FAMINE AS A SPIRITUAL ORDEAL: NARRATIVE AND RECEPTIVE STRATEGIES IN V. PIDMOHYLYNYI’S SHORT STORIES «THE DOG» AND «THE BREAD ISSUE»

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Introduction. The representativeness of V. Pidmohylnyi’s short stories The Bread Issue (1922) and The Dog (1920) in terms of the stated topic is determined by their shared theme – famine’s impact on human. Both texts offer the reader a genuine deep artistic analysis of the Ukrainian reality of the 1920s. Critics and scholars often argue that historical realia represent a realistic background, and the author focuses on private issues and mentality of his contemporaries (Akulova & Datseva, 2014: 60) or, on the contrary, refer to V. Pidmohylnyi as a true analyst of the era (Melnik, 1994). R. Movchan has summarized both trends and defined the writer’s art as neorealistic, that is characterized by psychologism, analytical, rational understanding of his epoch through exploring not a social, but an existential human (Movchan, 2011: 51). V. Pidmohylnyi appears as an experimental writer who tests extraordinary ways of intellectual and emotional impact on the recipient, which is manifested not through novelty, topic relevance or intrigue construction, but through short stories’ textual strategies.

Research methods and techniques. The article employs basic techniques of narratology and receptive aesthetics. Additionally, it leans on multidisciplinary approaches, particularly, cultural and sociological analysis techniques.

Results and discussion. The concept of the analyzed stories does not provide a thorough and logically consistent presentation of the model of reality with a demonstration of the character’s actions cause and effect or general social conclusions. The plot is ultimately fragmentary, it does not require any connection between events as the story centers around a person’s inner world, their experiences, bodily sensations, memories, conscious and unconscious responses to external stimuli.

The author is interesting for choosing the type of the main character. In both texts, these are students, promising young people having certain achievements and, at the same time, almost empty in terms of spirituality; their life experience is not enough to gain firm attitudes and acquire common values as their personal. The protagonist of The Bread Issue is a creative man who writes sonnets, plays the guitar, and is prone to reflection. Gervasius Timergei, the central character of The Dog, studies philosophy; for him, real life is found in books through which he escapes from reality. Both are absolutely positive individuals who could in the future qualify for the role of an ideal, an opinion leader, a role model. But so far, their speculations are largely imitative, at the beginning of the plot, the characters are going through a crisis due to long-term starvation, and both plots demonstrate the formality of social “higher values” the ideal character is expected to demonstrate.
It is hard to agree with those literary critics who emphasize characters’ degradation and moral decay (Stadnichenko, 2001). V. Pidmohylnyi's stories do not provide an explicit solution, they do not contain a clearly defined author’s evaluation. They encourage the reader to think about the problem, to abandon unequivocal condemnation. The boys are still very young. One only had sparse chin hair. The other one is young enough to be a son of a 35-year-old woman and became her kept boy. At their age, they are supposed to be responsible for their actions, aware of the consequences, but they still often make mistakes in decision-making. Each of them is experiencing an internal struggle, and their actions are ambiguous.

The reader gets acquainted with Timergei when he is in a state of despair accompanied by uncontrolled aggression, jealousy and anger towards strangers who look well-fed and satisfied. His appearance and, obviously, facial expression, movements, cause fear in passers-by, which makes them look at him more closely; this, in turn, provokes his barely restrained aggressive response. Timergei himself thinks that he rises above them all: he made fun of men with respectable faces, who pulled on their hats in the rain and bent as if under a heavy burden, and ladies in silk dresses, who were afraid of ruining their skirts, looked disgusting.

