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SVITLANA KOCHERGA

*Doctor of Science in Philology, Full Professor,
Department of Ukrainian Language and Literature,
National University of Ostroh Academy*

THE CODE OF INCANTATION IN KATERYNA KALYTKO'S COLLECTION "PEOPLE WITH VERBS"

Стаття присвячена інтерпретації самобутності ідіостилю поетеси Катерини Калитко на матеріалі збірки «Люди з дієсловами» (2022) та аналізу фольклорних витоків у поезиці авторки. Катерина Калитко репрезентує інтенсивні метамодерні пошуки новітньої мови у сучасній поезії, що стало реакцією на трагічні події російсько-української війни.

Мета статті – обґрунтувати код замовляння як наскрізну систему образного світу поетичної збірки «Люди з дієсловами». Поняття «замовляння» трактуємо як функціонування словесних конструкцій з метою зцілення від травми, складання заклиналих метафоричних текстів, інспірованих вірою в магічну силу слова. У роботі застосовано такі *методи*, як порівняльно-історичний, структурно-семіотичний, антропологічний, герменевтичний та елементи психологічної школи в літературознавстві.

У результаті проведеного дослідження доведено актуалізацію сакральної світоглядної прасистеми в художньому мисленні сучасних українських поетів, що переконливо ілюструє збірка Катерини Калитко «Люди з дієсловами». У ній зосереджені рефлексії та медитації авторки під час війни, апеляції до сугестивного мовлення, збереженого генетичною пам'яттю, використання його структур як форми захисту та спротиву. Бінарна часопросторова модель поетеси позначена культом ночі, що відповідає ритуально-духовній практиці у сфері містичного. Катерина Калитко оперує язичницькими архетипами та знаками, вдається до використання власних імен, образів тілесності згідно з традицією замовлянь. Водночас її метафористика є об'єктивацією екстрасенсорного сприйняття акту промовляння, у фокусі художньої студії Катерини Калитко перебуває голосовий апарат, вона намагається осягнути спричинені війною зміни висловлювань на рівні фонетики, лексики, морфології, стилістики. Образ авторки у збірці втілює щонайменше три іпостасі: сучасниці російсько-української війни, медіума, дослідниці-філологині. Поетичні шукання Катерини Калитко корелятивні з філософським тлумаченням феномену мови М. Гайдеґґера, Г.-Г. Гадамера, К. Ясперса.

Ключові слова: мова, замовляння, містичне, герменевтика, архетип, тілесність, сугестія, війна, поезія.

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Kateryna Kalytko's creative work has made a significant contribution to Ukrainian literature in the last decade. Critics and literary scholars have justifiably noted that her writings predominantly focus on the cataclysms brought about by war with all its many faces. The origins of the writer's thematic priorities lie in her translation practice, primarily in her work with the contemporary literature of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which delves into the historical vicissitudes that reverberated globally at the close of the 20th century, including the Bosnian War and the siege of Sarajevo (1992–1996). The anti-military motifs become notably

pronounced in the poetess' work after 2014, marked by the occupation of Crimea and the initiation of the Russian-Ukrainian war, altering the accustomed rhythm of life in Ukraine.

In the realm of contemporary literary studies, the exploration of war discourse in poetry has thus far been sporadic, primarily centred around the works of Serhiy Zhadan, Borys Humenyuk, and Lyuba Yakymchuk. However, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia has substantially increased the importance of delving into military themes. This heightened urgency is evident in the emergence of new poetry anthologies, such as "Poetry without Shelter" (2022), "War 2022" (2022), "State of War" (2023), etc. Nevertheless, only a few authors have successfully depicted the profoundly tragic transformations of the human self in response to deadly shocks without resorting to poster pathos and offered a perception of the realities of war at the level of deep nuances. Unbelievable in their horrific content, the events require an instant change of tone, reformatting the language, since there is a whole gap between 'yesterday' and 'today' in the psychological states of a contemporary. Among the authors who manage to go through these self-transformative processes due to the demands of the cruel time, one of the primary places belongs to Kateryna Kalytko, the winner of the Taras Shevchenko National Prize in 2023.

Published in 2022, Kateryna Kalytko's collection, "People with Verbs", vividly captures the author's imaginative palette, centring on the purpose of speech and writing during the war. The poems within the book were predominantly composed under the influence of the dynamic processes triggered by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, marking a point of no return in the self-awareness of the modern world. Kateryna Devdera defines the philological profile of Kalytko's book as 'dialogical', emphasising the challenges of communication and the turbulence of artistic articulation formed primarily through diving into the first moments of the experience of pain. The immersive practice employed by the poet reveals the unavoidability of the contemporary writer's appeals to folklore archetypes. As a result, initial reviews of the collection "People with Verbs" often note that "the poems of the Ukrainian author contain echoes of incantations and folk songs" [Девдера, 2023]. The possession of the word, capturing both the apocalypse and serving as a source of salvation, healing, and strength restoration, equates the poet to a mystical healer who realises his/her mission to come to the aid of a person in an existential crisis. Indeed, it would be more precise to say, 'witch doctor', emphasising the femininity of this role, aligning it with a unique female caste endowed with the ability to 'shoot' with words. In one of her interviews, Kateryna Kalytko stresses: "...your language, your verbal and extra-verbal experiences related to it are both your first and last superpower..." [Шуткевич, 2020].

