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## PORTRAIT ESSAYS BY YURII KOSACH ABOUT NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE WINNERS IN THE UKRAINIAN EMIGRE PUBLICATIONS

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*The purpose of this article is to highlight journalistic skill of Yu. Kosach in the genre of portrait essay represented on the pages of national emigration periodicals. The scientific study focuses on the specific attributes of portraying Nobel Prize writers. The author of the article argues that masterful combination of literary and journalistic discourse in the portrait essays is inherent in individual style of Kosach the publicist.*

*Particular attention of the researcher is focused around the constitutive issues of the analyzed thematic segment of Yu. Kosach's journalism, such as: role of an artist in establishing global and national values; singling out of national literary genius among several generations of writers.*

*The publication emphasizes that the journalist's essays is not only a model of highly professional analysis of worldview problems of world literature, but also a call to Ukrainian artists for raising the level of Ukrainian literature up to the world cultural standards.*

**Key words:** portrait essay, Nobel Prize, literary comment.

**Introduction.** The noted Ukrainian writer Yurii Kosach consistently continuing the tradition of his glorious Drahomanov-Kosach kin in journalism published a series of portrait essays devoted to the Nobel Prize winners: E. Hemingway, W. Faulkner, J. O'Neill, J. Steinbeck on the pages of emigration periodicals. The portrait essays by Yuri Kosach are interesting in terms of skillful combination of nature of a literary-critical article and journalistic essay itself.

However, this genre themed segment of his journalism has not yet been the subject of scientific analysis, so *relevance* of the proposed exploration is conditioned by need to fill this gap in journalistic map of Ukraine.

Today, the journalistic heritage of the press activist in exile is in a state of active scientific elaboration, including some facets of Yu. Kosach's journalistic activities, which were investigated by V. Ageyeva, S. Kravchenko, S. Pavlychko, R. Radyshevsky, S. Romanov, N. Sydorenko, Yu. Sherekh.

*The goal of the research* is to analyze the portrait essays by Yurii Kosach about iconic figures of the world literature that were represented on the pages of some émigré publications («Ukrainska Trybuna» (Ukrainian Tribune), «Obrii» (Horizons), «Za Synim Okeanom» (Beyond the Blue Ocean). The purpose of the article leads to solving a number of these *problems*: to clarify a leading conceptual orienta-

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tion of portrait essays by Yu. Kosach; outline the features of Yu. Kosach's journalistic style in the genre of portrait essay.

**Research methods.** For implementation of all of the tasks, the author of the article used the following *methods*: problem-thematic, genre-stylistic, and analytical to contribute to clarifying specific features of the journalist's individual style.

**Results and discussion.** According to the tradition of Dragomanov-Kosach journalistic dynasty, Yu. Kosach touched the important theoretical and worldview problems of spiritual culture in his portrait essays, smoothly combining roomy scientific analysis and journalistic fervor in the publications. Taking into account the nature of the genre of portrait essays and being guided by significance of literary activity of leading representatives of the world literature, the author skillfully selects and counterbalances biographical facts and examples from the original heritage of the writers. As a modern scholar remarks: «The artistic taste mainly serves Yu. Kosach, he knows how to counterbalance the excess pathos with notes of irony or skepticism» [1, p. 24].

Kosach's portrait essay «Hemingway and conscience of modernity» identified by him as «artistic silhouette» is flake. The publishing was caused by the fact the American writer had been awarded the Nobel Prize, which, according to Kosach, the author has long deserved. The publicist delivers his vision of the artistic world of the American writer: «Hemingway's world is even more a night and twilight world, that of doubtful beings, of suspicious social situation, of absurdity and hesitation, without a guiding iron will of so called strong personalities and almost – a crime» [3, p. 6].

