“MADONNA OF THE ROAD CROSSINGS” BY LINA KOSTENKO:
FORMS OF THE AUTHOR’S IDEA

Linas Kostenko’s collection “Madonna of the Road Crossings” (2011) represents a well-organized cycle of poems that are united thematically and lyrically. The collection is dedicated to the poet’s daughter, Oksana Pakhliovska, allowing the reader to witness the intimate family communication of the great poet with her immediate environment: daughter, son, husband, friends, etc. The author, however, delves beyond familial feelings and relationships, reaching deep philosophical generalizations, solving complex existential problems of human and country life in poetic cycles, drawing attention to ecological, cultural, socio-political issues that require an honest and frank answer. The collection consists of seventy-four poems, ten of which have titles ("Держава Куґель-Муґель", "Вінграновський над Россю", "Графиня Разумовська", "Гюґо в старому маяку", "Сучасники", "Люди з Табулена", "Біжутерія з магми", "Дон Піппо Лірозі", "Тарантела", "Наомі Уемура"). The poem "Обдарував присутністю, побув…" is dedicated to the memory of Leonid Kovalenko. In other poems, the title is identical to the first line, which creates an effect of "fusion" of these components of the lyrical work (title and introduction) and allows us not to focus on one problem.

The poems, "Madonna of the Road Crossings", combined into lyrical cycles, can be classified according to the principle of thematic and lyrical-psychological coherence: poems about nature, family relationships, happy childhood, love, art, the Chernobyl tragedy, etc. Poems dedicated to the forest, philosophical understanding of world evil can be combined into separate cycles. A unique cycle is "poetic miniatures-watercolors" – two-line (distich) or four-line poems (I. Dzyuba’s term), which are combined only by size, but thematically diverse and multiproblematic.

In "Madonna of the Road Crossings", Lina Kostenko avoids the classical chronological tying of her poems to specific dates and events. The logic here is served by internal dimensions and landmarks that are not always clear to the recipient, leaving the latter the honorable right to enjoy the poetry of the "elusive queen" (Yuriy Andrukhovich). The key words are: lyrical work, cycle of poems, existential problems, metonymic image, emotional tension, lyrical subject, lyrical experience.
Problem statement. The collection “Madonna of the Road Crossings” (2011) by Lina Kostenko was highly praised by contemporary critics. Literary experts consider her a model of high artistry and original imagery, a new page in the poetic biography of the poetess. They note the autobiographical basis of the collection, its dedication to the daughter and the variety of autobiographical details, where the most important existential problems of modern human life with its environmental, social, humanistic, and cultural problems are raised.

The relevance of the study is due, firstly, to the fact that Lina Kostenko is considered “a symbolic figure of the Ukrainian “sixties” [1, p. 1], and secondly, to the comprehensive scientific study of the work of a “deeply modern, deeply Ukrainian poetess” [Cited by: 1, p. 1] will contribute to the creation of a complete picture of the artistic world of the artist and the modern Ukrainian literary process.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The researchers rightly believe that Lina Kostenko’s book of poetry with the symbolic title “Madonna of the Crossroads” in its own way appears to be conclusive. Although it contains only 74 poems, in the author’s intention it is first and foremost a “gift book” for the daughter ... for the birthday”, which “should enter the modern literary process as an emblem book, a book that re-actualizes modernist trends in today’s christened time and vitalizes the poetics of visio-nerism bordering on verses-revelations and verses-prophecies” [2, p. 5]. Ivan Dzyuba in his fundamental book “There are poets for the ages” (2011) notes that “Madonna of the Road Crossings” is “not quite a “family album”, as it might seem from the interior and the annotation... This is a suggestive picture of the busy modernity, when the glorious acceleration of the historical time acquires a macabre character ... a picture against the background of suffering eternity, which, after all, with the blessing of the Madonna, the Madonna, if not of the Road Crossings, then the Off-roads, gives hope for some kind of human destiny. On that even in this infernal mess, people will somehow get to know each other, respect each other. It seems to me that the Madonna of the Road Crossings – or the Madonna of the Off-roads – by Lina Kostenko blesses all of us” [3, p. 90–91]. Thirdly, there is an urgent need for comprehensive reconnaissance of the poetess to cyclicity.

