

War Discourse in the Biographical Novels About Artists: Intermedial Aspect

Oksana Levytska

Ukrainian Academy of Printing, Department of Media Communications
19 Pidholosko St., Lviv 79020, Ukraine
Lviv Polytechnic National University, Department of Applied Linguistics
12 Bandera St., Lviv 79013, Ukraine
Email: oksana_levytska@ukr.net
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5033-4661>
Research interests: literary theory, intermediality, biographical novel about the artist

Nataliia Mocherniuk

National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine
I. Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Department of Ukrainian Literature
4 Kozelnytska St., Lviv 79026, Ukraine
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Department of Ukrainian Literature
57 Shevchenka St., Ivano-Frankivsk 76018, Ukraine
Email: mocher.n@gmail.com
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2737-8690>
Research interests: interaction of literary and fine arts, intermediality, comparative literature

Abstract. War narrative in the biographical novels about painters has been analysed in their intermedial links with the paintings of said artists. The object of analysis is novels about the Spanish artist Francisco Goya written by Manfred Schneider, Carlos Rojas, and Jacek Dehnel; Ralf Dutli's novel about Chaim Soutine; and a separate section dedicated to a selection of novels about Ukrainian artists: Ivan Holubkovskyy's text about Oleksa Novakivskyy, Stanislav Stetsenko's work about Mykola Hlushchenko, Kateryna Lebedieva's book about Les Kozlovskyy, Volodymyr Yavorivskyy's novel about Kateryna Bilokur. At the core of the study is the intermedial methodology based on theory by I. Rajewski, A. Hansen-Löve, S. Macenka, and A. Berger. Different aspects of war discourse in novels and its interaction with the creations of artists have been identified and highlighted, i.e., thematisation of war, description of painting creation, ekphrasis and references to works of art, use of art poetics in a literary text, aesthetics and psychology of creativity stipulated by war.

Keywords: biographical novels; war; intermediality; visual art.

Introduction

War memory in world culture and art has not lost its relevance during all recorded history, with artefacts and works of literature being “intermediaries” of this memory (by A. Assman). The cultural memory of many peoples has works of art that document

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landmark historical events, military victories or losses, images of war and relevant reflections. In literary biographies, writers respond to these artefacts and reconsider the military experience of artists or their feelings during the war.

The research aims to analyse war discourse in the biographies of artists through the prism of their visual art and the impact of historical events on topics, images, and poetics of works of art and literature. The subject of the research is the war narrative in the biographical novels about artists, analysis of war themes in literary texts and paintings of artists, the interrelationship of arts, and the influence of images and poetics of painting on the creation of the artists' biographies.

The object of analysis is fictional biographical works about artists in which war discourse is the most explicitly presented on the level of theme, poetics, plot, and connection with the works of artists. These are novels about the Spanish artist F. Goya (M. Schneider, C. Rojas, Ja. Dehnel) and the novel of the Swiss writer R. Dutli about Ch. Soutine; a separate section is dedicated to Ukrainian artists: I. Holubovskiy's short story essay about O. Novakivskiy, V. Yavorivskiy's novel about K. Bilokur, S. Stetsenko's novel about M. Hlushchenko and K. Lebedieva's work about L. Lozovskiy.

War discourse is not a new subject area in literary criticism. For a long time, researchers have focused mainly on the genre of anti-war novels, which predominantly described the events of WWII. Ukrainian literary criticism also developed the topic in its genealogical aspect and comparative studies, which contrasted the works of Ukrainian authors with famous anti-war novels by E. M. Remarque, E. Hemingway and others. Interest in war discourse has recently been reignited due to the Russo-Ukrainian war, which started back in 2014 and, on February 24, 2022, turned into its most active and violent phase. The topic was explored by O. Pukhonska in her monograph *Beyond the Battle: War Discourse in Modern Literature* (2022) and actively discussed during research conferences (International conference "Milestones and Crisis States of Communities in the Projections of Culture (Literature)"), Scientific seminar "Text and Image. Images of war"). Our research continues the literary studies discovery on the basis of biographical novels about writers and supplements the relevant topics by using an intermedial approach.

