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Ecocritical Study of the Chernobyl Disaster (Based on Materials of Contemporary Literature of Fact)

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Abstract

The effects of humankind during the Capitalocene period caused planetary changes that resulted in the devastation and destruction of the Earth. The nuclear tragedy at the Chernobyl NPP on April 26, 1986, should serve as a constant reminder to society as it provided an example of dysfunctional totalitarian management.

The topic of Chernobyl has become socially tiresome in recent years due to the trivialization of this large-scale anthropogenic, ecological, economic, and humanitarian disaster. The image of Ukraine as a hazard area has gradually been replaced in world consciousness. When Russia, the aggressor country, started to intimidate the world with nuclear and thermonuclear weapons and to take the nuclear power plants in Ukraine under fire, the danger of radioactive materials came up once again. Phosphorous ammunition used in Ukraine in 2022 demonstrates that the terrorist state is capable of anything. Scientists also relate to earthquake motions that occurred in Turkey in February 2023 and Japan in January 2024, with the displacement of continental plates of the Earth's crust resulting from missile attacks at the surface of the Earth.

In the 21st century, there was a need to reconsider and refresh memories as well as to reread the works under a new perspective to draw attention to crimes against the safety of humanity and the environment, as well as to popularize, preserve and pass historical knowledge to future generations to protect them from traumatic experiences and self-destruction.

The article aims to look at the postcolonial environment in contemporary literature of fact through the spectacle of ecocritical discourse via reading the works on the Chernobyl disaster. The objects of the study are Galia Ackerman's work "Crossing Chernobyl," the documentary and publicist chapter "Chernobyl Scenario" from the novel "Non-format Journalism" by Hryhorii Krymchuk, Volodymyr Shovkoshtnyi's semidocumentary short story "Chernobyl: I Saw It," the chapter "Elon Musk, "Tesla," and Nuclear Power Engineering" from Maks Kidruk's popular scientific book "Theory of Improbability," Oleksii Radynskyi's literary report "Chernobyl Is Ukraine," and Markiian Kamysh's travelogue "Stalking the Atomic City."

Study methods include principles of science, objectivity, and source verification. General scientific and special scientific research methods used in the study are a descriptive method for synthesizing and systematizing selected material; comparative and typological methods involving the elements of cultural, comparative, and narrative studies to compare the ways various authors have covered the Chernobyl topic; an ecocritical method that has made it possible to apply naturecentric approach to conceptualizing interaction between a human and nature to develop eco-conscious society; a postcolonial method aimed at conceptualizing the consequences of colonial rule via non-fiction text.

Key Words: Chernobyl, ecocriticism, postcolonialism, environment, radioactivity, nuclear power engineering.



Statement of the scientific issue and its significance

The topic of conceptualizing the effect of anthropogenic, ecological, economic, and humanitarian disasters after the explosion of the fourth reactor at Chornobyl NPP on April 26, 1986, has not gained great popularity in Ukrainian literature. However, traumatic events in all their manifestations had an impact on postmodern texts after the nuclear explosion – to some extent, they formed the narrative of Ukrainian literature during the USSR era and after its collapse at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries.

In 2026, there will be 40 years after the Chornobyl disaster but in society, there is still a discussion of a rhetorical question: has the disaster become the reason for the collapse of the empire, or has the collapse of the empire become the reason for the disaster?

There are plenty of interpretations and receptions of post-Chornobyl discourse via printed art. Among the latest of such books by Ukrainian authors where the disaster has become an object of depicting nuclear culture (the term introduced by the American scientist Weart Spencer), there are: Markiiian Kamysh's travelogue "Stalking the Atomic City" (2015)¹; Volodymyr Shovkoshtnyi's semidocumentary short story "Chornobyl: I Saw It" (2020)²; Serhii Plokhii's chronicles "Chornobyl. The Story of Nuclear Disaster" (2019)³; Oleh Veklenko's memoirs "Chornobyl: Nature Sketches" (2019)⁴; Anatolii Andrzheievskiy's belles-lettres story "Chornobyl True Story" (2019)⁵; books for teens "Axel, the Chornobyl Dog" by Anatolii Andrzheievskiy (2019)⁶ and "Flowers by the Fourth One" (2020) by Kateryna Mikhalitsyna⁷. These works are not included in the school program – they are for independent reading. On one hand, they sound with negative connotations – traumas, losses, pathologies; on the other hand, there are positive connotations as well – the Chornobyl zone being advertised as a tourist attraction for real and virtual wanderings; instructions and security guarantees in case of incorrect use of peaceful atom; reporting on full life of liquidators and

- 1 Markiiian Kamysh, *Oformliandiia, abo Prohulianka v Zonu* [*Stalking the Atomic City*] (Kyiv: Nora-Druk, 2015).
- 2 Volodymyr Shovkoshtnyi, *Chornobyl: ya bachyv* [*Chornobyl: I Saw It*]: a short story. 3rd ed., revised and updated (Kyiv: Ukrainyskyi priorytet, 2020).
- 3 Serhii Plokhii, *Chornobyl. Istoriiia yadernoi katasrofy* [*Chornobyl. The Story of Nuclear Disaster*] (Kharkiv: Folio, 2019).
- 4 Oleh Veklenko, *Chornobyl: etyudy z natury* [*Chornobyl: Nature Sketches*] (Kharkiv: Fabula, 2019).
- 5 Anatolii Andrzheievskiy, *Chornobylska buvalshchyna* [*Chornobyl True Story*] (Kyiv: Hamazyn, 2019).
- 6 Anatolii Andrzheievskiy, *Chornobylskiy pes Aksel* [*Axel, the Chornobyl Dog*] (Kyiv: Zelenyi Pes, 2019).
- 7 Kateryna Mikhalitsyna, *Kvity bilia chetvertoho* [*Flowers by the Fourth One*] (Kyiv: Portal, 2020).

Polishchuks⁸ after a planetary disaster; dispelling old myths about perpetrators of the disaster; showing the process of recovery and nature flourishing in ghost towns having gone savage.

We must mention the ones of the very first works-reviews on the tragedy: a documentary story by Yuriy Shcherbak “Chornobyl”⁹ (1986); a social and philosophic poem-mosaic by Ivan Drach “Madonna of Chornobyl”¹⁰ (1988); a poem by Borys Oliinyk “Seven”¹¹ (1988); a short story by Yevhen Hutsalo “Children of Chornobyl”¹² (1995); a story by Lidiia Viryna “That Fiery Night”¹³ (1989) etc..