The situation is described in such a way as to show the unconsciousness of numerous mental processes of a hungry person. Timergei seeks to demonstrate his independence from the situation (manifested in the dilemma the character is facing, more importantly – philosophy or food, and in the fact that in the initial episode, he was wearing an unbuttoned jacket and walking calmly in the rain, and all passers-by sought to hide or somehow escape from him), but fails to pass the test. This is first shown in the conversation with a passer-by who looked like a government official, and stared at the character in fright and surprise. Timergei pronounces three phrases. The first one is aggressive: Чого ви дивитесь?1 (Pidmohylnyi, 1991: 113). The second one is ordinary and testifies to his desperate state: Слухайте, нагодуйте мене сніданком. Кавою й хлібом з маслом2 (Pidmohylnyi, 1991: 114). The third one testifies to the impossibility of reciprocal understanding: Йозоп ви3 (Pidmohylnyi, 1991: 114). The government official’s response disclosed that he, unlike Timergei, who seeks to understand the basics of ontology, is indeed a small and frightened man: Чого ви до мене причепились! Я зараз покличу…4 (Pidmohylnyi, 1991: 114).

V. Pidmohylnyi introduces another «random» character – a respectable lady, who becomes a litmus test for characterizing Timergei. First of all, he hid from the rain on the porch, which symbolically showed that he was not so independent on the conditions he had found himself in. Secondly, he stood next to the respectable lady, although two quarters ago he felt disgust toward people like her. Thirdly, the respectable lady turned out to only seem respectable, because she had fully demonstrated the character her disrespect for him, which enhanced his feeling of own marginality, vulnerability, redundancy: Пані зміряла його величним поглядом, зморицяла губи й відвернулася. Тимергей добрій і не згадував її ліктем, засувачи хустку в кишеню, поправив на голові кашкетку і знову вийшов під дощ5 (Pidmohylnyi, 1991: 114). Their actions seem to place them on the same level. He behaves this way because his demands have dropped from the search for answers to everyday life questions to the desire to meet physiological needs, and she is simply unable to rise above the level of her own suspicions and resentments and learn to forgive others.

Just as unconsciously as aggression, Timergei manifests kindness. When he saw a lost dog, he did not have an idea to eat the animal, he wanted to wait for the grateful owners to start looking for it. In other words, someone who keeps a dog at home, earns him respect and trust; he expects to be rewarded. After a long-term starvation and being about to lose his last source of food, the character sells his coat on a threshold of colds to buy bread and meat.

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1 Why are you staring?
2 Listen, give me breakfast – coffee and bread and butter.
3 A fool you are.
4 Why are you bothering me? I’ll now call…
5 The lady looked him up and down, pursed her lips and turned away. Timergei pushed her hard with his elbow, put a handkerchief in his pocket, fixed the cap on his head and went out into the rain again.
for the dog. Such behavior of the character contrasts with the actions of other people, such as the government official, the respected lady or his groupmate Kneibenko, who offered hungry Timergei breakfast and a treat of lard only to trap him and punish him for the mess in the room.

The actions of The Bread Issue narrator seem no less ambiguous. In the first-person narrative, the name of the narrator is formally unknown. Since the plot is divided into parts that keep track of time, it is possible to speak about the diary-like nature of the story. This technique allows for a different (comparing to The Dog) way to capture mental, emotional, physical behaviors and feelings. The I-narrative as such seeks to build reader’s trust through its sincerity, and the diary-like nature enhances authenticity, undisguised truth, as the narrator does not need to embellish anything or, conversely, show it from a negative perspective. The egodocument effect adds factual accuracy to the evidence, which cannot be verified because the inner feelings go beyond objective capturing. At the same time, their narrativization adds vitality to the fictional situation.

The emphasis on the authenticity of the narrative is not accidental. The reader is responsible for evaluative perception. They are offered a whole variety of sins and moral violations committed by the narrator, who does not hide anything. A combination of the narrator and the main character in one person makes it possible to avoid the author’s evaluation. The floor is given to the main character. He has a record of «sins» of youth (omniscience, all-or-nothing thinking), minor and severe crimes (stealth, murder), being a kept boy.

The narrative accuracy of the deep psychoanalytic study of events is quite formal. On one hand, the events are recorded ex post facto, and on the other hand, the event seems to be presented in the process of its implementation and is accompanied by pronouncing how the narrator experiences, comprehends and feels about it, which is presented stage-by-stage and in an expressive way. The narrative emphasizes step-by-step thinking and sensing, while the understanding of «writeness», diary-like nature of the text takes a backseat.