The research relies on multidisciplinary literary and art criticism methodology, which employs intermedial tools developed in the works by intermediality theoreticians (I. Rajewsky (2005), A. Hansen-Löve (1983), S. Macenka (2014), and A. Berger (2012) and others). Despite the actualisation of studies dedicated to the war in literature, it has not yet been studied on the material of biographical works about artists through an intermedial lens.

1. Dialogue with art in a biographical novel about an artist: theoretical preconditions

Biographical novels about artists possess ample potential for interpretation of the dialogue between the written word and visual art. It is hardly surprising that many writers from different kinds of literature have resorted to this genre. This and other genealogical

questions require a solution; consequently, the present reading of biographical novels about artists is aimed at highlighting said questions and analysing the distinct elements of the plot, composition and poetics of this particular genre. Among the general genre characteristics of autobiographical novels, Svitlana Macenka, a researcher of German novels about music, singles out the following aspects essential for our study: the tension between subjectivity and objectivity, which calls for defining biography either as a type of research or art; the intertextual links to other texts and works of art; fictionalising of the rational and sensual knowledge of the main character; staging of the status of the individual depicted as a way to thematise ontological and epistemological issues, and others (Macenka, 2014, pp. 297–299).

This genre stipulates the use of intermedial terminology as a literary text absorbs numerous codes from visual arts, which may be decoded with the help of this interarts theory (papers by A. Hansen-Löve, S. Macenka, I. Rajewsky, W. Wolf, K. Chmielecki, A. Berger and others). We are highlighting the intermedial references of monomedial type singled out by I. Rajewsky (2005, p. 54), whose approach gave us an impetus to structure references in a way that directly resonates with the description of artistic interaction within biographical novels about artists:

- 1) direct inclusion of information about painting as the primary job, an actual reflection of the artistic experience built on autobiography;
- 2) artistic incorporations (inclusion of ekphrasis, often as insertion genres);
- 3) use of “poetics” of painting and principles of painting in a literary text (see Mocherniuk, 2018, p. 61).

A synthesised approach, which during the research of a biographical novel about an artist, may be defined as intermedial genealogy, is actualised in the war discourse, the main topic of the present analysis. Taking into consideration the topic of war in the biographical novels about artists and the images of war in artists’ paintings, we are looking into war discourse as part of cultural memory studies, extensively covered in the works by Aleida Assman (Assman, 2011).

The challenge as a motif in novels about artists is present in the trials of war that the individual faces when solving conflicts connected to the creative and humanistic search. The war itself may become one of the turning points in the protagonist’s life, which serves as “a way to structure and provide a narrative framework for the biography” (Macenka, 2014, p. 298), reflected in the author, plot and character time. War narrative in the analysed novels about artists representing various national kinds of literature are developed through the artistic component in the form of multiple incorporations of painting.

2. The Disasters of War: novels about Francisco Goya

The attention paid by writers to the Spanish artist Francisco Goya (1746–1828) is not surprising. The artist’s life fell onto a period marked by numerous historical and social cataclysms, primarily the war – the French invasion of 1808, which pushed his creativity. *The Disasters of War*, a series of prints no less famous than *The Caprices*, visually embodies

the horrors of war, disaster, violence and death. In the biographical works about Goya, war has interpretative potential, which is revealed in different pieces of literature depending on the idea and creative intention of the author. War exists in biographical novels as circumstances already experienced, recorded in plot and character time and, like Goya's art, dedicated to war. That is why the creation of the literary image of the artist against the backdrop of war foresees references to a vast layer of visual material and his famous cycle.

A direct description of war and its inclusion into the plot time is used by Manfred Schneider in his novel *Don Francisco de Goya* (1935). It should be noted that Lion Feuchtwanger's famous novel *Goya or the Hard Way to Enlightenment* (1951) covers the period between 1793 and 1806 in the artist's life. The author's plan to write a continuation was not successful. Schneider creates a narration under which "the omniscient" narrator focuses attention on the world seen through the eyes of the artist. His life is the plot of the novel. The narrator follows the historical canvas and sequence of events; facts mean a lot. Schneider is moderate in developing fictional elements, ensuring the narration is convincing and accurate.

