnia, /khto b zvidky ne nakochuvav siudy, /a liud buv korinnyi tut, bo korinnia / v takomu grunti hlyboko sydyt* [“No matter what crowds are here, /whoever comes from where, /the local people are indigenous, because the roots / are deep in this soil”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 72). The author tries to consider the Scythians not only through *slipuchu pryzmu pektoral*i [“the dazzling prism of armor plates”], and in general *istoriiu po zolotu chytat* [“to read history in a golden way”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 85). For her, the search for roots remains the main historiosophical attitude, which is the central theme of this layer of her work. *Viky ishly, narod ne perevivsia / i vreshti resht vony zrobylys namy* [“Centuries have passed, the people have not changed / and in the end they became us”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 69) – the slow rhythm conveys not only the slow passage of time, which is hard and full of experience, but also the process of forming an ethnic group, which does not happen overnight, easily and simply, but only with sweat and blood. It is set deep in time and manifests itself through artifacts that can be distorted, “corrected” for posterity, and one can “blow off the dust” of false theories and insinuations to try to find the truth. *Nemaie dat, nemaie faktiv holykh, /use diishlo u vymirakh lehend. /Ale v kurhanakh skifskykh – ne monholy. /Na pektoral*i – *tez ne Oriient* [“There are no dates, no bare facts, /everything has come down in the measurements of legends. /But in the Scythian mounds – are no Mongols. /On the armor plate – no Orient either”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 73). Lina Kostenko refers to the Scythian armor plate of a Scythian king of the 2nd century BC from the Tomb of the Tolsta Mohyla, found by archaeologist and poet Borys Mozolevskyi on June 21, 1971, during an archaeological expedition to a Scythian mound near the town of Pokrov, Dnipro region.

If the hero of the Scythian Odyssey is an unnamed Greek merchant, a rather conventional character around whom the story “revolves”, the passage of time, then time itself is not conventional at all: is

a distinct concrete reality full of events / collisions / observations / allusions. It is overgrown with convincing realities, everyday details, and is concretized through a “portrait” of the era, which speaks through the time quite clearly and convincingly. This is achieved not only by the successful “arrangement” of the chosen theme, but also by the parity of the author / time relationship. The writer does not pretend to be afraid of the past or its interpretations, but rather tells a slow story, creating her own patterns of a particularized temporality, where not so much collisions / oppositions / arguments are important as visions / observations / visual impressions. Thus, the usual (or expected here) lyricism often gives way to irony / humor, which does not allow us to descend into Blok’s sentimentality, sometimes a kind of particular seriousness that balances show-off intonations. Instead, the apparent softness of the narrative, which dictates the corresponding poetics, carries a great potential for confidence: *Ne mozhna braty istynu v orendu / i siiaty na nii chortopolokh* [“You cannot rent the truth / and sow thistles on it”] (Kostenko, 1987, p.73): it was on this “thistle” of distorted historical truth that the Ukrainian national and national-cultural identity was built on in the totalitarian era. The descriptive-soft tone of the poetic narrative with glimpses of humorous culture, focusing the reader’s attention on landscapes / details of everyday life / visual impressions, turns into a tone of the indisputability of the very idea of finding one’s own roots: *Yaki tut ne prokochuvalys ordy! / Yaka proishla po zemliakh tsykh bida!* [“What hordes have not passed through here! / What a disaster has passed through this land!”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 72). In this way, the poet’s time takes on a historical dimension, “sown” with events that tested the strength of the sacred land; it does not remain anonymous / impersonal, has a clear anthropological dimension, a “human” content, and reaches us alive / rich / fulfilled. All of this is not only for the sake of solving historical mysteries, but also for the sake of intergenerational resonance, searching for one’s identity, roots, and answers to the questions:

I khto vony?

A my khto?

Khto ty? Khto ty?!

*Khto nashi predky? Pryishli? Avtokhtony?
 Skoloty? Loty? Vykhidtsi z Dvorichchia?
 Vysoka vit z prakorenia slov'yan?
 Yaki buly tut movy i narichchia?
 V yakykh sadakh spivalos solovia'm?*

[*And who are they?/And who are we?/Who are you? Who are you?/Who are our ancestors? Newcomers?Autochthons?/Scoloti? Lots? Refugees from the Crimea?/A high branch from the ancestral tree of the Slavs?/What languages and dialects were here?/In whose gardens did nightingales sing?*] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 88).