The narrative expressiveness is achieved by the contrast between its dry factuality (it does not contain expansive descriptions, emotionality; it seeks to capture the smallest actions to illustrate the event; this effect is facilitated by the dominance of simple sentences, verbs and verbal constructions) and the exclusivity of the subject matter – to be more specific, committed crimes, among which murder is the key one.

V. Pidmohylnyi does not emphasize social conditions, does not highlight determinative parallels, but guides the reader through all stages of the mental state of an involuntary criminal in the unity of his conscious and unconscious behaviors. The character does not hesitate (it is not shown) to steal food (watermelons on a melon field). It is the second episode in his criminal history. The first one is stealing money from the housewife he lived with. As the story unfolds, we see that the stealth in those conditions was not an exception, but rather a rule the new government demonstrated, as its representatives would easily take the goods away from resellers and could return it for a fee. Having survived such an event, the character states that he is not able to give up pride: А я благати не міг і найменше вже – віддатися.6 (Pidmohylnyi, 1991: 125). This phrase can be considered a novelistic pointe, because it is a key to understanding the ending of the story. But for now, let us explore the murder episode.

Once the character arrives at the future crime scene, his general condition is determined by several factors. He had not eaten for a long time, he was wandering through the mown fields (it is impossible to find anything to eat, because everything had been harvested, and only yellow stubble remained) so as not to smell the food being prepared; the sun burns mercilessly, hunger and heat make him dizzy, he notices a change in his physiological state: every step reflects in his head as a thorny blow, and the ground slowly creeps, in other words, the character is on the verge of fainting. Since this moment, his logic no longer works, only reactions remain. He did not even think that the melon field could be

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6 And I could not beg and at the least is to surrender!
guarded; he grabbed a stone to protect himself from a possible dog. The following actions were performed in the affective state: he eats an unripe watermelon and cannot stop to take a ripe one, then, exhausted, he lies under the scorching sun, and falls asleep. He actually commits the murder in a semi-conscious state, as he began to defend himself from an elderly guard, who pushed him with a stick, cursed and finally grabbed him by the throat. Instinctively, the narrator hit the old man over his head with a stone prepared for the dog. Probably, it was not by chance that the author had sent the old man to guard the melon field. A strong man might have survived such an injury, but not old man.

The character’s post-crime behavior reveals the ambivalence of his moral beliefs. He feels free to commit a theft and perceives his victory over the old man not as a crime, but as a physiological enjoyment, as he is strong enough for physical activity. The idea that his mind is not that of a criminal is proved by the fact that he is not running away from the crime scene, is not trying to hide what he has done – he ties the old man and goes to the tent for food. When he ate, he was able to think reasonably. On a full stomach, he thought about morality and decided to apologize to the old man and to explain his action. As he saw the old man in a pool of blood and certified his death, the narrator immediately switched the focus of the story. The reader can only guess whether the character experienced the feeling of guilt.

If the author showed the character’s turmoil, the reader could have begun to sympathize with him, and in this case, the objectivity of the reader’s conclusion would have been questionable. At the same time, the framing of the described history acquires significance. Before it begins, the narrator says that he had an adventure, and adds that it is an interesting adventure. The reader builds appropriate expectations. Death turned out to be an adventure. This provokes moral opposition, but the entire preceding story gradually has prepared the reader for the fact that death in the depicted world becomes a casual adventure, and can be traced both in the subject matter (famine, chaos, destruction, injustice, lack of stability, living in danger), and poetic features of the narrator’s figurative thinking. In particular, the sentence preceding the murder episode addresses to the image of death: I от голодний, без грошей, я сиджу під живими деревами, й на мене стелиться їхній мертвий лист (Pidmohylnyi, 1991: 125). At the end of the episode, the narrator certifies the guard’s death and abruptly switches to another issue: І ще з півпуда борошна. Їм я самий хліб, курю махорку, та її то обмежено (Pidmohylnyi, 1991: 126). The first sentence of the last quote can be attributed to both topics – emotional turmoil related to the committed crime and physiological feelings of hunger. This way, the author gets ahead the reader’s reaction, provokes them with an unexpected causality of the images that appear next to each other due to such a remote-objectified narrative.