Despite the considerable attention Kateryna Kalytko's work has garnered from critics, literary scholars are only on the verge of understanding the space of artistic originality of her poetry. While her prose frequently serves as a subject of scholarly analysis, with studies such as "The Individual-Author's Word in the System of Kateryna Kalytko's Artistic Idiostyle (Based on the Novel *Mystery*)" by Iryna Yurchenko [Юрченко, 2013] and "Conceptosphere of the Chronotope of the War in the Book by Kateryna Kalytko *The Land of all Those Lost, or Little Scary Tales*" by Oleksandra Honiuk and Olha Sydorenko [Гонюк, Сидоренко, 2021]. Kalytko's poetry has been primarily acknowledged in survey studies of Ukrainian literature in recent years. Among others, should be mentioned Olena Romanenko's "Chaos of War and Identity Crisis: Typological Dominants of Narratives about Trauma in Modern Ukrainian Literature" [Романенко, 2023], Tetiana Ury's "Discourse of War in Contemporary Ukrainian Poetry" [Урись, 2013], and Oksana Pukhonska's "Allusion as a Phenomenon of 'Alien' Speech in the Semantic Field of Contemporary Poetic Texts" [Пухонська, 2012], etc.

Perhaps the only example of a systematic consideration of the originality of Kateryna Kalytko's writing is Liliya Lavrynovych's article "The Collection of Poetry *Torture Chamber. Vineyard. Home* by Kateryna Kalytko: Temporal Aspects of Meaning and Form (2018). In it, the researcher outlined the inherent features of the mature poetry by Kalytko, which were fully revealed in the author's next books "Nobody Knows Us Here, and We Don't Know Anyone" (2019), "The Order of the Silent Women" (2021). Lavrynovych emphasises: "The overarching motif of the collection is the motif of pain, which, due to its excessiveness, cannot be adequately described rationally" [Лавринович, 2018, p. 77]. Taras Pastukh singles out Kateryna Kalytko as a master of "dense, expressive, tragic, multi-perspective poetic narrative" [Пастух, 2022]. So

far, only critics Kateryna Devdera, Olena Lysenko, and Hanna Uliura have spoken directly about the collection "People with Verbs", noting aspects that may eventually become the subject of a meticulous literary interpretation. Today, however, the recipients of Kalytko's texts share the opinion that philological accentuation is one of the defining features of the poetess's artistic world. For Kateryna Kalytko, it is of major importance to master the artistic tools that can become an effective means of embodying the fatality of the wartime present, comprehending the phenomenon of traumatic memory, and penetrating the subtle feelings of a person who finds him- or herself in the epicentre of an anti-humanistic hostile policy of murder and bloodshed that seems insane at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. The author willingly uses the patterns of archaic genres (chronicle, trenos, prayer, Old Slavonic myth, prophetic lyrics, etc.), combining the literary Antique and Renaissance tradition and folklore. According to Liliya Lavrynovych, Kateryna Kalytko's work is distinguished by "the style of prophecy in the spirit of the ancient Greek sibyls, Cassandra (a prophetess of misfortune) <...>, the prophet Jeremiah (it was he who predicted misfortune and war to the Jews, the destruction of Jerusalem), with their ecstatic, foggy language and foresight of future misfortunes, etc." [Лавринович, 2018, p. 79].

Kateryna Kalytko's appeals to linguistic terms, which acquire important meanings in the context of the author's thought, are significant. Therefore, one can find quite reasonable definitions and generalisations about the linguistic core of the poet's meditative ideostyle in the statements of recipients and scholars. Ilya Levchenko gives the following evaluation of Kalytko's collection "Nobody Knows Us Here, and We Don't Know Anyone": "I think this is a collection about language <...>. She was preparing to write not a dictionary, 'but the language itself'" [Левченко, 2020]. As Uliana Halych aptly notes, "Speech, its structure, purpose, and tasks are the field of interest of Kateryna Kalytko, the subject-object component of her research" [Галич, 2019]. The study of this field can branch out based on the chosen subject matter and the use of specific scientific optics. The fusion of the discourse of the word mystery, experimentation with genres, and the experience of war is evident in numerous metaphors and images of the poet, as seen in titles such as "War and Prayer", "Everything Maimed in Summer Will Become a Manuscript in Winter," "A Spell of Humility", etc. However, the specificity of this synthesis deserves a more detailed analysis in the context of comprehending the peculiarities of the poet's idiostyle.