The theme of “peoples from the boundless wastes”, which is interpreted by Lina Kostenko as in the lines of the poem *Tsyhanska muza* [Gypsy Muse] where the main character, the legendary poet Papusha, is a kind of an artistic projection of the artist’s fate in the context of a stateless people, which was the Ukrainian people before the collapse of the USSR and the restoration of Ukraine’s independence in 1990. The inner drama of a talented person torn between the need for creative expression and the cruel circumstances of an anti-democratic reality is multiplied by sober understanding: *Mynuloho nema. Maibunoho ne bude* [“There is no past. There will be no future”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 88); *Bo tilky Slovo – pamiati spasennist. /Zhyvyi narod, shcho mav svoje pysmo!* [“For the Word alone is the salvation of memory./A living nation, which has an alphabet!”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 88). The controversial lines of Papusha’s opponents, *Poeziia? Narod? Tse vydumaly liudy. /Tse viazhe do zemli. A my – kochivnyky* [“Poetry? Nation? It was invented by people./It binds you to the ground. And we are nomads”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 406) return to the problem of historical roots / historical memory, the establishment of statehood as a guarantee of self-realization of the individual on the basis of free choice. The theme of the statelessness of the Roma, who pass through time as *protiah zoloty v istorii derzhav* [“a golden thread in the history of states”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 404), refers to the problem of colonialism on the territory of Ukraine and focuses on well-known lines that reflect the inner drama of the poet herself: *Ale zh, ale zh, ale zh!.. Narod ne vybyraiut. /I sam ty – tilky brunka u noho na hilli. /Dlia noho i zhyvut, za*

noho i vmyraiut, /okh, ne tomu, shcho vin – naikrashchyi na zemli! [“But, but, but... You do not choose your nation./And you yourself are just a bud on his branch. / For him they live, they die for it,/oh, not because it is the best one on earth!”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 406). Thus, during the period of imperial totalitarianism, Kostenko used Aesop’s language to draw attention to Ukrainian problems: of statelessness, genocide, and the destruction of a nation deprived of the opportunity to speak out about its tragedies through the mouth of a poet: *A khto zh rozkazhe liudiam pro ti kryvavi sloz / ... /koly my yshly v bezvykhid, u holod, u morozy, /tikaiuchy od zvira, shcho zvavsia henotsyd?!* [“And who will tell people about those bloody tears/... /when we walked into despair, into hunger, into frost,/running away from the beast called genocide?!”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 409).

Interpreted through a number of works (*Tsyhanska muza, Marusia Churai*, etc.), this theme of the artist of a stateless nation reflects the spiritual biography / fate of the poet herself, who consistently manifested her own unbending position as an artist in the context of the tragic twentieth century through her uncompromising life. The dramatic poem *Snih u Florentsii* (written in 1983–1985, published in 1987) also addresses this problem from a temporal perspective. But time here is not only a fertile background against which bifurcation knots / webs / explosions are revealed, but also a kind of mirror that reflects the artist’s position. The action takes place in the monastery of the ancient French town of Tours in the XIV century, and the symbol of the dramatic poem is the garden of “unfading figures” that personifies the talent of one of the most talented inspired sculptors who worked in the era of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. The conflict of past / present time encoded in the images of Giovanni Francesco Rustici (the Old Man) and Florentine (the youth of the Old Man), who represent the same person in different hypostases, is in fact a conflict of time / human nature: It leads to the problem of the artist, in particular the artist / authority, which is one of the main themes in L.’s work. Kostenko, especially in the context of the past totalitarian era. *Yak vazhko buty v nashi dni myttsem!* [“How difficult it is to be an artist these days!”], the old man sighs. The Florentine’s rhetorical response is heard in response: *U nashi dni... A zavzhdy i ponyni?* [“Nowadays... Is it always the same?”] (Kostenko,

1989, p. 484), by this transfer of meaning through time, the poet projects the era in which she herself happened to live.

One of the highlights of several poetry collections by Lina Kostenko is her dramatic poem *Duma pro brativ neazoskykh* (written in 1984), which projects a folk story onto a historical background, “re-imagining” it: the author creates a literary and philosophical antithesis to the well-known folk *duma* about Cossacks’ escape from captivity, raising the themes of cowardice-apostasy / sacrifice, knightly honor / disgrace. It uses a mirror image of the plot: according to the text of the folk *duma*, the older brothers renounce the younger one in order to save him, and in Kostenko’s poem, Cossack Sakhno Chereniak voluntarily surrenders to share his martyrdom with his older brothers: *Ya yidu z vamy ne po chest i slavu. / Ya yidu z vamy, bo meni tak lehshe... Ne cherez vas ya yidu, a dlia sebe...* [“I am not going with you for honor and glory/I am going with you because it’s easier for me”... I am not going because of you, but for myself...”] (Kostenko 1989, p. 520). A tough choice: *...A my zh ne iz nevoli, my – u smert* [“...We are not out of captivity, we are at the brink of death”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 529) offers a chivalrous counter-idea: *My zh ne braty azovski...* [“We are not the Azov brotherhood...”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 529). The sacrifice of the Cossacks Tomylenko and Pavliuk carries a great moral and ethical burden in dimensions broader than the local case: to atone for the sin of apostasy of others in order to prove the high moral spirit of the nation, its spiritual capacity for unity and readiness to defend the native land – something that has been particularly tragic in recent Ukrainian history during the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war, which began with a treacherous attack by the neighboring “evil empire” on February 24, 2022. These events bring us back to the author’s generalizing theses of powerful emotional force and historical truth: *Vzhe stily lit, vzhe stily pokolin! / use zhyttia – mizh shableiu i pluhom* [“For so many years, for so many generations! / all my life – between the saber and the plow”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 141); *To mor, to mur, to holod, to viina, / To z neba hrim...* [“Either a pestilence, or a wall, or a famine, or a war, or thunder from the sky...”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 146); *“Narod – na rani rana”* [“The nation – wound upon wound”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 142).