Valentyna Sayenko in the fundamental monograph “Poetry of Lina Kostenko: tradition, context, artistic originality” (2020) substantiated and scientifically proved that cyclization is the basis of Lina Kostenko’s work: Collections «Неповторність», «Над береґами вічної ріки», «Сад нетанучих скульптур», disintegrate into cycles, final book «Вибрано»; the latest collection «Річка Геракліта» (2011), which is rightly called «Вибраним-2» and which consists of the cycles «Осінні карнавали», «Сліпучий магніт, Сліпучий магніт: Клуб світогляда», «Весна підніме келихи тюльпанів», «Що в нас було? Любов і літо». The name of each of the cycles and the system of images-concepts spread in them are subject to a common musical principle...” [4, p. 321]. Valentyna Sayenko’s opinion that “the poetics of the title not only indicates the semantic significance, expressed succinctly, but also the formal principle by which poetic works are united into a single whole” [4, p. 321] seems to be very fruitful for further scientific research.

Hryhoriy Bilous rightly emphasizes that “it is impossible to be an active patriot and not love Lina Kostenko’s poetry” [5, p. 81]. This statement does not seem pathetic and odious, it reflects the deep essence of poetry and the life position of the poetess, who has become a symbol of the Ukrainian nation. But in the end, all critics and researchers bow before the talent of the genius poetess, pay tribute to her poetic gift, mastery of rhymes and the ability to combine «eternal» problems with specific socio-historical issues.

Setting objectives. We aim to consider the Artist’s poetry as internally organized cycles united by the principles of ideological and thematic unity, genre affinity, philosophical understanding of the problems of art, human existence, nature, war, etc. The analysis was based on structural-functional, typological, systemic, comparative-historical, archetypal, and psychological scientific methods.

Presenting the main material. The dedication of the collection to the daughter points at the of reader’s addressee of the poetess – her daughter – this is exactly how the artist outlines family and intimate communication in the lyrical works that make up the collection. The book includes poems from different years, claiming the category of the «chosen». The poetess refuses the external chronological order of including the poems in the collection, although she indicates the year (sometimes the date and month) at the end of each poem. Therefore, the sequence of the arrangement of the poems in the collection is determined by the logic of the internal lyrical confession of the poetess, and not purely by external dating. In the title there are lexemes of different semantic levels: Madonna – the Mother of God (a word of high spiritual style), and its definition («road crossings») is an everyday topographical detail of the urbanistic landscape. In this way, the pathetic level of religious spirituality and a prosaic definition of the space of human existence are combined. The poems of the collection to one degree
or another reflect such a semantic combination. One of the leitmotifs of the dedication is the motif of knowledge and characteristics of the own daughter, in whom the poetess sees a “noble soul” and thanks God for such a daughter («Я відчина Богу, що послав на землю / шляхетну душу, втілену в Тобі»). The series of characters in the collection is large, consisting mostly of representatives of the poetesse’s family (mother, husband, daughter, son), which objectively introduces the motif of autobiography.

In «Madonna of the Road Crossings» only ten out of seventy-four poems have a title («Держава Кутель-Мугель», «Вінгриновський над Россою», «Графія Разумовська», «Його в старому маяку», «Сучасники», «Люди з Табулена», «Біжутерія з магії», «Дон Піппо Лірозі», «Гарангела», «Наомі Уемура»). One poem («Обдарував присутність, побув…») has a dedication («To the memory of Leonid Kovalenko»). In other poems, in accordance with the well-known classical tradition, Kostenko uses the first line of the poem as a title. Thus, the over-text component – the title – completely coincides with the first line of the lyrical text, which creates the effect of the fusion of these components of the work, their artistic unity and complete identity.

Lina Kostenko has an inherent attraction to the internal cyclization of lyrical works. The poetess’s lyrics can be separately combined into cycles of poems about nature, love, traitors, careerists, pseudo-patriots, include patriotic poetry. “Poetic miniatures-watercolors” (the term of I. Dzyuba) also form a cycle, although they are not singled out by the poetess, entering into other problem-thematic groups. “Miniatures” “Madonna of the Cross”, united by us only by a formal feature – size: two-line (distich) or four-line poems – can be considered as an internally organized cycle – the “history” of the soul of the great poetess, her people and the country, which perceive life as a fabulous gift («А вранці із усіх казок / прийшов невиспаний бузок»), an opportunity to comprehend the philosophical categories of being («Хто я? / Стеблинка гравітаційного поля»), to understand the original source of genius («Важке / Усмішка двойлеза»). The poetess remains true to herself, bearing every-thing «старе», негативне» to the past: «Вже рік старий за обрії пливе» (1995) the antonymic pair “old – new” makes play

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Haiy у Новому буде все нове, – старі лиш вина, істини і друзі! [6, p. 79].

