

**SECTION 2. LITERATURE**DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-664-5-5>**CULTURAL CODES OF POETIC SELF-REPRESENTATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF LINA KOSTENKO****КУЛЬТУРИ КОДИ ПОЕТИЧНОЇ САМОРЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦІЇ:  
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The appeal to autobiographical experience and to the world literary intertext as a mode of self-presentation constitutes one of the leading authorial strategies of Ukrainian poet Lina Kostenko. At the same time, it continues a large-scale tradition of world literature, including Ukrainian literature, in which the poet enters into dialogue with the reader concerning the nature of their own individual and creative “self.” Self-reflection in Kostenko’s poetry never takes the form of narcissistic self-absorption; rather, it functions as a means of artistically comprehending personal and historical destiny. The poet belongs to the type of artist who is fundamentally open to the reader, ready to share personal experience, intimate emotions, and moral convictions. Yet this openness is almost always mediated through cultural codes – mythological and literary “masks” that enable her to speak about herself through the universal images of world culture.

Within the broad corpus of texts united by the theme “the poet about herself,” especially expressive are those in which self-identification is carried out through the topoi of world and national intertext. Thus, in the poem “*The Shadow of Sisyphus*,” the authorial intention unfolds from the ironic designation of her friends as “Sisyphuses,” climbing mountain peaks with backpacks, to a profound existential interpretation of the Sisyphus mythologeme. The stone rolled by the hero of the ancient myth appears here

as an analogue of the earthly cross – a burden borne by every thinking, responsible person. The imagined dialogue with the mythic character is combined with the introduction of the toponym “Ukraine”: «*Либонь, я знаю, що й подумав ти: / Вже краще йти до Бога пасти вівці, / ніж на Вкраїні камінь цей тягти*» [1, p. 148] (“Perhaps I know what you were thinking: Better to go tend God’s sheep / Than drag this stone in Ukraine”).

Thus, the existential motif acquires a national dimension. The poet emphasizes the historical and cultural engagement of her vocation and that of her generation. The images of friends are either concealed behind ironic masks («*мавки в шортах*» – “wood nymphs in shorts”) or named directly – «*Євген Попович, Мефістофель в кедах*» [1, p. 148] (“Yevhen Popovych, a Mephistopheles in sneakers”) – creating the effect of merging private and cultural planes. Yet the author’s self-identification ultimately occurs through identification with Sisyphus himself: «*І тінь Сізіфа, тінь моєї долі...*» [1, p. 148] (“And the shadow of Sisyphus, the shadow of my fate...”).

This is not a pose of heroic suffering but rather an ethical imperative – to continue working without expectation of immediate recognition: «*Ще крок, Сізіфе. Не чекай на оплески...*» [1, p. 148] (“One more step, Sisyphus. Do not wait for applause...”). Sisyphus’s labor emerges as a model of creative endurance and, at the same time, as a form of the artist’s inner solitude, conscious of the distance between stage and audience, between feat and its social comprehension.

If in “*The Shadow of Sisyphus*” the existential aspect of self-representation dominates (the choice of active stance, the acceptance of destiny as labor), then in the poems “*The Leitmotif of Happiness*” and “*For the Sin of Happiness at the Wrong Time*” self-definition is connected with reflection on gender identity. The lyrical heroine appears here as the “I-woman,” combining personal freedom, depth of feeling, and readiness for self-sacrifice. In “*For the Sin of Happiness at the Wrong Time*,” the image of Icarus is used to convey inner tension and fullness of experience. Calling herself a woman «*з крилами Ікара*» [1, p. 9] (“with Icarus’s wings”), the poet actualizes the myth of transgression – rising beyond measure and the inevitable fall. The parallel with the heroine is evident: she refuses the “golden mean” and rejects prudent, “safe” feelings. Love is conceived as risk, as flight above the abyss: «*Розтане віск – я в море упаду / і захлинуся морем, як тобою*» [1, p. 9] (“The wax will melt – I will fall into the sea / And drown in the sea, as in you”).

Alongside the Icarian code, the Orphic motif is implicitly discernible. Unlike Orpheus, who turned back and lost his beloved, Kostenko’s heroine does not allow herself to betray her impulse. In the beloved, she sees an equal, capable of “fatal spirals.” Thus, ancient mythologemes become

instruments for comprehending not only feminine but also creative identity, since the extremity of feeling is equated with the extremity of artistic gesture.

An important form of self-representation is also negational comparison. In *“The Leitmotif of Happiness,”* the heroine distances herself from Goethe’s Faust. Aware of the belated and costly nature of love, she does not seek to stop the moment but to fill the entire space of life with happiness: «Ох, я не Фауст. Я тільки жінка. Я не скажу: “Хвилино, спинись!”» [1, p. 57] (“Oh, I am not Faust. I am only a woman. I will not say: ‘Moment, stop!’”). Here, two models of experiencing time are contrasted: the Faustian desire to fix the peak and the Kostenko model of transforming it into an enduring inner reality. Female identity appears as the capacity not for instantaneous ecstasy but for sustained spiritual intensity.

Similarly, in the poem *“And Comfort Sings Like a Siren,”* the formula *“I am not Odysseus”* sounds. The rejection of the role of passive listener to the sirens symbolizes the refusal of comfortable complacency. The image of Odysseus correlates with that of the Colosseum as a space of open confrontation: «Життя, мабуть, – це завжди Колізей» [1, p. 159] (“Life, perhaps, is always a Colosseum”). Intertext thus becomes a field of antitheses: passivity versus activity, contemplation versus struggle, comfort versus risk. The lyrical heroine chooses the arena – that is, conscious entry into the space of trial. Here, self-definition merges with an ethical imperative: “to remain human”.

In the poem *“I Break Free Like Laocoön,”* the poet appeals to yet another ancient mythologeme – the image of the prophet who was not heard. Laocoön, strangled by serpents for attempting to warn of danger, becomes a symbol of the artist whose voice is ignored or destroyed. The image of serpents that “now embrace” actualizes the motif of transformation through pressure: from overt aggression to feigned benevolence. Here, an auto-image of the poet as prophet emerges, condemned to conflict with society.

Thus, Lina Kostenko’s recourse to world intertextuality performs several functions: self-identification through universal cultural codes; metatextual reflection on the artist’s role; ethical declaration; and the historical-national concretization of universal archetypes. The mythic and literary figures of Sisyphus, Icarus, Orpheus, Faust, Odysseus, and Laocoön become projections of the authorial “I.” The biographical and the cultural intertwine, forming a complex system of personal and artistic self-representation. In this way, Kostenko’s poetry organically enters the metatextual discourse of world literature, where speaking of oneself is always speaking about humanity as such and about the artist’s mission under conditions of historical trial.

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**THE SCORE OF WAR:  
MUSIC AS A STRUCTURAL ELEMENT OF WAR PROSE  
(BASED ON IHOR MYKHAILYSHYN'S WAR DIARIES)**

**ПАРТИТУРА ВІЙНИ: МУЗИКА  
ЯК СТРУКТУРНИЙ ЕЛЕМЕНТ ВОЄННОЇ ПРОЗИ  
(НА МАТЕРІАЛІ ВОЄННИХ ЩОДЕННИКІВ  
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