Developing the world tradition of memory, Kostenko focuses on the search for and restoration of a special concept – “persecuted truth”

(according to the thesis of Ukrainian thinkers Stefan Yavorskyi and Hryhorii Skovoroda) in the realities of Ukrainian life: the three hundred years of enslavement and the struggle for statehood. This national discourse remains a key one in her work. *V istorychnykh lokhakh / vidstoiatsia vyna istyn* ["In the cellars of history / the wines of truth will lie"] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 156) this is the credo that the poet uses to reconstruct historical events in the context and in the process of national identity formation and establishment, along with individual identity that crystallizes in the projections of national and cultural identity. Her work convinces us that time creates experience. Therefore, every reference to historical events is intended to "break through the old space of experience" (Kozellek, 2005, p. 196) through temporality, especially in the case of those periods of the past that were subjected to ideological deformations to please the official totalitarian authorities. The era of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi has become not only the object of close study by historians, but it also "thinks" of itself through the artist and his works, which reproduce not so much "past reality" as "real probability" with varying degrees of accuracy. Despite the fact that the poet's grandiose project "to enclose the whole of Ukrainian history in a stanza" (Kostenko, 2005, pp. 104–105) as an intention to realize a kind of "exclusive claim to comprehensiveness" (Kozellek, 2005, p. 216) has not been fully realized (Kostenko 2005), but we are still talking about her coherent historiosophical concept. The writer unfolds her historical and personalistic approach through a vision of the historical mission and historical power of the Ukrainian people, depicting an extraordinary figure at the center of events, "through whose spiritual dimension and fate one sees national history in its drama and heroism, in the long-suffering of the Ukrainian land" (Dziuba, 2007, pp. 536–536). In one case, it is Marusia Churai, a legendary Ukrainian folk poet whose songs provide insight into the aesthetic dimension of the Liberation War led by Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, "eternal questions of the human spirit that arise not in the abstract, but in the whole subjective specificity of national existence" (Dziuba, 2007, p. 537) (*Marusia Churai*), in another, Khmelnytskyi is presented after the lost battle of Berestechko (*Berestechko*), the lessons of which are the realization of historical defeat in the context of the "psychological

eternity” recreated by the poet (I. Dziuba) with a projection to future historical victories.

The name of the legendary Marusia Churai, lost in time, has been preserved only by folk legends. Since experts have not been able to historically prove her existence (*Nemaie dat, nemaie faktiv holykh, / use diishlo u vymirakh lehend* [“There are no dates, no naked facts, / everything has come down in the dimensions of legends”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 73), the author has been given the mission to expand the available memory of the legendary girl through the lens of her own imagination: *usmikhaietsia pravda ochyma lehend* [“Truth smiles through the eyes of legends”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 8). Reconstructing the hypothesis and the temporal and psychological atmosphere of the era required a great deal of intellectual and research work: this is the case when it is possible to “make the known unknown, to see in it something that no one else has seen, or to experience it in a way that no one else has experienced. Then what is known and allegedly experienced becomes a qualitatively different value-as if it had never existed before.” (Dziuba, 2010, p. 193). Therefore, the historical novel in verse, *Marusia Churai* (written in 1980) is to some extent experimental, since the author artistically explores the era not through a fixed documentary reality but through the dimension of folklore-folk tales. On the one hand, this provided a greater scope for conjecture / admission of probabilities, and on the other hand, it raised the problem of authenticity, convincing truthfulness, which is achieved by precisely found artistic and figurative means. Readers and critics alike appreciated this work (it was for it that Kostenko was awarded the highest national honor, the Shevchenko Prize). After all, the poet, actually guided by Marcel Proust’s instruction that space has geometry, while time has psychology, was artistically decoding an ancient mystery that seemed to have drowned with the Atlantis of time. Therefore, it was the psychological basis of the work that became the key to its undeniable success: such an arrangement on the level of deep emotional instincts of a supposedly well-known theme on the canvas of a historical era is possible only for virtuoso masters of the word.

