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**REGIONAL LITERATURE CLASSES  
(YURIY SLIPKO: THE SOURCES OF LIFE AND WORK)**

Regional literature classes are aimed at the enhancement of school children's literary education, since they help students to understand the peculiarities of the literary process and creative activity, develop their scientific research skills, affect their reading interests, and combine literature classes with regional studies.

The history of literary and artistic life in Luhansk Oblast is rich in famous writers, talented men of letters, who became a distinctive part of the literary process in Ukraine of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Sometimes though, due to the forces beyond a given author's control, his/her name in literature is brought to the center of attention with a great delay, e.g., three decades later. It is certainly a long period of time when it comes to somebody's life, but the reemergence of an artist – no matter how delayed – should be seen as a sign of his/her extraordinary talent. Yuriy Slipko is one of such writers. He lived and worked in the tragic years of the totalitarian rule, through which he managed to survive, preserved his creative individuality, and produced two books of poems, such as *Proloh do Pisni (The Prologue to a Song, 1966)* and *Zelena Fantaziya (The Green Fancy, 1968)*. His third book entitled *Na Lyudnim Vichi (At the Crowded Assembly)* was published posthumously in 1971.

Literary critics did attend to his creative heritage, but these were mainly book reviews published by Ivan Savych, Yosyp Kurlat, Ivan Triynyak, L. Milyutina, and O. Naumentko. Mykyta Chernyavsky wrote a preface to one of Yuriy Slipko's books, later survey articles by Ivan Savych in the newspaper *Literaturna Ukraina (The Literary Ukraine)* and by Ivan Bilohub in his book *Literaturno-krayeznavcha Luhanshchyna (On Literary Process and Local History of Luhansk Region)* appeared. A literary critic from Poltava, Petro Rotach, published Yu. Slipko's autobiographic

letter and a short essay. The aim of our article is to conduct the historiographical analysis of Yuriy Slipko's life and work on the basis of his lyric poetry, thus collecting learning material for regional literature classes.

Yuriy Slipko was born to a family of farmers on May 26, 1912 in the village Vynnyky of Kozelshchynsky District in Poltava Oblast. In 1928, he graduated from Breus seven-year school and, in 1930, successfully completed his studies at teacher training courses in the town of Kobelyaky. He taught for one year and, then, became a secretary for the editorial office of a local newspaper *Rozgornutym Frontom (Extended Front)*. Since 1932, he worked as the head of the rubric about schools in two Dniepropetrovs'k regional newspapers – *Zorya* and *Bilshovyts'ka Zmina (The Dawn and The Rising Generation of Bolsheviks)*. His works were published for the first time in 1930 in the journals *Nova Heneratsiya, Chervony Shlyakh, Molodnyak, Zorya (The New Generation, The Red Path, The Youngsters, The Dawn)*. For the publishing house *Ukrayinsky Robitnyk (Ukrainian Worker Publishing House)*, he composed his first collection of poems *Radist' (The Joy)*, which was to be released in 1935. Unfortunately, Yuriy Slipko was subject to unfair repression and had to spend ten years (since 1935) in prison in the Far East. Having returned to Ukraine in 1947, he had to work in a stone quarry in Donetsk Oblast'. In 1948, he moved to the town of Kirovs'k in Luhansk Oblast to work as a drift miner at Mine # 6-7-16. Yuriy Slipko retired in 1962. He is the author of several collections of poems - *Proloh do Pisni (The Prologue to the Song, 1966)*, *Zelena Fantaziya (The Green Fancy, 1968)*, *Na Lyudnim Vichi (At the Crowded Assembly, 1971)*. Since 1968, he was the member of the National Writer's Union of Ukraine. Yuriy Slipko died on October 4, 1969.

