

UDC 82'06-3.09:141.319.8

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Existential and Psychological Problems of Aging: The Perspective of Ukrainian Lyrics' Art Representation

Purpose. Aging is intricate process of self-transformation in view of involution of body, loss of sexual attractiveness, but at the same time, old age is a time for reconsideration of self-existence in time and in the world within coherence of life sense targets and their (successful) realization. Unique individual experience of growing old implemented in Ukrainian literature (and lyrics) can complete the data received by gerontology. Moreover gender approach in literary gerontology highlights masculine / feminine phenotypical features of internal reverberating of aging. **Theoretical basis.** To inquire into existential and psychological problems of aging exemplified in the twentieth-century Ukrainian Lyrics it is seems to be the most effective to employ philosophical (A. Anhelova, V. Demidov, T. Dziuba, K. Pigrov, S. Lishaev, O. Khrystenko and others) and psychological (O. Berezina, S. Hamilton, V. Savchyn, Y. Sapogova and others) approaches in gerontology, as well as feministic studies on elder female body discrimination, in particular in literature (K. Woodward, J. King). **Originality.** This research paves the way to the development of gender and literary dimensions in Ukrainian gerontology and anthropology in general. Some of the existential and psychological problems of aging (as anxiety of body involution and decline of strength, as well as finding the compensatory pleasure in wisdom and spiritual treasures) are revealed on the material of 20th-century Ukrainian poetry (N. Livytska-Kholodna, B. Lepkyi, M. Zerov, Yurii Klen, Y. Malaniuk, Y. Tarnawsky, I. Zhylenko, S. Yovenko and others). The individual lyric experience of aging in different gender moods is anchored mostly in psychic, mental, sense-life strategies. **Conclusions.** Among the feminine strategies of aging self-reception there are observation of own elder body with anxiety and fear, its "invisibility", deepened feelings of loneliness, self-estrangement, but also finding the sense of life and soul harmony in own family, offspring. Masculine self-reception of aging deals with ideal spiritual model of Wise old man – more abstract than personal; masculine anxiety is caused by physical bodily declining, not attractiveness, but strength and power loosing.

Keywords: aging; gender and literary gerontology; 20th-century Ukrainian Lyrics; feminine / masculine strategies of aging self-reception; body involution; decline of strength; spiritual model of Wise old man

Introduction

Aging is one of the important (and crisis) stages of human life, "the era of losses, problems, diseases, but also the era of holistic functioning of the individual" (Dziuba, 2013, p. 106). In the juvenile-centric society of the 21th century, including the Ukrainian one, significant aspects of old age are mostly preferred "not to be noticed", "phobically" pushed into the shadows by the "non-aging" setting" (hereinafter translated by the author O. S.) (Sapogova, 2011, p. 76), consumerist recipes of "successful aging", when the "age changes are visually retouched" ("a matter of aging without showing the visible signs of doing so") (Twigg & Majima, 2014, p. 26). The stigmatization of old age in the modern discursive field delays the formation of an adequate understanding of a person's life prospects and response to them, and therefore leaves people vulnerable to ordeals of time. Numerous "trajectories" of aging are reflected in the literature, enriching gerontology with valuable individual and generational experience.

The study of aging from different disciplinary positions – biological, sociological, psychological, philosophical, cultural and historical – determines both the versatility and inconsistency of understanding of this phenomenon (Yurevich, 2019). The focus of the anthropological approach to the study of aging is personality in the synergy of mental, emotional, communicative and other

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aspects of its existence, which actualizes the problem spectrum of gerontosophy (philosophy of aging), as well as age and gender psychology, ethnocultural studies. The study of the phenomenon of aging from an anthropological angle is shifting from sociological issues of social inclusion, working capacity of the elderly, ageism to global issues of mental transformation of the aging person, as well as changes in his or her existential platform, the core of which is the search for life sense in the perspective of (already imminent) death. According to O. Khristenko (2008), the philosophical understanding of old age is focused on a person's attitude to the aging process, to his own extremity, on the assessment of old age in different worldview systems (pp. 9-10). The existential meaning of aging, as a philosophical category, according to K. Pigrov (2002), is "the perception of the own life as a whole, which in turn is included in the context of universal, in the context of the *boundary foundations of existence* (highlighted in the original – O. S.)" (p. 4). E. Sapogova (2011), proposing to move from the empirical understanding of old age to the existential, i.e. "consider it in the *individual semantic perspective of personal life*" (highlighted in the original – O. S.), combines this approach with gerontopsychological, targeted not to combat the aging symptoms, but to create an attitude to the perception of age-related changes as "opportunities for existential rethinking of individual beingness" (p. 76). Existential-psychological questions relevant to everyone should sound like this: what happens to a person who realizes that he or she is aged and old? How can one's psyche cope with the inevitable old age and death?