The quatrain not only philosophically interprets the problems of existence, but also correlates temporal categories of «вічного» та «швидкоплинного». The poetess remains true to herself, bearing everything “старе”, негативне» to the past: «Вже рік старий за обрії пливе» [6, p. 79], and new, positive – to the present and future: «Уже й Новий стоїть на виднокрузі» [6, p. 79]. In the covert sense, there is heard the opinion that a person should be ready for something new, positive: «Хай у Новому буде все нове…» [6, p. 79].

Poems dedicated to the Chernobyl tragedy can be singled out in a separate cycle

(«Не половинь в полі колоски» (1991), «Лиси стоють в концтаборі. Остотом…» (2010), «Коли ганяли голку патефони» (2011). The constant return to this issue indicates that it is continuously understood, reinterpreted, elaborated by the poetess and is included in the circle of her most important themes. The quatrain «Ne половинь в полi колоски» (1991) is built on the triple objections:

Не половинь в полi колоски.

Не ходять люди. М’ячики не скачуть [6, p. 60].

The system of objections, composed according to the crescendo principle, the build-up of a dramatic situation, creates an alarming emotional tension. And the last two lines, which, it would seem, should introduce a positive beginning («В Чорнобиль повертаються казки. / Самi себе розказують і плaчуть» [6, p. 60], only deepen tragic element of the situation: «казки», which are associated with the childhood, future, have to «самi собi розказувати» stories, because after the tragedy Chernobyl is depopulated. 
The poem «Коли замовили менути...» opens a cycle of poetry united by the theme of art. Conditionally, it can also include poetry «Починають зорі пригасати...» (2007), where a lyrical subject appeals for help to the great composers: Альбініоні, Верді, Сарасате, поможіть цей сум переобвести! [6, р. 46].

Theme of art becomes a leading one in the poetry «Чорна птиця б'є крильми по клавішах» (1998), which, in our opinion, is an elaborate metaphor, not fully understood by the reader, in which the lyrical subject expresses his admiration for the human creator («чорна птиця»), who beats his wings on the keys:

І з яких ти упала небес?
Може, Бах, вікі подолавши,
у твоєму серці воскрес? [6, р. 70].

In a separate cycle, one can unite poems related to memories of a happy childhood, a happy home («Коти, зайці, ведмедики, лисиці...», «Навшпиньки повертаються в ті дні», «Вікні жнуть в старому фоліанті», «Груханів остриг. Крига, крига, крига», «Мені силилась дорога. Дорога – і все»). In the poem «Коти, зайці, ведмедики, лисиці...» (2011) the lyrical subject associates the wonderful world of childhood with characteristic toys: cats, hares, bears, foxes, a pink monkey, a green elephant, a silk leopard.

Poems dedicated to the forest can be singled out in a separate cycle («Ліс був живий. Він не прощався», «У наших лісах блукають вже інші люди», «Я лісу не впізнала». Він горів»). In the collection «Чорна птиця б'є крильми по клавішах» there are not many such poems, but they are iconic and carry a heavy burden. The beginning of the poem «Ліс був живий. Він не прощався» (2002) is dedicated to one of the most frequent images of Lina Kostenko’s poetic system – the forest, which seemed eternal:

Ліс був живий. Він не прощався.
Вікі, здавалось, зв'яжуться і відвернуться.

This poetry is a longing for the moment «минала і минала, / і от тепер її нема» [6, р. 18], a kind of lyrical experience related to the past feeling of happiness, which was not realized at the time, but acquires meaning as memories of the past, which is interpreted in a new way by the lyrical subject. He understands that time passes and everything changes:

I tіlкі з відстані розлукі
обналить, змучить, защемити –
tвоя присутність, твоя руки,
tvoє обличчя у тумань! [6, р. 18].

In the piece of poetry «У наших лісах блукають вже інші люди» (2002) the problems of the change of generations and the transience of life are poetically understood. At the same time, the poetess again chooses one of her favorite images – «ліс», enjoyed by people of different generations:

В наших лісах блукають вже інші люди.
Вони нас не знають. Це будуть вже їхні ліси.
Життя непоправне. Його фінали й прелюдії впадають невпинно у інші долі й часи [6, р. 25].