Kosach as a critic, analyzing artistic character types of E. Hemingway's works, states that the heroes gallery by the writer is an interesting symbiosis diverse for social, moral psychological factors: bullfighters, guerrillas, smugglers, fishermen, butterfly women, boxers, murderers, deserters, drunkards – «the very most diverse ragtag and bobtail of the present day, along with strangely restless, no way outstanding people from so called decent circle, people obsessed with big and small passions, skills and vices». While noting that specific features of the artist's creative manner are a style «untidiness» and ostensible indifferent attitude of the observer, the author of the essay states that such identity and originality was «to like for two «gone» generations, particularly European ones», albeit the properly American literary circles did not recognize any artistic value of Hemingway's creative works. Yu. Kosach focuses on what European society between the two wars, and especially after the Second World War, pronounced the American author, the spokesman of the epoch. Also the publicist is pleased with the fact that Hemingway took a bold civic stance, did not temporize, «was always strikingly candid», <...> ingratiated himself with nobody of the high and mighties <...> never was like all his contemporaries» [3, p. 7], which was clearly evident in his writings, where, instead of battle scenes and flagellating of the policy of militarism, he created artistic stories about a fate of a common man involved in the maelstrom of war from force of historical circumstances.

Kosach, analyzing thematic horizons of the artist in detail, concludes: «It seems, among Nobel Prize laureates there was still no author with so unexpectedly straightforward and bizarre artistic career. There was still an author with so ticklish, almost obscene topics, so seemingly simple and common plots, depicting figures though dramatic, but apparently so often met... And most of all, an author with so simple morality or, to be more correct, such absence of all morality» [3, p. 8].

Yu. Kosach weaves a Ukrainian trait into an outline of the essay by comparing the work of the Nobel laureate to Ukrainian artists' heritage.

For example, while making a parallel comparison between works by V. Vynnychenko and those by E. Hemingway in terms of showing moral and ethical issues, Kosach prefers the American writer, believing that «honesty with himself» theme put forward in the works of the Ukrainian writer is «prittle prattle» compared to morality of Hemingway's characters. The literary critic emphasizes: «The morals of E. Hemingway's characters is their biological strength and that's all, at first glance. That's why he addressed to the world clearly brightened marginal situations of human existence – to the world of people faithful to their biology. Not a veiled deceit but a true man could be found only between the bullfighters, fishermen, guerrillas, etc» [3, p. 9].

Yurii Kosach also addresses the following complex worldview issue in the essay: separation of a national literary genius among several generations of writers: «... literature of every nation has basically

only one writer. It appears like a shower from the blue, while being the result of an act of the soil after all; it illuminates the soul of the nation once and for all, and all that was before them and will be after them – it's just different and developed versions of their theme. And it's quite in vain to think of that someone could ever comprehend their terse style, their absolute loyalty to condemnation» [3, p. 10].

The author of the publication argues that a literary genius to be a kind of national messiah, a spokesman for the People's aspirations, he believes that every world literature has such an artist, who is a kind of literary myth: Spain – Cervantes, Poland – Juliusz Słowacki, England – Shakespeare, France – Moliere, America – Twain, Ukraine – only Shevchenko. Yu. Kosach without stopping readers' attention at the figure of the Ukrainian poet, who was one of the national myths of Ukraine for him, vividly proclaims that Shevchenko «in general, together with his «Shtschodennyk» («Diary») and novels and dramas, together with his worldview, is the Ukraine's word that «was in the beginning»... And everything that comes after it in the same line that ties us with the world literature process will merely be assimilation, or humble succession at best» [3, p. 10].

Yurii Kosach claims that Ernest Hemingway who considered himself a follower of Mark Twain worthily continues his traditions, making their own art of innovations, performing the mission of the singer of «unattractive time of revolutions and miseries of relativism» in his epoch. At the end of art silhouette, the publicist notes the artist's far-sightedness, who described a «naked» truth of life in his writings, appealing to humankind to overcome the «desert of the soul», which is worse than physical death.

In 1962, Yu. Kosach published a portrait sketch dedicated to John Steinbeck as the new Nobel laureate in the «Za Synim Okeanom» magazine. Architectonics of this publication is rather typical for this sort of Yurii Kosach's jubilee portrait journalism: the beginning is widespread journalistic-literary personal characteristics of the essay character, which sets the tone, then there are short biographical facts that are naturally intertwined with lapidary analysis of his main creative achievements.

Condemning the unjust attacks of some good American critics concerning of John Steinbeck's creative legacy, Yu. Kosach still agrees with them that the artist after the novel «The Grapes of Wrath» (1939) did not create any more work, «equal by concept and artistic power and social sound», as all of his next creative attempts are decline of creative energy. According to observations of the portrait essay author, popularity of writer who has a huge audience of fans is due to his humanity, ability to accurately reproduce feelings of «an ordinary American», attempt to artistically reflect the most pressing problems not only the US community but also the world one, as evidenced by the millions of books translated in all languages.