He connects the perception of war to creativity. What should the role of an artist be during the war? Are the muses silent during the war? Schneider gives answers from the perspective of Goya's choice as the latter decides to be the reporter of war, a witness for the prosecution. The writer resorts to bloody scenes and makes the artist their witness. Death, suffering, injuries, body parts and pain affect Goya, and he chooses between weapons and a paintbrush. The artist becomes a chronicler of "present hour, present day": a clear reference to the painting *The Second of May 1808*. The writer does not restrain poignance ("this scum must be branded for decades and centuries, branded for the sake of children and grandchildren", a painting as an "eternal accusation" that no one can refute). Goya feels his creative power is growing, converting his helpless anger and terror into art. An act of creativity becomes a noble act. Goya's works are often presented as indexes or as pictorial quotations, and, indeed, an "exemplary" reader should review *The Disasters of War* to be able to read the novel properly (Schneider, 2012). The work is generally rich in artistic incorporations, which in translations come with a sizeable list of comments. The war forms part of the linear plot of the biography, dramatising the even tonality of the novel with great force.

The Spanish writer Carlos Rojas foregrounds the war in his novel *The Valley of the Fallen* (1978) about Goya. The author skilfully fictionalises the biographies of artists, in particular painters. *The Valley of the Fallen* is one of his best novels in the genre. In this complex work, Rojas managed to combine two layers of time, creating a double socio-historical space-time: Spain in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when Goya lived and worked, and Francoist Spain, in which the narrator and protagonist of the novel, Sandro Vasari, lives. He is writing a book about Goya and is the writer's alter ego. Notably, the name of the narrator-protagonist is associated with Giorgio Vasari, an Italian artist and author of *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1550), a fact Rojas himself underlines (Rojas, 2018).

Despite the complex structure in which the author mixes past and present, fiction and fact, reality and art, the composition is perfectly balanced and thought out with almost mathematical precision: each of the five chapters contains the subchapters “Dream of Reason” and “Monsters”. In turn, each “Dream of Reason” begins with an ekphrasis of specific paintings by Goya – *Charles IV of Spain and His Family*, *Execution at the Mountain of Prince Pius – 3rd May 1808*, *Bullfight*, *Hide and Seek*, *Fight with Cudgels*. Although rich in art history material, these parts are quasi-scientific fragments subordinated to the artistic foundation of the novel. After the description of each painting, a piece with exact dating is given, in which the narrator is Goya himself. Consequently, the author recreates the five final days of the artist’s life (April 16, 1828) as if presenting ready-made texts from Sandro’s future book. As seen from the structure of these chapters, Rojas endows the painter’s art with a pivotal role, integrating it into *the structure of the novel*. Each of the five subchapters of “Monsters” is divided into the so-called historical part (biographies of historical figures until their death) and the modern part, which also has exact dates. These dates reflect the looming death of the dictator Franco, against the backdrop of which Sandro’s and Marina’s lives are unravelling. Thus, history is one of the characters of the novel, making Sandro ponder its events.

War in history is presented as a time threshold. War triggers murder, violence, and hunger in the lives of Spaniards. To convey this, Rojas, who saw the evils of war as a child, reaches back to Goya’s era in search of examples and generously uses his art. He seeks to show the war through the artist’s lens, raising the question of the psychology of creativity. The war, like the illness that beset Goya in 1792, became a catalyst for a new creative approach, producing some archetypal images for world culture. The second chapter of “The Disasters of War” is particularly important.

As mentioned, the chapter begins with musings about *Execution at the Mountain of Prince Pius – 3rd May 1808*. Notably, the author is interested in the history of the painting, the time of its creation, certain compositional features, and individual images. However, he does not delve into the colour scheme, the specifics of light and shadow, and other technical subtleties of painting. The writer values the content of the image, the “narrative” of the picture, and the artist’s ideas, which he conveys with almost journalistic wit. Goya testifies to war crimes with his works, just like modern reporters do with their photographs. The writer-investigator in the novel supplements his visual series with analytical and artistic comments, without betraying the autological nature of the images. Rojas further develops the theme of war through the artist’s experiences and entrusts the painter to express them through direct speech. War as a reflection of the essence of the people, war as a reflection of the nature of an individual, and war as a warning for the future – these are the dimensions of understanding that the writer projects.