Radioactive contamination does not stop at the borders. That is why the world tragedy, the accident at the Chornobyl NPP, is being conceptualized in various genre forms by the authors of other states. We should name some of them – poems by Belgian poet Alain Vanclooster “Cream Cheese with Wormwood”¹⁴ (2020); a graphic novel by French artist and writer Emmanuel Lepage “One Spring in Chornobyl”¹⁵ (2020); a novel by English writer Julian Barnes “A History of the World in 10^{1/2} Chapters”¹⁶ (2019), etc. These works represent today’s European reception of the 1986 disaster.

Analysis of recent studies and publications

Radioactive elements are used not only as a powerful source of energy for nuclear reactors or in medicine but as a source for producing nuclear weapons, and weapons of mass destruction, as well. In the work “Post-Chornobyl Library. Ukrainian Literary Postmodernism” (2013), Tamara Hundorova analyzed and conceptualized postmodern texts through ecocritical and postcolonial spectacle and warned, “On one hand, nuclear weapons become the evidence of the largest technological and rational power of a

8 Polishchuks are an ethnographic group of Ukrainians. This name is understood as 1) the whole population of Polissia; 2) a regional self-name of the population of a historical and ethnographic area of the Right-Bank (Prypiat) Polissia. See Vasyly Balushok, “Polishchuky” [“Polishchuks”], in *Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine*, vol. 8 (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 2011), 341.

9 Yuriy Shcherbak, *Chornobyl [Chornobyl]* (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1989).

10 Ivan Drach, “Chornobylska Madonna” [“Madonna of Chornobyl”], *Vitchyzna* 1 (1988): 42–61.

11 Borys Oliinyk, *Sim [Seven]* (Kyiv: Radianskyi pysmennyk, 1988).

12 Yevhen Hutsalo, *Dity Chornobyliia [Children of Chornobyl]* (Kyiv: Soniashnyk, 1995)

13 Lidiia Viryna, *Tiieii vohnianoii nochi: Chornobyliiska spovid [That Fiery Night: Chornobyl Confession]* (Kyiv: Molod, 1989).

14 Alain Vanclooster, *Prisnyi syr z polynom [Cream Cheese with Wormwood]*, translated by Taisiia Nakonechna, Martina Dali (Chernivtsi: Knyhy-XXI, 2020).

15 Lepage, Emmanuel. *Odna vesna v Chornobyli [One Spring in Chornobyl]*, translated by Oksana Makarova (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo, 2020).

16 Julian Barnes, *Istoriia svitu v 10 1/2 rozdilakh [A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters]*, translated by Hanna Yanovska (Kharkiv: Klub Simeinoho Dozvillia, 2019).

human over nature, and, on the other hand, they become a sign of the most sophisticated and civilized barbarism – a total human self-destruction.”¹⁷

The philosophy of anthropocentrism unlike the one of biocentrism is consumer, adventitious, and irreversibly pushes the ecosystem towards fatal consequences. Many people still do not fully realize that they are a part of the environment and that vigorous interference with it will have their kinds of negative effects that humanity might not be ready for. Cautions keep sounding from scientists all the time: “Ecological disasters are rather taken as emergencies than as disasters provoked by violating the laws of eco- and anthropogenic security. Ukrainian society has virtually lost the sense of danger” regarding ecological disaster objectively brewing in Ukraine.¹⁸

Studying relationships between literature, culture, and environment covering humans, animals, nature, and soil is the subject of ecocriticism. This field of literary criticism operates the methods of research borrowed from ecology, ethology, semiotics, psychoanalysis, etc. Its key issue is studying the impact of the environment on the narrative power of the art of word and vice versa – studying the role of literature in developing ecological consciousness and ethics of recipients. This socially oriented cultural and anthropological area of literary and critical discourse is still not approved enough based on Ukrainian literary studies. The history of this area begins with literary works of American writers-transcendentalists: “Nature” (1836) by Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Summer on the Lakes” (1843) by Margaret Fuller, and “Walden, or Life in the Woods” (1845–1847) by Henry David Thoreau. They founded such a phenomenon as American literary “ecologically-centric narrative” further transformed into phenomena of “ecological critics” and “ecological writing” having been spoken for the first time at the symposium of Western Literature Association (WLA) in the 70s of the 21st century.¹⁹

In 1962, Rachel Carson’s film “Silent Spring” provoked the emergence of ecocriticism in English literature.²⁰ In 1974, in New York, the book by biologist Joseph Meeker “The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology”²¹ having become a fundamental work in literary ecology was published. In it, the author explains the emergence of ecological crisis through anthropocentrism because culture separates from nature and starts to dominate it. In 1978, William Rueckert introduced the term

17 Tamara Hundorova, *Pisliachornobylska biblioteka. Ukrainskyi literaturnyi postmodernizm* [Post-Chornobyl Library. Ukrainian Literary Postmodernism] (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2013), 21.

18 Dmytro Zerkalov, *Ekolohichna bezpeka ta okhorona dovkillia* [Ecological Safety and Environmental Protection] (Kyiv: Osнова, 2012), 154.

19 Peter Barry, *Vstup do teorii: literaturoznavstvo i kulturolohiia* [Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory] (Kyiv: Smoloskyp, 2008), 292–4.

20 Abdalaziz Jomah Al Fawareh, Nusaibah J. Dakamsih, Ahmad Mohd Alkouri. “Ecocriticism in Modern English Literature.” *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 13, no. 3 (2023): 783–8. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1303.28>.

21 Joseph Meeker, *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1974).

“ecocriticism” as an integral part of ecological humanitarian sciences in the terminological field of literary studies in his essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism”²² and focused attention on applying ecological concepts to studying literature. In 1989, Cheryll Glotfelty (a professor of literature and environment since 1990) used this term for studying fiction about nature and worked at creating the collection “The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology”²³ together with Harold Fromm. In 1992, Cheryll Glotfelty became a co-founder of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) which has had its press organ “Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment” (ISLE)²⁴ since 1993.

In 1994, in Salt Lake City, a scientific meeting “Defining Ecocritical Theory and Practice” took place where sixteen authors (Ralph W. Black, Christopher Cokinos, Nancy Cook, Harry Crockett, Thomas K. Dean, Cheryll Glotfelty, Ian Marshall, Kent Ryden, Stephanie Sarver, Don Scheese, Mark Schlenz, Scott Slovic, Stan Tag, David Taylor, David W. Teague, Allison B. Wallace) defined the specificity of using the term “ecocriticism” and content of ecocritical studies.²⁵ The American scientists preferred the term “ecocriticism” (Scott Slovic, Richard Kerridge, Neil Sammels, Lawrence Buell, Karl Kroeber), while the scientists from Great Britain (Jonathan Bate, Terry Gifford) used the term “green studies.”²⁶

In the work “The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture” (1995),²⁷ analyzing the creative work of writers-transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau Lawrence Buell kept thinking of how culture perceives and reproduces the environment, and how the history of humanity is related to nature.