Change of ideological emphasis in the writer's prose, departure from the relevant social issues is accounted by Yu. Kosach for change of thematic focus of all the American literature that is in «captivity of unprincipled amorphousness, anti-realistic standoffishness» [4, p. 24]. J. Steinbeck has, in his view, been exposed to contemporary All-American literary trend of «ongoing spiritual transformations», taking a neutral position of the observer. Steinbeck's new literary role is not acceptable for Kosach, the former, in opinion of the latter, is «creatively tamed and constrained with conveniences of the society that he decided to «make peace» with, losing «all his dynamism of the innovator writer» [4, p. 25].

Giving brief chronology of John Steinbeck's life and work, Kosach stresses a feeling of love of the great American writer for his small homeland – California that has become the place where events happen of almost all his works. Likewise, the heroes of his works – Californians, different in origin, social status, nature and destiny, depicted by J. Steinbeck rather accurately and easily, without excessive pathos and hyperbole, as Yu. Kosach observes. The talented essayist also notes such a dominant feature of individual style of the writer's prose as lyricism: «John Steinbeck is primarily a poet. Alongside with epic, devoid of any rhetoric, records from existence of solid and ordinary people, he causes prospect, colors, lumps and hues with not comparable lyricism» [4, p. 26].

While describing the work of the American writer Kosach acts as adept of his own concept of the true literature delivered by him in the time of MUR (Mystetskyi ukrainskyi rukh / The Artistic *Ukrainian* Movement) because he most likes the writer's individual style attributes such as humanistic keynote, refined aestheticism and a keen sense of social conflict: «Steinbeck passionately loves people with their power and weaknesses. It continuously monitors their lives, along with its quirks, tricks and paradoxes. He is ready to forgive the people, even though they sometimes act silly, under pressure from animal

instincts... Steinbeck eyes the whole human comedy, tolerantly, humorously, even with sympathy and, above all, with skepticism of a scientist. He rejects his position of ideologue for that of artist» [4, p. 27]. Yurii Kosach concludes: the works by the artist are spiritual achievements of not only the modern American literature, but also the world one.

The «Obrii» magazine in July to August 1951 published a portrait sketch by Yu. Kosach about the American writer Eugene O'Neill, which acquainted the readers with difficult life story of the artist, his thorny path to the expanses of American literature. The publicist states that E. O'Neill, through hard self-education, diligent study in theater technique at Harvard University, became a prominent American playwright in a short time, whose plays have stage and success and are praised by professionals, as evidenced by a number of prestigious awards, among which there is the most honorable, Nobel Prize, awarded to him in 1936. The publicist also draws attention to the diversity of thematic horizons of the dramatic works by the American artist, while making special emphasis on the theme of the plays that were familiar to American audiences owing to prospective performances on stage. In his American colleague's works, Kosach as a playwright is impressed by the ethical tension, tragedy, melodramatic intrigue close to the Ukrainian mentality. In an effort to do his best for the same artistically valuable reform pieces to also appear in the national literature, publicist draws Ukrainian artists' attention to those American playwright's individual style features that brought him international recognition, such as: bold themes, expressive social keynote of the play conflicts, focus on «the deepest areas of the human soul», use of technique of «emphasizing multiple split of one character through 1) rise of voice – «inner monologue», 2) through a mask and 3) taking of two actors in one role» [5, p. 75]. As you can see, the publicist's relentless pursuit to raise the level of Ukrainian literature to the world's cultural standards, striving to overcome the stereotype of mental inferiority of the national literature on the world literary horizons comes even in the portrait sketches about the foreign cultural figures.

In the «Za Synim Okeanom» magazine in 1962, Yu. Kosach publishes an interesting exploration «William Faulkner and others' prospects», that he continues one of the main themes of his journalism and literary criticism in – highlighting artist's role in the life of the nation and world literature. Speaking of Faulkner's creative legacy, writer argues that the large part of it is not just a cleverly written works, but masterpieces «lasting values» that include «The Sound and the Fury», «Sanctuary», «Absalom, Absalom!», «Light in August», «Sartoris».

