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KYIV-MOHYLA HUMANITIES: HISTORICAL CONTINUITY AND EXISTENTIAL CHALLENGES OF WARTIME

The year 2025 is coming to an end... Another year in the history of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, which just celebrated the 410th anniversary of its founding...

Paving a long and complex path from the “brotherhood school” opened in Kyiv’s Podil in 1615 to the modern university established in 1992 based on the best world standards, the Kyiv Academy has played an outstanding role in the history of education, science, and culture in Eastern Europe, and in the formation of the Ukrainian nation, identity, and statehood.

The establishment and systematic development of the humanities within the area of Eastern Slavic Orthodoxy is directly linked to the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. This is not surprising, considering its unique experience in building an Orthodox humanistic school that was fully compliant with both European educational standards of the early modern era and the demands of Ukrainian culture at the time. By transposing the principles and methods of European humanistic schooling into the practice of the first higher Orthodox educational institution in Eastern Europe, the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy played a powerful role in the formation of humanitarian education, closely intertwined with religious and moral upbringing, aimed not only at acquiring knowledge but also at fostering the Christian

values and virtues laid at the foundation of European civilization.

The preservation and strengthening of the spiritual and value framework of Ukrainian education, science, and culture = formed during the Mohyla era – became a priority task for the revival of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in the post-Soviet period. And although the modern National University of “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy” prepares specialists in various fields of knowledge, the humanitarian sphere retains a fundamental role in the development of university education and science, and Mohyla humanitarians continue to play a powerful role in establishing the image of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy as a bulwark of Ukrainian spirituality.

Throughout its history, the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy has never limited itself to educational functions, actively responding to the problems and demands of social life and influencing its agenda. The same applies to the present day... Therefore, in the life of the National University of “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy,” the past year is not just a year of a significant anniversary. Another year is passing in the long and dramatic Russian-Ukrainian war, in which Ukraine must fight for the preservation of its state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and civilizational choice, as well as the democratic values of a world that today finds itself on the

brink of an abyss. And this is another powerful factor in the lives of the members of the Kyiv-Mohyla university community, who have endured the hardships of war...

Focusing on this factor, one cannot help but recall the prominent German existentialist philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) and his well-known concept of “limit situations” (*Grenzsituationen*), in which a person finds themselves when faced with insurmountable problems of their own existence that literally push them out of the usual flow of everyday life and open the veil to true human being in its deep personal, existential dimension. War fully belongs to such “limit situations,” as it always sharpens the fundamental questions (existentials) of human existence. Death, loss, fear, despair, guilt, responsibility, freedom, the absurdity of existence and destruction, the search for meaning, etc. – these existential challenges created by the situation of war reveal to a person the true dimensions of their being in the world and encourage the realization of their own essence (existence).

Considering the deep focus of the humanities on human beings and the human world, it is not at all surprising that the wartime everyday life of society, which forces its members to be around the clock “on the edge” of existence, creates a particularly powerful stimulus for representatives of the humanities to reflect not only on the war, its causes and consequences, the problems it generates, and ways to overcome them, but above all, to pay the closest attention to the situation of a person-on-the-edge caused by the war, the world of their meanings and values...

These are the trends that contemporary Ukrainian humanities emphasize, including the works of the humanities scholars of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, whose creative searches during wartime found themselves, according to the editors’ intent, in the focus of the latest (twelfth) volume of the *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal*.

As the articles included in this volume attest, the themes of the latest research by Ukrainian humanities scholars organically combine history and modernity, attention to historical and cultural narratives and classical figures, and attempts to comprehend current events and demands.

Articles on historical topics primarily address problematic aspects of the history of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and its successor in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Kyiv Theological Academy. This includes the study of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy’s Latin-language manuscript courses in rhetoric and the use of foreign sources and textbooks in their development (Roman Kyselyov), as well as the reconstruction and analysis of the views of a number of prominent Kyiv Theological Academy’s professors on school reform within the Russian Empire during the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries (Svitlana Kuzmina, Svitlana Avdieieva).

Historical and philosophical studies by Viktor Kozlovskyi and Nazar Matiovka present the results of research into important aspects of the work of classics of world philosophy – Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Ludwig Wittgenstein.

A bridge between the past and present is built in the article by Volodymyr Yermolenko, which is dedicated to the historical and cultural analysis of the concept of palingenesis – a notion particularly relevant during wartime – which denotes the existential reality and potency of affirming life in defiance of death and destruction.

The productivity of a complex approach to artworks as evidence of a specific era is demonstrated in the article by Iryna Borysyuk, dedicated to the analysis of Kateryna Kalytko’s poetry collections from 2019–2022 in their conceptual integrity. Focusing attention on the linguistic “fabric” of the contemporary Ukrainian poetess’s works, the author highlights the problem of language reformatting

against the backdrop of wartime realities and its connection to collective memory.

The article by Mariia Panfyorova is devoted to the examination of the specifics of Ukrainian fanfiction and its RPF (Real Person Fiction) genre. Based on her analysis, the author shows the cardinal impact of the full-scale Russian invasion of 2022 on Ukrainian culture and society.

The article by Svitlana Kuranova and Pavlo Zernetskyi depicts the discourse landscape of the 2024 presidential campaign in the United States of America. Relying on a communicatively-cognitive model of discourse analysis, which focuses primarily on the narrative structure of discourse as a macro-speech event, the authors view the discourse of the 2024 US presidential campaign as a cycle of stories linked by a single "storyline." By analyzing the main strategies used by campaign participants to shape public opinion, the means of linguistic influence on the audience, the speech activity of the presidential candidates and its semantic structure, general communicative intentions, thinking stereotypes, and tools for forming narratives, the authors open up new approaches in the application of discourse analysis within political linguistics.

A polemical article by Michael Moser exposes the methodological inconsistency and

uncritical acceptance of Putin's narratives regarding the history of the Ukrainian and Russian languages by some Western academics. The immediate thrust of the author's criticism is aimed at Alexander Maxwell's article, "Vladimir Putin, Normative Isomorphism and the Language/Dialect Dichotomy," published in the first issue of *Nationalities Papers* for 2025.

Nataliia Shlikhta's article is dedicated to the analysis of the book by Yevheniia Kuznietsova, a Ukrainian writer, translator, and specialist in postcolonial studies, *Language as a Sword: How the Soviet Empire Spoke* (2023). In the author's opinion, the book quite convincingly shows the process of transforming the Russian language into a "sword" of the Soviet totalitarian state and explains why the languages of the nations and peoples of the former empire must serve as "shields" against it.

Wishing readers intellectual satisfaction and only positive impressions from familiarizing themselves with the above-mentioned articles and materials, the editorial board expresses its sincere gratitude to Mr. Serhii Zuzak, an alumnus of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, whose charitable support made the preparation of the 12th volume of the *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal* possible.

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