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**THE IMAGE OF THE HERO AS A NATIONAL VALUE EXPONENT IN
THE POEM “AENEID” BY I. KOTLIAREVSKY****Osipenko Natalia,***PhD in Pedagogy, Associate Professor,**ORCID: 0000-0002-7542-7821**Associate Professor of Ukrainian Literature,***Yovenko Larysa,***Doctor of Sciences in Pedagogy, Professor,**Professor of Ukrainian Literature,**ORCID: 0000-0003-1035-071X***Kyrychenko Vita,***PhD in Pedagogy, Associate Professor,**Associate Professor of Ukrainian Literature,**ORCID: 0000-0002-1420-2303**Ukrainian Studies and Methodology Department,**Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University,**Uman, Ukraine*

Abstract. The purpose of the article is to examine the image of the hero as an exponent of national values in the poem “Aeneid” by I. Kotliarevsky. The **methodology** of the study is displayed by the use of axiological (to investigate the image of the hero in the unity of social and existential features, to introduce such phenomena as value, ideal, spirituality, heroism, laughing culture, national virtues of the individual, etc. into the research context; to study the images of I. Kotliarevsky’s heroes in school textbooks of the 20th century), cultural (to consider the evolution and transformation of key ideas and significant trends in the interpretation of the national image of the creative hero in Ukrainian literature), and hermeneutical (to understand the structure and semantics of a literary work) approaches, as well as the method of theoretical generalization (to formulate and substantiate conclusions). **Scientific novelty** includes the expansion of ideas and concepts of I. Kotliarevsky’s heroic personality, a study of the best traits of the national character embodied in the image of a creative hero. It is established that I. Kotliarevsky’s works had a significant impact on Ukrainian society, as they served to strengthen human and national dignity and were important for the self-preservation of the colonized people. It is stated that the “Aeneid” became a phenomenon in the new Ukrainian literature to defend and affirm Ukrainians’ virtuous national character in various forms. It is proved that I. Kotliarevsky’s concept of personality contains the heroic greatness of the Ukrainian people’s spirit, their loyalty to faith, duty, and nobility of soul, as well as the best traits of the national character such as hard work, love of freedom, courage, honesty, bravery, kindness, hospitality, curiosity, generosity, etc. When creating the image of Aeneas, the author, who was an expert in folk traditions, made his hero go through all stages of forming an ideal warrior-leader. It is shown that the burlesque poem “Aeneid” is of a great importance for Ukraine’s current situation since it postulates the idea of establishing a strong state with freedom-loving spirit, unity of compatriots, national values, and traditions of Ukrainians in respect and tolerance to other peoples in the world.

Keywords: hero, the image of the hero, national values, ideals, laughing culture, best traits of the national character.

Introduction.

The Russian and Ukrainian war has highlighted the need for a thorough study of national values, national interests and goals for educating the future generation. The experts in different fields of knowledge emphasise various aspects of the concept



“national values”. The authors of this article will focus on the works by Ivan Kotliarevsky, the prominent writer of the 19th century. Ukrainians’ affirming ideals, representing the spirit of the nation, its mentality, traditional understanding of aesthetic categories, and laughing culture were embodied in I. Kotliarevsky’s burlesque and travesty poem “Aeneid”. According to V. Shevchuk, the work reflects the historical events that took place in Ukraine after the elimination of Cossack autonomy and the destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich in the 1880s, and the poem itself is a vividly painted picture of the Ukrainian Cossacks’ history and the colourful everyday life of the Ukrainian people [Shevchuk 2005, p. 51].

The writer, referring to the historical events, praised the heroic deeds of the Ukrainian people. Extolling national traditions and customs that had found their own development over the centuries, the artist called to love the Motherland and serve it faithfully. It is well-known that struggling for the native land makes people become perfect, spiritualised, acquire honour and dignity, etc. Their self-respect are elevated, and high feelings are awakened. I. Kotliarevsky’s laughing at the sad events of Ukrainian history was a kind of challenge, a protest against the state’s liquidation, because “the grain thrown in battle always sprouts in our land” [Sverstiuk 2014, p. 50] despite countless Russian “reforms” and constant attempts to “improve” the Ukrainian people.

The works of literary critics reveal certain aspects of studying the features and interpretation of the national hero image. P. Volynskyi, I. Voitsekhivska, A. Horban, M. Zhulynskyi, R. Lenda, H. Martsenko, V. Matsapura, Y. Sverstiuk, H. Syvokin, Y. Storokha, Y. Shablivskyi, T. Shcherba, V. Shevchuk, V. Yaremenko, and others studied the works written by I. Kotliarevsky. The ideas of scholars and teachers who considered the urgent issues of national education (R. Antoniuk, V. Baranovsky, M. Boryshevsky, V. Budak, V. Vorozhbit, H. Dezhniuk, L. Levytska, O. Sanivsky, J. Selezhan, N. Syvachuk, O. Savchenko, O. Sukhomlynska, I. Khlystun, P. Shcherban, and others) were important for the hero image investigation in the Ukrainian literature.

The object of the study is I. Kotliarevsky’s poem “Aeneid”, and consequently, its **purpose** is to examine the image of a knight as an exponent of national values in the writer’s literary work.

The **methodology** of the study is displayed by the use of axiological (to investigate the image of the hero in the unity of social and existential features, to introduce such phenomena as value, ideal, spirituality, heroism, laughing culture, national virtues of the individual, etc. into the research context; to study the images of I. Kotliarevsky’s heroes in school textbooks of the 20th century), cultural (to consider the evolution and transformation of key ideas and significant trends in the interpretation of the national image of the creative hero in the Ukrainian literature), and hermeneutical (to understand the structure and semantics of a literary work) approaches, as well as the method of theoretical generalization (to formulate and substantiate conclusions).

I. Kotliarevsky’s “Aeneid” is an epochal historical literary work, a sincere national poem, where the virtues and vices of the Ukrainian society in the 18th century were highlighted by means of effective humorous words, combined with a



sense of human dignity. It encouraged spiritual unity and self-knowledge of separated, indifferent compatriots with a friendly smile, delving into the true essence of its charismatic characters.

The writer's contribution to the literary treasury is outstanding, as "Aeneid" captures the meaningful humour as one of the means of spiritual struggle against the torturers of the Ukrainian people. In the work new aesthetic functions (laughter is no longer only entertaining thing, but also is used for describing serious events) are given to burlesque. I. Kotliarevsky made a perfect artistic depiction of folk life, customs, and folk psychology in a humorous way, created vivid artistic images embodying the national values of the Ukrainian people. The poet formed the basis for Kobzar's social humour and the development of the self-critical irony of the serf actor, who ridicules not only himself but also brightly mocks his masters' arrogance, idleness and pride in order to please them.

It is stated that the artistic world in "Aeneid" emerges not so much from the satirical tradition of its author's predecessors as from the ancient layers of folk culture, which influenced the formation of the humanistic concept of personality. Laughter in ancient genres of folklore has always been characterised by ambiguity and manifested not in the opposition of concepts "good" and "evil", "sublime" and "low", "beautiful" and "ugly", but in their organic combination, where the comic issues act as a form of existence of the high, heroic ones [Yatsenko 1995, p. 79].

According to the mythological beliefs of our ancestors, laughing culture was universal, democratic in nature and allowed joking even about gods and heroes, as it was perceived as a realm of social equality and personal freedom. Therefore, it is quite obvious that in the conditions of antagonism between social class formations, laughter was treated as an alternative to the existing official forms of public life, and a person could assert his freedom-loving essence. Thus, the humanistic ideas in "Aeneid", the heroic and patriotic traits of Aeneas, courage, solidarity, and bravery of the Cossacks glorify the moral greatness and have their origins in the historical traditions of Ukrainians.

I. Kotliarevsky used the retrospective, showing that the free expression of Ukrainian people's spirit became almost impossible during the serfdom period, yet their hopes continued to live on in the heroic epic and serf songs. The author incorporated famous folklore heroes, as well as characters from burlesque and parody works and interludes into classical literature.