Contemporary Polish writer Jacek Dehnel also resorted to the image of Goya in the novel *Saturn: Black Paintings from the Lives of the Men in the Goya* (2002). The development of artistic themes, dialogue with artists from the past, and stylisation are general characteristics of the writer’s work. Originally, *Saturn* reveals the story of Francisco’s complicated relationship with his son Javier, whom the father dominated with

his power and authority, and supplements it with the “voice” of grandson Mariano. The unreliability of the narration is formed through the polyphony of voices as the narrator lets the three men from the Goya family speak as if removing himself. As a result of genre hybridisation, the biographical novel merges with the art history detective story and historical and psychoanalytical novels.

The father and son’s perception of the war becomes a marker of characters that the author aims to highlight. Javier, Francisco’s son, recalls that when the French entered the city, his father “didn’t care about it” and continued living his normal, unhurried life. Javier admits that this behaviour seemed dishonourable and vile to him, “as if he went there only to fill his eyes with blood and excrement coming out of the stomachs, the smell of fresh corpses”, and he chose what seemed pleasant to him: “soldiers, ours or enemy, standing in pairs or threes in front of the gate of the house, clean uniforms, curved moustaches” (Dehnel, 2011, p. 65). So, the war, presented here in retrospect, through the character’s eyes, in the structure of the narration emerges as a reconstruction of the artist’s biography, thereby emphasising the importance of the war experience in the artist’s life and work.

The author lets Francisco himself speak. His confessions show him as a man who feels pain at the fate of his country and as an artist who perceives reality with extreme sensitivity, despite his deafness. In characters’ memories, war pictures are sometimes visualised, creating a gloomy colour for the story. Through the genius artist, Dehnel tries to generalise the topic of war, asserting that violence is unacceptable.

It is necessary to highlight the role of artistic incorporations in the novel, which more than once actualise the war experience. Each part of the novel begins with an ekphrasis. Each description of a painting is the author’s interpretation of the image, although the reader may perceive it as Francisco’s opinion or, perhaps, that of Javier and Mariano. Within the framework of this study, of importance are the descriptions of the paintings *Duel with Cudgels* (*Duel* in the novel) and *Asmodea or Fantastic Vision* (*Kidnapping* in the book) from the *Black Paintings* series, which were created between 1819–1823. In *Duel*, the author uses words to reveal the archetypal nature of a duel as a competition of strength and fighting, hostility and violence, just as Goya did employing visual art instruments. In *Kidnapping*, Dehnel dives into the abyss of the brutality depicted by Goya, often accompanied by the allusion “I saw it”.

3. Poetic strategies for depicting war in Ralph Dutli’s *Soutine’s Last Journey*

While analysing biographical fiction about painters, one may observe that its poetics is often consistent with the creator’s paintings and their topics. Biographers verbalise and decode artistic canvases, trying to get closer to the artist’s figure, including through poetics and style. The novel of the modern German biographer Ralph Dutli about the last months in the life of Chaim Soutine, a French artist of Jewish origin, vividly employs the expressionist poetics of the artist’s painting. Soutine’s paintings, full of expression, contrasting colours, deformed images and broken lines, clearly convey the pain of the

artist, who suffered from being unable to settle in the world amid two world wars and social cataclysms. Both his early works after the First World War – with the tragedy of life and the colourfulness of death in still lifes with dead animals and birds, an expressive and contrasting colour palette – and later paintings with detail for human nature, national and religious identity, deformed landscapes and buildings, gravitate towards expressionism – a popular trend in the German modernism (Hammer, 2010; Soutine und die Moderne, 2008).

Soutine's expressionist painting preconditioned the artistic understanding of his personality and worldview in the novel, in which we can trace the attraction to a tragic outlook, religious mysticism, the poetics of dreams and delusions, the study of mental states, attention to childhood and old age combined into one, the depiction of the drama of life and vitality and the many colours of death.