Existential problematization of aging as an incentive to critically re-evaluate the lived life, which is integrally formed as an opportunity to "return to the real self" (Demidov, 2005, p. 79; Dziuba, 2013, p. 106; Pigrov, 2002, p. 5), is complicated by psychomental, ethnocultural, generational, gender nuances. Relevant areas of gerontology and gerontopsychology are widely represented in the West. The fusion of feminist studies with gerontology led to the conceptualization of the female aging body and the revelation of the mechanisms of its socio-cultural "construction". The latter have, in particular, been noted in literary texts, which have organically incorporated literary studies (since the 1990s, according to Jeannette King (2013, p. xiv)) into this methodological symbiosis (King, 2013; Wyatt-Brown & Rossen, 1993), although it is believed that literary critics (M. Hepworth, K. Woodward, G. McMullan, J. King, B. Waxman, etc.) focused on aging among the first (Zeilig, 2011, p. 20). Close reading of fiction / media texts in the studies of K. Woodward (2006), J. King (2013) and others is mainly aimed at exposing gender ideology in the perspective of the image of elderly heroes, especially heroines, as well as understanding the cultural dynamics of the reception of old age (in Ukraine, the diachrony of gerontogenesis in foreign literature is studied by A. Gaidash). The biased literary arsenal is also noticeable in the study of geronto-narratives as imprints of individual and generational experience of aging. In Ukraine, literary gerontology has not yet become widespread, in contrast to sociological, psychological, religious, philosophical studies of old age (Anhelova, 2018; Berezina, 2011; Dziuba, 2013; Topol, 2013). Thus, the existential issues of gerontosophy and gerontopsychology can be expressed by individual (author's, hero's, narrator's) experience of aging, adjusted for ethnomental, generational and gender factors, constellated in literary texts. In this article, the priority is the gender dimension of existential-psychological problematization of old age in literature, because feminine / masculine (and not just female / male) (artistic) consciousness (Shaf, 2019, p. 20, note 11) reacts differently to reality of aging in accordance with the life strategies developed at active maturity, conscious senses of life and, of course, mental reactions to sociocultural attitudes different for masculinity and femininity.

Purpose

The purpose of the article is to understand the existential and psychological problems of aging as a serious age crisis associated with the transformation of human self-concept, including the body image, organization of individual being-in-time, communication with the world, as well as personal awareness of life as the integrity of meaningful life tasks and their implementation in the perspective of one's own finiteness. Unique individual experience of confronting the situation of aging is studied on the basis of literary (lyrical) activities of the 20th century (epoch of rapid change in the formatting of the image of old age, including in the arts), gender differentiation of which, according to the specifics of the expressed artistic consciousness, illustrates the gender differences in the lyrical subject's experience of his or her own old age.

Statement of basic materials

Existential and psychological problems of aging in lyrical reflection

According to E. Sapogova (2011), "the search for the symbolic and existential meaning of existence, one's place in the world" is important for the accomplished personality integrated into the reality of life, so "old age turns the personality to itself" (p. 77) creating the psychological basis for self-reflection, including in the literary text. Typological and functional similarity of "domestic" (personal, situational) history of one's own aging and its literary refraction (the similarities between reading "lives" and reading "novels", the "novel-like" quality of our lives) is noted by Hannah Zeilig (2011) as a basis to apply a narrative approach to the study of old age, the essence of which is "capturing the individual processes of meaning making in later life, a way of delving into the interior (and private) aspects of 'age'" (p. 17). Individual, private, immersed in the mental foundations of a person's experience of his or her own (!) aging – and this is represented by the lyrics of such topics – not only complements the "extrapersonal" gerontological discourse, but sometimes offers a controversial alternative to rethink aging ("Literature has been used as data for reconceptualising ageing") (Zeilig, 2011, p. 21). In other words, the reflection of one's own aging, including lyrical one, does not completely coincide with the "generally accepted" knowledge of old age, moreover, it can, like any "textual explication of old age", according to M. Elyutina (1999), be considered as a "model of initial knowledge" to create "a new epistemological image of old age" from "reduced prototypes" (p. 5). The advantage of the experience of aging as a "model of initial knowledge" recorded in the literature is "authenticity", i.e. awareness of the subject of self- and world-transformation with age (although not all scientists trust this "authenticity", especially when it comes to epic (fiction) narrative (Zeilig, 2011, p. 22)). It is obvious that an epic narrative is much more than a lyrical one engaged in relaying gerontological "ideology", although not always artistic conceptualization of old age and cultural gerontological discourse in one historical period are coherent, creating "dynamics and tension between text and context" (King, 2013, p. xv).