The plot of "Aeneid" is based on the journey and exploits of both the glorious knight Aeneas and the entire heroic Cossack army. It is noteworthy that at the beginning of the poem I. Kotliarevsky also depicted Troyans' extreme passion for alcoholic beverages. On the contrary, the study of scientific sources has shown that the Cossacks were not addicted to alcohol and severely punished everyone for its excessive consuming. During a military campaign, a knight could be killed for his being drunk. T. Kaliandruk notes that the Cossacks often spread rumours about their drinking customs, as it was their advantage during battles [Kaliandruk 2007]. For example, Samiilo Velychko's chronicle describes the events of 1675 Christmas night in detail, when thousands of elite Turkish janissaries attempted to destroy the Cossack camp, relying on the Cossacks' state of alcohol intoxication, but were



trapped by the Cossacks [Velychko 1720].

Ukrainians have long had a distinctive culture of alcohol consumption that dates back to Scythian times. Feasting was traditionally accompanied by physical competitions, dancing, singing, and games, which helped to quickly eliminate alcohol from the body. “After drinking horilka or vyshniak (traditional Ukrainian beverages) you need to sing so that you don’t get dizzy,” one of the respondents told the article authors during a folklore expedition with future philologists of Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University to Korzhova village in Uman district, Cherkasy region [Shevchenko 2001, p. 23].

“Aeneid” reveals festive scenes to the reader. There are a lot of alcoholic drinks and tasty dishes. However, as soon as Troy’s Cossack set off on a campaign, the revelry stops, and sober life begins according to the strict laws of war and the categorical execution of the leader’s orders. The Trojans pour out with alcohol their spiritual pain and despair of the tragic destruction of Troy, which is reflected in the poem words: “wandering without talent”. The writer here depicted a real historical fact that is the period of statelessness, the collapse of Kyiv state.

Instead, in the third part of the poem, the heroes are seen as strong, brave, enduring, militarily knowledgeable and educated people. The Cossacks neglect physical pain, respect their elders, and are honourable of folk traditions. It is well-known that they were people of high intelligence, always learn the language of the ethnic community they fought with.

The spiritual aristocracy of the characters is manifested in their disdain for material things, rejection of hedonism, etc. Existence under constant threat called into question the hope of Ukrainians for a peaceful, happy life. This led to the fact that the desperate personality experienced “existential repulsion”, i.e. made a transition from the lower animal or natural level (the desire for personal happiness and pleasure) to the higher “existential” form of being [Kulchytsky 1949, pp. 708-718, p. 713]. This resulted in the creation of ideas or ideals that transcended reality. Such an elevation was manifested in the person of knightly Cossack type. O. Kulchytskyi writes: “Under the influence of historical factors the Cossacks considered the preservation of knightly honour more important than life or everyday concerns. Their main task was to defend the faith as an “otherworldly transcendence” and earthly “otherworldly liberties” of the Ukrainian people” [Kulchytskyi 1949, p. 713]. Such Cossacks developed an aversion to money, wealth, and a well-fed life (“A Cossack, a true soul, has no shirt”, “Who loves to sleep at home must not visit Sich”). The archetype of the Cossack hero was associated with the person of knightly Cossack type in the Ukrainian collective mind. The highest embodiment of such type is the image of St. Yurii the Serpent-Slayer, who was most appreciated by Zaporizhzhia Cossacks.

The Cossacks valued their glory, chose death, and did not accept slavery. In I. Kotliarevsky’s work they are displayed under strange names, but their portrait characteristics allow the reader to recognise Ukrainian Cossacks, who treated the Motherland, Ukrainian people, and native land as the greatest values.

A Cossack is not a brother to the devil there [Kotliarevsky 1981, p. 126].

The writer’s patriotic attitude is manifested in his pride for the heroic events of Ukrainian history, idealisation of the Hetmanate era, and glorification of brave



knights. Troy's Cossacks personify the heroic greatness of Ukrainian people's spirit and indestructibility, loyalty to duty, nobility of soul, diligence, honesty, etc.

The image of Aeneas unfolds in several stages, giving the reader the opportunity to realise the complex process of becoming a talented warrior and leader. For the first time Aeneas is shown at the beginning of the poem ("a robust guy, a kossack full of vim" [Kotliarevsky 1981, p. 7], "a stallion on a harness", "Cain" [Kotliarevsky 1981, pp. 16-18]). I. Kotliarevsky disdainfully characterised the protagonist by Dido's words ("nasty", "dirty", "mean", "ragamuffin", "catholic", "mischievous", "flirty", "unworthy", "thief", "heretic...!") [Kotliarevsky 1981, p. 20].

A worthless warrior, devoid of moral virtues, a tramp, a fugitive from Troy, gradually begins to transform into a noble knight. This transformation takes place with the assistance of Okhrim, a Cossack with magic power who became the protagonist's spiritual mentor and guide, who helped Aeneas understand his own purpose and life goal so as "to build Rome", i.e. to create the powerful state that the supreme ruler dreamed of. After being reminded of his mission by Zeus, Aeneas leaves his comfortable life "to build a strong kingdom", as he has considerable potential for this. Thus, at the beginning of the third part of "Aeneid", the hero is already a "master" who thinks about the future, looking for ways to implement his father's order (to visit hell, which means to experience ritual death as a further stage of initiation into warriors). In Shevchuk's interpretation, the hell is a symbolic image of Ukraine at the turn between the 17th and 18th centuries, which is known as the period of genocide of the Ukrainian nation by Russian tsarism, and Aeneas is shown as a generalised image, a "leader of the people", symbolising the "march of the nation", "the journey of the people in the sea of time" [Shevchuk 2005, p. 655].

At first glance, the motif with Dido, which is full of colourful ethnographic features of Ukrainians (customs, cooking, clothing, games, dances, musical instruments), seems to be a travesty, but Dido can symbolise the image of Poland. "Therefore, Dido's self-immolation after Aeneas left her can be read as a reminder of the famous Polish "Flood" after the competition with Bohdan Khmelnytsky: after that, Poland began to decline and it already happened in the time of I. Kotliarevsky, when there were partitions of Poland: the first in 1772 and the second in 1793" [Shevchuk 2005, p. 653]. This refutes the opinion of some literary critics that the author was confused about historical events, thinking of Aeneas's campaign as a journey of the Cossacks in time.

At the end of the poem, employing the image of Khan Diomid I. Kotliarevsky depicts Aeneas as the knight with deep majesty. Foreseeing the future of Aeneas, the reader sees the witch's prediction unfold. Thus, the hero and leader will build a strong, powerful state in which Ukrainians will live "as in paradise". The poem ends with the victory of the Ukrainian knight over Turnus, which testifies to the writer's belief in the resurrection of the Ukrainian state. Thus, I. Kotliarevsky's "Aeneid" had a significant impact on Ukrainian society, as it served to strengthen human and national dignity, as without it the self-preservation of the colonised people is impossible. This led to the emergence of a phenomenon that defended and affirmed the virtuous national character of Ukrainians in various forms in the new Ukrainian literature.



The concept of the writer's personality reflects the chivalrous greatness of the Ukrainian people's spirit, their loyalty to duty, faith, nobility of soul, as well as the best virtues of the nation in general (diligence, freedom-loving, bravery, honesty, courage, kindness, hospitality, curiosity, generosity, etc.). Creating Aeneas, I. Kotliarevsky used the image of the protagonist to guide the reader through all the stages of a talented warrior and leader's formation. It is proved that the burlesque and travesty poem "Aeneid" in Ukraine's current realities acquires an extraordinary importance, since it postulates the idea of the urgency to build a strong state in which the freedom-loving spirit, unity of compatriots, national values and traditions of Ukrainians in respect and tolerance to other peoples of the world reign.

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Анотація. У статті розглянуто образ лицаря як виразника національних цінностей в поемі «Енеїда» І. Котляревського. Констатовано, що концепція особистості митця вміщує богатирську велич духу українського народу, його вірність вірі, обов'язку, шляхетність душі, а також найкращі риси національного характеру – працьовитість, чесність, сміливість, гостинність, допитливість, щедрість тощо. Виписуючи образ Енея, автор – популяризатор народних традицій, разом зі своїм героєм проходить усі етапи становлення ідеального воїна-ватажка.