

Philosophy

УДК 130.2

DOI <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15545039>

**The role of Postcolonial Studies in studying the contemporary state of
Ukrainian culture**

Olena Tytar,

Doctor of Sciences (Philosophy), Professor, The Theory of Culture and
Philosophy of Science Department, Faculty of Philosophy, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
National University, Kharkiv, Ukraine, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1951-7830>

Hanna Kostenko,

Post-graduated of Theory of Culture and Philosophy of Science Department,
Philosophical Faculty, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Ukraine,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2731-5251>

Accepted: 16.05.2025 | Published: 29.05.2025

***Abstract.** Postcolonial studies are becoming one of the most important tools of philosophical analysis in the modern era, as they allow not only to comprehend past imperial practices, but also to realize what they are transforming into in modern conditions, in particular, creating new hierarchies of oppression and direct aggression. Ukraine is supposedly not a classic case of «overseas» European colonialism of the 19th and 20th centuries, although the development of postcolonial studies and the very situation of Ukraine as a victim of a full-scale Russian invasion in 2022 dictate the urgent need for precisely such theorizing within the framework of postcolonial thinking and postcolonial studies. It is postcolonial studies that*

should deconstruct imperial narratives and correct the cultural subordination of Ukrainian culture, emphasizing its independent mission in world culture.

***The goal** is to analyze how postcolonial studies contribute to the philosophical understanding of the current state of Ukrainian culture, primarily through the prism of literature, artistic and social practices.*

***Methods:** postcolonial socio-cultural analysis, hermeneutics, comprehensive analysis of literary and artistic discourses.*

***Results.** The key concepts and approaches of postcolonial theory are adapted to the analysis of the Ukrainian cultural situation of 2020-2025, the role of postcolonial studies with their specific terminological vocabulary regarding changes in Ukrainian society in recent years is revealed.*

The following concepts of postcolonial studies are reinterpreted in the Ukrainian context: «subalternity» (subordination), «hybridity», «mimicry», «muteness» (a property of the colonized that cannot express itself in discourse), «epistemological violence», «logic of national culture» (the logic of national culture appears as resistance to colonization) and «representation of the Other».

«Subalternity» consists in the fact that the voices of marginalized groups remain unheard, bans on the Ukrainian word contributed to both the marginalization of Ukrainianness and the production of supposedly second-rate art. Only by overcoming «subalternity» can one reach a holistic «logic of national culture» and replace imperial and Ukrainian-centric strategies.

It is proved that it is postcolonial thinking that provides the best opportunity to describe in appropriate terms the great Ukrainian experience of resistance and struggle for identity both in the conditions of centuries-old imperial domination and in the circumstances of modern military aggression. Decolonization is no longer just an intellectual gesture, it has become an ethical, political and even existential need.

It is shown that it is postcolonial studies that open up new epistemological horizons for understanding the Ukrainian experience of 2000-2025, since they allow

us to ask such basic questions as who is the leading narrator in the discourse about Ukraine, how legitimate is the structure of postcolonial knowledge, and by what philosophical means to overcome the colonial inferiority and secondariness imposed by the aggressor in culture, language, art and science.

Postcolonial theory opens up new horizons for understanding the Ukrainian experience of 2000–2025. It allows us to go beyond the traditional national discourse and ask fundamental questions: who speaks about Ukraine and what structure of knowledge is legitimate, how to overcome colonial inferiority in culture, language, and science.

Conclusions. *The state of Ukrainian culture requires further deep theoretical and practical decolonization, the destruction of imperial narratives.*

In general, this involves both a conscious rejection of imposed imperial traces and the creation of a new free alternative epistemological space, the basis of which will be the logic of national culture. Postcolonial thinking is a leading intellectual tool that allows us to free ourselves from violence and the “charm” of empire, to build a new authentic national subjectivity capable of both national development and fruitful cultural dialogue with the whole world. The best assistant in this is postcolonial studies. The main prospects of postcolonial studies in Ukraine are related to their heuristic ability to offer new models of identity and the logic of national development.

Keywords: *identity, postcolonial studies, postcolonialism, anticolonialism, subalternism, hybridity, philosophy of culture, philosophy of literature*

**Роль постколоніальних студій у вивченні сучасного стану
української культури**

Титар Олена Володимирівна

доктор філософських наук, професор, кафедра теорії культури і
філософії науки філософського факультету, Харківський національний
університет імені В.Н. Каразіна, Україна,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1951-7830>

Ганна Костянтинівна Костенко,

Аспірантка, кафедра теорії культури та філософії науки філософського
факультету, Харківський національний університет імені В.Н. Каразіна,
Україна, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2731-5251>

***Анотація.** Постколоніальні студії стають одним з найважливіших інструментів філософського аналізу в сучасну добу, оскільки дозволяють не тільки осмислити минулі імперські практики, але усвідомити те, у що вони перетворюються у сучасних умовах, зокрема створюючи нові ієрархії пригнічення та прямої агресії. Україна нібито не є класичним випадком «заморського» європейського колоніалізму XIX – XX століття, хоча розвиток постколоніальних студій та сама ситуації України як жертви повномасштабного вторгнення росії у 2022 році диктує нагальну необхідність саме такого теоретизування в межах постколоніального мислення і постколоніальних студій. Саме постколоніальні студії мають деконструювати імперські наративи і виправити культурну підпорядкованість української культури, наголосити на її самостійній місії у світовій культурі.*

***Мета** - проаналізувати, як постколоніальні студії сприяють*

філософському осмисленню сучасного стану української культури, насамперед через призму літератури, мистецьких та суспільних практик.