It is noteworthy that the author «places» the murder in the middle of the plot, and therefore, it does not become the culmination of the story. Analysis of the episodes location shows that the story is presented in two lines, one of which is fully completed and motivated, and the other is fragmentary and needs no ending. The clearest is the second line, which actually represents the «fall», which can be projected on the entire Ukrainian post-revolutionary society that faced permanent chaos, absurd existence, and violation of any norms of human coexistence. Its representation neglects preceding events, and it is hopeless to make predictions of its future development, because development becomes impossible. The first line is the psychoanalytic basis for the second one and is implemented mainly through compositional techniques.

At first glance, narrator’s first meeting with the prostitute falls out of the overall series of events and serves as an ironic comparison between the ansiptations of a highly intellectual student and a woman who represents a socially marginal group of the underclass. She sincerely complains to the student that she cannot earn a living, and at the same time

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7 And here I am hungry, without money, without food, I am sitting under yellow trees, and their dead foliage is spreading on me.

8 I'm still holding on. There is another half a pound of flour. I eat the very bread, I smoke strong tobacco, although limited.
does not notice that she expresses the principles of the double standard: Мы розбалакались; вона довго скарживалась на підпадок попиту й головне обвинувачення клала на соціальні умови. // – Тепер, – казала вона, – дійшло до того, що жінки до краю розсіялися. Кожна її без грошей одягається. Забули Бога, по канцеляріях відвікуються… Хто ж платитиме?9 (Pidmohylnyi, 1991: 122). However, as the story unfolds, the idea to make his own body a major source of existence strikes the character twice more. When the narrator exclaims that he is unable to surrender to get back the goods taken from him by the representatives of the new government, he rejects the possibility to descend to the level of a prostitute. And then, he experiences the same state, which is reproduced in a lengthy episode of his understanding of being a woman’s kept boy, which can be interpreted as character’s recognition of his moral decline. Yet, this idea is implemented not from the perspective of social moral, but from the point of view of self-respect. The student arrives at this decision gradually: at first, he is ironic about his former beliefs, dreams, ideals. Later, he tried to justify his actions by saying that, having become a kept boy, he gave the woman what she needed, and took from her what she could give, and gladly gave. The third stage is sarcasm over the feminist movement. After all, he learnt a lesson about the benefits of a dependent existence: Протягом століть жінка була в такому становищі, як я тепер, – на утриманні, – мала змогу не турбуватися про хліб – і куди вона повернула свій дух? Чи піднесла вона свою душу на височин? Чи утворила вона хоч що-небудь?10 (Pidmohylnyi, 1991: 130).

The answer to this question is partially found in the final episode of the text, when the twilight affects the character’s soul. It appears to him as an abandoned elderly lady who plays solitaire with dusty cards. And his own life looks like a book, the pages of which you turn and seem to say goodbye to your past. The character treats this procedure as ordinary that is repeated every night; yet, only night makes it possible to stay alone with himself. It is a time for creativity and self-understanding. However, death symbols predominates and paves the way to eternity. And it is not the feeling of satisfaction that dominates, but the feeling of sadness. The absence of an unequivocal ending gives the reader the opportunity to choose the epilogue, makes the ending open.

At the same, we can look at this story from a different perspective.

V. Pidmohylnyi is a modernist writer who was ahead of his time not only in terms of addressing the concepts that would soon become the center of existentialists’ attention, but also in terms of their comprehension. Usually his works, and particularly small prose, are studied from the viewpoint of neorealism and existentialism movements aimed at the deep analysis of social reality and human mentality, taking into account the latest philosophical ideas of the time. However, it should be noted that the Ukrainian writer was ahead of some sociological research. I mean the hierarchy of needs and the system of motivation theory introduced by Abraham Maslow (1943).