While describing the artist's final days in occupied Paris in 1943, the writer juggles his memories of the beginning of the war, the first reports about Poland, then France and other countries, the impossibility of escaping from the battlefield even in a distant province, Soutine's daily need to receive information about the course of events, even if he did not take part in hostilities. The First World War looms large in his memory, which he briefly served as a volunteer, mainly because of his frail physique – he sought to thank France for the residence permit he received the same day war was declared. With reference to the war, Dutli constantly uses “broke out”, even if it was predictable and expected; his characters feel constant despair because of the war and occupation, in which brings death and uncertainty; they long for escape and, at the same time live in constant fear of deportation. One of the pivotal episodes of the novel is related to the period of mass deportations of foreigners and their children in July 1942; Soutine recalls a woman terrified to the point of madness with a “big white handkerchief” who not only noticed him as he seemed “invisible” to the world, but called him “Monsieur Epstein”, insisted on the “terrible machine that will crush us”, and constantly asked, “What will two-or five-year-old children do in a labour camp?”, “Why all these arrests of women and children” (Dutli, 2013, p. 114). Like Soutine's canvases, the poetics of Dutli's novel accentuates the artistic details characteristic of expressionism: fragments of clothes or some expressive elements, deformed and hypertrophied images or their parts; ekphrasis of self-portraits, still lifes, landscapes and other Soutine's works created in the expressionist style.

4. War narrative in Ukrainian novels about artists of the 20th and early 21st centuries

The texts analysed in the subsection are written about Ukrainian artists of the 20th century, who experienced war cataclysms in different ways and reflected on them differently on their canvases: from a visionary view in the images of war to a compensatory escape from the war in the depiction of landscapes, panoramic paintings, pictures of flowers.

Based on the material of Holubovskiy's short story essay *With the Spread of Mighty Wings* (1945), it has been identified that the discourse of war can be considered in the dimension of the psychology of creativity, ethics and aesthetics, be a worldview category

and reflect the views of the artist or the author of a text about critical events in history and the horrors of death and destruction. The Ukrainian artist Oleksa Novakivskyi often turned to the images of war; he witnessed the First World War shortly after arriving in Lviv, survived the occupation by the Russian Empire, and the defeat of WUPR – these events are reflected in his works of different periods, and the paintings dedicated to this theme are some of the most powerful in his career and Ukrainian painting legacy (*Angel of Death*, 1923; *The War Madonna*, 1916; several versions of the painting *The Cathedral of Saint George. A Poem of the World War*, 1919–1922).

In the short story essay, constructed as a dialogue between the author and the artist – mostly about art, issues of aesthetics, and creative pursuits – the author repeatedly returns to the discussion of war and the artist’s role in wartime. Novakivskyi takes the position of an artist detached from social reality, unable to influence the course of history, participate in military operations or change the world order; he would prefer not to see such truth at all. In this discussion, Ivan articulates the mission of artists “to help with the word of the Creator” to recognise the disease of the masses, to strike it and with the power of talent to push away its harmful consequences. The key convincing argument he uses for Novakivskyi is Goya’s work *The Executions* as a protest against brutal executions of Spanish patriots committed by Napoleonic troops. Holubovskiy writes about the “terrible calamity” of the First World War, which plunged the artist into the very “depths of despair” the closer the “thunderstorm of war events” loomed, the more compositions, paintings, sketches, and drawings appeared in the artist’s quiet workshop, in which “a burning heart lived through some of the worst events of the harrowing war”. In this way, the author says, “the personal and the public are inextricably linked”, “a neurasthenic stigmatism is formed”, “the centre of the nerves of those apocalyptic pains that repeatedly shook the national organism, and then all of humanity” (Holubovskiy, 2002, p. 59).

Both the short story essay about the artist and Novakivskyi’s creativity demonstrate his inability to distance himself from misfortunes, not to feel the emotional tension, to restrain the expression of colours and lines; a look at Novakivskyi’s artistic works and the biographical, artistic text highlight the images and aesthetics of both types of art and are a productive way of their interpretation.

On the canvases of another Ukrainian artist, Kateryna Bilokur, who survived as many as three wars, including two World Wars, we mostly see gardens and orchards in bloom, fields and meadows, flower compositions and still lifes. The reader’s expectations from a biographical novel about the artist rely on the visual series of her works: Bilokur almost did not paint war; among the hundreds of pictures of bloom, we do not see wartime plots; this theme is not visible in the general panorama of the paintings. However, Yavorivskiy’s biographical novel *Self-Portrait from the Imagination* (1981) highlights the military discourse of many of her works and becomes an integral element of understanding the painting. Central to the novel is the artist’s self-portrait, the long and mentally difficult work creating it, which unfolds a vast canvas of the artist’s memories. It is the self-portraits of the artist that establish an intermedial connection between text and visual art, revealing the wartime horrors experienced, “but you saw the war, the wounded and the killed, you

escorted many Bohdanivka people to the village cemetery... Draw some sadness in your eyes” (Yavorivskiy, 2018, p. 103).

Various kinds of intermedial connections in the text refer to the war – in almost every reference to her iconic works, we read about the war or its consequences: when mentioning sunflowers, the author describes how she warmed her feet, which took a cold during the war; the wild poppy reminds how “on the first Tuesday after the war”, she stepped on a horseshoe and “went numb, waiting for an explosion, fire and pain”; and the key is *Field in the Collective Farm* painted on friend Maria’s canvas after the war, where she lost both her Ivans. The lush flowers created by Kateryna Bilokur in Yavorivskiy’s novel are salvation for the artist and her fellow villagers in times deprived of joy and optimism, decades of loss and desolation, hunger and hard work; they reaffirm the victory of nature despite years of famine and death on the battlefield. Yavorivsky also assigns them a sacred meaning; Katria’s flowers were also a good luck charm for her beloved during the war years (Yavorivskiy, 2018, p. 107).

Thus, the discourse of war becomes an integral part of the interpretation of Bilokur’s paintings through the intermedial citation of paintings in the novel, the interweaving of a retrospective historical journey to wartime into the story of painting creation, the endowment of the paintings with cultural memory and war traumas.

In 22, a recent Ukrainian novel by Kateryna Lebedieva, the lives of Ukrainian artists are entirely inscribed in the events of the civil war of 1917–1922. The war is both the setting for the events happening in the novel and a parallel plotline; scenes of peaceful artistic life alternate with contrasting descriptions of military and revolutionary battles that began in January 1918. The war determines the fate of Kyiv artists and their work: artillery shelling of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts during painting from life; the mobilisation of the main character, art student Les Lozovsky, and the constant change of power (14 times throughout the novel), murders, robberies, shootings, looting and fear for one’s life and the life of others. The entire artistic community is experiencing war; everyone’s fate depends on who holds power in the city and for how long.

In biographical novels about artists, the war is part of the aesthetic discourse; it forms new requests, tastes, and its consequences explain the new image and thematic phenomena and ethical priorities, the dominance of specific genres in art, the topics of exhibitions and the perception of art in society. In Lebedieva’s novel, we read about the fall of morality, eroticism and sensuality, vulgarity and physiology in NEP art, formed after the imperialist and civil wars, with their “post-war thirst for life”. Images and metaphors are interpreted through an intermedial lens: Les Kurbas chooses Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* “as a metaphor for time”, and the German army is compared to “a sculpture of cast iron and strength”. Verbal descriptions of Kyiv depicted the reality of that time and artists’ reactions to what they saw; the pictures change each other: first perfect winter landscapes when you cannot even think that there are heaps of corpses under the snow, then victory parades or night carnivals and again massacres on the streets. But the aesthetics of revolution and war dominate: “Kyiv gave off an impression of a freshly dug cemetery” (Lebedieva, 2020, p. 213).

The writer describes an impressive scene: the day after the burial of the dead, Les went swimming in the Dnieper and, playing with the sand, pulled a severed human head out of the water. This feeling, as if he had looked into the face of death, never left him, but, at the same time, this horror stimulated his imagination and encouraged him to conquer death. In Lebedieva's novel, we see that artists are impressed not only by the scenes of actual war but also by their depiction on artists' canvases; in particular, Tymko Boychuk was most impressed by the works of Francisco Goya in Madrid's Prado Museum, which served as an impetus for him to become an artist.

When writing about the military discourse in Ukrainian biographical texts about artists, one cannot ignore Stetsenko's novel *Wars of Artists*. The work is written in the genre of an action-adventure detective story. It is based on the biography of the famous Ukrainian artist and intelligence officer Mykola Hlushchenko. The novel is set in 1940, at the beginning of the Second World War; the hot phase has not yet started, so the author describes it as a "strange", "sitting", "lying down" war; we do not see combat battles or scenes of war horrors that we know about from history. Like the figure of the artist himself, everything in the novel is mysterious, hidden, and ambiguous, which maintains tension and mystery. In addition to archival documents, historical facts and memoirs, the artist's observation of the course of history and the most important events after 1914 are essential in the novel: the author elaborates on Hushchenko's reasoning regarding various statements of Hitler, Stalin, Churchill and others, he describes with the shrewdness of a portrait artist the reaction of people to the speeches of the Führer, the beginning of the invasion, announcements from loudspeakers about the war; it is important for him to understand what ordinary passers-by think and feel in Berlin, a city that does not yet know what war is because not a single bomb has yet been dropped on it.