Ecocriticism became an academic subject only in the 1990s and started to be approved vigorously by scientists all over the world today’s works: an American Patrick Murphy²⁸ studied ecocritical pedagogy and considered contemporary literature

22 William Rueckert, “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism,” in *Iowa Review* 9, no. 1 (1978): 71–86.

23 See Cheryll Glotfelty & Harold Fromm, eds., *The Ecocriticism Reader: landmarks in literary ecology* (University of Georgia Press, 1996).

24 Larysa Statkevych, “Teoretyko-metodolohichni formanty suchasnoi ekokrytyky” [“Theoretical and Methodological Formants of Modern Ecocriticism”], *Visnyk Kharkivskoho natsionalnoho universytetu imeni V. N. Karazina. Series Philology* 76 (2017): 100–3.

25 “Defining Ecocritical Theory and Practice. Sixteen Position Papers from the 1994 Western Literature Association Meeting,” Salt Lake City, Utah 6 October 1994. https://www.asle.org/wp-content/uploads/ASLE_Primer_DefiningEcocrit.pdf.

26 Barry, *Vstup do teorii*, 295.

27 Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995).

28 Patrick D. Murphy, “Ground, Pivot, Motion: Ecofeminist Theory, Dialogics, and Literary Practice,” *Ecological Feminism* 6, no. 1 (1991): 146–61.

through an eco-feministic perspective; an Australian philosopher Val Plumwood²⁹ studied eco-feminism and anthropocentrism; an Englishman Simon Schama was interested in the impact of landscape on memory as well as on formation of ourselves³⁰; a British philosopher Kate Soper worked at the theory of consumption, ecological philosophy, and hedonism.³¹

Having monitored scientific articles from the academic journal “Ecozon@” for the years 2020-21 we conclude the relevance of ecocritical studies: Philipp Erchinger, Sue Edney, Pippa Marland studied the development of ecocriticism from ancient times to Anthropocene;³² Sissel Furuseth, Anne Gjelsvik, Ahmet Gürata, Reinhard Hennig, Julia Leyda, Katie Ritson considered literature, television, and filmmaking in Norway through the prism of ecocriticism³³; Elena Past studied the development of ecocriticism in Italy;³⁴ Wojciech Małeck, Jarosław Woźniak – in Poland;³⁵ Kadri Tüür, Ene-Reet Soovik – in Baltics;³⁶ Meliz Ergin – in Turkey;³⁷ Lisa FitzGerald – in Ireland;³⁸ Sule Emmanuel Egya – in Africa;³⁹ José Manuel Marrero Henríquez – in Spanish-speaking works of literature;⁴⁰ Serenella Iovino, Pasquale Verdicchio were interested in Mediterranean ecocriticism.⁴¹ Larysa Horbolis,⁴² Mykola

29 Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

30 Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).

31 Kate Soper, *Post-Growth Living: For an Alternative Hedonism* (London, 2020).

32 Philipp Erchinger, Sue Edney, & Pippa Marland, “Eco-Georgic: From Antiquity to the Anthropocene. An Introduction,” *Ecozon@* 12, no. 2 (2021): 1–17, <https://ecozona.eu/article/view/4537/5119>.

33 Sissel Furuseth et al., “Climate Change in Literature, Television and Film from Norway,” *Ecozon@* 11, no. 2 (2020): 8–16, <https://ecozona.eu/article/view/3468/4485>.

34 Elena Past, “Itinerant Ecocriticism, Southern Thought, and Italian Cinema on Foot,” *Ecozon@* 11, no. 2 (2020): 26–33, <https://ecozona.eu/article/view/3501/4470>.

35 Wojciech Małeck & Jarosław Woźniak, “Ecocriticism in Poland: Then and Now.” *Ecozon@* 11, no. 2 (2020): 34–41, <https://ecozona.eu/article/view/3553/4481>.

36 Kadri Tüür & Ene-Reet Soovik, “Among Forests, Wetlands and Animals: Ecocriticism in the Baltics,” *Ecozon@* 11, no. 2 (2020): 42–51, <https://ecozona.eu/article/view/3498/4479>.

37 Meliz Ergin, “Ecocriticism in Turkey,” *Ecozon@* 11, no. 2 (2020): 52–58, <https://ecozona.eu/article/view/3489/4455>.

38 Lisa FitzGerald, “Border Country: Postcolonial Ecocriticism in Ireland,” *Ecozon@* 11, no. 2 (2020): 59–65, <https://ecozona.eu/article/view/3504/4456>.

39 Sule Emmanuel Egya, “Out of Africa: Ecocriticism beyond the Boundary of Environmental Justice,” *Ecozon@* 11, no. 2 (2020): 66–73, <https://ecozona.eu/article/view/3495/4482>.

40 José Manuel Marrero Henríquez, “Hispanic Literatures: One Breath, a Million Words,” *Ecozon@* 11, no. 2 (2020): 74–81, <https://ecozona.eu/article/view/3496/4457>.

41 Serenella Iovino, Pasquale Verdicchio, “Naming the Unknown, Witnessing the Unseen: Mediterranean Ecocriticism and Modes of Representing Migrant Others.” *Ecozon@* 11, no. 2 (2020): 82–91. <https://ecozona.eu/article/view/3559/4458>.

42 Larysa Horbolis, “Ekokrytychni vymiry ukrainskoi literatury: dotsilnist i pryiniatnist zastosuvannia (na prykladi ‘Lisovoi pisni’ Lesi Ukrainky)” [“Ecocritical Measurements

Tkachuk,⁴³ Tetiana Hanzha,⁴⁴ Oksana Vertyporokh,⁴⁵ Anna Horniatko-Shumylovych,⁴⁶ Nataliia Maftyn, Halyna Sokol,⁴⁷ Inna Sukhenko,⁴⁸ Larysa Statkevych⁴⁹ et al. are Ukrainian scientists conducting scientific research in developing and practical usage of theoretical and methodological basis of ecocriticism.

The problematic range of ecocriticism as an area of interpreting literary phenomena is quite wide, namely: nationwide global issues of spiritual development of humanity, nuclear / aggressive / occupying wars, deterioration of precious natural resources, global warming, climatic changes, population outbreak, genocide / ethnocide, spreading exploitation technologies, anthropogenic disasters, earthquakes, miasmas, methane-hydrated explosions, space exploration before using it as a dump, contaminations (toxic waste, radioactive fall-out, phosphoric burn-out), extinction and consumer world outlook, thoughtless inhumane killing of non-human beings (animals, plants) by humans as well as the issue of morality (“ecology of soul”), honesty with yourself, searching for yourself (ecological balance), relation of gender issues to ecological ones, reconsidering traditional values via “coming back to nature” and nostalgia for primary mythological roots with pan-mythological (absolute) model of world outlook, understanding your species as one of the elements of life on Earth, and realizing that violating divine law of the Earth will inevitably lead to punishment from nature, etc.