The purpose of this study is to substantiate the code of incantation as a foundational and pervasive element in the system of creative tools in Kateryna Kalytko's poetic collection "People with Verbs". In a broad sense, 'incantation' refers to the use of verbal constructions to alleviate pain and trauma. This includes the professional crafting of metaphorical texts with the indispensable belief in their healing power, a belief that becomes particularly crucial during trials such as war.

The object and tasks of the study determine the use of such methods as comparative-historical, structural-semiotic, anthropological, and hermeneutical elements of the psychological school in literary studies. Collectively, these methods enable us to interpret incantation in poetry both as an artistic tool and as a philosophical reflection of the author's worldview amid the chaos induced by war.

The origins of magical folklore poetry of the incantatory and spell-like type can be found in the most ancient chronicles. The esoteric power within these verses was consistently safeguarded through secrecy and warnings for the uninitiated. Only in the 19th century, there have been attempts to publish and interpret samples of incantations on various topics, mostly utilitarian (Petro Yefymenko, Mykhailo Drahomanov, Ivan Franko, Mykhailo Komarov, and others). The representatives of the mythological school perceived the sayings and charms as remnants of pagan prayers. The apologists of the associative school of psychology (Oleksander Potebnya, Filaret Kolesa) also defended their interpretation of incantation. In the meantime, Viktor Petrov claimed, that "of all the existing genres, the connection between the representation of an image and a direct practical function is most clearly manifested in spells (whispers, incantations)" [Петров, 1947, p. 10]. The basis of any incantation, shamanism, or witchcraft is the ancestral belief in the magical power of words. In rituals with a focus on action, the word was initially given only an accompanying role. However, gradually, it asserted dominance over the intended esoteric influence, marginalising the action. Scholars have convincingly proved that the modus of incantation is not confined to the folklore domain; over time, these structures have evolved

into integral components of literary imagery, symbolic narratives, and motifs that represent an author's originality and erudition. Nevertheless, nominally, the incantation remains an attributive part of folklore, and its extensive genre system is interpreted by researchers in different ways. The mystery of suggestion lies at the core of numerous interpretations. According to Volodymyr Vojtovych, an incantation is "a prayer book of a magical nature, grounded in the belief in the miraculous power of words as a means of influencing higher spiritual forces" [Войтович, p. 184]. Contemporary scholars such as Yaroslav Herasym, Ihor Hunchyk, Maryna Novyko, Viktor Davydiuk, Uliana Parubiy, Olha Solyar, Andrii Temchenko, and others have significantly contributed to our understanding of the literary nature of incantations.

Undoubtedly, poetry has adapted the folklore tradition of expressing a wish in an imperative form, which should serve as a lever for its implementation. The best poetry examples wield a powerful suggestive effect, including the incantatory and spell-like nature. The heritage of recent centuries demonstrates the permanent artistic and analytical penetration into the mystery of the word, various concepts of its interpretation, and the recognition of its constructive and destructive potential. The interest in the properties of the word that seem to be magical is represented by prominent philosophers who tend to hermeneutical analysis, primarily Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, James George Frazer, Jacques Lacan, Edmund Husserl, Gaston Bachelard, Roman Ingarden, Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and others. In particular, the phenomenologist Martin Heidegger argued that language itself possesses a person, and not vice versa, and thus it has a powerful influence on our worldview and actions. At the same time, the philosopher notes that modern language has become too pragmatic and formalised and that only poetry can reveal the truth of existence. In the article "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry", he emphasises: "The foundation of human existence is conversation as the authentic occurrence of language. But the primary language is poetry as the founding of being" [Heidegger, 2000, p. 61]. In his turn, Gadamer notes that literature maintains the connection between generations by referring to cultural traditions preserved in people's memory. In his opinion, the poet's mission and functions are difficult to assess without resorting to mystical meanings. According to Gadamer, writers "are supplicants before language. They want language to answer their prayers. They want it to grant them a favour so that they succeed in making it speak in a new way". [Gadamer, 2001, p. 179]. Reflecting on the amazing suggestive effect of Stefan George's poetry, Gadamer states: "...the magic word is the word that transforms, that is not only heard and understood, and understood not literally, but, as they say, caught in the ear, as if it were a spell of spirits" [Гадамер, 2002, p. 46]. The philosopher identifies motifs and stylistic echoes close to witchcraft spells, primarily in the works of prominent authors such as Friedrich Hölderlin, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Paul Celan.

In Ukrainian literary studies, there have been sporadic attempts to comprehend the idiostyle of individual poets by exploring the tradition of incantations. Noteworthy examples of this professional approach include Ihor Hunchyk's article "Folklore, Magical and Sacred Elements in the Poetic World View of Volodymyr Svidzinsky" [Гунчик, 2018] and Yulia Dzhuhastrianska's "The Suggestiveness of the Mystical in Incantation and Prayer (Based on the Poems of B.-I. Antonych and V. Svidzinsky)" [Джугастрянська, 2011]. Significant contributions in this area come from scholars such as Iryna Borysiuk, Tetiana Tsepka, Volodymyr Morenets, Oleh Tomchuk, and others, who delve into the mythology of poetry.

It is worth noting that the appeal to the tradition of incantations is mainly expressed in contemporary women's poetry (Svitlana Koronenko, Liubov Holota, Oksana Zabuzhko, Iryna Shuvalova, Liubov Yakymchuk, and others). Iryna Borysiuk, for instance, singles out the motif of witchcraft in Oksana Zabuzhko's lyrics, by which she means the Renaissance concept of divinity, wizardry, "a touch of the word and the ability to create", mastery of the language of archaic incantation, the sacred language "which opposes the ordinary profane everyday language" [Борисюк, 2015, p. 59].

Kateryna Kalytko stands out among contemporary poets, showcasing the actualization of various original word functions like prayer, crying, cursing, confession, and incantation. The lyrical heroine of many of her poems often serves as an intermediary bridging 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow', the realms of the living and the dead. The title of her collection, *People with Verbs*, is not only an affirmation of the social efficiency and passionarity required during times of war but

also a declaration of the need for a new language. Nowadays, as Kalytko argues, “the foundation and supporting walls of poetry should be created by verbs” [Ківа, 2021]. Remember that the narrative in magical texts is always distinguishable by verb phrases. Uttering these phrases serves as a means to achieve goals, aspirations, and desires.

An essential feature that brings ritual incantations and poetry closer together is the time-spatial model of the world. This primarily deals with the cult of the night, whose multidimensional image is widely represented in Kateryna Kalytko’s collection. The night may appear as a period of formlessness, akin to an absence or death to ordinary people. At the same time, this is the most productive time of action/creation for exceptional individuals, which contributes to the realisation of their extrasensory abilities. As Marina Novikova notes, “Night is more powerful, more ‘natural’, more ‘cosmic’ than a day, and therefore more suitable for the most important sacred texts and events” [Новикова, 1993, p. 12]. The nocturnal hours intensify the acute sensations of anxiety, eeriness, and fear, particularly amplified by the realities of military conflict. At night, the feelings of anxiety, eeriness, and fear caused by military realities intensify. Thus, verbalisation becomes an imperative way to subdue the tense mental state, as Kalytko metaphorically claims, “to hold the beast of night horror by the throat” [Калитко, 2022, p. 24]. The score of the ‘night voices’, written out in the poetry of the author with the slightest detail, is accompanied by military deadly shouts and their echoes. The “night bodies of missiles” evoke an acute internal reaction – “...rage trumpets the bones amidst the chaos” [Калитко, 2022, p. 25]. And after those nights, “fresh rocket craters, / like holes on a pipe-flute, / change the sound of the street” [Калитко, 2022, p. 17].

The darkness causes an urgent feeling of being a hostage, a prisoner, and unrelenting anxiety deprives those who have experienced at least one “predatory” night, when “their own skin” becomes tight. The visions become more vivid, such as: “And the shadows of knight-women, of sisters, / move in the night mirror” [Калитко, 2022, p. 7]. The lyrical heroine’s strength lies in her ability to marginalise these fears. She extends word therapy beyond herself, striving to be heard and becoming a source of support for all those affected by war:

The night is cracking open like the valley of the deadly shadow.
One can hear explosions. One can hear the stones speaking.
How can one talk over this stone’s language [Калитко, 2022, c. 19].

The space in Kalytko’s poetry is underscored as binary; however, its uniqueness lies in the fact that the alienated “out there” can also be a realm of personal vastness, where the apocalypse of war has taken hold. In her thoughts, the lyrical heroine endeavours to protect both the immediate surroundings and the distant unknown. In a cosmogonic sense, she strives to expel evil and its roots, attempting to free her native land from its grasp and liberate the disadvantaged people, all within the coordinates that extend to the author’s self. The definition of the place ‘here’ significantly prevails in the collection, serving as a fixation of the narrator’s self-awareness, who carries out its distinct sacred mission – expanding control over space through the selection of words, whose combination is intended for magnetic influence both in the present and the future. The concept of ‘there’ in Kateryna Kalytko’s poems sometimes induces the visualisation of the past (“there an apple tree grew,” “there was peace”) and materialisation in pictures emerging from the depths of memory, a consequence of the unreal process of whimsical bifurcation in space and time – “I am still standing there. Not everyone is alive anymore” [Калитко, 2022, p. 11]. In the author’s poetry, there are also utopian visions of another world, an inaccessible heterotopia – “as if there really is the land where you can / stay forever” [Калитко, 2022, p. 90]. Kalytko often uses the capacious symbol of the shore to denote various kinds of barriers and boundaries. Thus, the image of a bridge becomes the most popular in her imaginative world, but for the poet, it is primarily constructed through language – “Not bridges – voices will unite the shores” [Калитко, 2022, p. 111].