Although it is difficult to deny the influence of cultural regime on the formation of gerontological identity, including in artistic / media text, as proved by K. Woodward (2006), J. King (2013), M. Elyutina (1999), the lyrics, on the contrary, mostly reproduces constant existential-psychological "patterns" of the experience of old age as a truly human-anthropological, rather than relative historical and cultural phenomenon. It is worth clarifying the statement of E. Sapogova (2011) that it is impossible to avoid the realities of psychological aging: these reali-

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ties are manifested in such a "depth" of subjectivity, where factors of race, status, gender, ideology, etc. do not work, in such a moment when a person feels (and not just realizes) the shift of his or her position on the scale "life – death" towards the latter, the beginning of "own transformation into a 'subject of non-existence'" (p. 76). This threshold existential situation arouses a powerful energy of lyrical reflection, although its textual realization is not always facilitated by aesthetic, stylistic, genre, ideological, gender and other factors. At the same time, the vector of reflection of old age and its poetic representation have gender-psychological nuances, conditioned more by the masculine / feminine phenotype than by social regulation. If we leave the aesthetic-stylistic, ideological, generational dynamics of the artistic embodiment of the old age theme in Ukrainian poetry for a separate study, and focus on anthropological, existential, gender-psychological features of this embodiment, it is worth outlining a number of problematic nodes that appear in the lyrics of a wide time and style range, and therefore are representative in understanding the "tragedy" or "tragicomedy" of old age (Pigrov & Sekatskiy, 2017, p. 27) as an *unconditional* human experience. Basically, these problem nodes are focused on the experience of loss, so appeal to the so-called. "negative" image of old age as physical, intellectual, social degradation. Conceptualization in Ukrainian lyrics of the "positive" image of old age as the achievement of wisdom, reconciliation with the world is not common and rather looks like complacency. In addition, it is necessary to distinguish between interior (subjectively experienced) and exterior (known by example) lyrical reflection of old age, which significantly affects both the assessment of this phenomenon and the degree of emotional investment of the lyrical subject. At the forefront of the problem of old age in both masculine and feminine consciousness is the life-purpose inquiry, but the answers to this existential challenge are in different planes of life.

Physical degradation of the aged body as an existential problem

Deterioration of the body with aging, according to geriatrics, leads to obvious changes in appearance, including dryness and decreased skin elasticity, muscle weakness, abnormal body weight, grey hair, hair loss. Depending on the hormonal background, the appearance of people of different sexes changes differently and, although equally losing physical attractiveness, is differently assessed by the norms of modern youth culture. The body is known to be gendered, so the aging process of men and women "has cultural differences" (Khristenko, 2008, p. 10), or rather – it is assessed by double standards (Twigg & Majima, 2014), as aptly articulated by J. King (2013): "While fame, money and power are sexually enhancing in men, they are not so for women, whose 'sexual candidacy' depends on their meeting rigid conditions relating to looks and age" (pp. 148-149). As a result of the objectification of the female body as reproductive and sexual, and therefore, according to the "norms" of patriarchal culture – young and attractive, in the psyche of women there is entrenched persistent fear of aging (Ilin, 2010, p. 172) as primarily devaluation in the sexual sphere and the collapse of life in the absence of other life-purpose spheres. "Older women are subjected to negative notions of ageing and often perceived as asexual, deformed, sagging and unappealing, which makes them even more vulnerable, unseen and ridiculed". "Therefore, older women are more likely than older men to experience discrimination, and be regarded as asexual and unattractive" (Stončikaitė, 2020). It can be said that if the problem of the body distorted by old age is discursively raised, it means the female body, because "women has been constructed as body – through the body–mind binary – throughout Western cultural history" (King, 2013, p. 148), as "performing age is principally a bodily effect anchored in visibility", thus "the older female body is paradoxically both hypervisible and invis-

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ble" (Woodward, 2006, p. 163). It is invisible due to the "asexuality" attributed to it, but at the same time it becomes "hypervisible" as a sign of inevitability and ugliness of physical aging.