A. Maslow suggested looking at human needs as factors motivating human actions. He divided all needs into groups, showed their interdependence and hierarchy. Moreover, higher level needs can be met only when lower needs are met, at least in part. He presented them all in the form of a pyramid, the basis of which are physiological needs (breathing, water, food, sleep, sex), the second level has to do with security, which, like the first, is basic for humans (health, property, future), the third level covers the needs of socialization (friendship, family, intimacy), the two higher levels indicate a high personal development of a person who feels the need for respect (self-esteem, confidence, achievement) and self-expression (disclosure and realization of abilities, creativity, morality, problem solving). This system is complicated by the introduction of two types of motivation: deficient and existential.

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9 We made a talk; she complained for a while about the decline in demand and blamed social conditions.
// - Now, - she said, - the women have gone wild. Each one gives herself without money. They have abandoned God, they get married in offices… Who will pay?
10 For centuries, a woman has been in the same position as me now — dependent, had the opportunity not to worry about bread — and where did she return her spirit? Did she lift her soul to the heights? Did she create anything?
People with deficient motivation are aimed at meeting unmet needs. With existential motivation, the activity itself brings a person a joy (Maslow, 1970).

It is noteworthy that V. Pidmohylnyi’s texts chosen for analysis demonstrate A. Maslow’s theory in full.

First of all, let us look at the minor characters of The Dog. All the characters are divided into two camps: those who are starving (Timergei himself), and those who are not perceived by Timergei as a starving person. The government official, whom Timergei first meets, is obviously physiologically satisfied, but he highly prioritizes security needs. Accordingly, his social needs and need of respect may be partially met only when he feels protected. He seems to be a person with deficient motivation, which determines his behavior (a wish to avoid potential danger). The respectable lady’s appearance shows self-confidence and safety; she obviously has her social needs met at the level that is accepted in her environment, which determines her self-respect. However, a person who has reached the level of higher self-fulfilment needs would hardly have disrespected other people for no particular reason. The only minor character that seeks to reach the higher level of needs is Knaibenko, Timergei’s groupmate. He clearly aspires to leadership, but, judging by their conversations, Timergei outperforms him, although he does not have such an aspiration. Timergei differs from all other characters in the fact that his behavior and thinking are determined by the existential motivation. He prioritizes the very process, search, improvement, arising ideas and thoughts, and not goal achievement.

In The Bread Issue, minor characters are not that unequivocal in terms of composition. Their behavior also testifies to the desire to meet middle-level needs (Martha, whose kept boy the narrator has become), as well as aspiration to meet higher-level needs (Martha’s ex-husband was a train driver and played the guitar, that is, looked for creativity, self-fulfillment). The same is true for people with deficient motivation. A special focus is placed on the elderly melon field guard (The Bread Issue) and Olya, the cafeteria worker (The Dog), who can be referred to as functional images that have no self-sufficient significance and play a helping role for plot development; therefore, their needs and behavior motivations are reduced to performing professional duties.

Among other minor characters, the image of a prostitute from The Bread Issue stands out. It goes parallel to the image of the narrator and constituents the semantic structure of the story. The second part has already been discussed. As to images parallelism, it is worth mentioning that the prostitute and the narrator are mutually opposed at the beginning of the story and are identical in the end. At the beginning of the story, an ironic comparison of the prostitute’s claim to have common interests and needs with the narrator can make the reader smile. Let us recall: Я не потребую багато – аби підтримати життя. Я люблю читати, гуляти ввечері, міркувати й не вбачаю достатніх підстав на те, щоб відмовитися від цього через шлунок. // Вона дивувалася, що думки двох незнайомих людей можуть так зблизитися. Точнісінько, як і я, вона любить почитати щось захавати, погуляти з чоловіками й часом навіть поміркувати (Pidmohylnyi, 1991: 123). The student speaks about his asceticism, minimalism of requests and physiological, social needs, that he concentrates on spiritual development, that is, he demonstrates a higher level of needs and existential motivation. Instead, the prostitute, saying almost the same thing, means something else: the joy of meeting primary physiological needs, which is the meaning of her existence. However, narrator’s irony is not long-lasting, and his tragedy lies in the fact that he has to fall all the way down the pyramid of needs and appears to be unable to meet primary needs. He, who is used to perceiving himself as a creative person with higher spiritual needs, is forced to change his behavior from existential motivation to deficient. And even the optimism of youth is unable to overcome the sadness that embraces him. That is why vitalistic actions (joy of life, singing on the roof of a train, helping a woman) are interspersed with images and