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- of Ukrainian Literature: Suitability and Admissibility of the Application (by Example of ‘The Forest Song’ by Lesya Ukrainka)”, *Filolohichni traktaty* 3 (2011): 5–10.
- 43 Mykola Tkachuk, “Liudyna i pryroda v ukrainskii literaturi kriz pryzmu ekokrytyky” [“Man and Nature in Ukrainian Literature Through the Prism of Ecocriticism”], *Dyvoslovo* 6 (2011): 52–6.
- 44 Tatyana Hanzha, “Ekokrytychnyi aspekt dykosti u poetychnomu tsykli Oleha Lyshehy «Snihovi vohniu»” [“Ecocritical Aspect of Wildness in the Poetica Cycle ‘To Snow and Fire’ by Oleh Lysheha”], *Naukovi zapysky NaUKMA. Literaturoznavstvo* 1 (2018): 62–5. <https://doi.org/10.18523/2618-0537.2018.62-65>.
- 45 Oksana Vertyporokh, “Ekokrytyka yak model interpretatsii suchasnoho khudozhnogo tekstu (na materialy romanistyky Yevhena Pashkovskoho)” [“Ecocriticism as a Model of Interpretation of a Modern Literary Text (Based on the Novels of Eugene Pashkovsky)”], *Aktualni pytannia humanitarnykh nauk* 36, no. 1 (2021): 122–7. <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863/36-1-18>.
- 46 Anna Gorniatko-Shumylovich, “‘Ne ya tut hospodar, a pryroda’. Ekotsentrychne prochyttannia tvorchoi spadshchyny Vasylia Tkachuka” [“‘I am not the master here, but nature’. Ecocentric reading of Vasyl Tkachuk’s creative legacy”], *Poznańskie studia slawistyczne* 22 (2022): 181–94. <https://doi.org/10.14746/pss.2022.22.9>.
- 47 Nataliia Maftyn & Halyna Sokol, “Rannia proza Hryhoriia Shtonia kriz pryzmu ekokrytyky” [“Hryhoriy Shton’s Early Prose Through the Prism of Eco-criticism”], *Aktualni pytannia humanitarnykh nauk* 48, no. 2 (2022): 96–103. <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863/48-2-15>.
- 48 Inna Sukhenko, “From Nature Beliefs to the Politicized Ecocriticism: a Brief Glance on Ukrainian Eco-imperatives Formation,” *Visnyk Dnipropetrovskoho Universytetu imeni Alfreda Nobelia. Philolohichni nauky* 10, no. 2 (2015): 33–8.
- 49 Statkevich, “Teoretyko-metodolohichni formanty suchasnoi ekokrytyky.”

Since the 2020s, humanity has not only realized but begun to treat the global challenge – climate change – seriously, as for sure this issue/crisis “threatens the existence of human civilization itself in the long run”⁵⁰: a massive war with climate can occur very quickly and a human just will not manage to adapt to win this fight, it will need centuries to recover. In the environment, all biodiversity is interrelated, the ecosystem is a permanent creation, and keeping the ecological balance is quite difficult for today’s humans which is why consequences of their consumer activities can have irreversible effects.

Every culture and literature, consequently, has formed its treatment of the environment and its understanding of ecological issues. The writer having a degree in engineering and energy, Maks Kidruk, is warning us and describing the perspective, “Due to global warming, the regions that used to be fertile will turn into deserts more and more often condemning millions of people to famine. Climate change will cause the drying up of rivers and deplete soil horizons. Altogether, these will pave the way for political instability, armed conflicts, and migration crises the likes of which mankind has not yet seen.”⁵¹

In the 21st century, there also emerged a need to reconsider common knowledge: to refresh memories, to reread literary works and documents through a new spectacle, and to draw attention to crimes against the safety of humanity and the environment; to use the memories – to popularize, preserve and pass historical knowledge from the past to future generations to protect them from traumatic experiences and self-destruction.

The aim of the article is to look at the postcolonial environment in contemporary literature of fact through the spectacle of ecocritical discourse via reading the works on the Chernobyl disaster. The objects of the study are Galia Ackerman’s work “Crossing Chernobyl,” the documentary and journalistic chapter “Chernobyl Scenario” from the novel “Non-format Journalism” by Hryhorii Krymchuk, Volodymyr Shovkoshytnyi’s semidocumentary short story “Chernobyl: I Saw It,” the chapters “Ubiquitous Plastic” and “Elon Musk, “Tesla,” and Nuclear Power Engineering” from Maks Kidruk’s popular scientific book “Theory of Improbability,” Oleksii Radynskyi’s literary report “Chernobyl Is Ukraine,” and Markiiian Kamysh’s travelogue “Stalking the Atomic City.”

The main material and substantiation of the gained results

During the last few years, we observed social fatigue from the topic of Chernobyl and trivialization of this global ecological disaster. In international consciousness, the formed image of Ukraine as a hazard area was gradually replaced. When the soldiers of the aggressor country Russia infected with racist’s propaganda started to use nuclear power plants for intimidation in the war against Ukraine taking them under fire and

50 Kidruk, *Teoriia neimovirnosti*, 21.

51 Ibid.

using them as nuclear shields, the danger of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons came up once again. And using phosphorous ammunition in Ukraine in 2022 demonstrates that the terrorist state is capable of anything. That year, in his book “Nuclear Folly: A History of Caribbean Crisis,” in an appeal to readers, Serhii Plokhii wrote that Ukraine “found itself in the center of two nuclear crises – related to nuclear power and to the threat of using nuclear weapons.”⁵²

“Chernobyl is a dreadful model of world anthropogenic disaster,” mentions the reviewer Oksana Pakhlovska, a daughter of the writer Lina Kostenko and an acquaintance of the author Galia Ackerman and some characters of the book “Crossing Chernobyl,”⁵³ in the foreword to “Humanism after Progress.” The foreword complements the stories told by the writer and is a nominal sequel of the storylines of the characters mentioned in the book.