How does an elderly woman who still remembers the power of her physical beauty feel? How is the self-concept changing with bodily aging and the transition to the "zone of invisibility"? Psychology and philosophy rarely differentiate between the age problems of the sexes, and feminist gerontology mostly focuses on old women's resistance to discriminatory stereotypes. Lyrics (mostly authored by women), on the other hand, provide invaluable evidence of personal dramas, fears, bitterness, and despair due to the loss of physical attractiveness with aging. The feminine format of experiencing these feelings allows frank articulation of the heroine's life defeat, meticulous objectification of the slightest bodily changes ("Today grey hair and wrinkles on the face" (N. Livytska-Kholodna "Rain"), "Black shadows under the eyes, / the experienced in wrinkles-cobwebs" (M. Lyudkevych "At a time when insomnia thread scurries...")), a painful emotional reaction to the relentless passage of time ("You notice in the mirror how time / steals you in pieces – / that portrait from the Lego mosaic" (L. Povkh "Morning"), "A woman cuts her veins because she does not want to grow old" (G. Crook, title after the line)) – and this gender-poetic format is relevant for distant works in time, and therefore presentable for feminine consciousness as such.

Mature lyrics by Natalia Livytska-Kholodna (1902 – 2005) are a poignant "poem of old age". In her poems from the 1970s, the theme of aging in the motive spectrum of loneliness, loss of beauty and health, living space and meaning, the death of a young soul in an old body becomes relevant. The narrowing of the living space focuses on the body and its torments (Khristenko, 2008, p. 20) and in the poems of N. Livytska-Kholodna: "Apparently the sclerosis has eaten the brain, the factory has devoured the last sense, twisted all the veins out of the body" ("I'm writing shambling poems today..."); "Arthritis fingers crunched, / And the pain swept to the knees" ("And tulips bloom"). The dramatic worldview of her heroine is due to the constant involuntary correlation of herself young, whose image lives in her mind, and herself old, locked for an unknown period (as it turned out, for almost 30 years!) in a distorted body, in a small room, in a strange and unfamiliar world. Time in old age is condensed, disintegrates into quanta of intimate-personal meanings (Khristenko, 2008, p. 20), temporal boundaries are erased in the experience of "timeless present" – past semantic events that are perceived as ongoing (Sapogova, 2011, p. 79). So the only consolation for the lyrical heroine is memories, or rather mental and emotional escape into the past, when she was young, was loved when she was in Ukraine (autobiographical detail: N. Livytska-Kholodna as the daughter of a member of the UPR government after defeat in 1919 was forced to emigrate with her family to Czechoslovakia, and in the late 1950s – overseas). But reality is relentlessly returning. In the dream poem "Ivan Kupala Night" the self-identification image from the poet's early poems comes to life – the image of a young witch who with scattered hair rushes to Lysa Hora and wakes up in the morning in her old body and "two tears drop silently / in face grooves". The pain of love and separation, now multiplied by loneliness and hopelessness, does not subside in the old woman's soul, but in a lyrical mental appeal to the lost one she persuades him to ignore her old age, because it is not her fault, but the burden imposed on her: "Old age, believe me, / It is a delusion, a lie. / This old age has fallen on my shoulders, / And the burden of years – in the soul" ("Do not believe me"). Mature lyrics by N. Livytska-Kholodna, which highlights "the most intimate nooks of old age, including the desire for love" (Rubchak, 2012, p. 159), as well as the desire for at least a fleeting mental escape into her former young and beautiful body from the old body, isolated from the world and unnecessary, is a unique intimate-existential text in Ukrainian (and world) poetry.

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In Iryna Zhylenko's mature lyrics (1941-2013), the reflection on aging is, at first glance, emotionally balanced: the lyrical heroine imagines old age as natural, one that promises her peace of mind: "I am old. What a pity? / Everyone is getting old. No big deal". At the same time, the positivization of aging in the expository line of this verse is like complacency, because in other texts of the poet the fear of aging of the body is voiced: "...What do you [God] know about the thickening of the shadow? / the flesh crying, as you grow older?..." ("Autumn. Night Music"), sadness over the loss of sexual attractiveness: "Eyebrows are weighed down with peace. / And I don't have coloured dreams. / And the bright coloured dresses don't suit me anymore" ("Autumn. Violin"). In the poem "Interior with a mirror" the aged image of the lyrical heroine, reflected in the candlelight, contrasts unpleasantly with the evening silence of home comfort, ruthlessly returns her to the reality of time: "And the dark mirror then / mercilessly pushes into the circle of light / the woman's pale cheeks, <...> middle age, obese stature, / lips lowered to grief". The metaphor of "pushes into the circle of light" emphasizes the "hypervisibility" of the aged body, especially for the woman herself, who examines it alienated and removed, as if someone else's. The first signs of aging lead to a rethinking of one's own body as "Other" (Chebotareva, 2002, p. 60), which creates an existential drama of self-alienation, self-identification. According to K. Woodward (2006), it is caused by the "youthful structure of the look", which forces to correlate the aged body with the ideal young body, evaluate it as if from a younger age (p. 164), and despite the desire to attribute the devaluation of the old body to cultural discrimination, the prominent is the existential-psychological plan of lyrical self-observation of I. Zhylenko's heroine: the seen reality inclines her to identify her own aged image with the "middle age", but this image is not "hers" yet.