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I don’t need much – just to ensure my living. I like to read, walk at night, speculate, and do not see enough reason to give it up because of the stomach. // She was surprised that the opinions of two strangers could coincide that much. Just like me, she likes to read something exciting, walk with men and sometimes even think.
the semantics of death. It is significant that the final image is associated with sadness, which leads the soul to infinity, i.e. death.

Tимергеi from *The Dog* has a better chance for an optimistic conflict resolution, as the character does not lose his existential motivation. He is full of hope, albeit illusory, that everything can be brought back, that the feeling of hunger is a temporary problem, a need he can satisfy, and everything will be as it was before.

A few words are left to say about the genre specificity of the analyzed stories. They are often called short stories, as the events they depict go beyond the ordinairized. However, everything depends on the specificity of the analytical view, on what narrative accents the critic will put. And it has to be kept in mind that these stories have open endings, which is not typical of a short story as a genre. The plot of *The Dog* describes one day in the life of a starving student. The morning walk of a boy who is incapable of any other actions due to hunger is interrupted by his decision to steal bread from a classmate with whom he has a bad relationship; failure forced him to reconsider his position and figure out the path to it; on the way from the dining room, he finds a purebred dog, for which he wants to get a reward; worrying that the dog is hungry, he rejects the enemy’s intivation to breakfast thus avoiding trouble; to get money, he pawns his only valuable thing, a coat, and buys bread and meat for the dog; the ending is all about hope that everything will work out. Thus, the central event – to give the dog back to the owners – remains unfinished, in the same way as the central problem – the one of famine – remains unsolved. Accordingly, the narrative focus is placed on a hungry person. The fragment is revealed in a number of ways, while the cause-and-effect relationships remain unclear within the plot; they are a responsibility of the reader’s creativity. Therefore, it can be stated that with some novelistic elements, this work is still a story, because the details are more important than the events’ extraordinary nature.

In terms of its composition, *The Bread Issue* is more than *The Dog* approximated to the novelistic structure, as it contains a novelistic pointe. However, again, everything depends on the analytical perspective. If we put student’s «sins» in the center of the story, the death of the elderly melon field guard he has caused, coupled with the transition of the culmination to the final episode and the two-dimensional plot development give enough reason to call this work a short story. If the critic looks at the work as a search for survival performed by a famine-degraded human, this work can be called a story, as it consistently represents these stages.

**Conclusions.** The concept of V. Пidmohylnyi’s *The Bread Issue* and *The Dog* as texts open to professional reception and semantic interpretation is the writer’s innovation. It can be argued that the author was ahead of his time not only as a thinker, but also implemented in his works the trends that would become predominant in the late twentieth century. The artist’s ideas about artistic presentation are surprisingly consistent with modern theories. Let us recall the bodily-mimetic method of exploring the works of art introduced by F. Steinbuk and involving the study of the bodily basis of artistic discourse, the relationship between reality and fiction: «The bodily-mimetic analysis of the spiritual (artistic) experience makes it possible to consider its bodily background and reach the meanings that are shaped as a result of the mimetic mechanism that transforms (translates) bodily being into this spiritual (artistic) experience» (Steinbuck, 2008: 58). The explored texts by V. Пidmohylnyi are a good example of how personality’s existential dominants are examined by physiological existence and artistically embodied through the mimesis of the character’s bodily experience.

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Резюме

Постановка проблеми. Мала проза українського письменника-модерніста В. Підмогильного демонструє його пошуки художніх прийомів, спрямованих на введення естетичної комунікації між автором і читачем на новий рівень. Тексти автора прості й складні одночасно. Вони захоплюють як неподготовленого, так і фахового читача своєю виразністю, поліфонічністю, неоднозначністю інтерпретації. Зокрема, оповідання «Собака» і «Проблема хліба» є благодатним матеріалом для зіставлення з огляду на спільну проблематику (голод як випробування на духовність), однаковий типаж головного героя (перспективний студент) та відмінні текстуальні стратегії.

Мета статті – уявиразнити рецептивні й наративні стратегії в оповіданнях В. Підмогильного «Собака» і «Проблема хліба».

Методи дослідження. Базові: методи наратології та рецептивної естетики. Додаткові: методики культурологічного та соціологічного аналізу.

Основні результати дослідження. Обидва оповідання не дають однозначної відповіді на центральні питання, до якого підштовхує читача його бажання «завершити» сюжет: яким буде фінал випробування головом, чи зможе людина знову сповідувати вищі цінності, якщо за стабільних умов існування своїм пріоритетом вона вважала духовний розвиток, а в кризових умовах полювання пішла на злочин? У текстах відчути авторська стратегія, спрямована не на пошуку відповідей на ключові питання сучасності чи причин травчих подій, а на увійняття усвідомлених і нeusвідомлених людиною взаємних і психічних процесів. Для цього письменник обирає центральними персонажами молодих людей, знайомих із провідними філософськими течіями та здатних до самоаналізу. В оповіданні «Проблема хліба» використано ярку і накаючою натурацію з щоденниками принципом оповіді. Оповідання «Собака» сфокусовано на внутрішньому світі персонажа. Суб’єктивність ракурса зображения поєднано з протокольною точністю фіксації емоційних, мисленнєвих і фізіологічних реакцій персонажів.

Висновки і перспективи. Концепцій оповідань В. Підмогильного «Проблема хліба» та «Собака» як текстів, відкритих для фахової рецепції та смислової інтерпретації, є новаторським письменником. Автор вигадовує тексти в такий спосіб, щоб стелегнути читача самому ставити запитання й шукати на них відповіді.
Abstract

Background. Small fiction by the Ukrainian modernist writer V. Pidmohylnyi testifies to his search for artistic devices seeking to bring an author-reader aesthetic communication to a new level. The writer’s texts are simple and at the same time complicated. They appeal to both an unprepared, and a professional reader with their expressiveness, polyphony, ambiguity of interpretation. Particularly, short stories «The Dog» and «The Bread Issue» represent a good material for comparison in terms of a common idea (famine as a spiritual ordeal), identical type of main character (a promising student) and different textual strategies.

Purpose. The article seeks to highlight receptive and narrative strategies in V. Pidmohylnyi’s short stories «The Dog» and «The Bread Issue».

Methods. The article employs basic techniques of narratology and receptive aesthetics as well as additional cultural and sociological analysis techniques.

Results. Neither of these short stories give a clear-cut answer to the central question, toward which the reader is pushed by their desire to «complete» the plot: how will the famine ordeal end? Will a person still be able to uphold their values if they have prioritized spiritual development in normal setting, but committed a crime under famine-caused crisis? The texts reflect the author’s strategy that seeks not to look for answers to key questions of the present or reasons for tragic events, but to highlight mental processes people are aware or unaware of. For this purpose, the writer puts at center young people familiar with prominent philosophical movements and capable of self-analysis. In «The Bread Issue», he resorts to 1-narrative with a diary-like account. «The Dog» focuses on the character’s inner world. The subjectivity of a depiction angle is combined with a protocol accuracy of capturing characters’ emotional, cognitive, and physiological responses.

Discussion. The concept of V. Pidmohylnyi’s «The Bread Issue» and «The Dog» as texts open for professional reception and meaning-based interpretation is the writer’s innovation. The author builds texts in such a way that the reader is encouraged to independently ask questions and look for appropriate answers. Depending on the interpretation vector, the texts composition and genre peculiarities can be interpreted differently. In V. Pidmohylnyi’s texts, personality’s dominant existential ideas survive the test of physiological being and are embodied via mimesis of the character’s bodily experience. The writer’s flash fiction represents a productive material for further research from the literary sociology viewpoint.

Keywords: receptive strategy, narrative strategy, small fiction, modernist poetics, V. Pidmohylnyi.