After the democratic changes in the Soviet society, which became noticeable at the end of the 1950s, the voices of the writers whose spiritual world had been transformed by the years of imprisonment and the loss of hope for normal life (or for life itself) became more powerful. It should also be taken into consideration that these artists were deprived of any connections with Ukraine and, in particular, the literary process in the country. It is a well-known fact that, after long-term imprisonments, the satirist Ostap Vyshnya, poet Vasyl Mysyk, humorist Oleksandr Kovin'ka, prose

writer Borys Antonenko-Davydovych, literary critics Petro Kolesnyk and Yevhen Shabliovsky were able to start their creative life over. Big difference, though, is that these gentlemen managed to publish their first books before the arrest, while Yuriy Slipko had no chance to do so. Moreover, he was arrested when he was only twenty-three. The fact that his “peers” in literature (for instance, Andriy Malyshko) were already popular writers and authors of numerous books by the time Yuriy was able to reclaim his freedom, made his comeback to literature even more difficult, which is suggested by the psychological studies of creativity as well.

In his first book, Yuriy Slipko chronologically marks each poem, and the time range of the writings included in it encompasses 35 years. It should be emphasized, though, that these are not selected poems, but the author’s first book, which is a unique occurrence in the history of the Ukrainian literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. For example, Ivan Savych, a writer from Starobil’s’k, was also unfairly imprisoned (1948 – 1956), but his first book *Z Vichnykh Dzherel (From Eternal Springs)*, published in 1957, included numerous poems written in the 1950s.

Ivan Savych enthusiastically praised the book of his fellow-sufferer, Yuriy Slipko, in his newspapers review under the title *Prolog do Vysokoho Zvuchannya (The Prologue to the High Sounding)*, stating that it was real poetry and that this first book was just the beginning, the prologue to new creative achievements.

In our analysis of the poetic peculiarities of Yuriy Slipko’s lyric poetry, we support the view that the distinction between civil, landscape, love, and philosophical poetry is quite relative, since all these groups are intimate to a certain degree. Moreover, the lyric character is not identified with the author himself, with his inner state, but rather they constitute an aesthetic unity, a certain aesthetic ideal, expressed in the text of the poem. It is important to note that subject-object relationships between the lyric character and the artistic reality are always prominent in Yuriy Slipko’s lyric poems. They are expressed by the fundamental interrelated notions, such as the lyric character – the world of nature, the lyric character – the native land, the lyric character – the work activity, and the lyric character – the creative work.

The objects depicted are also interconnected with the key images. In philosophical poetry, as suggested by the literary critic Eleonora Solovey, these key images are “unique “concepts” of being; the reconstruction of the world view of the poet on the basis of these images will be highly accurate” [4, p. 300].

Along with nature, the list of key images may include the images of intimate feelings, native land. The lyric character in Yuriy Slipko’s poetry is his contemporary. He loves life, works hard to deserve the trust of his friends, and strives to do good to society. When discussing these ideas today, a provision should be made with regard to the possible influence of the method of socialistic realism on the artist. Beyond doubt, though, is that the image of the worker includes, in the first place, the spiritual growth, the need for moral and aesthetic development, and the acquisition of high aesthetic ideals rather than a simplified depiction of the manufacturing processes or the work activity. It should also be mentioned that collectivism in the artistic interpretation of Yuriy Slipko does not only bring satisfaction, but true joy and enthusiasm from working together. The latter are the features typical of the Ukrainian national character since old times. Arable farming and husbandry in general, as well as hunting and house building always require collective efforts. Collective efforts are also necessary for such sacred activities as the protection of one’s own land, for which the assembly of the army, of the retinue (*druzhyna*) is a must. In his childhood, being brought up in a small village in Poltava Oblast’, Yuriy Slipko acquired moral and aesthetic Christian values, which are intertwined with the spiritual life of the village community. This is reflected in the words of the lyric character stating his life credo in the poem *Slovo pro Syniv (The Word about Sons)*, who, after long years of collective work, taught the two young boys his trade and could proudly say:

...З тих пір минуло літ багато,  
Уже й обжинки я стріваю,  
Та й до тепер, неначе тато,  
За їхні долі вболіваю.

As for the place that is depicted as the native land for the lyric character in Yuriy Slipko’s poems, it is, first of all, Poltava Oblast’, where the writer was born

and lived until the age of 20. Luhansk Oblast, where he spent 20 years of colorful and full-blooded life after the imprisonment, is prominent too. But very often the poetic image goes beyond specific geographic markers, not being restricted in terms of time and space. The understanding of the notion of *the native land* by the lyric character is related to Ukraine and the historical past of its people. Despite the ideological dogmata of the Soviet times, Yuriy Slipko did his best to reconsider the most valuable and important from the Ukrainian past: the love of freedom, heroism, courage and, at the same time, industriousness, tenderness, loving kindness to the dear ones, and the love of the beautiful.