The work about post-apocalyptic times “Crossing Chernobyl” by a Jewish Galia Ackerman combines the features of a travelogue, chronicles, and memoirs. The author plunges into the history of the tragedy, into the time and space of the exclusion zone as she has been examining it for more than 18 years to “exhume Ukrainian Atlantis,”⁵⁴ and “Soviet Pompeii”⁵⁵ and show a case of destroying and resuming life at the irradiated territory: self-settlers and about five thousand workers on rotational work basis live here. These statistics bring hope despite great discouragement, though updating the time or reviving even a dysfunctional environment in this territory is almost unreal.

The case of Chernobyl we should never forget about has become illustrative evidence, a model, a picture of how a “peaceful atom” (a well-known oxymoron) can conserve life and forms of its being – time and space – for centuries, or force these categories exist differently: moving from the past into phantom future unreal to see clearly. The destroyed reactor has contaminated a unique region of Ukrainian indigenous culture, Polissia, “for a few tens of thousands of future years.”⁵⁶ From 1986 to 2008, in this region, “about 52.2k families or 162.8k people”⁵⁷ were evacuated or relocated.

However, you can learn not only about harm, but also about the benefit of nuclear power if you read the chapter “Elon Musk,” “Tesla,” and “Nuclear Power Engineering” from Maks Kidruk’s popular scientific book “Theory of Improbability.” The book has been created based on eponymous scripts from the author’s popular scientific podcasts broadcasted on “Ukrainian Radio” in the second half of 2021. In it, the author explains scientific theories and hypotheses clearly, excitingly, and shortly, dispels myths, and ruins stereotypes by successfully combining jokes with scientific terminology.

52 Serhii Plokhii, *Yaderne bezumstvo. Istoriia Karybskoi kryzy* [*Nuclear Folly: A History of Caribbean Crisis*] (Kharkiv: Klub Simeinoho Dozvillia, 2022), 12.

53 Galia Ackerman, *Proity kriz Chernobyl* [*Crossing Chernobyl*], translated from French by Petro Tarashchuk (Kyiv: Lybid, 2018), 14.

54 *Ibid.*, 23.

55 *Ibid.*, 27.

56 *Ibid.*, 22.

57 Shovkoshtnyi, *Chernobyl: ya bachyv*, 248.

The writer claims that “nuclear reactors almost do not give harmful emissions and even considering the disasters on Three Mile Island, in Chornobyl, and Fukushima Prefecture they appear to be one of the safest ways of generating electricity.” In contrast, Maks Kidruk gives the statistics, “On average, one hundred terawatt-hours of electrical energy produced at an NPP cost 7 deaths for the mankind”; for coal-fired and oil power, the statistics are 430 deaths, so the author claims, “If we want to reduce the impact on the environment and go on powering our energy-intensive economies, we have to do our best to increase the number of nuclear power plants.”⁵⁸

If a nuclear disaster occurs, it is impossible to revive fully after it as chain reactions of decomposition of chemical elements (iodine, caesium-134, caesium-137, strontium-90, plutonium, uranium-238, uranium-235, etc.) can last from a few days to tens of thousands of years. Hryhorii Krymchuk pays his attention to the interrelation between the disaster and geology: the Chornobyl NPP reactors are placed on “a shaky and wet layer of the earth,” “in the swamps of Polissia with massive ground waters,” thus summarizing that colonial self-delusion or lack of awareness of natural processes of the local environment “will poison both soil and water for entire geological epochs in time.”⁵⁹

The thing that unites Hryhorii Krymchuk and Galia Ackerman is that they are professional journalists, prose writers, and intellectuals scrupulously digging out the truth, checking facts, and carrying out journalist inquiries. Hryhorii Krymchuk was born a few years before World War II, and Galia Ackerman – a few years after it. They met with life in the Soviet empire and then lived in the territories of free independent states: Hryhorii Krymchuk – in Ukraine, and Galia Ackerman – in Israel and France. These writers recorded the traumatic experience of destroying the private world of a few generations of citizens of a part of Ukrainian Polissia for whom the irony of Chornobyl topos / the “war” and “nuclear war” jargons are alienated through the concept “the 1986 disaster.”

The outlandish strangers entered the authentic culture and environment of indigenous people. For them, the soil was just a resource, not an ancestral memory connecting generations, so it was not a pity for them to outroot a person from being, not only from home. Cultural memory engraves everything. Its layers include universal (mental archetypes, cultural senses, patterns, traditions, customs, values, norms, and forms of behavior inherent with the nation: love of home nature, soil, etc.), event (wars, revolutions, dekulakization, collectivization, Holodomor, repressions, disasters), and the one of everyday life (live/communicative memory of three generations accumulated in family stories, legends, genealogies, family traditions, customs, and documents).⁶⁰ Galia Ackerman shows the contrast between cultures of

58 Kidruk, *Teoriia neimovirnosti*, 43–4.

59 Hryhorii Krymchuk, *Podorozh u roky: publitsystyka [Journey through the years: publicism]* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo imeni Oleny Telihy, 2017), 124.

60 Iryna Kolesnyk, “Kontsept ‘pamiat’ yak analitychna struktura: ukrainskyi vymir” [“The Concept of Memory as an Analytical Structure: Ukrainian Measurement”], *Natsionalna ta istorychna pamiat* 3 (2012): 173–4.

nations who settled this territory: a numerous Jewish community having the main Hasidic center in Chernobyl was killed by Holocaust, and the local inhabitants with longtime civilization rooted through centuries were relocated by communism combining essentially beggar economy and monumental squander⁶¹ with monotonous planning.⁶²

Lost uniqueness of indigenous culture and religion and bringing everything to universal – turning cultivated area as leftover from the empire into wilderness, these are the consequences of imperial influence. Exploiting indigenous lands for the sake of communism violated the harmony, led to abnormalities, mutations, and modifications, destruction, and degeneration of consciousness. The residents having stayed after the disaster became outcasts nobody cared for.

The author is making a philosophic, cultural, anthropological, and psychological cross-section of the consequences of tragedy – “reality doomed to oblivion”⁶³ and shares the experience of evaluating the Chernobyl drama through her own psychological and emotional states and examining the culture and memories of people having suffered from colonialism. She notices that those people who had stayed in the zone or came back there go on adhering to the Soviet system of values which means fake past and colonial narrative. Surviving and living out is a hard challenge for them; their memories have been deconstructed by a traumatic experience of their lost Atlantis. Their “memory makes sense” only in their native land,⁶⁴ it is related to the landscape and environment of their familiar area – a unique land of their ancestors. The inhabitants having come back home have found their shelter from life troubles waiting for them beyond Polissia as the process of relocation after the disaster was a traumatic experience of a breakdown between generations, that was the loss of traditional values and usual way of life, that was the separation from the natural world.

People, animals, plants, and soil – they are all witnesses of changes. In her reminder story, Galia Ackerman raises issues of relationships: human-land, human-nature, human-human, human-space and time, human-animal (non-human), memory-unconsciousness, honor-dishonor, longing for the past-inconsolable future, government-corruption, security-insecurity. The author cares for the credibility of facts, is intolerant to fake or unchecked information, and feels the leftovers of colonial heritage not breaking free from the past, “We still have solid statistical data neither on liquidators nor on eight million inhabitants of the contaminated lands.”⁶⁵

The researcher’s continuous memory lane plunges us into the past, into a parallel world, in a utopia of well-being, in a bewitched kingdom – a model Soviet city Prypiat, a ghost, an exclusion zone, a cursed place, an outdoor museum of the Soviet epoch “for at least the next twenty-four thousand years”⁶⁶ until plutonium decomposes. Every

61 Ackerman, *Crossing Chernobyl*, 50.

62 Ibid., 29.

63 Ibid., 6.

64 Ibid., 112.

65 Ibid., 37.

66 Ibid., 50.

traveler, every inhabitant, and every migrant worker is trying to find something of their own, attracting to them, and resurrect the lost life: someone is longing for the Soviet past of their youth, someone – for memories of their dad-liquidator, someone – for recalling their childhood, someone – for trying themselves as an adventure seeker or a “STALKER” computer game character, someone – for seeing post-industrial atmosphere with their own eyes and feeling the apocalyptic one they have heard of or watched, and someone – for finding the sense of tranquility and intimacy.

Galia Ackerman says and disproves one of the hypotheses on the reasons for the tragedy: it was the “grid for drying hops,” “a Russian woodpecker” – a giant radar “Duga” “meant for early detection”⁶⁷ of intercontinental ballistic missiles that could be launched from Europe and the USA. That fraud project had cost from \$500 million to \$1.5 billion according to various data being twice more expensive than the Chornobyl NPP construction but there was no use in it, so it was necessary “to hide that painful truth”⁶⁸ whatever it took despite the victims.

Imperialism was manifested via secret closed cities and towns, strategic objects, concentration camps, prisoners, and prosecution. All those were masked and secreted behind exterior well-being. A thirty-kilometer area, once a blooming territory of ancient Slavs is a model of Muscovite rulers’ ambitions and their crazy speed of moving towards the bright future. Rust and barbed wire, broken glass, and thicket – these are visual reminders of what a territory can turn into because of negligence, irresponsibility, and carelessness.

The destiny the zone had could happen to a much bigger territory – they planned to put reactors in the territories of all republics of the empire.

Hryhorii Krymchuk recalled that he used to go on missions to Chornobyl multiple times due to work. He had also been there together with other journalists three weeks before the disaster and “had witnessed the fact how disconsolate were things with safety at the object.”⁶⁹ On the fourth reactor, there had been an accident yet before the disaster, and radioactive substances were leaking.

Before the large-scale disaster happened, the article warning by a Chornobyl editor of the local newspaper “Energy Tribune” published in the newspaper “Literary Ukraine” had raised the issues “having been kept silent about before,” and “which had been once vetoed for mass media,” namely, “the divergence of the existing security system of the plant from technologies of atomic industry.”⁷⁰

The incompetence of those being responsible, misinformation, keeping silent, fake propaganda, secret KGB snouts, glorification of advantages of “socialist society compared to the capitalistic world,”⁷¹ and inactivity – these are consequences of colonial consciousness of the society in the totalitarian environment (“the party never makes

67 Ibid., 41.

68 Ibid., 48.

69 Krymchuk, *Podorozh u roky*, 127.

70 Ibid., 125.

71 Ackerman, *Crossing Chornobyl*, 46.

mistakes. Even when the reactor exploded, it was its fault, one of the reactors”⁷²). The information was secreted and hidden from the victim population: “There was not a single Ukrainian scientist having been credited to head any area of scientific research.”⁷³

The most massive anthropogenic disaster in human history provoked humiliating unemployment for “militaries and workers of defense industry” – tens of millions of Soviet citizens,⁷⁴ and besides contamination and untimely deaths of thousands of liquidators “having been throwing radioactive innards of the reactor from the roof of the nuclear plant with their bare hands.”⁷⁵

The writer Volodymyr Shovkoshytnyi has also been gathering unique evidence of the disaster at Chernobyl NPP for 33 years to analyze the reasons and consequences of this tragedy from a professional point of view in an autobiographic semidocumentary story-confession with elements of chronicles “Chernobyl: I Saw It” (which the author himself named “my endless short story”⁷⁶ “about my own youth”⁷⁷).

Volodymyr Shovkoshytnyi was the head of the group of liquidators of the consequences of the disaster at the fourth unit in 1986–1987; eight years before the disaster, he made his way from an operator to the shift supervisor of the chemistry shop. He also did not stay aside after as in 1990, he became the president of the All-Soviet organization “Union Chernobyl”; and from 1991 to 2003, he was the president of the international organization “Union Chernobyl.”

Gathering facts from the memories of his friends, colleagues, and acquaintances, writing down the stories of different people working at the NPP who became eye-witnesses and liquidators the writer is trying to carefully figure out the cause of the unprecedented nuclear disaster and to reconstruct the shutdown of the fourth reactor and its explosion second by second as well as to find out and analyze human faults because the official version of frame courts in the Soviet empire was a large lie and a myth worth lives, dignity, and dramatic stories of people’s destinies.

The book is full of facts and scientific terminology that can be understood only by people with technical degrees. It proves that it was written not by an ordinary witness or literary man, but by a professional in nuclear energy, a Chernobyl NPP worker, and a person who lived this catastrophe through his entire life and his soul and for whom it is the honor to tell the truth. “The whole set of problems caused by it [Chernobyl] is not a big secret for me,” the author mentions in the foreword.⁷⁸

The fiction beginning of the work is an allusion to an adventure novel by Ivan Bahrianyi “Tiger Trappers.” A train rushing through the night into the unknown: in Bahrianyi’s work, it takes suicide bombers to penal servitude, and in Shovkoshytnyi’s it takes nuclear physicists for whom the night of April 26 had become a boundary from

72 Krymchuk, *Podorozh u roky*, 131.

73 Shovkoshytnyi, *Chernobyl: ya bachyv*, 258.

74 Ackerman, *Crossing Chernobyl*, 47.

75 Krymchuk, *Podorozh u roky*, 126.

76 Shovkoshytnyi, *Chernobyl: ya bachy*, 4.

77 *Ibid.*, 197.

78 *Ibid.*, 4.

hopes for a bright tomorrow to undefined new era when the world became different for them, after Chornobyl.