Works of the artist, according to Kosach, were associated with modernity, deeply social; being multiplied by the writer's talent it produced a new cultural formation, made Faulkner an ideologue and spokesman of the nation. By turning to the difficult conceptual issues such as: projection of the work ideas on the present day, recognition of the writer's greatness, the publicist stresses that resolving these complicated worldview problems depends largely on spirit and specific of the time when he writes his novels.

Kosach tries to incorporate Faulkner's works into the American literature mainstream, seeking the common between his works and the legacy of the classics of American literature: Poe, M. Twain, E. Hemingway. According to the observations of the essay author, unlike these writers, Faulkner «encamped with his art» in America but «not in Madrid hotels and not in tents near Kilimanjaro» proving «his fanatical attachment to American traditions» [2, p. 20]. Creative quest for Faulkner's ideal, according to Kosach, is both spiritually close to the search for microcosm of Gogol, with whom he has a lot of adjacent worldview stands.

Creating a macrocosm of the American South in his novels, Faulkner doesn't idealize, as the publicist stresses, his characters, showing all the society evils unvarnished – «demonstration of manifold abnormalities». Singling out such characterological traits of the writer's work ideological load such as: depicting absurdity of human existence, philosophical pessimism, tragedy in describing the characters, Kosach manifests that the works by Faulkner outgrew limits of regionalism because of being well-made, becoming on par with the works of such sound by Reymont and Dostoyevsky.

Analyzing the current development condition of American epic tradition, Yu. Kosach shows that US writers' prosaic legacy from the 1940 to 1950s is a kind of literary stereotype, was being created by inertia of the prose from 1920 to 1930s. So, amid feeble picking of the contemporary writers in the abstract naturalism, compliance with standards of academic routine style, Faulkner's works «appears to

be gigantic», while most of the contemporary writers remain wingless and unable.

**Conclusions.** Thus, the publicistic practice of Yurii Kosach in portrait essays is a testimony to his skillfulness as a journalist, who can accumulate an artistic principle, literary criticism and thorough analysis of urgent problems of the contemporary Ukrainians' life in one genre.

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### **Портретні нариси Юрія Косача про письменників-лауреатів Нобелівської премії на сторінках українських еміграційних видань**

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*Метою пропонованої статті є висвітлення публіцистичної майстерності Юрія Косача у жанрі портретного нарису, репрезентованого на сторінках національної еміграційної періодики. У науковій студії акцентується увага на специфічних атрибутах портретистики письменників лауреатів Нобелівської премії. Автором статті стверджується, що для індивідуального стилю Косача-публіциста притаманне майстерне поєднання у портретних нарисах літературознавчого й публіцистичного дискурсів. Особлива увага дослідника сконцентрована довкола таких конститутивних проблем аналізованого тематичного сегменту публіцистики Ю. Косача, як-то: роль митця в утвердженні загальносвітових і національних цінностей; виокремлення національного літературного генія з-поміж кількох генерацій літераторів.*

*У публікації наголошується, що портретні нариси журналіста є не тільки зразком високопрофесійного аналізу світоглядних проблем світового письменства, а й закликом до українських митців піднести рівень української літератури до світових культурних стандартів.*

**Ключові слова:** портретний нарис, Нобелівська премія, літературознавчий коментар.

### **Портретные очерки Юрия Косача о писателях лауреатах Нобелевской премии на страницах украинских эмиграционных изданий**

**Семенко Светлана**

*Целью представленной статьи есть освещение публицистического мастерства Юрия Косача в жанре портретного очерка, репрезентированного на страницах национальной эмиграционной периодики. В научной студии акцентируется внимание на специфических атрибутах портретистики писателей лауреатов Нобелевской премии. Автором статьи утверждается, что для индивидуального стиля Косача-публициста характерно мастерское соединение в портретных очерках литературоведческого и публицистического дискурса. Особенное внимание исследователя сконцентрировано вокруг таких конститутивных проблем анализированного тематического сегмента публицистики Ю. Косача, как-то: роль художника слова в утверждении общемировых и национальных ценностей; выделении национального литературного гения среди нескольких генераций литераторов.*

*В публикации акцентируется, что портретные очерки журналиста есть не только образцом высокопрофессионального анализа мировоззренческих проблем мировой литературы, а и призывом к украинским мастерам слова поднести уровень украинской литературы к мировым культурным стандартам.*

**Ключевые слова:** портретный очерк, Нобелевская премия, литературоведческий комментарий.

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