In the historical discourse actualized by Lina Kostenko, *Istoriia dyvyllasia v dva dzerkala / antychne hretske y skifske zolote* [“History

looked into two mirrors – / ancient Greek and Scythian golden”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 439), where two mirrors are like two dimensions of memory, through which the self-awareness of the nation is manifested, which forms and unfolds national identity, and thus national-cultural identity with its artistically fixed and actualized concepts through the figurative word. Nevertheless, tolerating the theme of antiquity, the poet escapes from the captivity of the ancient “idea of the Cosmos as the dwelling place of man” (Krymskyi, 2008, p. 254) (cf., in her work, the antiquity is vividly present in various allusions / appeals) and develops her own idea of the human home within history (according to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel), using her own conceptual sphere, developed over the years, where the category of time remains fundamental as a broad context and at the same time as a powerful factor in the formation of national and cultural identity. The poet tries to encompass the anthropocentric paradigm of man-history-man with her artistic imagination. Such a temporal and anthropological range / amplitude (“scope”, “span”) of historical development is usually compressed in her works to the existential world of an individual personality (*Marusia Churai, Berestechko, Tsyhanska muza*), and she tries to transform the situation that plays the role of a mirror into an existential and artistic model, where the cathartic imperative always remains dominant, even if the catharsis is related to the philosophy of defeat. Thus, the fate of a nation / state and the fate of an individual “nominated” by history itself to the role of a historical character (sometimes it is the will of one person, sometimes a coincidence or a challenge of time, but never an accident) are interdependent, they mirror each other, as seen in the image of B. Khmelnytskyi (*Berestechko*). Of course, the thesis that “events are ‘embedded’ in a specific course, in a Before and After of a natural chronology that can be proved empirically” (Kozellek, 2005, p. 157). This thesis of the famous German researcher does not contradict the historiosophical position of L. Kostenko, but only emphasizes it, despite the fact that her historiosophy is not formed chronologically, but makes certain “semantic circles”, eventually forming a coherent, verified anthropocentric conceptual model of the decisive role of the individual in the historical progress of the nation. Undoubtedly, a true artist is free to comprehend

different events in different periods of his or her life, returning to what he or she has already “mastered” again and again, rethinking the painful problems of historical existence at a different level each time. And only later do such “outliers” of the past develop into a coherent clarity and quality, which testifies to the author’s long process of crystallizing the image of the Khmelnytskyi era (*Marusia Churai*, *Berestechko*). Obviously, Kostenko’s “crown jewel” or, perhaps, pivotal work, judging by her reverent attitude towards it and the resonant response of the intellectual community, we shall regard her novel in verse, *Berestechko*. Here we are talking about a painful, traumatic experience, grounded in layers of time, which does not add much optimism in complex historical realities, especially in the context of “walking in circles” in Ukrainian national history. Therefore, a “justificatory philosophy” is inevitable and fully justified here, a version of which has been maturing in Kostenko’s mind for a long time and, obviously, accompanied with doubt and difficult reflections. After all, the mission of a poet (especially if he or she leans towards romantic poetry) is not to open old wounds, but to enlighten the people, to inspire them for national growth with artistically perfect, elevated words. The author’s extraordinary self-determination is evidenced by the fact that she returned to writing / improving this work for thirty years (1967–1999), adding new expressions to the text each time: It is also obvious that the work itself did not let go of the writer (Panchenko, 2010, pp. 207–210). There was a long conflict with the creative laboratory of the recognized artist regarding the polishing of the concept of the work and the “molding” of the image of B. Khmelnytskyi’s work testifies not only to the censorship restrictions in totalitarian Soviet times and the writer’s perfectionism (as critics have emphasized), but also, obviously, to her internal conflict between the real and ideal. The “expectation horizon” of society, which is extremely important for her, played an important role, so the thesis about “aged wine” will probably not be out of place either. The year 1999, one of the strategic choice, became the necessary “x” time that could ensure an adequate perception of *Berestechko* by Kostenko’s compatriots and guarantee its success, the election of a new Ukrainian leader, when it was important to avoid another defeat.