In Ukrainian poetry, nature has always been one of the most popular topics. In the artistic palette of Yuriy Slipko, it is definitely given prominence. Landscape poetry always attempts to depict those relations between people and nature that emerge in the process of the development of the individual and his/her world view. The way the individual perceives himself/herself in the environment, his/her attitude to the world are the logical consequences of his/her very being, life, deeds, otherwise an individual cannot understand his/her own value in the life scheme. Therefore, man seeks spiritual salvation, psychological comfort, and moral courage from nature. Man opens up new resources, and poetry, overcoming the inertia of its own understanding of nature, seeks new ways of its interpretation and previously unknown lines along which the cooperation between nature and man can occur.

In the book *Ukrayinska Filosospska Dumka (Ukrainian Philosophical Thought)* by Eleonora Solovey, the author states that the key images in Ukrainian philosophical lyric poetry are mostly the images of nature. One of such images, which are universal and specific, stamped with poet's signature and yet common, is the image of the orchard. The orchard is part of a lived-in world. "In the Ukrainian philosophical lyric poetry, the image of the orchard can be viewed as a testament to the systemic nature of not only philosophical poets' work, but to the entire national philosophical and poetic tradition (and, even beyond that, to the world tradition, which includes the former on the basis of the systemic relations of a different, higher order)" [4, p. 305].

*Orchard* as both the word and the notion is an example of how words and notions can accumulate content and poetic potential. This point can be demonstrated by Hryhoriy Skovoroda's *Sad Bozhestvennyh Pisen'* (*The Orchard of Divine Songs*), Taras Shevchenko's *Sad Vyshnevyy kolo Khaty* (*The Cherry Orchard near the House*), the image of the orchard in Volodymyr Svidzynsky's poetry, the orchard portrayed in Maksym Ryl'sky's and Leonid Pervomaysky's lyric poetry, including Iryna Zhylenko's *Vikna u Sad* (*Windows Overlooking the Orchard*). The image of the orchard can easily be found in the poetry of Yuriy Slipko. As a rule, the most remarkable events happen in the orchard, which is seen as the defender of tenderness and love:

Де конвалії в саду і спориші,  
Там, де тиша і немає ні душі,  
Неспокійна і чутлива, мов струна,  
У замрію чорнобривка порина.  
Чорнобривці тій у сукенці новій  
Гладить плечі свіжий вітер-легковій,  
А здається, ніби юний чорнобрив  
Непрочитаною казкою укрив... [2, p. 44]

The image of the orchard is topical for the diptych *Tryumf Mista* (*The City's Triumph*). Its depth and the power of artistic portrayal, its musical and song-like rhythm, the inspiring images of nature and human soul make it the symbol of life itself. Therefore, the image of the orchard in Yuriy Slipko's lyric poetry changes substantially in terms of its content potential, maintaining, at the same time, its traditional nature (the eternity of the beautiful).

Already at the very beginning of his artistic path, Yuriy Slipko proved to be a profound, subtle lyric poet, capable of depicting the lyric character as a personality at the peak of his/her emotions, where love turns into a humanizing spiritual power beyond the range of egoistic passions. His poems *Tebe, Chernyavko Temnooko* (*You, the Sloe-eyed Brunette*, 1930) and *Ne Spishy Ohudyty* (*Don't Hurry to Blame*, 1934), which were included into his first collection of poems *Prolog do Pisni* (*The Prologue*

*to the Song*) prove this statement. Yuriy Slipko's love lyric poetry glorifies man; whereas feelings of love lift from the bottom of one's soul the finest and the purest. On reading his *Malyunok Smutku (The Painting of Sadness)*, we learn that the lyric character "з коханням знався небагато" (did not know much love), that is why his years "не запахнуть квітами волошок" (will not smell of the cornflower). Such melancholic motifs are not a rare occurrence in love lyric poetry; as a rule, they usually emerge when those who love each other cannot be together. Among the key images of Yuriy Slipko's artistic heritage, we can distinguish the images of the good, faith, song, *Kobzar's* language, love, the word as a weapon, the Ukrainian song, poetry as a joy. Except for the song, which is one of the notions the poet refers to most often, one can also find the names of such folk poetic genres, as ballads and sung epic poems called *dumy*. The notion *song* acquires different interpretations: a) the name of the poetic genre; b) a music composition; and c) a symbol of the national spiritual culture and the native language. The lyric character, who is associated with the poet, sometimes refers to the literary works as songs, while the artistic activity is interpreted as singing.

