

АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ ТЕОРІЇ ЛІТЕРАТУРИ ТА ЛІТЕРАТУРНОЇ КРИТИКИ

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ALTERNATIVE HISTORY GENRE IN THE FINE LITERATURE. THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN MYTH IN CRYPTOHISTORICAL WRITING

Стаття присвячена жанрово-стильовим особливостям метажанру альтернативної історії (AI). *Мета* статті – визначити ідентичність і шлях альтернативної історичного роману в Україні та його порівняльну характеристику на сучасному етапі зарубіжного роману цього жанру. *Завдання студії* полягають у визначенні способів функціонування європейського міфу в мистецькому просторі неомодерного AI роману в Україні, що створює новий генологічний малюнок в українському літературознавстві.

Методи дослідження підпорядковані меті та завданням, переважають порівняльний, історико-літературний, описовий та аналітичний.

Для альтернативної історії добре підходить жанр історичного роману як базовий генологічний тип. В дослідженні представлено уявлення про джерела AI. У полі історизму з'явилися альтернативи, які вистіснили історію. Виникнення історичного роману пов'язане з відродженням історичної прози в середні віки, модифікацією новелістичної структури оповіді та трансформацією історичної літератури як класичної прозової традиції від міфологічної притчі до епічного жанру, а останнім часом, – як канонізований жанр роману. Історична проза – оригінальний фактажний жанр, сповнений науковості та стилю, поєднаних на принципах поетики. Дослідженням генології AI займалися декілька науковців, таких як М. Шнайдер-Майерсон, Дж. Клют, О. Абрамович, В. Даниленко та ін. Але в галузі жанрових маркерів та набору піджанрів ця тема ще недостатньо висвітлена. Новизна дослідження була висунута О. Абрамовичем і пов'язана з історичною основою генезису роману AI. Через встановлення тоталітарного режиму в Європі та поширене явище переписування історії, суспільно-політичні трансформації, свідками яких стало не одне покоління, локальні історії та європейська історіографія були переформатовані в численних джерелах. Який з них провідний? Це питання, яке слід досліджувати та обговорювати. *Висновки.* У новелістиці та романній прозі AI механізмами трансформації субжанрів, зокрема у криптоісторії, виступають міфологеми та численні пласти стилізації історії в ХХ ст., а не тільки історичні події давнини. Тенденція до узагальнення визначила роль історії як посередника між філософією та релігією: вона трансформувалася як світська релігія. Можна також зробити висновок, що метажанрове становлення AI поширювалося протягом століття, впливаючи на окремі жанри та різновиди, набувало різноманітних рис інших жанрів, зокрема канонічних, таких як історичний роман, пригодницький, детективний роман, роман-хроніка, наукова-фантастика.

Ключові слова: Альтернативна історія, європейський міф, неомодерний сучасний роман, альтернативно-історичний метод, український роман.

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Introduction

The alternative history (AH) means history-cultural course of sections in historiography, culture studies, genres studies, phenomenology; their basis of investigation is multidimensionality of historical time. The term has a more limited meaning in literature discourse. AH was finally established in worldwide writing during the modernism epoch. As a fiction genre it originates from works of the prominent American writer – M. Twain [Nicholls, Clute, 1993, p. 806].

The most famous works in this genre are: “3,000 Years among the microbes” by M. Twain. (1905), “A Sound Of Thunder” by R.D. Bradbury, (1952), “Eutopia” by P.W.S . Anderson, (1967), “Tunnel Through the Deeps” by H.M. Harrison (1972), “Dr. Heidegger’s Experiment” by N. Hawthorne (1837), “Lest Darkness Fall” by Lyon Sprague de Camp (1939), “The Island of Crimea” by V. Aksyonov (1979), “The Heir” by K. Bulychov (1992), “Fatherland” by R. Harris (1992), “The other sky” by A. Lazarchuk (1993), “72 letters” by T. Chan (2000), “The variant “Bis” by S. Anisimov (2004), “11/22/63” S. King (2011).