"Gazing in the mirror is a ubiquitous trope in the image-repertoire of age" (Woodward, 2006, p. 168), it is often featured in Ukrainian feminine poetry. The heroine of the poem "And such a day comes" Olga Slonivska (b. 1960) is motivated to assess the physical condition of her body in the mirror by the meeting with former classmates who seem too old to her. Alert by the rapid passage of time, she resorted to urgent self-observation:

And until yesterday, it seemed that you are still in shape, at a nice age!...

You lock yourself in the bathroom and don't know whom to trust:

The classmates, the mirror, the passport, your own intuition?!!

The interjection "seemed" in these lines shades the illusory-subjective idea of the heroine about her body, her confusion before the inevitable age-related changes.

The reflection of aging in Svetlana Yovenko's (b. 1945) poem "Time", constructed as a lyrical appeal of the heroine to the mirror reflecting the image of an old woman, who in her imagination has nothing to do with her, reaches a high existential and psychological tension. Expressively sharpened features of the old female body in the text (cracked face, cheeks, like faded parchment, scalp shining through thinning hair, toothless smile) are deadly ugly, associated with the skeleton. Apparently, for the lyrical heroine, such an old image of her in the mirror correlates with death. K. Pigrov noted that "farewell to attractiveness, to a young body can be considered as a preliminary experience of death" of a woman (Pigrov & Sekatskiy, 2017, p. 28). The old look of the S. Yovenko's heroine is obviously preventive (not without reason the poetry is called "Time", the consequences of which are predictable) and emphasizes the tragic disconnection of physical and mental, the degraded external and the preserved internal, essential. As in the poems of N. Livytska-Kholodna and I. Zhylenko, in this poem by S. Yovenko the heroine resolutely distances herself from her foreign body, revealed in the mirror (even as a formidable warning) and seeks herself as real, not subject to time. K. Woodward (2006) called the "psychic age" the

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"different age-selves" contained in the consciousness as we grow older (p. 166). In S. Yovenko's poetry, the "psychic age" of the lyrical heroine is engraved in her images, which appear through the image of the old woman: her young ("anxious", "with deer eyes, with soft rime of the lips") idealized "version" of Self, young with "feet-stalkets", with "haircut <...> funny" and the image of Self-soul, "unfading", "passionate", "noble". Among such a multitude of self-identifications in poetry, the question naturally arises: "Who is she?" – we read: "Who am I?", relevant in the critical time of transition from youth to maturity. Even the occasional feminine strategy of reflecting in twentieth-century Ukrainian lyric poetry on one's own aging as an "absurd rebellion" against time, but not a rebellion against the body, reveals either the fallacy or the masculine one-sidedness of gerontosophical generalizations about abandoning the corporeal for the sake of the spiritual, such as "the desires of the true old man <...> are directed beyond his body" (Pigrov, 2002, p. 4). In feminine consciousness, aging does not remove, but rather exacerbates existential problematization of corporeality, which activates dramatic processes of self-identification, mnemonic conservation in the self-concept of earlier bodily images, as well as mental conflicts of unrealized desire for tactile (sexual) pleasure, visual attention to one's own body, pleasure from realizing its attractiveness.

Old age as an "ascending movement to the Absolute": ideal or "painkiller"?