Among the dominant features of Yuriy Slipko's poetry is the combination of the publicist and lyric, philosophical and epic elements, the interpenetration of the sources of the lyric poetry, the pathos of the ideas express, the emotional nature of his works, and the polyphony of the images.

Unfortunately, many outstanding names of Luhansk Oblast writers are forgotten as a result of the totalitarian regime policy. It is important, therefore, to save the memory of their contribution to the regional literature, which can be regarded as the direction of our further research.

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**Неживий О. І. Уроки літератури рідного краю (Юрій Сліпко: джерела життя і творчості)**

Уроки літератури рідного краю сприяють розвиткові літературної освіти школярів, адже наближають їх до розуміння особливостей літературного процесу та специфіки художньої творчості, формують навички пошуково-дослідницької діяльності, впливають на розвиток читацьких інтересів, поєднують вивчення літератури із краєзнавчою діяльністю. Історія літературно-мистецького життя Луганщини багата письменницькими іменами, справжніми талантами тих літераторів, які ввійшли в історію української літератури ХХ ст. своїм самобутнім рядком. До таких належить і письменник Юрій Васильович Сліпко. Його життєвий і творчий час припав на трагічні роки тоталітаризму, але він зміг вистояти, зберегти творче обличчя й засвідчити свій літературний талант.

*Ключові слова:* література рідного краю, Юрій Сліпко, життєвий і творчий шлях, поетика, філософська поезія.

**Неживой А. И. Уроки литературы родного края (Юрий Слипко: источники жизни и творчества)**

Уроки литературы родного края содействуют развитию литературного образования учащихся, потому что приближают их к пониманию особенностей литературного процесса и специфики художественного творчества, формируют навыки исследовательской деятельности, влияют на развитие читательских интересов, соединяют изучение литературы с краеведческой деятельностью. История литературной жизни Луганщины богата писательскими именами, настоящими талантами тех литераторов, которые вошли в историю украинской литературы ХХ в. своей самобытной строкой. К таким принадлежит и писатель Юрий Васильевич Слипко. Его жизнь и творчество относятся к трагическим



годам тоталитаризма, но он смог выстоять, сохранить творческое лицо и засвидетельствовать свой литературный талант.

*Ключевые слова:* литература родного края, Юрий Слипка, жизненный и творческий путь, поэтика, философская поэзия.

### **Nezhyvyi O. I. Regional Literature Classes (Yuriy Slipko: the Sources of Life and Work)**

Regional Literature classes help schoolchildren progress in their literature education by providing them with a better understanding of the peculiarities of the literary process and creative writing, developing their skills in doing research activity, affect the formation of their preferences in literature, and allow to combine the study of literature with the local history studies.

The history of the literary and artistic life in Luhansk Oblast is rich in talented writers, who have become well-known as representatives of the Ukrainian literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. However, some names in the literary process became famous only over time, sometimes decades later. Yuriy Vasyliovych Slipko is among them. His life and professional development occurred in the years of the totalitarian rule. Despite that, he managed to cope with all the challenges, having preserved his creative talent and published two poetic collections, namely *Proloh do Pisni (The Prologue to a Song, 1966)* and *Zelena Fantaziya (The Green Fancy, 1968)*. His third book *Na ludnim vichi (At the Crowded Assembly)* was published after his death in 1971.

The main features of Yuriy Slipko's lyrics are the successful combination of publicist and lyric, philosophical and epic aspects in his poetry, the adherence to the poetic traditions, the depth of the ideas express, and the polyphony of the images.

*Key words:* regional literature, Yuriy Slipko, life and work, poetics, philosophical poetry.

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