There are also Ukrainian writers, who created works in this genre, among them are: V. Baziv, I. Bilyk, M. Brynykh, V. Vladko, V. Danylenko, R. Ivanenko, R. Ivanychuk, M. Kidruk, S. Protsyuk, V. Shevchuk, Ya. Yanovs’kyi, etc. V. Kozhelyanko consciously and purposefully elaborated this genre, developing our literature, and Yu. Shcherbak continued to do this, after his death.

The most prominent researchers who discovered alternative history are: H. White [White, 1928], W.J. Collins [Collins, 1990], P. Nicholls & J. Clute [Nicholls & Clute, 1998], G. Rosenfeld [Rosenfeld, 2002], V. Sobolev [Sobolev, 2006], S. Bierieezhnoy [Bierieezhnoy, 2008], M. Schneider-Mayerson [Schneider-Mayerson, 2009], G. Winthrop-Young [Winthrop-Young, 2009], R. Katsman [2013], C. Abbott [Abbott, 2016] etc. M. Twain’s novel “A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court” (1889) is written on real historical notes, chronicles, and evidence materials, however, the plot catalyst is a fantastic element introduced by the author, which can be generally named as “what would be, if...”. The divergence point (external crucial element) is changing ordinary (known, real) historical course; this is the most important genre marker, which helps to identify the writing that is written in alternative history genre.

Alteration of the history in the past (even if it comes to the future of society) creates lacuna for plot schemes evolution of fantastic type in literature, namely, prepares the basement for realization of typical story constructions in science fiction and fantasy, for example, in time traveling, intruding of alien civilization or in individual representatives of extraterrestrial forms of life.

Style and genre markers of the alternative history

Genre markers in AH works can also balance on global and partial edges, namely history and story; the probable histories of development, only human civilization life screenplays, in relation to official historiography, “and not smart dinosaurs, walking trees or mice” [Sobolev, 2006, p. 17.] as Hokser has said (pseudonym of the site founder, organizer of writers-alternatives competition).

The most important stylistic markers of AH are (from the experience of prominent nowadays fiction texts):

- Immersion in nationally-mental peculiarities of historical development, passing laws and historical events changings;
- Hermeneutics connection of AH and Christianity (predominant amount of AH works are written on the historical material after Christianity uprising or actually on the material of this process or its objection);
- Immersion into mythology and esoteric knowledge;
- Criticism of linear consequence theory in general sense;
- Reproduction methods involvement from the other kinds of art or science;
- Wide range of formally-typical formations;
- Typical genre markers are:
 - Replacement of history in the past;
 - Epic and epoch of the story, that means life description of at least one generation in the changed historical reality;

- National attachment of the characters, allusions, logical chains, and at the same time, parable generalization of the story;

As Hokser introduced, alternative history genre has three principled positions from which there are its features:

- Described history fully matches to the fixed world and national history to the point of divergence, in other words, alternative history can't be based on cryptohistory, hypothesis, fabrications; only real historical persons must be main in the writing;
- Alternative history is a history of humanity; that's why animal images or representatives of extraterrestrial civilization can't be protagonists there;
- If artistic method with parallel world or virtual reality are used in the writing, this world must be identical to the real, civilized space before the divergence point and must differ essentially after it;

Thesis for creating the definition of this genre can be distinguished from the competition regulations of the modern writers, as they are seen by literary critics in Slavic area. The competition among alternative writers was organized in participation with M. Moshkov and writers from the *Kharkiv School of Fantasy*. It had been conducted for about 10 years, so the jury and interested viewers created literature, aesthetic and even philosophical criteria for the genre, which is formed into an aim genre on the basis of Slavic literature.

Appearance of the AH genre on the fantastic and historical edges is proved with common functioning of both genre markers. As J. Clute used to say in his encyclopedic article: "Alternative History is not computer game-strategy, which can *be saved, replayed* and then *resaved*... and it is not secular talks about *what it could be if*... [Nicholls, Clute, 1993, p. 714]. Alternative history "lets us analyze progress of historical events, estimate the role in history of a person and occasional factors, and the most important, understand regularity of historical events, to avoid the repetition of the former mistakes in reality" [Marusyk, 2005, p. 14–18].

Ambivalence of this genre is connected with the fact that *it is distinguished from the science fiction sphere and is formed in the genre of historical fiction*.

Genre scheme of historical fiction successfully works for alternative history writings. Alternative emerged in the historicism field that shifted history. Appearance of historical fiction is connected with historical prose revival during the Middle Ages epoch, modification of novel narrative structure, and transformation of historical literature in the new *age* epoch from mythology-parable into epic gender, lately into canonized genre of novel. "Historical prose is original genre, where facts, scientism and style are combined, that is based on poetics principles" [Volkov, 2001, p. 239]. This expression was said by A. Abramovuch and it is connected with historical prose genesis. But in the 20th century "[...] in connection with totalitarian regime establishment in Europe and practice of history rewriting [...] numerous presentations of historical events [...] mythology more and more dominates [...] and numerous stylizations are observed" [Volkov, 2001, p. 239–240].

Movement to generalization gave history the role of mediator between philosophy and religion: it transformed into secular religion. So its relations with the church became ambiguous. History blocked up *Divine Providence* by the skill to explain the course of things, but at the same time, history continued to *be connected with God (unmittelbar zu Gott)*, there was always something lofty for rational historical reconstruction. V. Humboldt compared history with art that "is also not only imitation of an image, but application into the idea that is based in that image" («[...] auch nicht sowohl Nachahmung der Gestalt, als Versinnlichung der in der Gestalt ruhenden Idee ist» [Humboldt, 1841, p. 49].

The philosophy of history returned to polemic between history and novel. D. Didro, while talking about S. Richardson, opposed *a bad novel* to a novel as *a bad history*. As O. Tyerri, putting forward clear and consistent principles of understanding, thinks that the novel itself approaches the truth in a bigger extent than old history which is only able to accumulate facts without their inner logical connection. Long and tangled history of historical fiction, especially in English (W. Scott) and French literature (G. Michle), slightly separated two quarreling camps of dreamers and historians.

The human's desire to change something in history in order to return it in the right way is frequently realized in historical science and fiction literature. Changing of facts or their interpretation only politicizes historical chronicle and historiography itself. But doesn't give the desirable

correction of *historical modernity*. New variants of projects can be successfully created if we impose them into known schemes of historical events in the past epochs in the process of understanding the logic of events, especially on the particular consecutive distance. National history can be reconstructed especially well with the help of this method. So, the first timid try was done in 1889.

In the 20th century, AH elements appeared in essays, dramas, small prose, and lately in novel. Historical intervals and moments that interested foreign writers mainly belong to the history of wars, century breaks and also connect with the history of Christianity [see table 1]. In return, Ukrainian attempts mainly apply to domestic history (mostly to political one) which belongs to Kyivan Rus' and Christianization of Ukrainian territory (I. Bilyk "*Mech Arey*" [The Sword of Arey], "*Pohoron bohiv*" [The Gods' funeral], "*Ne dratuyte hryfoniv*" [Don't annoy griffins], V. Vladko "*Nashchadky skifiv*" [Scythians' descendants]), or till 19 – early 20th centuries (O. Irvanets "*Rivne-Rovno*", Ya. Yanovs'kyi "*Dolyna Belvederu*" [The valley of Belveder], Yu. Shcherbak "*Chas smertochrystiv*", M. & S. Dyachenko "*Vita Nostra*", and *defilyadna* range of three novels by V. Kozhelyanko.

Enormous amount, about 1000 units presented to alternative writers' competition in Hoker's site, were fantastic and fantasy AH works. They use it as a brand for successful spreading of book products, as it is very popular among European readers and literature critics. However, some texts with such an abbreviation do not always belong to mass literature, especially while talking about Slavic nations. There is intensive enrichment of the texts by this genre marker in Russian literature. They focus on the quantity, forgetting about the quality.

A. Alekseev, founder of the biggest Internet-resources connected to alternative history questions wrote in *Time o'clock: news-дневник фут-уролога*: "On the basis of my old idea lies the notion that feuilleton epoch rooted in Russian fantasy long time ago. There are not original writers with holistic creative method for about 20 years. All who exist are regarded as hybrid-mutants, pasted with small parts from the past." [Labazov, 2002]. He didn't stop by the fact, that his old idea was principally taken from F. Blyaya, from his book "*Bestiariy suchasnoyi literatury*" (Bestiary of modern literature) [Labazov, 2002].

There is the other important theoretical aspect – fantastical one. Its role in AH as a genre-stylistic component of aim genre and AH formation in Ukrainian literature as genre-stylized variety in the alternative *history of Ukraine*.

In the 20th–21st centuries, fantasy became an aim genre in fiction literature, which uses property of the former genres of alternative history. "Genre, which is taken from the other literature, undergoes some modifications in a new cultural environment. One of the most complicated problems of gene science is interaction in genre between stable and variable, generally theoretical and national unique" – N. Kopystyanska [Kopystyanska, 2005, p. 16.] presenting a definition in one of the most authoritative domestic works in genre studies.

The second factor has become the problem of genre transformation on the basis of traditions of a particular national literature, as pointed out by the researcher of genre theories; this factor increases AH borders. That's why we talk about the discovery made by V. Kozhrylyanko of not only the novel in AH genre for Ukrainian literature, but of creating a specific genre variety – *Alternative history of Ukraine*.

The article "*Metaistoriya: Istorychna uyava v Evropi XIX viku*" [Meta-history: the historical imagination in Europe of the 19th century] written by H. White [White, 1928] in the 19th century points to the expansion of geographical borders of alternative history (in wide meaning of the term). In the 19th century, European civilized theory together with historiography composed similarly to medieval notions about the universe structure. The opinion, that absolute center of intellectual history of the humanity belongs to Europe was created by Great Britain and supported by France, Italy and Germany. However, beyond West Europe (in geographical meaning) the other theories functioned. Although, the cultural development of nations of our part of the World allowed monopoly on historiography in its scientific and artistic revelation.

So, flash ideas were not developed during centuries; they were forgotten or used again, but differently. In the article "*Narodzhennya ta smert natsionalnyh mifiv*" [Birth and death of national myths] written by Zh. Niva [Niva, 1998], this process was called the *greenhouse effect of Europe*. Europe is complicated botanical garden where all kinds must be cultivated and where unification can't be simplified with hybridization. Each variation must have its own place there, while there is deficiency it will disappear, together with Europe idea; it means wealth and national di-

versity of Europe. It is much easier to plant pines everywhere than to do Arboretum. European gardens can't grow with outdated agriculture. Europe can't be the Middle West.

Alternative of each historical work and novel, in particular, was proving this philosophical idea every year, which discloses inner features of Europe.

AH not only expanded geographical borders as time passed, while implementing in every new national literature, but also received new genre features and converted from filial genre that was formed with science fiction, fantasy and historical novel into metagenre that contains a set of peculiar filial ones.

Creation of an obligatory ground for simultaneous survival of many similar, multi-aspect ideas means multiculturalism, multi-semantic as symbolic features in European culture and literature development that led an American genre to European writing. AH obtains the biggest distribution and readers' interest in Germanic, Austrian, Polish, Swedish, Finnish and Dutch literatures. In this investigation attention is paid on the impact of Germanic, Polish, Finnish and Swedish literature among the others on AH formation in Ukrainian literature and importance of V. Kozhelyanko works in the development and formation of this genre in Ukrainian literature process.

Non-admission of alternatives is a historical peculiarity in Asia (in wider cultural sense) that has rooted in Slavic area. The reason for the mental colonialism of the former USSR provoked almost complete absence of alternative history works in fiction literature of Ukraine, Belarus, Slovakia, Bulgaria, by the time of obtaining political independence by these countries. Large amount of Russian AH literature texts doesn't mean that colonial complex overcomes, as not only quantity is important, but also quality of writings that has been already mentioned by A. Andreev: Russian writers aren't able to create different worlds, they only parody and imitate the action. Russian writer and Moscow performer M. Yelizarov (who originates from Ivano-Frankivsk) wrote about this in his book "Myltuku" (Cartoons) [Yelizarov, 2010, p. 317].

Prominent country man M. Zerov wrote about ideological conception far from mobility and about the rate of artist's mastery in East Slavic literature such words: "Oh, you, my nipples – Asian area!" [Zerov, 1990, p. 588]. Also Zh. Niva's *botanic garden* symbolizes European culture's artificiality dependent on its development on closed and repetitive processes, its own microclimate unlike Asian culture (even because of the fact that its borders are wider).

Peculiar feature of Ukrainian modern fiction is the mythology of history in the global and local meaning of this term, which is also similar to a novel in Western Europe. A myth symbolizes a kind of rescue from conservation in European literature. The repeated mythology process happens in Ukrainian literature practice of modern fiction, so the modern myth is created on the basis of mythology historiography; T. Bovsunivska notes about it in her monographic work. Repeated mythology process is observed in V. Kozhelyanko's novel "*Konotop*" on the example of historical differentiation consequences of Konotop battle and alternative variants of mythology historiography in each of them.

However, created in Europe Myth is qualitatively different from European myth. We can imagine that the European myth is an internal one and the myth of Europe is an external one. Disclosure of inner myth and external etymology finally answer the question about European essence. This analytical chain is the way to comprehend the path of AH that has been revealed in the brightest cultural layer of Europe – in literature. Firstly, it spilled into Great Britain literature and later into West European countries and the USA.

So, let's consider M. Novikova theses from her article "*Yudeysko-hrystyyanske korinnya Evropy*" [Jews-Christian roots of Europe] [Novikova, 2005, p. 432]. Here are external comments:

1. "Europe and the old Mediterranean gave monotheism to humanity" [Novikova, 2005, p. 346]. But she denies herself – no atheist culture existed before Europe of a New period. Furthermore, no other country produced such a divine-demonic pluralism. And still all these things would not exist simultaneously and symbiotically in any other culture. We see from these theses that there are two *traffic lights* of external myth: Europe=European culture, and an alternative which appears on religious and philosophical planes, even on such an initial level of European essence determination.

2. "Europe and the old Mediterranean gave God humanity [...] to mankind [...] an idea about itself as a person created similar to God" [Novikova, 2005, p. 346]. But simultaneously, it gave us a theory and practice of monotheism, which was noticed by F. Dostoevsky and happily accepted by F. Nitsche. Both cults are connected in idolatry. Alternatives are not comforting and

their duality is based on the fact that one is sinful from the side of Christianity and the other is utopian in its form and content, leaving the question: *Why?*

3. "Europe gave the concept (and practice of realization) of [...] personality" [Novikova, 2005, p. 346]. And almost simultaneously (in correlation with human life and epochs) proposed absolute *impersonality*. Government insists on electronic indexing of all people from the beginning of the XXI century. So, a person becomes virtual even if the quality of individual existence is a number.

4. "Europe gave history as an advancement to humanity" [Novikova, 2005, p. 347]. Purposeful walking to progress, not cyclic circulation along a circle or spiral. And Europe gave the feeling of *history* as a *deadlock*. "Posture European cultures (with all their historical dramas and tragedies) didn't even imagine" [Novikova, 2005, p. 347]. It is necessary to point out that the author and M. Novukova didn't mean that Europe was covered with total pessimism at the end of the 20th century, like in "The Decline of the West" by O. Spengler. Historical fatalism has become more abrupt in its outline and more adventurous in the second decade of the 19th century. Old *alienation* was added to the deadlock of history. People didn't feel like *nobody's* anywhere except for a new European experience. They belong to God, the other people, family and origin and to their lands. We can find brutal and global alienation in the extremely emotional and vivid novel of the British (!) writer P. Dibisi (DBC) "Zhaslo svitlo v krayini dyv" (Lights Out in Wonderland) [Dibisi, 2012, p. 360].

Alternative history has become an emergency help in restoration of such a necessary myth in Europe. As it was mentioned, firstly in historiography practice historical renovation branch and later in fiction literature. Firstly, in English and later in all the other national literatures of Europe and the USA.

Two ideological columns appeared as obstacles for alternative history in Slavic literature: hidden paganism and totalitarianism. Inner myths of Europe (*Europe as cradle of civilization, England as cradle of Europe, Germany as mother of philosophy, legend about Scandinavian world, unity of Europe in contrasts, European mentality, European history* (separate with history of Europe), *mythological origin of Europe* (in direct meaning – from Ancient Greek myth about Europe) and etc.) in construction with two already mentioned *columns* create sacralization of the history.

Alternative *history and stories* attempt to overcome this sacralization and make each European component as an alternative one.

So, all European myth investigations can be attributed to the sum of alternative history studios. Mythology of Europe always created alternatives to historicism and together they created the meanings paradigm of its enigmatic part of the world. And researchers know about it. And writers guess about it.

Also, writers of alternative history do not always deliberately do it. Some authors use alternatives because of technical needs (way of combining detached storylines, difficulties in transition between composite elements) that's why they don't strive to draw their thoughts by genre and stylistic means of AH. That's why the state of genre development as well as its investigation is similar to an iceberg: marked texts are the part of available works bank.

Alternatives of Europe strongly connected with spirit of ruin even in Europe. And even though European culture is regarded as garden by Zh. Niva, these two varied qualities are successfully connected. Yu. Andruhovych's essay "*Tsentralno-shidna revizia*" is a vivid confirmation: "[...] ruins, this special trace, special garden of former being [...], landscape of my part of the world saturated enough with these objects [...] time fracture is sensible not so demonic as in provinces than, for example, in Vienna, however bigger part of that world was in ruins in the moment of my birth [...]" [Stasiuk, Andruhovych, 2007, P. 111–112]. The view of Ukrainian Yu. Andruhovych on so called *old Europe* is a view of Slavic heathen on Christian ruin of Europe of permanent inner *fin de siècle* who lives in blooming *Baroque country*.

Curiously, that the moment of appearance the notion *Old Europe* hard to determine even it seems that Europe is always old. But the most interesting starts *there*, on the crossing of these two worlds, to which Bukovyna and Haluchuna relate. Yu. Andruhovych has joined the studios of history desacralization, especially in his novel "*Moscoviada*" (1992), from Haluchuna side (it was the first attempt to create basis for formation AH genre), while V. Kozhelyanko silently and in troublesome way corrected literature in Bukovyna. Some alternatives from O. Irvanets (the novel *Rivne-Rovno*), and Ya. Yanov's'kyi (the novel in cooperation with V. Naydenova "*Dolyna Belvederu*" [Valley of Belveder], historical mystification from Yu. Shcherbak (the novel "*Chas smertohrystiv*") – this is complete list of works written in alternative history genre in modern stage.

The rate of literature processing of achievements in alternative history genre is also different in various countries. The USA as a genetic colony of Great Britain began to create alternative history first. This is not a strange fact as the urgent necessity of their *own history* was realized in such a simple way. G. Klyut is perennial literature investigator in science fiction and fantasy genres, professor and writer; he prepared and reissued encyclopedia of science fiction in 2000s. the edition contains several encyclopedic articles where alternative history genre mentions in its various sides.

There were two investigations in Ukrainian science in 2012 which were dedicated to functioning of alternative history genre. Investigation of S. Sobolev converted into scientifically-publicist edition "*Alternativnaya istoriya: posobiye dlya hronohichhaykerov*" [Sobolev, 2006, p. 17] and dissertation work in onomastics "*Onimnyi prostir postmodernistskoho tekstu*" by M. Maksymiuk, that is created on the basis on three novel of V. Kozhelyanko, two of which are alternative examples – "*Defilyada v Moskvi*" [Parade in Moscow], "*Kotyhoroshko*".

Conclusions

Every metagenre formation itself has separated into individual genres and varieties during the century and accepted different fable schemes of the other genres, in particular canonical ones, such as historical novel, literary, detective novel, chronicle and fantasy.

Cryptohistory is a subgenre of alternative history. In its genealogical formula, the actual story exists only theoretically, while the alternative history that forms the plot after the bifurcation point is based on unproven historical sources. It allows more freedom for the author's imagination, where they may involve two or more bifurcation points. As previously mentioned, the second point of bifurcation would be based on an unreal story that is presented as a true one. Genre markers and plot schemes are identical to alternative history. Though the goal of reconstructing history disappears and is replaced by other goals: restoration of national and mental mindset elements (V. Kozhelyanko's «Ethiopian Sich»), humanization of the society (Kir Bulychov «A Reserve for Academics»), psychologization and/or logical construction of the historical course (H. Garrison's trilogy «West of Eden», «Winter in Eden», «Return to Eden»), and so on.

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ALTERNATIVE HISTORY GENRE IN THE FINE LITERATURE. THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN MYTH IN CRYPTOHISTORICAL WRITING

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The article is devoted to the Alternative History (AH) genre in fiction and function of the "European Myth" in cryptohistorical writing. The article *aims* to determine the identity and path of the alternative historical novel in Ukraine and its comparative characteristics at the current stage of modern fiction. The *tasks* of the study are to determine the ways of European myth functioning in the artistic space of the neomodern AI novel in Ukraine which creates a new genealogical pattern in Ukrainian literary studies.

Research methods are subordinate to the aim of the study and tasks. They are comparative, historical-literary, descriptive, and analytical methods. The metagenre of alternative history has three key aspects, which seem to determine the comparative level of the American and European literature samples within this genealogical formation. These keys are the following: firstly, the story is supposed to completely match the recorded historical and geographical events up until the bifurcation point (in other words, a classic alternative history cannot be based on cryptohistory, hypothesis, fiction, however its background may be folklore or nation mythological heritage or known ancient culture); secondly, the historical figures should play a leading role in the storyline events, especially in the political context; thirdly, the key storyline is expected to relate to the history of a certain human community or civilization on the planet Earth up to the bifurcation point.

Apart from the general experience about a different functional role of the time travel method in alternative history novel, we also have a new update, much more distant from the one declared by M. Schneider-Mayerson in 1995, namely, 1889, the year when M. Twain wrote the novel "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court". However, the novel by M. Twain was criticized due to its monoculturalism in the political worldview. Although all of these details are related to extraliterary factors. If we compare the invariant of American AH, presented for the first time in the novel by M. Twain, we want to talk about cryptohistory in Ukrainian and Western European literature. In his monograph T. Shippey refers to it as a pseudo-history ('Whig history'). It precedes the novelty of this article, which comes to conclusions about common things in the architectonic structure of the European Myth and cryptohistorical writing. That is why we qualify AH as a metagenre, and the political utopia, cryptohistory, allohistory, uchronia, metahistory, political fantasy novels as AH subgenres. One of the most valuable sources of the article is a set of AH novels by M. Twain, P.W.S. Anderson, S. King, V. Baziv, I. Bilyk, M. Brynykh, V. Vladko, V. Danylenko, R. Ivanenko, R. Ivanychuk, M. Kidruk, S. Protsyuk, V. Shevchuk, Ya. Yanovs'kyi, V. Kozhelyanko. To solve the article's issues we used comparative and descriptive methods.

Conclusions. Every metagenre formation itself has separated into individual genres and varieties during the century and accepted different fable schemes of the other genres, in particular canonical ones, such as historical novel, literary, detective novel, chronicle and fantasy.

Crypthistory is a subgenre of alternative history. In its genealogical formula, the actual story exists only theoretically, while the alternative history that forms the plot after the bifurcation point is based on unproven historical sources. It allows more freedom for the author's imagination, where they may involve two or more bifurcation points. As previously mentioned, the second point of bifurcation would be based on an unreal story that is presented as a true one. Genre markers and plot schemes are identical to alternative history. Though the goal of reconstructing history disappears and is being replaced by other goals: restoration of national and mental mindset elements (V. Kozhelyanko's "Ethiopian Sich"), humanization of the society (Kir Bulychov "A Reserve for Academics"), psychologization and/or logical construction of the historical course (H. Garrison's trilogy "West of Eden", "Winter in Eden", "Return to Eden"), etc.

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