Методи: постколоніальний соціально-культурний аналіз, герменевтика, комплексний аналіз літературних та мистецьких дискурсів.

Результати. Адаптовані ключові поняття і підходи постколоніальної теорії до аналізу української культурної ситуації 2020-2025 років, розкрита роль постколоніальних студій з їхнім специфічним термінологічним словником щодо змін в українському суспільстві останніх років.

Переосмислені в українському контексті такі поняття постколоніальних студій як «субальтерність» (підпорядкованість), «гібридність», «мімікрія», «німотність» (властивість колонізованого, що не може виразити себе у дискурсі), «епістемологічне насильство», «логіка національної культури» (логіка національної культури постає як опір колонізації) та «репрезентація Іншого».

«Субальтерність» полягає в тому, що голоси маргіналізованих груп залишаються не почутими, заборони на українське слово сприяли як маргіналізації українськості так і вироблення мистецтва нібито другого татунку. Лише при подоланні «субальтерності» можна вийти на цілісну «логіку національної культури», замінити імперські стратегії та україноцентричні.

Доводиться, що саме постколоніальне мислення надає найкращу можливість описати в належних термінах великий український досвід опору та боротьби за ідентичність як в умовах багатовікового імперського домінування, так і в обставинах сучасної військової агресії. Декolonізація вже не є лише інтелектуальним жестом, вона стала етичною, політичною та навіть екзистенційною потребою.

Показано, що саме постколоніальні студії відкривають нові епістемологічні горизонти для осмислення українського досвіду 2000- 2025

років, оскільки дозволяють поставити такі базові питання, як, хто є провідним наратором в промові про Україну, наскільки легітимована структура постколоніального знання, якими філософськими засобами подолати насаджену агресором колоніальну меншовартість та другорядність у культурі, мові, мистецтві та науці.

Постколоніальна теорія відкриває нові горизонти для осмислення українського досвіду 2000–2025 років. Вона дає змогу вийти за межі традиційного національного дискурсу й поставити фундаментальні питання: хто говорить про Україну і яка структура знання є легітимною, як подолати колоніальну меншовартість у культурі, мові, науці.

Висновки. Стан української культури потребує подальшої глибокої теоретичної і практичної деколонізації, руйнування імперських наративів.

Загалом це передбачає як свідому відмову від нав'язаних імперських слідів, так і створення нового вільного альтернативного епістемологічного простору, в основі якого буде логіка національної культури. Постколоніальне мислення є провідним інтелектуальним інструментом, що дозволяє звільнитись від насильства і «чар» імперії, побудувати нову автентичну національну суб'єктність, здатної як до національної розбудови, так і плідного культурного діалогу з усім світом. Найкращим помічником в цьому є постколоніальні студії. Головні перспективи постколоніальних студій в Україні пов'язані з їх евристичною здатністю пропонувати нові моделі ідентичності та логіки національного розвитку.

Ключові слова: ідентичність, постколоніальні студії, постколоніалізм, антиколоніалізм, субальтерність, гібридність, філософія культури, філософія літератури

Problem statement. Postcolonial studies, as an interdisciplinary approach that emerged in the second half of the XXth century, have become an important tool

for analyzing cultural, social, and political processes in countries that have experienced colonial dependence. In Ukraine, which for centuries has been under the influence of various imperial structures, including the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, postcolonial discourse acquires special significance.

Modern Ukrainian culture, formed in the conditions of independence after 1991, is a unique field for studying postcolonial processes, since it reflects both the legacy of the colonial past and the desire for decolonization and the affirmation of national identity. The latter is of exceptional importance both for resisting the enemy during the Russian-Ukrainian war and for affirming the high status of our state in the world.

The Ukrainian context of applying postcolonial theory involves both consideration of general problems of postcolonialism and analysis of emancipation practices, and the Ukrainian community's liberation from the inferiority complex. In the Ukrainian context, great attention should be paid to the educational potential of postcolonial studies.

Analysis of recent publications. We consider both the establishment of key concepts of postcolonialism and their adaptation to the Ukrainian context, as well as the challenges associated with the decolonization of culture in the context of globalization and the Russian-Ukrainian war that has been ongoing since 2014. Therefore, our research is based on the classical theoretical works of Edward Said [16; 17], Homi Bhabha [3; 24], Gayatri Spivak [30], as well as the works of Ukrainian scholars such as Marko Pavlyshyn [13-14], Tamara Gundorova [7], and Vitaliy Chernetsky [25]. Ukrainian authors first introduce postcolonial themes into Ukrainian theoretical discourse (Marko Pavlyshyn) [13-14], then use a synthesis of approaches, in particular postcolonial studies and generational trauma (Tamara Gundorova) [7], and at this stage we can already make a more complete description and mapping of our colonial past and postcolonial present (Vitaly Cheretsky) [25].

In addition, we used general works on the theory of nations (B. Andersen [1]), the theory of power and power subjugation, knowledge as an effective form of power (M. Foucault) [20], anti-colonial and post-colonial national discourses in Ukraine (L. Bilanyuk [4], O. Hnatiuk [5], Ya. Hrytsak [6], O. Zabuzhko [10; 11]).

In the development of the theory of postcolonialism over the past 5 years, new themes and concepts have emerged. In particular, this is the concept of transgression as key in the awareness of the experience of the Other and post-Orientalism in J.H. Joo, Y.C. Kim [27], the difficulties of combining queer and postcolonial identities («Queering Postcolonial Worlds») [28], the combination of the fight against postcolonial and gender discrimination, special sensitivity to women in the postcolonial world (I. Talks) [31]. The problem of creating a new postcolonial literature as a means of expressing a national worldview also remains widespread in the relevant postcolonial scientific literature, for example, this year the work of Rodrigues dos Santos (Rodrigues dos Santos E. «The Late Postcolonial Condition. Twenty-First-Century Reconfigurations in the Literatures of Portuguese-Speaking Africa» [29]) was published.

Special attention is paid to the issue of creating a colonial and decolonial canon of Ukrainian culture, the role of criticism and satire in this (M. Kravets [12], M. Pavlyshyn [13], S. Stepkin [19]), in particular, the creation of a post-colonial map of Ukrainian literature [15] and the difficulties of overcoming its colonial status (E. Sverstyuk [18], V. Shevchuk [23]).

Highlighting previously unresolved parts of the general problem. (Problem statement). Although formally Ukraine was not a colony in the classical sense, its history testifies to multiple subordination: to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire, Austria-Hungary, and the USSR. The Russian imperial policy, which included cultural assimilation, the ban on the Ukrainian language («Valuev Circular», «Ems Decree»), the marginalization of the local intelligentsia, the imposition of a «Great Russian» center and the logic of

development as civilizational standards, had particularly pronounced colonial features. In the XXIst century, this colonial paradigm was transformed into a form of «neo-imperial thinking». Russia, claiming the role of the heir to the empire, restored ideological mechanisms of control, in particular through the ideology of the «Russian world», propaganda, and the infiltration of humanitarian knowledge. The full-scale war of 2022 became an extreme form of imperial invasion, which activated the process of decolonial awakening in Ukraine. Given this, Ukraine has every right to be included in postcolonial analysis, and postcolonial studies to become the leading humanitarian scientific methodology in Ukraine. It is especially important to consider the issue of epistemological emancipation as a break from Russian intellectual canons, the development of one's own academic, cultural and political narratives.

Statement of the goals and objectives of the article. The purpose of our research is to analyze how postcolonial studies contribute to the philosophical understanding of the current state of Ukrainian culture, primarily through the prism of literature, artistic and social practices.

From this follows a number of important tasks of our research;

1) study and adaptation of key concepts of postcolonial studies to the Ukrainian realities of the early twentieth century, consideration of these concepts in a synchronic and diachronic perspective;

2) determination of the extent to which the terminological vocabulary of postcolonial studies (hybridity, logic of the colonizer, representation of the Other) corresponds to the current state of Ukrainian culture; how can the experience of the Ukrainian struggle for its subjectivity be described in such terms;

3) to reveal a new postcolonial epistemology of Ukrainian culture and its possibilities;

4) a separate task is to understand the prospects of postcolonial studies for Ukrainian culture both today and in the future.

Presentation of the main material and the scientific results of the research obtained. Postcolonial studies in academic discourse as a separate discipline arises in the context of the decolonization movement in Africa, Asia and Latin America [13], the further development of postcolonial studies (Eva Thompson) showed that its concepts can be applied to the countries of Eastern Europe, to show new «white oppressed» in Europe itself, in particular in Ukraine [25]. The main theoretical foundations of postcolonial studies, from our point of view, are Edward Said's orientalism [17] and Homi Bhabha's hybridity of culture [24]. In particular, Edward Said [17] develops the concept of orientalism, the imperial perception of the East, which describes how imperial centers construct the image of the "other" to justify their domination, this "other" has the right only to a condescending attitude, he is a kind of "savage" who is fundamentally devoid of logic. In the Ukrainian context, this is manifested in stereotypes of Ukrainians as «less civilized», «emotional», «irresponsible», or «provincial» in Russian or Soviet discourse [25]. Homi Bhabha's introduction of the concept of «hybridity» [24] allows for the clarification of concepts in scientific discourse that can show how colonized cultures adapt elements of the colonizer's culture, creating new, hybrid forms of identity. This, so to speak, «mastering» of the alien turns out to be a perfect form of domination, since it is familiar and embedded in the psychology of the conquered. In Ukraine, this is particularly clearly manifested in literary practices, where the Ukrainian language and traditions are combined with imperial influences, the most famous case of such a combination being observed in the work of Mykola Gogol [7].

One of the main features of colonialism is that it deprives the colonized of their voice, they are either silent or forced to proclaim imperial narratives. This oppression, or «sublaterality», of the colonized was first analyzed in detail by Gayatri Spivak [30], who convincingly proves the key theoretical idea that the voices of marginalized groups often remain invisible (unheard) in dominant narratives. These voices are deliberately silenced or destroyed, this is manifested in the

muteness of the culture of the colonized, in Ukrainian culture, in particular, these are numerous attempts to ban the Ukrainian language or give it a dependent status, the “language of the village”.

In Ukrainian culture, this applies both to the historical silencing of Ukrainian identity and to modern attempts at its distorted restoration, when they talk exclusively about the peasant character of Ukrainian culture or about Ukrainian culture as a culture of exclusively holidays and «sharovarschyna». In particular, the concept of sublaterality [30] allows us to analyze how colonial structures negatively influenced the formation of Ukrainian culture and how modern cultural practices counteract this colonial legacy.

Unfortunately, we are forced to state that Ukrainian culture developed under conditions of long-term colonial rule. In the 19th century, the Russian Empire restricted the use of the Ukrainian language, and in the 20th century, the Soviet Union pursued a policy of Russification, destroying the intelligentsia during the «Shooteed Renaissance» and the Holodomor of 1932–1933. At the same time, the western regions of Ukraine were under the influence of Poland and Austria-Hungary, which also formed specific cultural narratives [6; 11]. This multiple colonial legacy created a complex cultural identity, which Marko Pavlyshyn calls «polycolonial» [14]. Ukrainian culture was forced to maneuver between different imperial influences, which led to the emergence of hybrid forms of art, literature and social practices.

Ukraine’s independence opened up opportunities for cultural decolonization, but this process turned out to be uneven. In the 1990s, attempts were made to restore the national identity as Cossack, the «Cossack myth» of Ukraine is being revived, and true historical narratives are also being restored (it should be noted that the true history of Ukraine during the 1920s–1980s was destroyed in every possible way by Moscow, even all true folklorists, anthropologists, and Ukrainian ethnologists during the 1920s–1930s were ruthlessly destroyed, in most cases simply physically

liquidated) [6; 18]. However, Russian cultural influence remained strong in the 1990s, particularly through media, pop culture, and education. The events of 2014, both the Maidan Revolution and the opposing events – the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas, which revealed the true nature of the enemy – became a kind of catalyst for active decolonization [12].

In 2017–2019, a number of official laws were also adopted aimed at supporting the Ukrainian language and culture, in particular the Law «On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language» (2019). Also, the theme of hybrid war, national trauma, and the search for national identity began to be recognized in literary and political discourses, reflecting the ideological postcolonial turn in Ukrainian society. To characterize the changes that occurred in Ukrainian culture in the XXth and XXIst centuries, we use the concept of «internal colonialism».

The concept of internal colonialism was developed by the cultural scholar Alexander Etkind [26], who proposed a new perspective for the analysis of the imperial practices of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and the modern Russian Federation. In contrast to classical colonialism, which assumes the geographical remoteness of colonies, internal colonialism describes the processes of exploitation and cultural domination within a single imperial territory, where the metropolis constructs peripheral regions and ethnic groups as negatively labeled, «other», «alien». In the Ukrainian context, this concept is particularly relevant, since Ukraine has historically been an object of Russian internal colonialism, and the modern transformations of Russian imperialism, in particular after 2014, demonstrate new forms of this practice.

Alexander Etkind, in his work «Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience» (2011) [26], argues that the Russian Empire, unlike Western colonial powers, directed its expansionist practices not only to territories located far beyond the seas, but also to its own border territories, or territories that had fallen under the

influence of double treaties through deception, such as Ukraine, the Caucasus, or Siberia. This process was characterized by economic exploitation, cultural assimilation, and the construction of peripheral peoples as “savages.”

In the context of Ukraine, for example, internal colonialism manifested itself through excessive economic exploitation of Ukraine as the «breadbasket of the empire», exclusively as a source of resources for the metropolis. This was reinforced by the policy of Russification, which aimed to assimilate Ukrainians into the Russian cultural space, Ukrainians were to become a less developed branch of the Russian people, striving to unite with their «elder brother» (hence the cult of Bohdan Khmelnytsky and the Pereyaslav Rada, which supposedly embodied the age-old desires of the Ukrainian people).

It must be said that internal colonialism is a flexible system that adapts to historical conditions [26]. In the Soviet period, it was transformed into ideological expansion through the concept of a common «Soviet people», in the post-Soviet situation it used all permitted and prohibited methods: from hybrid cultural influence to direct armed aggression against Ukraine. During the Soviet period, internal colonialism intensified through forced collectivization, the Holodomor of 1932–1933, and repressions against Ukrainian intelligentsia («The Shot Renaissance»). These actions not only destroyed a significant part of the Ukrainian cultural elite, but also intensified assimilation through the Russification of education, media, and administrative structures. In the post-Soviet period, after the collapse of the USSR, Russia continued to view Ukraine as part of its «canonical territory» [26], from which it had the right to extract profits and human resources (the limitrophe theory). This was manifested in the cultural dominance of Russian-language content in the media, support for pro-Russian political forces, and promotion of the narrative of «brotherly peoples». However, continuing the concept of O. Etkind [26], internal colonialism in modern conditions is taking on new forms, adapting to the globalized world and information technologies. After 2014, with the beginning of Russian

aggression against Ukraine (annexation of Crimea and war in Donbas), Russian imperialism transformed into a hybrid form that combines military, informational and cultural strategies.

Russia actively uses propaganda to maintain the image of Ukraine as a «failed state» or «artificial entity». These narratives, spread through the media, social networks and cultural products, are a modern analogue of imperial stereotypes about the «backwardness» of the province. For example, Russian TV series and literature often depict Ukrainians as comically dishonest characters [19], which in particular corresponds to E. Said's orientalist approach, but within the framework of internal colonialism. Russia uses economic levers, such as gas wars or trade restrictions, to weaken Ukraine, which is a continuation of the economic exploitation characteristic of internal colonialism. In response to these transformations, Ukraine has intensified decolonization processes, which include legislative support for the Ukrainian language, the decommunization of toponyms and monuments, and the development of national cinema and literature. These steps are a reaction to internal colonialism, as they are aimed at destroying Russia's cultural hegemony and restoring the subaltern voice of Ukrainians, in Gayatri Spivak's terminology [30].

The contemporary transformations of Russian imperialism, which are analyzed through O. Etkind's concept of «internal colonialism» is particularly fruitful, have had a profound impact on Ukrainian culture. First, they stimulate a rethinking of national identity through literature, art, and cinema. For example, the novels of Serhiy Zhadan («Voroshilovgrad» [8], «Internat» [9]) directly address the theme of war and Russian influence, deconstructing imperial narratives. Secondly, they increase polarization in society, as Russian-speaking Ukrainians face the challenge of rethinking their identity in the conditions of hybrid war. Thirdly, these transformations contribute to the globalization of Ukrainian culture, as the fight against Russian imperialism attracts the attention of the international community [12], which is visible in the translations of Ukrainian literature and the participation

of Ukrainian artists in world cultural events and festivals.

Ukrainian literature has always been at the forefront of the development of postcolonial thinking; due to the development of sublaterality and colonial oppression, national literature played a much greater role than in ordinary societies, which are not imposed with an inferiority complex or secondary status, becoming a kind of national philosophy.

At the same time, Ukrainian literature itself is one of the key objects of postcolonial studies, since it reflects both colonial pressure and resistance to it. In particular, in the 20th century, literature became an arena for artistic and ideological struggle between Ukrainian modernism and Soviet ideology. Contemporary Ukrainian literature, as Tamara Gundorova rightly puts it, is «postcolonial in nature», as it constantly reinterprets imperial narratives.

In the early 2000s, even works of «classical» literature and modernism (Taras Shevchenko [7; 15], Lesya Ukrainka, Ivan Franko [11]) are often analyzed through a postcolonial prism. In this postcolonial context, for example, Taras Shevchenko's poetry is not only an expression of the national spirit, but also a protest against Russian imperialism. For example, his poem «Caucasus» speaks of the liberation of all peoples from the domination of the Russian Empire. The image of Prometheus, who as an unconquered spirit awakens others, comes to life and «laughs again», becomes a symbol of the invincibility of the Ukrainian people, since «our soul does not die // will does not die» [22]. Behind such «great knights» in the national struggle as Prometheus, there is truth and God's will: «For you is truth, for you is glory // And holy will» [22]. Other images of T. Shevchenko's «orphan» or «slave» resonates with Gayatri Spivak's concept of subalternity.

Contemporary Ukrainian writers such as Yuriy Andrukhovych [2], Oksana Zabuzhko [10, 11], Serhiy Zhadan [8-9], and Sofiya Andrukhovych also actively work with postcolonial themes. In particular, Oksana Zabuzhko's novel «Museum of Abandoned Secrets» (2009) [10] is illustrative, which explores generational

trauma, the trauma of the colonial past, and their impact on contemporary identity.

Serhiy Zhadan, in his works, particularly in «Voroshilovgrad» (2010) [8], addresses the post-Soviet space as a territory of cultural hybridity, where Ukrainian identity confronts Russian influence.

Postmodern Ukrainian literature also reflects attempts to «decolonize» the canon. For example, translations of works by Ukrainian authors into English (in particular, with the support of the Ukrainian Book Institute) contribute to the emergence of Ukrainian culture on the global stage, destroying stereotypes about its «provinciality».

Hybridity, as a key concept of postcolonial theory, developed by Homi Bhabha [3], describes the process of creating new cultural forms through the interaction of colonized and colonizing cultures. In the context of Ukrainian literature, hybridity manifests itself in the combination of Ukrainian identity with elements of imperial (Russian, Soviet, Western) influences, as well as in the creative reinterpretation of these influences to form a unique voice. Contemporary Ukrainian writers, such as Serhiy Zhadan [8; 9], Artem Chekh [21], Oksana Zabuzhko [10] and Yuriy Andrukhovych [2], use hybridity in the spirit of postmodernism as a strategy for deconstructing colonial narratives and asserting a postcolonial identity.

It is very important to understand the functioning of postcolonial discourses to analyze literary practices through the prism of hybridity, with an emphasis on linguistic, thematic and genre aspects. Serhiy Zhadan, one of the most famous contemporary Ukrainian writers, in his works, in particular in the novels «Voroshilovgrad» (2010) [8] and «Internat» (2017) [9], explores the hybridity of the post-Soviet cultural space. His characters often find themselves on the border between Ukrainian and Russian identities, between rural and urban, between the past and the present. In particular, in «Voroshilovgrad» [8] S. Zhadan depicts Donbas as a space of cultural hybridity, where the Ukrainian language, Soviet nostalgia and globalized pop culture coexist in tension. For example, the main character of the

novel, Herman, returns to his hometown, where he encounters a fragmented society that combines local traditions with post-Soviet realities [8]. S. Zhadan skillfully uses hybrid language, a mixture of Ukrainian literary norms, Surzhyk and Russian-language inserts to reflect the polyphony of the region. This is an example of «mimicry», according to H. Bhabha [3], which not only reflects colonial influence, but also a strategy of resistance to this influence, the «double» word, according to Bakhtinian terminology, overthrows the existing colonial canon along with humor, as S. Zhadan reinterprets imperial narratives through irony and local context. In «Internat» [9] this hybridity takes on a tragic dimension. The novel is set against the backdrop of the war in Donbas, where the main character, Pasha, a Ukrainian language teacher, travels through the conflict zone. S. In order to show the fragmentation and treachery of this new world, Zhadan mixes genres such as dystopia, road novel, and realistic narrative to show that war destroys hybrid identities, forcing characters to ultimately choose between loyalty to the Ukrainian state and belonging to post-Soviet ties. Hybridity in S. Zhadan is both a creative force and a source of conflict, reflecting the complexity of decolonization in contemporary Ukraine.

Artem Chekh, author of the novels «Point Zero» (2017) [21] and «Who Are You?» (2021), uses hybridity to explore personal and collective traumas caused by war and postcolonial legacy. In «Point Zero» [21], which is based on Chekh's experience as a participant in the war in Donbas, hybridity manifests itself in a combination of documentary, fiction, and philosophical reflections. The author mixes Ukrainian and Russian, reflecting the realities of a bilingual front-line environment, where soldiers communicate in Surzhyk or switch to Russian in everyday situations. This linguistic hybridity emphasizes the ambivalence of identities in the conflict zone, where national consciousness is formed in conditions of cultural mixing.

In «Who Are You?» A. Chech turns to his childhood in post-Soviet Ukraine,

where hybridity is revealed in the combination of Soviet aesthetics (panel houses, pioneer camps) with the new realities of independence (Western pop culture, national revival). The protagonist of the story, Timofey, raised by his veteran grandfather, lives on the border of two worlds: the Soviet past and the Ukrainian present. A. Chech, like S. Zhadan, uses hybridity as a tool for deconstructing nostalgia for the USSR, showing how it coexists with the desire for a new identity. His style, combining lyricism with rough realism, is an example of mimicry that allows us to rethink the colonial legacy.

Oksana Zabuzhko, a prominent writer and philosopher [10-11], in her works, in particular in the novel «Museum of Abandoned Secrets» (2009) [10], explores the hybridity of postcolonial Ukrainian culture through the prism of historical memory and gender. The novel combines elements of a family saga, a historical detective story, and a postmodern game, creating a hybrid narrative that spans several centuries of Ukrainian history. O. Zabuzhko mixes Ukrainian, Soviet, and Western cultural codes to show how the colonial experience shaped national consciousness [10]. For example, the story of Darka, a contemporary journalist, is intertwined with stories about the UPA, the Holodomor, and Soviet repression, creating a multilayered text that reflects the hybridity of Ukrainian identity.

Zabuzhko's linguistic hybridity is manifested in the use of archaisms, dialectisms, and literary Ukrainian, contrasting with modern vocabulary and Anglicisms. This strategy allows the author to deconstruct the Russian-Soviet narrative of Ukraine as a province and to propose an alternative history based on a subaltern voice [27]. Zabuzhko's hybridity is an act of resistance that allows for the restoration of silenced aspects of Ukrainian culture, such as the female experience or the national liberation struggle. Yuriy Andrukhovych, one of the founders of Ukrainian postmodernism, uses hybridity as a tool for ironic deconstruction of imperial myths in his novels «Moscowiada» (1993) [2] and «Twelve Rings» (2003). In «Moscowiada» [2], Yu. Andrukhovych depicts Moscow as the center of imperial

culture, but does so through grotesque and parody, mixing Ukrainian, Russian, and Soviet cultural traditions. The protagonist, the poet Otto von F., is a hybrid figure: a Ukrainian who writes in Russian, lives in the Soviet capital, but dreams of a European identity. The novel's linguistic hybridity reflects the multiplicity of identities that coexist in the postcolonial space [2].

In «The Twelve Rings», Y. Andrukhovych turns to the Galician context, where hybridity manifests itself in the combination of Ukrainian, Polish, Austrian, and Jewish cultures. The novel is a postmodern play on the myths of Galicia, where characters such as Karl-Josef Zumbrunner embody cultural mixing. Y. Andrukhovych uses hybridity as a way to go beyond the national narrative, offering a cosmopolitan vision that is at the same time rooted in the Ukrainian experience. His texts are an example of mimicry, which allows for a rethinking of the colonial legacy through irony and creative freedom.

The literary practices of S. Zhadan, A. Chekh, O. Zabuzhko, and Yu. Andrukhovych demonstrate how hybridity functions as a creative strategy in Ukrainian literature. It allows writers to deconstruct imperial narratives, when through irony, parody, and linguistic mixing, authors destroy stereotypes about Ukraine as a province.

Another consequence of such hybridity of narrative is the recovery of the subaltern voice itself and the establishment of the possibility of its influence: hybridity allows for the expression of the experiences of marginalized groups, such as women, veterans, or residents of frontline territories.

As a result, in postcolonial literary discourses, this combination of local and global elements contributes to the creation of a modern Ukrainian culture that is open to the world but retains national specificity. Hybridity in these authors is not only a reflection of colonial legacy, but also a tool of decolonization, allowing for a rethinking of the past and building the future. Their works show that Ukrainian literature is a dynamic space where postcolonial concepts acquire new meanings in

the context of contemporary challenges, such as war and globalization. Contemporary Ukrainian visual art also actively works with postcolonial themes. Artists such as Arsen Savadov, Oleksandr Roitburd and Zhanna Kadyrova use irony and deconstruction to rethink the Soviet legacy. For example, Zhanna Kadyrova's installations, which use «Soviet mosaics» in new contexts, are a metaphor for the fragmentation of the imperial past. Ukrainian cinema has been experiencing a «Renaissance» since 2014, largely linked to decolonization. Films such as Serhiy Loznytsia's «Donbas» (2018), Valentyn Vasyanovych's «Atlantis» (2019), and Marina Er Horbach's «Klondike» (2022) address themes of war and postcolonial trauma. These films not only document contemporary realities, but also deconstruct imperial narratives, offering an alternative perspective on Ukrainian identity.

Decolonization in Ukraine is not limited to art and literature, but permeates social practices. For example, the decommunization movement (2015–2020) [12] led to the renaming of thousands of place names and the dismantling of Soviet-era monuments. This process, while controversial, is an example of a postcolonial attempt to rewrite the spatial and symbolic landscape of the country.

Education has also become an arena for decolonization. Reforms in school and university curricula are aimed at restoring Ukrainian historical memory and reducing Russian influence. At the same time, globalization creates new challenges, as Ukrainian culture must balance between local identity and universal values.

Conclusions. Postcolonial studies provide a powerful toolkit for analyzing contemporary Ukrainian culture, allowing us to uncover mechanisms of colonial influence and strategies of resistance. Literature, art, cinema, and social practices demonstrate how Ukraine is rethinking its past and building a new identity in a postcolonial vein. At the same time, war, globalization, and internal challenges require a flexible approach to decolonization that combines local traditions with universal values. This includes further exploration of hybrid cultural practices, support for subaltern voices, and dialogue with global postcolonial discourses,

which will allow Ukraine not only to confront internal colonialism but also to assert its cultural sovereignty.

Despite the progress made, the decolonization of Ukrainian culture faces several challenges, the greatest of which is the Russo-Ukrainian war and Russian imperialism. Russian aggression reinforces the need for decolonization but also complicates cultural dialogue in frontline regions. At the same time, Western cultural influences can both support decolonization through the recognition of Ukrainian culture and create new forms of dependence.

The prospects for postcolonial studies in Ukraine are linked to their ability to offer new models of identity.

Further research could focus on a comparative analysis of the Ukrainian experience with other postcolonial cultures, as well as on the role of digital media in shaping new cultural narratives. Postcolonial studies will remain relevant for Ukraine as long as it continues its struggle for cultural and political sovereignty

Список використаної літератури

1. Андерсон Б. Уявлені спільноти: роздуми про походження і поширення націоналізму / Б. Андерсон ; пер. з англ. В. Морозов. – Київ : Критика, 2005. – 272 с.
2. Андрухович Ю. Московіада. – Львів: Вид-во Старого Лева, 2023. – 232 с.
3. Бгабга Х. Локація культури / Х. Бгабга ; пер. з англ. О. Коваль. – Київ : Видавничий дім «КМ Академія», 2010. – 312 с.
4. Біланюк Л. Картина мовного світогляду в Україні // Мовознавство. – 2001. – №4-5. С.44-51.
5. Гнатюк О. Антиколоніальний дискурс в українській літературі: від Шевченка до сучасності / О. Гнатюк // Українська література в загальноєвропейському контексті. – 2018. – № 3. – С. 45–60.
6. Грицак Я. Страсті за націоналізмом: історичні есе / Я. Грицак. – Київ : Критика, 2004. – 344 с.

7. Гундорова Т. Післячорнобильська бібліотека: український літературний постмодерн / Т. Гундорова. – Київ : Критика, 2005. – 264 с.
8. Жадан С. Ворошиловград. - Харків: Фоліо, 2010.
9. Жадан С. Інтернат. – Чернівці: Meridian Czernowitz, 2017. – 336 с.
10. Забужко О. Музей покинутих секретів. - Київ: Факт, 2009.
11. Забужко О. Філософія української ідеї та європейський контекст: франківський період / О. Забужко. – Київ : Факт, 2006. – 496 с.
12. Кравець М. Філософія трансформаційних процесів інформаційного формату структури масової політичної культури // Вісник НТУУ «КПІ». Політологія. Соціологія. Право. – 2021. – Вип. 2 (50). – С.58-61.
13. Павлишин М. Канон та іконостас. - Київ: Критика, 2008. – 447 с.
14. Павлишин М. Постколоніальна критика і українська література / М. Павлишин // Сучасність. – 2016. – № 5. – С. 22–35.
15. Постколоніальна мапа сучасної української літератури: курс лекцій [Електронний ресурс] / Львівський національний університет імені Івана Франка. – Режим доступу: <http://philology.lnu.edu.ua/postcolonial-map>. – Назва з екрана. (Дата звернення: 02.04.2025)
16. Саїд Е. Культура й імперіалізм / Е. Саїд ; пер. з англ. М. Климчук. – Київ : Критика, 2007. – 512 с.
17. Саїд Е. Орієнталізм. - Київ: Основи, 2003. – 511 с.
18. Сверстюк Є. На хвилі свободи: есеї про культуру і політику / Є. Сверстюк. – Луцьк : Терен, 2004. – 312 с.
19. Стьопкін С. Ноука от Горького Лука. Сборник лекцій по кацаповеденію / С. Стьопкін. – Харків : Віват, 2015. – 320 с.
20. Фуко М. Археологія знання / М. Фуко ; пер. з фр. В. Шовкун. – Київ : Ніка-Центр, 2004. – 320 с.
21. Чех А. Точка нуль. – Чернівці: Видавець Померанцев Святослав, 2023. – 216 с.

22. Шевченко Т. Кавказ [Електронний ресурс]. – Режим доступу: <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/printit.php?tid=741>– (Дата звернення: 02.04.2025)
23. Шевчук В. Муза роксоланська: українська література XVI–XVIII століть / В. Шевчук. – Київ : Либідь, 2005. – 760 с.
24. Bhabha H. K. The Location of Culture. – London: Routledge, 1994. – 408 p.
25. Chernetsky V. Mapping Postcommunist Cultures: Russia and Ukraine in the Context of Globalization. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007. – 384 p.
26. Etkind A. Internal Colonization: Russia’s Imperial Experience. – Cambridge: Polity, 2011. – 300 p.
27. Joo J.H., Kim Y.C. Curriculum Studies as Post-Oriental Text: Entering into a Transgressive Complex Conversation for Postcolonial Transnational Curriculum Studies // Educational Philosophy and Theory. – 2025. – Режим доступу: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2025.2454404> – Дата звернення: 02.05.2025
28. Queering Postcolonial Worlds: An Introduction / R. Maricocchi, D. Neumann, O.O. Talabi, C. Wieser-Cox // Gender Forum. – 2024. – Vol. 23, No. 1. – Режим доступу: <https://doi.org/10.18716/ojs/gefo/2024.3165> (Дата звернення: 02.04.2025)
29. Rodrigues dos Santos E. The Late Postcolonial Condition. Twenty-First-Century Reconfigurations in the Literatures of Portuguese-Speaking Africa. – Oxford, Berlin, Bruxelles, New York: Peter Lang, 2025. – 270 p. – Режим доступу: <https://www.peterlang.com/document/1394861> (Дата звернення: 02.04.2025).
30. Spivak G. Ch. Can the Subaltern Speak? // Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture / C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.). – Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1988. – P.271-313.
31. Talks I. Gender Data 4 Girls?: A Postcolonial Feminist Participatory Study in Bangladesh // arXiv preprint. – 2021. – Режим доступу: <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2108.10089> (Дата звернення: 02.04.2025).