Ever since the philosophers of antiquity, there has been the tradition of raising old age as the peak stage of personality development, sanctified by experience, wisdom (Demidov, 2005), which is the acmeological paradigm of gerontology, which, unlike the finalist paradigm, values "conscious choice of individual strategies of aging based on moral and spiritual-religious beliefs of man" (Anhelova, 2018, p. 27). K. Pigrov (2002) formulates the theory of "true" old age, when a person achieves a "truly spiritual life", disengages himself from his own body, overcomes the "low" fear of death, and concludes that old age, although "the downward movement of human life, is the rising movement towards mystical identification with the world whole, with the Absolute, with God" (p. 6). Such rhetoric encourages associating the "real" old person with the "real man": for example, the definition of the old "as bearers of knowledge and wisdom" to "act as teachers and mentors" (Demidov, 2005, p. 12) has little to do with women, who in patriarchal culture have no claim. Wisdom and spirituality are also traditionally attributed to men, whose values the androcentric philosophy is focused on. Naturally, old age is reflected positively as the pinnacle of life and spiritual development in masculine artistic thinking. This is how this life stage appears in the poems of M. Rylsky "Smell of autumn with flabby tobacco", Y. Buriak "Wild grapes", V. Bazylevskii "Reading the ashes", B. Oliynyk "Years are no longer flying" and others. At the same time, even with a positive perception of old age, the lyrical hero of these poems avoids direct identification with the elderly, hides behind the lyrical "we" or extrapersonal narrative. Thus, in E. Malaniuk's poetry "August" despite the ruthless visualization of details of the body and face of an elderly man ("weight of a wingless body", "first silver on the temples", "plowed forehead") the emphasis is not on his loss of bodily presentability, but on the realization of his own existence: "Because sight turns to itself, inwardly, / With satiety from the human and earthly", because everyday worries, as O. Khristenko (2008) characterizes the "acmeology" of old age, "yield to the last concern, which reduces anxiety over everyday miseries <...>" (p. 17). The balanced narrative tone reinforces the positive "aura" of E. Malaniuk's image of an elderly wise man who realizes his age as a time of loneliness and humility ("if humility is wisdom, / Loneliness is always height"), but its "absurd rebellion" against old age continues despite all the reasons.

Gender-psychological features of artistic problematization of aging are manifested in the comparison of lyrical cycles by Yurii Klen (1891 – 1947) "Circle of Life" and Galina Tarasiuk (b. 1948) "Women's story (in four parts with epilogue)", thematically and compositionally oriented to comprehend / reflect on the life cycle of a person (man and woman, respectively) from childhood to old age. Yurii Klen's cycle focuses on the formation of the hero's personality in cognition and conquest of the world in work, war and creativity, on his pride and self-satisfaction. His rebellion against old age in the dream of "drilling" the earth to see again the "sun of youth" that has already set, is replaced in the last sonnet of the cycle by the pleasure of old age peace, of a dignified life: "How sweet to give snow / the evening dream and faded years!", so the aging and death of a man-as-a-person who has reached the heights of self-realization and "reaps the fruits" of successful activities, in Klen's cycle are presented as natural, benevolent, "true" (as K. Pigrov would say). In G. Tarasiuk's cycle "Women's story..." the narrative fragmented by four miniatures expresses a reflection of the heroine of her own life, where semiotic "quanta" are children's impatience to grow up, fleetingness of love, the first breath of old age and death-non-existence. Old age is conceptualized in these cycles quite differently (regardless of the time and style of their creation): in the masculine (artistic) consciousness – as a well-deserved peace of mind (Yurii Klen), and in the feminine – as an irreversible loss, sinking into oblivion (G. Tarasiuk). Klen's "acmeological" philosophical narrative, balanced by his sonnet form, contrasts with the emotionally unequal remarks-sobs of Tarasiuk's miniatures, the fragmentary conciseness of which not only mimics a fragmented short (almost unnoticed) life, but also expresses hysterical notes of female fear of this terrible short-livedness. The global difference is that the masculine narrative is mostly about old age as such (so you can resort to acmeological "calming"), and the feminine narrative is about one's own old age, which is not benevolent, but relentless.

The gender difference between the artistic modelling of images of old men and women is noticeable in the comparison of single-themed poems by one author, for example, Peter Midianka (b. 1959) – "Transcarpathian at the set of life" and "Old Romanian in the city". The image of the old Transcarpathian emphasizes his wise prudence against the background of the decay of the world: "And all you need is the Word. / In the sunken eyes the world is so miserable". The image of the old Romanian woman is built on the opposition of her young soul and old body with an emphasis on the loss of her physical presentability: "The whole body has faded, because it is time to fade...". It is worth mentioning the observations of I. Stončikaitė (2020): "If, in contemporary western understandings of beauty and sexual appeal, grey hair and wrinkles translate into maturity and wisdom in men, in older women they are often seen as the antithesis of femininity, and as markers of grandmothering and nurturing". P. Midianka in his poems involuntarily evinces not only gender stereotypes about the elderly, but also the cultural and psychological "asymmetry" of masculine and feminine situations of aging.

Thus, androcentric acmeological theories of aging as a spiritual ascent sometimes find a subjective lyrical reinterpretation, but mainly in masculine artistic thinking, which, although avoiding direct identification with old age, tries (not always successfully) to find solace in the spiritual "positives" of aging to compensate for the loss of instrumental potential of youth.

Old age as the end of life: results and prospects

Gerontopsychology mostly appeals to a more "realistic" finalist paradigm and associates increased fear of death, depression, helplessness and maladaptation, feelings of life sense loss with

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involutional processes in the body (Berezina, 2011, p. 56; Dziuba, 2013, p. 138). If the feminine existential model of experiencing physical involution problematizes bodily attractiveness, sexuality, the masculine – the loss of strength, the possibility of instrumental influence, although in today's world physical strength is compensated by intellectual, financial potential. With aging and loss of social prestige, however, power ambitions for men are becoming increasingly difficult to realize (Demidov, 2005, p. 10), about which, of course, the masculine narrator will not spread. So in the lyrics the reflection of aging as a physical (intellectual, sexual, etc.) impotence of a man is quite rare, more often it is veiled by philosophical extrapersonal thoughts, metaphorically coded, as, for example, in the poems of Leonid Talalai (1941 – 2012). "Lord, nothing of the hopes left!...", "Wing on the ground", etc.). The concept of powerlessness and the motive of returning in old age "to where the road began" (V. Bazylevsky) are actualized in the lyrics that draws together old age and childhood (similarly understood in gerontosophy (Lishaev, 2017, p. 21), less often – the presenting of an old man as a child, which is literally recorded in the title-oxymoron of Bohdan Lepky's poetry (1872 – 1941) "Old Child", as well as in the rather frank confessions of the lyrical narrator: "Old child. Yes, old child, / Although I will never be young. / Life has passed like one minute, / The evening bell is already heard behind the mountain".

The image of an elderly man, a character in the poetry of Yuriy Tarnawsky (b. 1934) "Old age" is appalling with his helplessness, immobility, mortality: "An old man is sitting in the arm-chair", he "has neither the strength nor the desire to move" as an outspent mechanism, – "His life is over, / Like an unpleasant task that had to be done", "And now he can rest, / Until he is let into the grave". The correlation of the central image with the title of the work deepens its meaning to the symbol of the instrumental "soulless" male world, where only youth and strength are valued, to the symbol of modern civilization, which considers man as a means, not an end, and finally, to the symbol of the absurdity of old age as "life-time death". The old man in the poetry of Y. Tarnawsky is a man without a soul in a motionless body, in his self-alienation (if there is the self that is neglected), isolation from the world he embodies the most terrible finalist "version" of old age.

According to E. Sapogova (2011), "'being old' is equivalent to realizing one's 'completeness', requires from a person a specific internal (hermeneutic) activity aimed at building meanings based on the own 'acquired' resources" (p. 77), so the approaching prospect of death activates the meaning-life plan of the Self-concept, which is often problematized in the lyrics in connection with the aging and death theme. If the masculine lyrical narrative, obscuring the reflection of personal aging, reveals a meaningful life paradigm in the sphere of struggle, accomplishments, and hence heroic death (and not natural death from old age), the feminine narrative quite often connects the life sense strategy with the development of the lineage, love communication with descendants and death in their circle, which significantly positivizes the experience of aging with the hope of continuing life in children. A wide range of lyrical texts shows that dramatizing the search for the life sense is a masculine prerogative, in the feminine consciousness this problem, especially at the end of life, is much less relevant. Many poems evince the pacification of the elderly lyrical heroine, who does not care about the search for life sense, because her life was happy, and it is the natural regularity of its duration that was the sense. Lyrical heroine of I. Zhylenko's poetry "Farewell" calmly reacts to the end of her life cycle, which symbolizes the image of seeds, grains as a "result" of growth, as hopes for "rebirth": "Your hive, and children, and flowers – / everything is left at the bottom. /<...> One more moment and you will sleep peacefully / in your little grain". Lyrical heroines of the poems by M. Pryhara ("Grandchildren"),

G. Gordasevych ("Poem for descendants") find joy of life, meaning, harmony in the generations of their descendants, Calm joy, pride of a woman as a mother and grandmother expressed in these poems are far from "scientific" explanation of women's emotional comfort in old age by "alien presence", i.e. "the ability to distance themselves from their own, already unusable (!) bodies in other people's bodies", we must think, probably, those of grandchildren (Pigrov & Sekatskiy, 2017, p. 28).

Originality

This research for the first time applied a gender-literary approach to the study of existential and psychological issues of gerontology in the 20th-century Ukrainian lyric poetry. The studied gender and psychological specifics of lyrical reflection of old age in the semantic perspectives of anxiety about the loss of body attractiveness, physical strength, search for compensatory satisfaction in the realization of acquired spiritual treasures, fulfilled life purpose in some respects correlates with the discoveries of gerontosophy, gerontopsychology, complements them with individual experience of aging, which is turned out to be determined not so much by socio-cultural norms, but by psycho-mental, meaningful life strategies of (masculine / feminine) consciousness.

Conclusions

The actualization of the research field of literary and gender gerontology not yet mastered in Ukraine in the context of anthropological studies of literary text allowed to single out a number of artistically conceived existential psychological problems in Ukrainian poetry. They include depressogenic devaluation of the aging female body, compensatory positivization of old age as a spiritual "acme", which correlates not so much with personal experience as with the culturally formatted ideal of the wise old man, as well as the problem of losing life positions and prospects due to decrepitude and senility. The gender specificity of these problems is determined not so much by the format of (geronto)culture, but by the masculine / feminine phenotype of the life strategy formed at active maturity. The lyrical texts of artists of different generations taken into account testify to the dramatization in the feminine consciousness of the loss of physical / sexual attractiveness of the body, which provokes increased fear of aging, loneliness, uselessness, self-alienation. At the same time, the prospect of death does not exacerbate the search for the meaning of existence, which is evident in the fulfilled purpose – the birth of offspring, whose care and love emotionally smooth the last stage of a woman's life. In masculine lyrical consciousness senile impotence is dramatized, although its internal reflection due to the risk of revealing the lack of masculinity is encoded by a non-personal or metaphorical narrative. On the other hand, the acmeological ideal of old age is modelled much more often than in the feminine consciousness as a positive meaningful life model. Different cultural strategies of masculinity and femininity, enshrined in culture, lead to reduplication in androcentric and philosophical and artistic texts of asymmetric gender stereotypes about female old age as the involution of the body and male old age as the evolution of the spirit. Feminist gerontology (as well as literature) tries to break these stereotypes. The lyrics, however, present not so much ideological models as individual existential experience, invaluable for understanding the phenomenon of human at the last stage of life.

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Старіння як екзистенційно-психологічна проблема: ракурс художнього відображення в українській ліриці

Мета. Старіння – складний процес трансформації Я-концепції на тлі фізичної інволюції, втрати сексуальної запотребованості, але, водночас, старість – це час для перегляду людиною її існування в часі й просторі, в єдності її життєвих цілей та їхньої (успішної) реалізації. Оригінальний індивідуальний досвід, утілений в українській літературі (ліриці), може доповнити дані геронтології, а гендерний підхід до осмислення цього досвіду націлений на висвітлення маскулінних / фемінінних фенотипічних особливостей переживання старіння. **Теоретичний базис.** Для вивчення екзистенційно-психологічних проблем старіння, представлених в українській ліриці ХХ ст., видається ефективним звернення до філософського та психологічного напрямів геронтології, а також феміністичних студій, присвячених дискримінації старого жіночого тіла, зокрема й у літературі. **Наукова новизна.** У студії зроблено спробу активувати гендернолітературознавчий вимір української геронтології (та антропології загалом). Окремі екзистенційно-психологічні проблеми старіння, зокрема тривога від занепаду тіла й втрати сили, а також пошук компенсаторного задоволення в духовному збагаченні, простежені на матеріалі української лірики ХХ ст. Гендерно диференційований індивідуальний досвід старіння, відображений у ліриці, закорінений переважно в психічні, ментальні, сенсожиттєві стратегії. **Висновки.** Фемінінними стратегіями ліричної рецепції старіння є тривожна обсервація вікових змін у своєму тілі, переживання "невидимості" власного тіла, поглиблені почуттями самотності, самовідчуження, але, крім того, віднайдення сенсу життя й душевної гармонії у власній родині, нащадках.

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Для маскулінної рецепції старіння характерна орієнтація на ідеальний образ Старця, кодування тривоги з приводу втрати фізичної сили позаперсональним нарративом.

Ключові слова: старіння; гендерна та літературознавча геронтологія; українська лірика XX ст.; фемінінні / маскулінні стратегії рецепції власного старіння; інволюція тіла; безсилля; ідеальний образ Старця

Received: 01.08.2021

Accepted: 02.12.2021