As is typical of incantations, Kalytko’s poetry abounds with corporeal imagery. It encompasses specific markings such as *eyes, head, lips, muscles, lungs, heart, spine, knees, joints, throat, intestines, viscera, veins*, etc., as well as metaphorisation through the description of bodily

sensations, for instance: “When casting a spell, listen to how the bird of childhood memory, cut by broken glass, startles in your head” [Калитко, 2022, p. 111]; “The blind air of Europe gropes a new face of you, / cause trying to recognise” [Калитко, 2022, p. 10]. The image of the skin holds particular importance in this cluster, as it provides information about the human condition: “Like a paper, your skin is fragile and just as pale, /and the blue vein under your left eye has blackened over the winter...” [Калитко, 2022, p. 9]].

The poet’s lyrical heroine possesses the ability to “listen with her skin”, and “let into deep / both skinlessly and nakedly”. She prefers to cover a dear one with “her own skin” and undergoes improbable internal metamorphoses, coining the term “de-skinning” to articulate these transformations. In the manner of folk incantations, the collection embodies numerous phantasmagorical visions, for example:

But the explosion weighs down the diaphragm like a tank hatch,
shreds the vocal cords and tears the throat.
But it’s not a bone from the shoulder replacing a living arm –
it is your crystal tree that puts the body back together [Калитко, 2022, p. 9].

In the system of healing spells, a significant place belongs to the incantations against bleeding. For Kateryna Kalytko, bloodshed appears as an indispensable sign of a soulless war. Healing requires specific words preserved in the ancient folk tradition, and they integrate into the matrix of contemporary poems, one of the functions of which is to save the soldiers-defenders (“Take this tremor. Take this poem / instead hemostatic...” [Калитко, 2022, p. 7]). Wartime language itself is associated with a wound, “bloody lips”, the poet turns “the spoken / into a bloody swelling” [Калитко, 2022, p. 94]. Within the texts, spilled blood catalyses mystical transformations, for instance:

Blood melts voices into landscapes,
absorbing the oxygen of the country,
and vice versa [Калитко, 2022, p. 106].

Such an equivalent exchange is also evidenced by folk incantations; for example, invoking imagery of a river, healers would say: “I will pour out watery, and drink honeydew, / And I will charm blood with bloody” [Василенко, Шевчук, 1991, p. 71]. Searching for a hemostatic word is to halt death because “blood is the heartland and symbol of life, the substance of vitality, the abode of the soul” [Войтович, 2005, с. 255]. The resonance with incantations reveals the author’s unwavering commitment to shaping her poetic voice amidst the tumultuous backdrop of wartime adversity:

To be a platelet in the country’s viscous blood.
Among hundreds of others, to rush in
to scar a lacerated wound,
to fuse up a fractured vein [Калитко, 2022, p. 115].

In the artistic world of Kateryna Kalytko’s poetry collection, death threatens everywhere. Still, the strong lyrical heroine does not avert her gaze and is capable of showing both its naturalistic and hyperbolically metaphorical forms. In her spells, she calls on the archangels to watch “how awkwardly blood splashes on the altar of the festive sky, / how black silence squirms in the corpse’s mouth” [Калитко, 2022, p. 13]. She constantly increases the originality of her poetic formulations, sometimes constructing them based on borrowings directly from folklore. The author’s Slavic mythopoetical thinking is occasionally evident at the level of lapidary structures:

Here are grief and wisdom.
Here are seas and mountains. Here is fire – hold it
High above your head” [Калитко, 2022, p. 43].

However, at times, it grows into expanded images resembling epic narratives. In both cases, as the author notes, "Spell and blood-stopping words return" [Калитко, 2022, p. 111]. The suggestion of such concepts is rooted in ancient charms, which are understood as "lexemes, stable expressions, sayings, texts (incantations) that, according to folk beliefs, perform the functions of protection and warning" [Лебеденко, 2020, p. 95]. By analogy with folklore idioms, poetic formulas contain archaic symbols full of hermeneutical meanings revealed in the context, indicating the author's search for the mystical potential of the word. For instance, one of the poems begins with the lines:

And what are we doing with you?
And this is us incanting the death.
Like children, we call out into a well,
Waiting for an answer from out there [Калитко, 2022, с. 60].

In moments of danger, when individuals unwittingly perceive themselves as a target in the chaos of war, almost everyone uses the death incantation in one way or another, and forgotten words emerge from the depths of their genetic memory. These moments allow us, according to Kateryna Kalytko, to feel "how salty the language came up to us, / how the death listened to the spells and joined the game" [Калитко, 2022, p. 60]. In the corpus of the poetic charms, we will highlight the most typical components that become the core or expressive detail of the metaphors, thus bringing the author's style closer to the national ethnocultural tradition: *earth, roots, river, boat, stones, tree, forest, house, fire, wind, bird, feather, beast, iron, ash, crystal*, etc.

Kateryna Kalytko's collection is a kind of hymn to language, speech, speaking, and naming. In it, one can find a lot in tune with the nervousness of Hryhoriy Chubay's poem "To Speak, to Be Silent and to Speak Again", in which the author confesses how difficult it is for him "to come across good words in the twilight / with moist lips..." [Чубай, 1998, p. 139]. Kalytko is also constantly looking for "good" (accurate) words, but she sets even more complex tasks for them. Her words strive not only to mirror reality and inner states but also to infuse a healing energy capable of altering the course of our time. In her idiosyncrasy, one can easily guess the language of whisperers, fortune-tellers, witch doctors, and molfars who resist evil by conjuring images. However, she does not duplicate memorised clichés but creates occasional expressions, generated through ritual actions. This whole creative process is captured in poetic lines:

As if in the dark, you trace the contours of your body with your tongue.
You utter your own.
<...>
And while we talk at night,
Our roots are intertwined in the womb of the living earth [Калитко, 2022, p. 43].

Even ordinary communication, conversation, the functioning of language in everyday life, and especially the act of speaking in a "liminal situation", which, according to Karl Jaspers, arises as a result of a direct encounter with death, appears to be an incomprehensible phenomenon for Kalytko. The collection abounds with lexemes closely related to the verbs 'speak', 'say', and 'pronounce'. The stress caused by the outbreak of war, the invasion of enemies threatening death, pushes aside the diversity of speech modes for a while, and instead, screaming (beastly) and dumbness prevail. On the sacred "seventh day", Kalytko's lyrical heroine notes that language is still alive despite the furious roar of weapons. With the surprise of a neophyte, she begins to observe its creation with a hope for salvation. It is noteworthy that the artistic system of the collection is interspersed with the contours of oral language, as exemplified by the quote, "I want to be in time – and I speak / out loud, nakedly, among the human pack" [Калитко, 2022, p. 23]. Speech is commonly interpreted as the transmission of verbal information from mouth to mouth. However, the concept 'mouth' in the author's dictionary paradigm is confidently replaced by the concept 'throat' – far from being poetic, it is rather anatomically precise.

With analytical purposefulness, the author seems to explore the articulatory apparatus, perceiving its perfection as a unique gift, admiring the "word creation", which comes from

“touches of the tongue” and “drops of precious saliva”. It is not surprising that the Ukrainian word “гортань” (larynx) echoes the word “Jordan”, evoking biblical associations with the absolute beginning. The mechanisms of speech unfold to minor details only before professional speakers and scientists, although the phenomenon of language “warmed by millions of throats” conveys an infinite range of human emotions with all nuances. In opposition to destructive death, Kateryna Kalytko elevates the calling of a human, which is creativity and recovery, as well as the ability to compose unique worlds through speech. Yet only the most inquisitive ones look for a higher purpose in speech:

And here’s this throat, the cherry tree
grows out of and moves in the air, speaks and breathes –
how did it happen? What for? [Калитко, 2022, p. 108].

Nevertheless, operating with one’s speech apparatus, being conscious of fulfilling a mission assigned by someone, is an extremely exhausting and traumatic task. Sometimes, uttering even a single word in the context of spiritual mantras requires considerable effort: “You say ‘country’ – and a cramp tightens the throat” [Калитко, 2022, p. 43].

Apart from the phonetic aspects of the nature of language, the collection pays equally close attention to its lexical composition, morphological features, and stylistics. The title of the second section – “The Personal Pronoun” – is indicative. As for nouns, in the collection, they noticeably tend to transform into imperative verbs, as war is a time of actions, not observations. It changes the world, which has to be recognised anew, as it emerges completely different. Thus, “it is a time when everything is truly named,” a time of “renaming,” and in this period, the speaker often lacks words. One of the lexemes that form the core of the collection’s vocabulary is ‘nameless’, emotionally related to the concepts of ‘orphaned’ or ‘newborn.’ The author unfolds a painful picture of changes and reactions to them, showing how “what was initially nameless” takes on new contours and energy. The communicator faces new challenges – finding a verbal equivalent to describe the cataclysms he witnesses (“Memory still stumbles over the word” [Калитко, 2022, p. 63]). He also deals with the borderline internal state caused by emotional wounds: “We’ll then have to re-invent the words. / I still have an unnamed stake” [Калитко, 2022, p. 25].

It is worth mentioning the role of proper names in the aesthetic paradigm of the collection. Traditionally, incantations have always endowed them with magical powers, whether referring to mystical images of supreme authority, specific characters, or anthropomorphic appellations of personified objects-addressees (illness/health, etc.). For Kalytko, a name is a very capacious sign that continues the ancient attitude towards it as a supernatural phenomenon, since, according to cognitive traditions of ancestors, it contains the essence of the being. In the collection, the name also appears as an essential double of a person; it can tremble “in a net of dense fear”, it is thrown “into the bottomless air shaft of memory” so that it will echo there for ages. In “People with Verbs”, naming is always a miraculous act attesting that the language of a ruthless murderous war can be talked over by “names that break heart rhythms” [Калитко, 2022, p. 19]. Death is not all-powerful, because “grass has always sprouted from names”, and even now, despite the pressure of fear, “courage lives in names”, life goes on without stopping – “streets and stories are filled with names” [Калитко, 2022, p. 50]. In illustrating the lyrical heroine’s response to peril, the author vividly depicts her nightly incanting ritual shared by thousands of her contemporaries. With unwavering faith in the energy of what is said, she “in prayer lists the names”. Thus, she is confident that a person (or the soul of the deceased) can be protected by powerful “currents that were born from the utterance of names” [Калитко, 2022, p. 106].

First and foremost, speech is life, which is why the heroine asks everyone to speak, to narrate, not to be silent. She listens to every word, the “modulation of the voice” that twangs nearby, its slightest nuances and touches, such as the “tickling of sibilants”. She catches how “sounds are sleepily delaminated”, and diction changes, sees how the voice flows like a “river of fire”, and how its “embers” shine. Her wish sounds like an incantation – “...let this language not disappear. / Let it be / shared” [Калитко, 2022, p. 16]. At the same time, the author states linguistic mimicry, at least this is the feature that our perception gives it: the sentence evokes associations with gunshots. It can illuminate, “like a signal flare”, or “a bullet of a sentence with

a shifted centre of gravity” [Калитко, 2022, p. 91] and can lay a trajectory somewhere in the depths of the human self.

Kateryna Kalytko’s poetry illustrates Karl Jaspers’ thesis that communication “is the individual’s struggle for existence, which is a struggle for one’s own and others’ existence in one” [Jaspers, 1956, p. 65]. Ordinary dialogues acquire an initiatory level because they take us beyond the surrounding catastrophic phenomena and create another self-sufficient world: “Language and reality are delaminated like oil and water” [Калитко, 2022, p. 9]. Under the realities of wartime, Kateryna Kalytko’s tropes fill Martin Heidegger’s famous formula “Language is the home of being” with a broader sense. Without losing its inherent functions of “opening” and “closing,” language is now rather associated with a shelter, a dugout, so behind the “door of language”, the supposed calm is full of enormous tension, which is only evident for those who have experienced war:

Here is a shelter in the very heart of the language,
Into which you will enter [Калитко, 2022, p. 25].

The last poem of the collection, “Catechism”, which constitutes a separate part of the book, is particularly indicative of the perception of the inseparability of consciousness and expression. In it, the author acts as a kind of conductor of a chorus of incantations that, with millions of voices, can change the picture of the mad world. In response to the murderous crimes of the invaders, she offers “the honest word ‘kill’”:

Utter the word ‘kill’,
and let it be written in your mind.
<...>
And tell everyone:
Do not pray or cry,
do not sign petitions,
do not bless this land
to any gods.
only kill for it [Калитко, 2022, p. 118].

This choral incantation, reminiscent of “singing... similar to a wheeze” [Калитко, 2022, p. 48], is the only counteraction, the “antithesis” capable of saving us from death and slavery, brought to our land by an enemy who cynically professes terror as (pseudo)mercy.

Thus, incantations are a type of sacred tradition that embodies a worldview proto-system. Their magical language is close to sayings, prayers, and spells, the purpose of which is to influence the environment verbally. Genetic memory has played a pivotal role in preserving incantatory formulas and texts, leading to their reincarnation in contemporary lyrics. Examples of these modern manifestations highlight reflections on the stressful conditions faced by individuals during the Russian-Ukrainian war. In Kateryna Kalytko’s poetry, the lyrical heroine tends to perform magical functions, as she believes in the supernatural power of words, and interprets the phenomenon of communication as a way of fighting for the self. In the collection “People with Verbs”, the motif of speech as a defence is cross-cutting. Language and speech gradually turn into a deadly threat to the terrorist enemies. The suggestive power of words has determined the important role of the time-space model of Kalytko’s artistic world, marked by the binary opposition of the presentation of reality and the parapsychological cult of the night archetype. According to the ethnocultural traditions, in the author’s poetic structures of incantatory content, Kateryna Kalytko gives new life to pagan images and signs that were especially popular in folklore. The poet operates with mythonyms, toponyms, and proper names, and uses images of corporeality in various ways. It is worth highlighting the author’s expressive appeals to the word as a hemostatic means, an instrument of resistance to destruction and the deadly mania of the terrorist state.

The collection appears as an artistic laboratory of extrasensory perception of the act of utterance. Kateryna Kalytko’s metaphorical approach objectifies the vocal apparatus, with the

help of which the speaker spiritually resists the invaders and strives to weaken and destroy them. The poet tries to comprehend the linguistic changes caused by the war at the level of phonetics, vocabulary, morphology, and stylistics. The image of the author embodies at least three hypostases: a witness of the Russian-Ukrainian war, a medium, and a philologist, and each of them adds important connotations to the suggestive and incantatory discourse of the poems in "People with Verbs". This way, the collection under study convincingly proves Heidegger's thesis that true poetry is the territory of language, which serves its original purpose of seeking the truth of being, and poets endowed with a delicate ear and deep genetic memory convey it to readers through the capacious word and timeless codes.

Kateryna Kalytko's book also addresses the problems of writing in the new reality; the poet attempts to penetrate the motivation of *homo scribens* and *homo legens* in wartime, which we consider to be the prospect of this study.

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THE CODE OF THE INCANTATION IN KATERYNA KALYTKO'S COLLECTION *PEOPLE WITH VERBS*

Svitlana O. Kocherga, National University of Ostroh Academy (Ukraine)

e-mail: svitlana.kocherha@oa.edu.ua

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Over the last decade, a significant vector of Ukrainian literature was the reception of the traumatic stress caused by the Russian-Ukrainian war. The works of Kateryna Kalytko, representing intensive metamodern explorations in contemporary poetry, occupy a significant place in this trend. The article interprets the poet's idiostyle based on the collection *People with Verbs* (2022). This study focuses on the analysis of folklore archetypes in the author's poetry, motifs, and verbal structures, whose origins are rooted in ancient Ukrainian incantational traditions. It also covers the interpretation of the poet's meditative experience with the magic of language, its role in strengthening the spiritual axiology of a person suffering from terrorist aggression, and the establishment of a stoical worldview despite the fragility of life.

This article *aims* to establish the concept of 'incantation' as a unifying system within the metaphorical world of the poetry collection *People with Verbs*. The term 'incantation' is interpreted as the functioning of verbal constructions aimed at healing from trauma, and the composition of incantatory metaphorical texts, inspired by the belief in the magical power of words. The paper applies such *methods* as comparative, structural, semiotic, anthropological, and hermeneutical analysis, as well as elements of the psychological school of literary studies.

The study proves the actualization of the sacred worldview pre-system in the artistic thinking of contemporary Ukrainian poets, as illustrated by Kateryna Kalytko's collection *People with Verbs*. It focuses on the author's reflections and meditations during the war, appeals to suggestive speech preserved by genetic memory, and the use of its structures as a form of defence and resistance. The binary time-spatial model of the poet is marked by the cult of night, which corresponds to the ritual and spiritual practice in the field of the mystical. Kateryna Kalytko intensively operates with pagan archetypes and signs, and resorts to the use of proper names, emphasizing that even their pronunciation has a protective energy. The figurative system of corporeality, which is in line with the tradition of incantations, is indicative of the poetics of the collection. It concerns the specific markings (eyes, head, lips, muscles, lungs, heart, spine, knees, joints, throat, intestines, entrails, veins, etc.) that are part of the metaphorical structures of the incantatory nature. There are parallels with the healing modus of folk spells, firstly, the poetess tries to stop the bloodshed and protect the defenders with her words. In the spirit of the ethnocultural tradition, Kateryna Kalytko endows certain lexical signs with the function of verbal amulets (earth, roots, river, boat, stones, wood, forest, house, fire, wind, bird, feather, beast, iron, ash, crystal, etc.)

At the same time, the poet's metaphor is an objectification of the extrasensory perception of the act of speaking. The focus of Kateryna Kalytko's artistic studio is the articulatory apparatus, the miracle of the birth of sound and voice, as evidenced by a number of tropes, whose centre is the word "throat". The poet also tries to comprehend the changes in phonetics, vocabulary, morphology, and stylistics caused by the war. Kateryna Kalytko's poetic search is correlated with the philosophical interpretation of the

phenomenon of language by M. Heidegger, H.-G. Gadamer, and K. Jasperas. For the author, in accordance with the realities of war, the well-known statement “language is home” is transformed into the metaphor “language is a shelter”.

Thus, in Kateryna Kalytko’s idiosyncrasy, one can guess the pathos of whisperers, fortune tellers, healers, and mofars who resist evil with words. At the same time, the image of the author-medium is complemented by the hypostases of a witness of the Russian-Ukrainian war and a philologist.

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