The form of the author's interview with liquidators raises plenty of questions and speculations for a writer-nuclear physicist that he shares with his readers in remarks, he analyzes facts and makes conclusions letting the readers do that by themselves as well, "The most honest and manliest our colleagues are dead... Isn't it because the science (nuclear in this case) has become the authorities' servant?"⁷⁹

The extent of a possible disaster after a breakdown can be imagined by examining the data: there are 180 tons of uranium-238 in a nuclear reactor which are worth 36 hundred-kilogram bombs, "If all this bangs – there's no Europe anymore!"⁸⁰

Human life has no value for reaching the ambitious objectives of war chiefs, military leaders, rulers, generalissimos, and marshals, as well as for the Soviet vozhd's or Russian senior officials. After repair and restoration work, "in half a year, the first and second units were already launched," one year after the third unit was also launched.⁸¹ Such decisions are worth tens of thousands of people having been irradiated (among which there were the ones with high level of physical fitness).

The description of the concealment of facts about the staff's over-irradiation and false diagnoses, the existence of the cases when the plant's workers were unfairly awarded medals, false notes in the "Pravda" newspaper, and fake reports by the IAEA convincingly denied by the author are the consequences of the culture of information secrecy.

The compositional elements of the work include the history of creation of the Chornobyl NPP, the description of the response and behavior of Poleshuk's in the first days after the tragedy, the characteristic of ecological, social, and economic and political shifts provoked by the tragedy, reconstruction of the chronology of post-accident period during the first hours, days, weeks, months, and years; the stages of liquidation of the consequences of the disaster; recording of long-term actions aimed at managing the consequences so that a disaster of such kind would never happen again (development and guarantees of international standards of the society's security, informational exchange, discussion of the perspectives of the plant); a letter-excuse from the engineer A. Diatlov; impact of the disaster on the nation's health; analysis of the plant's state "thirty years after"; dispelling the myths produced by the HBO TV series "Chornobyl" (2019) by the director Johan Renck ("The creators of the series, obviously, had never set themselves a goal of searching for true reasons of the disaster or its perpetrators"⁸²). All details and storyboard appear to be a balanced view of the global event made by the person being one of those who "took the worries of his comrades, of his state, and of our Earth on his shoulders,"⁸³ so through his own life

79 Ibid., 65.

80 Ibid., 102-3.

81 Ibid., 66.

82 Ibid., 309.

83 Ibid., 291.

experience as a vigilant and thoughtful witness and participant who retains many details, he shares them with readers as the deeper they plunge into such information, the more possible that will be to reduce the number of such tragedies and disasters in future. Thus, safe living is a result of the decisions taken; it is an endless narrative of consciousness and meanness, honor or dishonor, responsibility or irresponsibility where circumstances, events, and individual choices intertwine.

In the third part of the story, the narrative position changes from a first-person narration to a third-person narration. The character named Volodymyr appears. This way, the author describes his life from his youth student years to a mature writer and deputy as if from the side of a spectator intertwining personalistic stories with the topic of Chernobyl having entered his being and pierced it. He is a participant in life, but not just a spectator.

Ecology has become a priority in the character's life when building the independent sovereign state of Ukraine, "for me, Chernobyl is not a topic, it's life."⁸⁴ Recreating dreams, describing his feelings ("The soul keeps aching – it's personal"⁸⁵), impressions, and anticipations are complemented by people's stories, philosophic digressions, and poetry pierced with pain and compassion. All these make the work more lyrical, provide it with intimacy, and let the reader feel the character's state, measure the depth of his emotions, and provide insight into what has helped him strengthen his sense of self-worth and citizenship.

The author proves that those were not engineers-nuclear physicists (A. Diatlov, A. Akimov, L. Toptunov, etc.) to be blamed for the tragedy and brought to justice, but those who did not notice serious construction failures and malfunctions in the reactor and allowed it to be put into operation were academicians Aleksandrov, Dollezhal, and others.

De-jure, due to the theory of probability, the explosion of a reactor could have "happened once in one hundred thousand reactor-years,"⁸⁶ and de-facto, the deficiencies had provoked a disaster like never happened in the world. However, in 2011, a comparable disaster happened at Fukushima Daiichi (like the Chernobyl NPP disaster, power engineers classify it as "the seventh highest level by the scale of nuclear events"). However, in the case of Fukushima, only "light" metals were emitted into the environment. That was different from the explosion at the fourth power unit in 1986 resulting in "virtually all radionuclides"⁸⁷ going into the environment.

Markiiian Kamysh, the tragedy's coeval, a son of a liquidator of the breakdown at the CNPP, and a diehard stalker, realistically shows the abandoned and annihilated land – the Exclusion zone in his travelogue "Stalking the Atomic City." He is constantly organizing illegal trips to Polissia to convey his impressions, feelings, and emotions to the reader unvarnished, uncensored, and informally, with no prohibitions or media

84 Ibid., 266.

85 Ibid., 73.

86 Ibid., 104.

87 Ibid., 246.

patterns as well as to record time changes taking place in the territory of “a wonderful country of abandoned huts,”⁸⁸ “among the lost lives and nighttime fragments,”⁸⁹ “ruins of the former world”⁹⁰ where the time has stopped and the civilized development has ended.

The author’s imagination is making the space more literary, it is drawing personified visual images: the patio of the house has “turned into Amazon,”⁹¹ wandering across the brushwood is named a marathon through the thicket where the character is overtaking “Chuhaister, and the legions of his marshy demons.”⁹² In the travelogue, the method of framing is used. It is a story about a duct of the fourth energy unit having been cut off – “a phallic symbol of disasters.” This method is a try to reconstruct the symbol of a youth spent on “the roofs of Prypiat.”⁹³

A dead wolf “getting slightly rotten during about two years among faded hangings”⁹⁴ – such an exotic scene evokes visceral empathy from readers creating an immersive experience and providing an idea of squalidity and voidness.

A documentarian and essay writer Oleksii Radynskyi is the author of the report on the occupation of the NPP by Russians “Chornobyl is Ukraine” from the collection “The Most Dreadful Times of My Life” created by Ukrainian and international media workers of “The Reckoning Project”⁹⁵ for gathering testimonies and saving the memory of the life of Ukrainians at de-occupied territories in 2022, after the first year of the full-scale war of Russia against Ukraine. Oleksii Radynskyi’s report is an attempt to bring the dreadful reality to the world which is an unprecedented crime against mankind – nuclear terrorism.

Using the location of Chornobyl NPP as a nuclear shield, the invaders did not realize that their ambitious plans and foolish actions “could have led to one more global nuclear disaster.”⁹⁶

Conducting hostilities in the territory of Ukraine and the capturing of the Exclusion zone of Chornobyl NPP (most of the territory of which received the status of radiation and ecological biosphere reserve in 2016) by Russian federation in February and March 2022 using all possible weapon structure, ammunition, armor, and vehicles caused massive and long-term environment deterioration.⁹⁷

88 Kamysh, *Oformliandiia, abo Prohulianka v Zonu*, 10.

89 Ibid., 12.

90 Ibid., 16.

91 Ibid., 13.

92 Ibid., 16.

93 Ibid., 13.

94 Ibid., 17.

95 See The Reckoning Project. URL: <https://www.thereckoningproject.com/uk>.

96 “*Naistrashnishi dni moho zhyttia.*” *Reportazhi The Reckoning Project* [“*The Most Dreadful Times of My Life.*” *Reports of The Reckoning Project*], comp. by Natalia Humeniuk (Lviv: Choven, 2023), 98.

97 Anastasiia Splodytel, Oleksandr Holubtsov, Serhii Chumachenko, & Liudmyla Sorokina, “Zabrudnennia zemel vnaslidok ahresii Rosii proty Ukrainy” [“Land Contamination as a Result of Aggression of Russia against Ukraine”], *Ekodiia*, 2023, 123,

In Ukrainian discourse, the conceptual field of the concept “Chernobyl” is verbalized via the lexemes: fear, exclusion, critics of the government, and losing childhood.⁹⁸ In Oleksii Radynskyi’s report, the verbalization of this concept in 2022 expanded the room for interpretation moving from tragic to ironic: the collapse of “Russian strategy aimed at fast invasion of Kyiv;”⁹⁹ evidence of “inevitable Russian defeat”; for the occupants, it is the choice with no options between two coffins – made of zinc or made of lead;¹⁰⁰ dispelling of a colonial myth of deep affinity between Ukrainian and Russian realities; the crash of the empire’s leftovers. The concept of “Chernobyl disaster” has also transformed into metaphoric expressions: the catalyst for Ukraine’s secession from the USSR; a model of chronic backwardness of Soviet nuclear power energy; and a model of political ineffectiveness.

Thus, the literary report “Chernobyl is Ukraine” is aimed at verbalizing the extent of nuclear danger to the world community, not only causing outrage but at making them think over the importance of organizing international measures to have an opportunity to protect themselves and counteract tragedies in future as the full-scale war of Russia against Ukraine is a geopolitical threat for the whole civilized world.

The ecological disaster of Chernobyl went on par with excess outrages Ukraine had to suffer from Russian Federation: the mass murder of the intellectuals (executed Renaissance), industrialization, collectivization, Holodomors, holocaust, deportations, the war of the years 2014-..., June 6, 2023, – blowing up of the Kakhovka HPP. To this list of national ecological disasters of the previous years can be added: 1980-1989 – a local radioactive contamination in a house in Kramatorsk; July 16, 2007, – phosphorous accident by Ozhydiv; August 6, 2013, – ammonia emission during an accident at a chemical plant in Horlivka of Donetsk oblast; August 24, 2018, – emission of harmful chemical substance at the plant in Armiansk; contamination of river waters and sources with herbicides and pesticides.

Exceptional events form the collective experience of the past, determine today, and define the direction of the future. “Cultural memory is represented in two dimensions: ritual and bodily, and textual. A ritual cross-section of memory is implemented in actions, rituals, and customs, namely, in commemoration practices (preserving the memory of the dead) and mnemonics (the art of memory). A textual dimension of historic memory is represented in “me-recollections,” legends, family chronicles, and genealogies as well as official and mass discourse. The essence of

127. <https://ecoaction.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/zabrudnennia-zemel-vid-rosii-full3.pdf>.

98 Olha Lyntvar and Yuliia Pletenetska, “Verbalizatsiia poniattievykh poliv kontseptu ‘Chernobyl’ tvoriv S. Aleksiiievych ‘Chernobylska molytva’” [“Representation of the ‘Chernobyl’ Concept Language Expression in the English Translation”], *Vcheni zapysky Tavriiskoho natsionalnoho universytetu imeni V. I. Vernadskoho* 31 (70), no. 4, part 3 (2020), 45.

99 “*Naistrashnishi dni*,” 98.

100 *Ibid.*, 105.

a memory mechanism constitutes the process of turning individual recollections into collective/historic memory due to fake purposeful activities of memory creators (politicians, artists, writers, historians, etc.).¹⁰¹ Now, the Chornobyl zone is not only a place of tragedy but also a place of memory freed from multiple relapses of the feudal past.

Conclusions and prospects for further research

If a human does not pay timely attention to their actions and violates natural balance, they will be destroyed by natural disasters and feel an irreversible impact on their state of health and duration of life. The relation of a human to the Earth is a closed cycle of co-existence that has to be based on ethical principles. Now, it is more important not to investigate the causes but to anticipate and prevent the consequences. The means of the art of word are important and universal instruments for developing ecological awareness and responsibility; they provoke activity as well as encourage dealing with inertia, indifference, and infantilism among citizens. Their impact is wider than ecological education. One of the most important objectives of ecocriticism today is solving environmental issues through literature. Ecological narratives in the texts of Galia Ackerman, Hryhorii Krymchuk, Volodymyr Shovkoshytnyi, Maks Kidruk, Oleksii Radynskyi, and Markiiian Kamysh influence the ecological reality because they represent the issues of contaminated or disrupted ecosystem. Ecocriticism as a field of literary analysis studies the way writers interpret ecological abnormalities people face in today's world, what aspects they focus on, and how they mobilize public opinion in their literary works triggering the readers into visceral emotions to overcome these issues in future and reach the positive in the new era of relationships between a human and the environment.

In the texts-warnings mentioned in the article, the authors raise the topic of the Chornobyl disaster having changed the wonderful landscape of the thirty-kilometer zone of Polissia due to radioactive contamination forever violating the relationships between humans and the environment. The aim is to draw the recipients' attention to the issues of ecosystem to reduce the consequences of anthropocentrism. Humanity is forming the future today. The genesis of relationships between a human and the Earth is manifested in ecological crises irreversibly transforming into disasters. The seismic tremors that occurred in Turkey in February 2023 and in Japan in January 2024 serve as models. Some scientists relate them to missile attacks of Russia at Ukraine that resulted in the displacement of continental plates of earth's crust. A human as a biological creature has to learn to respect the other living and non-living species of life on the Earth, and to treat them tolerantly and carefully, otherwise "eco-concern" and "eco-grief" will be followed by irreversible way of self-destruction.

101 Kolesnyk, "Kontsept 'pamiat'," 173-4.

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