The contradictory nature of man and life choices are implicit in the novel. The author highlights the little-known incarnation of Hitler as an artist: in several passages, he accentuates the artistic figure, his assessment of Hushchenko's landscapes, even when he was serving in the Reichswehr; Adolf's stories that he "painted almost constantly" on the frontline because "painting saved him from the horrors of war", and the real shock was the thought that after the gas attack, he had gone blind because "then he was most afraid that he would not be able to draw anymore" (Stetsenko, 2016, p. 143). The figure of the artist and agent Hushchenko is ambivalent. He painted vivid landscapes, was one of the best painters, and at the same time, secretly made drawings of the latest French and English military equipment for the intelligence of the USSR. Still, one cannot find military themes or battles in his paintings; he was constantly under surveillance, and his true feelings were not expressed on canvas. The writer only verbalises his imagination as, for example, after a difficult conversation about the fate of the torn Ukraine, Hushchenko remained seated, in his mind drawing the columns of Guderian's tanks pushing through Ukrainian fields are sown with bread (Stetsenko, 2016, p. 487). At the same time, the writer raises the question of whether painting can record the war and whether this art can meet the challenges of wartime. In the scene on the train, when Hitler announced the offensive at dawn, he told his photographer Heinrich Hoffmann. Unfortunately, the artist's brush

cannot capture on canvas the moment when the great German people raised their arms in the struggle for their great future (Stetsenko, 2016, p. 417). The author also actualises the art of cinema, which was actively conquering the world, and its ability to record the war truthfully: in one of the episodes, Kleist says that he watched a newsreel about deserted cities and ruins in Belgium.

Conclusion

Upon studying war narratives in biographical texts about artists who experienced the crucible of various wars and interpreted them in their works of art through visual images, comparing different arts and forms of expressing images of war and cultural memory of war, it has been concluded that the modern intermedial toolkit opens new perspectives for literary studies and makes it possible to reveal implicit images of war in the works of artists and novels about them, otherwise unnoticeable during their separate analysis. In the novels analysed, the introduction of the chronotope of war makes the plot and composition of texts more complicated, adding an entire layer of topics: war and creativity (are the muses indeed silent during the war?), the sense of war and its intentions, war and the artist, the artist's choice (weapon or paintbrush, participation in the war or immigration), responding to the challenges of time by means of art. War is represented by narrative time and, via retrospection, as immediate showing and telling. The poetics of war (the image of war as the general tone of the work) is actualised through visualisation of the events, analysis of relevant paintings, and descriptions of the psychological state of artists-protagonists. To a large degree, these works become the articulation of the trauma of war, which resonates through time and space.

In contrast, the intermedial specifics of the genre, for the sake of communicating trauma, dictates and explicates visualisations of violence, death, pain and suffering in the poetics of novels or, like in the novel about Kateryna Bilokur, accentuates the healing effect of paintings both for the artist and for the society traumatised by war. Goya's paintings about the war are the starting point for the reinterpretation of war as evil and tragedy in the 19th and 20th centuries. The writers managed to capture the pathos and tone of Goya's creativity on the topic: neither heroisation nor romantic elevation of the war but revealing its most unpleasant scenes, the tragedy of an individual, the horrors of violence and death. In *Soutine's Last Journey*, the depiction of the road to death, which is symmetrical to the artist's obsession with conveying death through painting by introducing dreams, delusions, and hallucinations, turns into a kind of poetics of a dream about war. In the biographical novels about Ukrainian artists, we see how through the narratives of the wars of the 20th century, writers seek to understand Ukrainian artistic life in the context of historical events and discuss about cultural traditions leading up to the present time through the figures of less known artists, whose biographies and artistic works require in-depth study.

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