Berestechko, which has gone from an ordinary place name on the map of Ukraine to a key historical event, has eventually “grown” into a cultural symbol that tends to be tinged with national philosophy in its tragic version of national defeat, which, despite everything, contains a great potential for victory encoded in the value of experience. And in the fate of the writer herself, it is also an important stage in her creative biography. The novel *Berestechko* has two temporal layers of memory: The first covers the events of more than three hundred years ago near Berestechko and their consequences, and the second is three decades long, when various interpretive versions, variants of textual texture, and meanings layered and crystallized on the writer’s original idea. L. Kostenko tries to trace the fate of Ukraine as a consequence of its previous history in all its potentials and weaknesses, unfolding a broad theme in a short phrase: *Ye borotba za doliu Ukrainy* [“There is a struggle for the fate of Ukraine”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 118), and the theme of apostasy / treachery is presented here on the “scale of national tragedy and history” (Dziuba, 2007, p. 543). Interpreting the concept of the **fate** of a nation / people, she tries to reject “all the mystical and fatalistic connotations of its meaning”, replacing it with an understanding identical to the concepts of “natural abilities”, “national character”, “the nature of a given statehood”, etc. (Chyzhevskiy, 2005, p. 10). And yet there is no denying that there is something “irrational, unexpected, beyond human will, like fate itself” (Chyzhevskiy, 2005, p. 11). Dmitry Chizhevsky calls it mercy or grace (which, obviously, in the rational plane of thought can be described as a causal law). It is a blessing (as the spirit in the “self-consciousness of the epoch”, according to S. Krymskiy, as the quintessence of the progressive development of history, historical experience), because “happiness spoils people, nations; because happiness weakens, because happiness obscures other possibilities...” (Chyzhevskiy, 2005, p. 11). Even from this point of view, the novel has an undeniable importance as a glimpse into the psychological depths of history, into the experience that lies beyond the exclusively chronological course of events, since the writer “takes from history not the transient but the eternal” (Dziuba, 2010, p. 197). The thesis *Porazka – tse nauka. / I ty v tsii Akademii – spudei* [“Failure

is learning.../and you are a freshman in this Academy”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 170) is grounded in the position of a strong personality who, facing a painful defeat, opens up a new range of other possibilities: *Niiaka peremoha tak ne vchyt* [“No victory teaches you like that”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 173). According to D. Chyzhevskiy, people “can never guarantee that the tasks they set can be solved” (Chyzhevskiy, 2005, p. 12), since different circumstances exist. This claim is reflected in the sacramental phrase put by the writer in the mouth of Hetman B. Khmelnytskyi: *Use zh bulo za nas./Chomu zh prohraly my?!* [“Everything was in our favor./Why did we lose?”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 12), so her *Dusha hortaie tysyachi prychnyn* [“Soul flips through thousands of reasons”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 120). In general, the poet’s analysis is in tune with V. Panchenko’s analysis of the situation around B. Khmelnytskyi (*Berestechko*): *...Ne vse, vykhodyt, zalezhalo vid Bohdana Khmelnytskoho* [“...Not everything, it turns out, depended on Bohdan Khmelnytsky”] (Panchenko, 2010, p. 212). No wonder D. Chyzhevskiy was convinced of the need for an active life position capable of overcoming obstacles: *Braty na sebe vynu, shchob, mozhe, y dosiahnuty tsili, yty na nebezpeku, shchob distaty nadiiu peremohy – bez tsoho* [“To take the blame in order to achieve the goal, to go to danger in order to get the hope of victory – without this”], a person will not move forward in a historical movement; but in a historical movement there are no **guarantees**, no **guaranteed** happiness. Fate will collapse only under the blow of grace independent of man (author’s highlighting)” (Chyzhevskiy, 2005, p. 12). Thus, through the cathartic imperative clearly stated on the pages of *Berestechko*, the writer brings the reader to the philosophy of defeat as the start of new opportunities and potentials. Therefore, her historiosophical concept is in line with the historiosophy of D. Chyzhevskiy: only those who risk danger in order to obtain the “hope of victory” are able to make it. Of course, Kostenko’s lyrical-epic works are imbued with a tragic spirit that “blows on the field of the struggle of will against fate” (Chyzhevskiy, 2005, p. 12), but his position is far from that of a fatalist (and thus has nothing to do with Hegel’s “sin of fatalism” that his descendants accuse him of). In fact, collective memory and individual memory, multiplied by the time factor, had to enter into a complex interaction in order

for the writer to create this image of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, whom one can approach at least with understanding, if not justification.

For Lina Kostenko, who uses convincing artistic and figurative means to reveal her historical and personalistic vision of time and man in the context of this time, history is always creation as a sphere of human effort, unfolded chronologically, as well as specific actions of people responsible for the fate of the country. In the process of unfolding this creativity, a national identity is crystallized and a national-cultural identity is nurtured, which should be characterized by “the criterion of continuity in cultural change, the criterion of culture’s very nature, the criterion of traditionality as fidelity to the community hierarchy of values, etc.” (Lysyi, 2013, p. 36), all of which is ripening in the depths of time and historical memory. That is why it is so important for her to go beyond factualism and plunge into the maelstrom of psychology, which, according to Marcel Proust, is what time is all about, as a temporal and anthropological substance. It is this psychological depth and psychological portraiture that makes it possible to say that “Bohdan in the novel ‘transcends’ not only the battle, but, to a certain extent, **time**” (Panchenko, 2010, p. 214), and this timeless psychological reality is more important for the writer in terms of psychological authenticity, artistic persuasiveness, and projection into the future. That is why Bohdan’s words sound so authentic: *Mene ne mozhut liudy ne pochuty – /dusha v meni rozghoidana yak dzvin!* [“People can’t help but hear me – / my soul is swinging like a bell!”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 174). This is how its inherent constructive temporality manifests itself: It is about extrapolating three days into “psychological eternity”, according to I. Dziuba (the researcher compares them to the days before the execution in *Marusia Churai* (Dziuba, 2010, p. 198)). Emotional immersion in the complicated past is achieved through dramatization of the plot (primarily internal) and visual illustration. The deep layers of the protagonist’s “inner psychology” and the conflicts of the internal dialog illustrate the truth that national history is always anthropocentric: a significant role in it is played by a personality inscribed not only in the chronology of the time but also in the chronology of one’s own soul with its seemingly far from real history conflicts (the Khmelnytskyi-Helena love theme).

The writer's vision of historical characters is consistent with the views of G. Hegel, who defined historiosophy as a symbiosis of two moments: ideas and human passions, since, according to unwritten historical laws, “nothing great in the world happens without passion”, and a person (historical character) who cannot be considered outside of his or her interests and passions is not a person at all (i.e., an average person), but a very specific person with the whole complex of virtues and vices. The artistic and figurative system of the work activated by the writer unfolds in such a way that eventually “Berestechko” in the interpretation of L. Kostenko symbolizes defeat, and at the same time, it is not only a toponym of defeat, its symbol, chronotope, mythologeme, metaphor, but also a toponym of hope as a result of rethinking the tragic experience, reinforced by the thesis: *Zakon viiny, tiazhka yoho khoda* [“The law of war, its heavy gait”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 146). This is how a historical event is transformed in L. Kostenko's interpretation into a source of moral reflection and lessons for future generations: the articulation of the past defeat is projected onto the possibility / impossibility of defeat in modern Ukrainian history: the current Russian-Ukrainian full-scale war of the twenty-first century is exactly the kind of difficult test for learning historical lessons. After all, “the past opens up to experience only to the extent that it contains an element of the future and *vice versa*...” (Kozellek 2005, p. 40). It is not without reason that the text raises the problem of Ukraine's verbal “presence” in the world: *Chomu u nas nema Horatsiia?* [“Why don't we have a Horace?”] (Kostenko 2010, p. 139). Accordingly, the poet's historiosophical model as a vivid emanation of the national spirit is immersed in Taras Shevchenko's natiocentrism: “One of the main motives of *Berestechko* is the need for Shevchenko. However, Shevchenko is also a certain alternative to Bohdan Khmelnytskyi...” (Dziuba, 2007, p. 539). There remain certain constants in the work: Ukraine's desire for sovereignty and its anti-imperial stance. We are talking about the strong statehood of Ukraine, which generations of Ukrainians have dreamed of: *Derzhavnist – derzhyt. Bo vona – derzhava / U nei skipetr vladu u rutsi* [“The state holds. Because it is a state... / It holds the scepter of power in its hand”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 99). The text of *Berestechko* is full of lines that rise to the level of Taras Shevchenko's

poetry: *Ne poshchastylo nashomu narodu, / Dav Boh susidiv, lasykh do nashest. / Zabrally vse – i zemliu, i svobodu. / Teper zabraty khochut vzhe i chest* [“Our people are unlucky, / God gave us neighbors eager to invade. / They took everything – land and freedom”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 132); *A zvidusil – to khyzhi kihti leva, / to dzob zokliuchenyi orla* [“And everywhere there are the ravenous claws of a lion, or the beak of a chained eagle”] (Kostenko 2010, p.146); *Vsi khochut bulavy, vsi boriutsia za vlast. / Ta y bude bulava, yak makova holivka. Otak potorokhtit, i znovu khtos prodast. Ne toi, tak toi. Tam zrada, tam zlodiistvo. Tam vyhnaly Somka, obraly slymaka. Tam nalyvaikivti pobyls z lobodivt-siamy. / Tam ti ob tykh zlamaly derzhaka.* [“Everyone wants power,/ everyone is fighting for it. / There will be a sceptre like a poppy head / If not this one, then that one. / Betrayal, theft. / Now, they kicked out Somko and elected a slug. / Now, the Nalyvaiko faction fought with Loboda’s... / Now, they broke a club on somebody...”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 118).

L. Kostenko’s artistic and historical truth is beyond the limits of historical truth alone. Without relying on “posterity to sort it out” (Kostenko, 1989, p. 152), the poet usually rises above the document / fact / storyline of historical events with her undeniable ability to see through the thickness of time layers, her experience of generalization, and her ability to verify this historical truth with the realities of her time. *Dusha hortaie tysiachi prychnyn* [“Soul flips through thousands of reasons”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 121), *Because really: Vazhke tse dilo – vlada, bulava* [“It’s a hard business, power, the Hetman’s seat”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 119). Therefore, Shevchenko’s anti-imperial theme finds its own artistic embodiment and plot development through his own optics of seeing history as “an actual image of a tragedy” (I. Dziuba), in which the influence of the individual plays an almost decisive role. His position is based on anthropocentric dominance: The driver of historical events is the individual, in whom its “moral force” is manifested (D. Chyzhevskiy). At the same time, as a rational and intuitive thinker, she does not reject the philosopher’s thesis about the “high tragedy” of history (as opposed to the historical optimism imposed by Marxist ideology), when “a true attitude to the historical element in which the future of people and nations is forged” (Chyzhevskiy, 2005, p. 11) remains fundamental. She is no

stranger to Chyzhevskiy's idea of the “superhuman” and “supra-individual” in history, which he concentrated in the concept of the fate of the people (and not just the individual), which “emphasizes... the inexorably cruel nature of what binds the individual, the nation and the state not only from above but also from within...” (Chyzhevskiy, 2005, pp. 10–11). Thus, in covering the historical fate of Ukraine, the poet is guided not only by the course of external events but also by their internal context: hidden motivations, psychological motivations of historical characters, human virtues / weaknesses, irrational concepts such as charisma / energy of a personality, etc.

Using the resources of word art, the writer realizes the idea of Hegel's philosophy of history, according to which individuality in history acquires its significance in the process of realizing what the “national spirit” seeks; therefore, the individual component of the historical process synthesizes the character of the special type and content of the consciousness of the epoch. Kostenko's work is primarily about determining the limits of personal responsibility of historical figures, which is rooted in the national ontology, in national existence as the basis of self-identification and the formation of national identity. In the history of Ukraine, it has always been an object of foreign encroachment: *Dlia nykh tsi zemli tilky lasyi kusen* [“This land is just a tidbit for them”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 143). The poet fills in the gaps of Ukrainian historical existence as the basis of self-identification under the omophorion of national responsibility, which she sacralizes as a counterbalance to Ukraine's longstanding colonial situation. Such an impulse to “rehabilitate history” from the perspective of an “offended nation” whose history has been distorted for centuries to please the imperial ambitions of its northern neighbors, of course, lies in the ideological, social, and socio-cultural plane. By artistically synthesizing the varieties of collective memory – ethnogenetic, historical, and social – and ennobling them with individual memory, the poet creates a historiosophical model where being-in-itself and being-in-the-world coexist, presented through the prism of the national. The writer engages in a dialog not only with specific events and their traces in history, but also with time, which modifies the proportionality of these events and history itself, which in fact remains a process

of “will actualization” (Hegel), according to the distance between our “now” and our “then” of the event.

Kostenko’s attempt to read the “invariant content of the experience of the nation” (Krymskyi, 2003, p. 217) is not so much to correct the past history with all its dramatic and tragic consequences as to correct the future with the help of an “adequate understanding” of the past. So, from the point of view of constructive temporality, it is always a dialog between the past and the future-through the mediation of the present: “...Everything is preceded by a diagnosis that incorporates the given experience. From this perspective, the space of experience, open to the future, opens up a horizon of expectations. The acquisition of experience enables and guides predictions” (Kozellek, 2005, p. 359). This observation is to some extent illustrated by the prose novel of L. Kostenko, *Zapysky ukrainskoho samashed-shoho* [*Notes of a Ukrainian madman*] (written in 2001–2010), which for a thoughtful reader sounded like a premonition-foresight of the latest full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022–2023, launched by our northern neighbor in the eastern regions of Ukraine in 2014. Cf.: Tarnashynska 2018). The “privilege of the past”, which is active in her poetry, loses its position here under the pressure of time itself, due to its inclusion in the totality of the present and the feeling of a threat to the future. Thus, as *Idut roky. Idut stolittia* [“Years go by. Centuries go by”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 36), and *Proishla vikiv povilna chereda* [“A slow line of centuries has passed”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 464), and Ukrainian history seems to be unfolding in a circle: *...otak tut spokonviku / Zhyttia i smert na vidstani strily* [“...this is how it has been here for centuries – / Life and death are at the distance of an arrow”] (Kostenko, 1987, p. 72). And in the context of the tragedies of the twenty-first century, the poet’s words from *Berestechko* sounds powerful again: *My – shchyt Yevropy i svii khrest nesem* [“We are the shield of Europe and we carry our cross”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 86). And as a warning, as a message to future generations, it is carried on beyond time: *Ne dopuskai takoi mysli, / shcho Boh pokazhe nam nelasku. / Zhyttia liudskoho stroky stysli. / Nemaie chasu na porazku* [“Do not allow the thought / that God will show not us grace. / Human life is short. / There is no time for defeat”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 182). *Viky mynuly / i viky hriadut* [“Ages past and ages to come”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 177);

“*Yak strashno ore istorychnyi pluh!*” [“How terribly the plow of history plows!”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 264); *Mynaie chas, yedynyi sekundant* [“Time is passing, the only second”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 262) – her aphoristic lines sound like a reminder of the transience of time. And the lines that support our victory are completely in tune with the tragic present: *My peremozhem. Ne taki my y kvoli* [“We will win. We are not so weak”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 182). After all, the historical experience of Ukrainians gives them the right to speak through the mouth of their great poet: *Blahoslovenna kozhna myt zhyttia / na tsykh vsesvitnikh kosovytsiakh smerti!* [“Blessed is every moment of life / in this world’s harvest fields of death!”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 7).

Thus, in L. Kostenko’s work, individual time is extrapolated onto the collective time (time of the state / non-state nation), which gives us the right to talk about the interdependence of these temporal units, their fullness of creative potential. Personal (subjective) and social (objective / anonymous) time have different semantic transcriptions. *Prohravshy na spivuchii tiatyvi / istoriiu...* [“Having lost playing history on a bowstring...”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 425), the poet proposed her own version of “ideological decolonization” that promotes “the restoration of the connections of liberated peoples (from the oppression of totalitarian regimes) with their long, traditional memory, which these regimes confiscated, destroyed or distorted” (Nora, 2014, p. 262).

Thus, the reconstruction of historical truth with the help of artistic intuition and insight, multiplied by thoughtful verification and comprehension of the facts of national history, always acts as artistic truth for Lina Kostenko. The writer seeks to “reshape” the historical time distorted by other people’s projections and aberrations and appeals not only to historical accuracy but also to the reader’s emotional sphere. This “actual time” and the poet herself are looking for answers to the questions: *Kudy ydemo? / Yakyi lyshaiem slid?* [“Where are we going? / What is our trail like?”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 260). *Dusha nalezhyt liudstvu i epokham* [“The soul belongs to humanity and epochs”] (Kostenko, 1989, p. 27) is the main thesis of our great contemporary, the Nobel Prize-level writer Lina Kostenko, whose work is imbued with irrefutable conviction: *Bo lysh narody, yavleni u Slovi, / dostoino zhyty mozhut na zemli* [“For only the peoples

revealed in the Word / can live in dignity on earth”] (Kostenko, 2010, p. 111).

And finally, instead of a summary. In the context of the formation of national, and thus national-cultural identity on the example of the work of a leading Ukrainian writer, it is worth turning to the discussion conducted by professional philosophers such as E. Smith, P. Ricœur, T. V. Adorno, S. Hall, E. Gellner and others, and which is very eloquently summarized by the Ukrainian philosopher Ivan Lysyi: “However, the currently influential phenomenological line encourages us to look for the national identity of culture not in the culture itself and its artifacts, but in the intentions of the subject of culture creation and in the attitude of the ‘consumer’ of culture. If we do not alterealize the artifact of culture and the subject’s instructions from this perspective, then we can find some resonance in this statement. However, the discussion of such resonances leads to the question of the criteria of a culture’s national identity, when identity is thought of in its adjectival hypostasis rather than in its substantive version. That is, we will be talking about theoretically grounded determinants of “one’s own” in the course of national and cultural self-identification of the community” (Lysyi, 2013, p. 35). It is Lina Kostenko’s work, with its cross-cutting concepts of historical and cultural memory, temporal continuity, and the creative role of the responsible individual in these processes, that demonstrates her distinctive attraction to all these still debated components with a clear emphasis on the specific “own”, the native, as the most productive. That is, on what has been gained through the historical and cultural experience of generations and embodied in the national and cultural consciousness, where both the artist’s intentions and the resonant perception of her texts by a thoughtful reader seem to “converge”.

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