The forest becomes a generalized image of nature, forming a life-affirming optimistic concept of the infinity of life.

The lyrical subject of the poem «Я думаю, – це так, а то була уже Доля» (2004) considers the general fundamental problems of life, which is graphically expressed by the use of capital letters to denote concepts «Доля», «Душа», «Вічність». The lyrical subject correlates these philosophical nominations with her own perception of life, complaining that «безмірно жаль, що ніжність вже не в моді. / І що життя нікого вже не віддасть» [6, р. 26].

In the poem «Домовичкам незатишно у місті» (2003) the theme of time is interpreted as nostalgia for the long-ago past. The lyrical subject correlates the historical time of the rural space with the space of the city, where «нема горища й комина», «немає хрестика свічками», «у інтер’єрах казка не живе» [6, р. 30]. At the same time, the leading emotional mood of this poem is connected with sadness about the historical past in its cultural and everyday form:

На Страсть не пишуть хрестика свічками.
З екранів щось стріляє і реве.
БІда сьогодні бути домовичками,
у інтер’єрах казка не живе [6, р. 30].

Comparing the patriarchal life of the Ukrainian house of the past and the reality of the modern city, the poetess makes the TV screen, from which «щось стріляє і реве» a component of the urban topos. We have already written about the fact that Lina Kostenko predicted a war with russia. And this temporary association of the TV screen with shooting and roaring shows that the poetess constantly remembered the threat and it worried her even in poems far from war themes. The same theme suddenly appears in the poem «На перевалі, там, на перевалі…» (2009), where it is about «чудесних шибайголов» – «студентське братство мандрівне» (Kostenko, 2012: 69). Remembering an episode from the past when «гриміли грози нетривалі / і дощ в градинки стріляє і реве» a component of the urban topos. We have already written about the fact that Lina Kostenko predicted a war with russia. And this temporary association of the TV screen with shooting and roaring shows that the poetess constantly remembered the threat and it worried her even in poems far from war themes. The same theme suddenly appears in the poem «На перевалі, там, на перевалі…» (2009), where it is about «чудесних шибайголов» – «студентське братство мандрівне» (Kostenko, 2012: 69). Remembering an episode from the past when «гриміли грози нетривалі / і дощ в градинки стріляє і реве» a component of the urban topos.

Мене підвозили геологи.
Камінчик маю на презент [6, р. 69].
The theme of war arises accidentally, unexpectedly: «Були і спалахи, і сполохи, і град обстрілював брезент» [6, p. 69]. Involuntary association with poetry «Мій перший вірш написаний в окопі…» hints at the inclusion of deep memory in the everyday communication of the lyrical subject.

Poems united by the problem of the poet’s role in society can be considered as a separate cycle. The poem «Ми хочемо тиші, хочемо храмів» (2006) is dedicated to the social contradictions between a civil society that wants silence and peace («Ми хочемо тиші, хочемо храмів / Мій хочемо музики й садів»), and the ruling power, which kills and punishes their people:

Нас убиває їхній атом.
А їх все більше, їх орда.
Ми що не виборем, то втратим,
і в цьому вся наша біда [6, p. 31].

Poetry represents an elaborate antithesis, in which a sharp public position is based on the awareness of the irreconcilability of the interests of the government and the people: «Ми хочем тиші… − «А всі залежимо від хамів»; «Ми всі залежимо від хамів! – «У нас немає наших храмів…»; «Нас убиває їхній атом» − «Ми що не виборем, то втратим…» [6, p. 31]. And although the poet avoids open protest and devastating criticism, her position is clearly defined. She openly and uncompromisingly opposes «хамів», «хрунів, хряків і вождів», «кланів і сваволь», «орди», which take away «наші храми», «наші долі».

Conclusions. The analysis of the collection “Madonna of the Road Crossings” allows us to conclude that the basic principle of its construction is cyclization. Firstly, the poems are internally united by ideological and thematic parameters (landscape, family, war lyrics, poems dedicated to the Chernobyl tragedy, art, the poet’s role in social life, etc.). Secondly, lyrical works can be grouped according to the external principle: couplets, quatrains, twelve-line poems, etc.). Thirdly, the very arrangement of the poems in the collection, which is not subject to chronological sequence, allows us to conclude that the author’s logic of distribution is still dominant, not always clear to the reader, but which gives the impression of organicity and completeness.

REFERENCES: