

Regional Polyethnic Literature of the Belarusian-Polish-Ukrainian Border Region about Life and Creative Values*

Regionalna literatura polietniczna pogranicza białorusko-
-polsko-ukraińskiego o życiu i wartościach twórczych

MARIA ZHIGALOVA

Brest State Technical University, Belarus

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9406-8369>

e-mail: zhygalova@mail.ru

Abstract. In this article, the author reveals the concept of “regional polyethnic literature,” shows the specifics of its genre diversity, peculiarities of themes and issues of the language and style, points out the role of inter-language and inter-culture in the reader’s understanding of the work. The reflection of theoretical and practical aspects of regional literature, which reflects the vital and creative values of the border region, and shows the possibilities of consolidating a multicultural society by means of literature, is presented in the example of the analysis of separate poems by Lyubov Krasevskaya, Dmitry Kovalev, Vladimir Kuchminsky, and of the stories by Zbigniew Włodzimierz Fronczek.

Keywords: regional polyethnic literature, multicultural society, life and creative values, inter-language, inter-culture

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Contact details of the author: Brest State Technical University, 267 Moskovskaya St., Brest, Belarus, 224017, phone: +375 162 32 17 32, +375 336 44 48 79.

Abstrakt. W artykule autorka omawia pojęcie „regionalna literatura wieloetniczna”, pokazuje jej specyfikę: różnorodność gatunkową, tematyczną i problemową, charakter języka i stylu, a także zwraca uwagę na rolę inter-języka oraz inter-kultury w odbiorze czytelników. Na przykładzie analizy wybranych wierszy Liubow Kraszewskiej, Dymitra Kowalowa, Vladimira Kuczmińskiego, opowiadania Zbigniewa Włodzimierza Fronczka pokazuje kwestie funkcjonowania teoretycznych i praktycznych aspektów literatury regionalnej, która odzwierciedla wartości życiowe i twórcze pogranicza, pokazuje możliwości konsolidacji wielokulturowego społeczeństwa za pomocą literatury.

Słowa kluczowe: regionalna literatura wieloetniczna, wielokulturowe społeczeństwo, wartości życiowe i twórcze, inter-język, inter-kultura

INTRODUCTION

Today, the Belarusian-Polish-Ukrainian border area is increasingly becoming the subject of serious scientific sociological, culturological, psychological and pedagogical research. It is especially important in the field of studying the life and creative orientations of graduates of the border region since its future depends on the choice of profession of those young men and women who will play a key role in the economic and social life and social development of the border region in the near future. In many ways, this choice depends on the aims and values which young people follow today, on their socio-psychological and moral mobility, and, therefore, on their life and creative orientations. A certain role in the process of choosing values is played by humanitarian knowledge, and in particular, knowledge of regional literature, which, based on ethnic culture, largely contributes to the formation of young people's lives and creative values and their successful adaptation to the communicative process in modern multicultural society (Latipov, Bykova and Zhigalova, 2016, pp. 655–662).

For the first time, we raise the little-studied problem of forming, by means of literature, the moral and creative orientations of young people of the border region, whose life in the conditions of modern active migration of the world's population will inevitably take place in a multicultural environment. In describing the problem, we relied on the methodology of studying the region as a text developed by Yurii Lotman, Vladimir Toporov, and the Tartu School of Semiotics, which in recent years has been widely studied by scientists from Bulgaria, Russia (Anisimov, 2005), Romania (Beženaru, 2012), and Belarus (Žigalova, 2012). However, the field of Philology such as “regional polyethnic literature of the border region” has not yet become an object of scientific interest.

Therefore, areas of literature such as linguistic and literary local history of the border region, areas of didactic philology, and in particular, the method of analysing an artistic piece of work as an intercultural universe (Žigalova, 2014), still need to

clarify a clear methodological approach and develop didactic methods and techniques for analysing works of art, created by talented regional artists of the word. Here, it is important to emphasize that the analysis of such literature, reflecting real life in the multicultural context of the border region, undoubtedly actively affects the formation of life and creative values of young people.

This article attempts to confirm this point of view, based on the opinion of a modern researcher, Kirill Anisimov, who believes that the personality of the writer, his self-awareness, “the desire to associate his activities with the region” should be the priority in the study of the regional literature (Anisimov, 2005). We will use the term “region” in two meanings: a broader one (the Brest-Podlasie border area) and a narrower one (the Brest region). By region, in the narrow sense of the word, we mean internal zones that are comparable to linguistic and cultural areas, which are allocated conditionally and sometimes coincide with the administrative division into districts. Sometimes we associate the region with an idea, a concept, that is, an emotionally coloured collective idea of what a region is. We will consider the Brest-Podlasie border region as one of the stable polyethnic regions, which has dynamic features and is associated with the experience of identity on several levels: regional – the actual Brest region; over-territorial – the Belarusian-Polish border world; the national and polyethnic structure of the people living here.

Regional polyethnic literature (i.e., literature written by the representatives of different ethnic groups), which reveals a unique code of the border Belarusian-Polish-Ukrainian multicultural society, in which the authors of different nationalities living in this region create a specific “polyethnic literary atmosphere,” thereby enriching the history of the development of domestic, Belarusian and Russian, as well as regional literature, will be considered from similar positions (Žigalova, 2017). It should be noted that regional literature is studied at school in optional courses, or elective courses, and is used by students when writing scientific research papers that analyse works reflecting the elements of regional culture. At the Brest State University named after A.S. Pushkin, at the Faculty of Philology, regional polyethnic literature was studied in 2010–2013 during the author’s specialisation “Russian-Language Literature of the Belarusian-Polish Borderlands.”

Taking into account the scope of the article, we will show fragments of an analysis of certain works by Lyubov Krasevskaya, Dmitry Kovalev, Vladimir Kuchminsky, Zbigniew Włodzimierz Fronczek and the author’s point of view on the artists of the word noting the influence of polyethnic environment and external factors on the themes and issues of their creativity, style and reflection of the traditions, characters and customs of the different peoples living in the region. We will also note how such work helps to form the life and creative values of the students in a polyethnic society.

METHODS

The following methods were used in the article: critical journalism, artistic interpretation, and analytic-synthetic method in order to understand the problem-thematic and genre-style originality of the work and determine its influence on the formation of life and creative values of the readers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

But first, let us talk about the phenomenon of “regional literature” and the historical context of the border region. Regional literature of the borderlands is the literature created by the artists of different ethnic statuses (Ukrainians, Belarusians, Poles, Russians, etc.) who live in the Belarusian-Polish-Ukrainian border region and write in Belarusian, Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish. The creativity of the regional poets of the Brest-Podlasie border region (Valerij Grishkovets, Nikolaj Kovalevich, Liubov Krasevskaya, Vladimir Kuchminsky, etc.) organically fits into the context of regional literature, while reflecting a wide range of topics and issues: “the past and the future,” “the connection of times and peoples,” “the unity of Slavs” – themes that run through all the diverse texture of poetic modernity today.

Before turning to individual authors and works, we should note that the experience of reflecting a national and foreign mentality and mindset in the regional literature of the Brest region is also clearly influenced by the historical context, since the history of the Brest region is initially multicultural because at different times the region was possessed by various States of the world. Thus,

for almost 170 years (from 980 to 1150), the Brest region belonged to Kievan Rus, for 216 years (from 1150 to 1366) – to the Volyn and Galician – Volyn Principality, then to the Kingdom, for 203 years (from 1366 to 1569) – to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the following 206 years (1569–1795) – to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, for 120 years (1795–1915) – to Russia, for only nine months (September 1915–May 1916) – to Austria-Hungary, for a period of 14 months (May 1916–12 November 1918) – to Germany, for one year (1918–1919) – to the Ukrainian People’s Republic, for 19 years (1920–1939) – to Poland, and for a total of about 50 years – to the USSR (from 1941 to 1944 – to Germany). Only since 1991 – has the Republic of Belarus become an autonomous and independent state. (Hnilamiodaŭ, 2012)¹

¹ “почти 170 лет (с 980г – по 1150г.) Брестчина принадлежала Киевской Руси, 216 лет (с 1150 по 1366г.) – Волынскому и Галицко-Волынскому княжеству, потом Королевству, 203 года (с 1366 по 1569г.) – Великому Княжеству Литовскому, 206 лет (1569–1795г.) – Речи Посполитой обоих народов, 120 лет (1795–1915) – России, 9 месяцев (09.1915 по 05.1916г.) Австро-Венгрии, 14 месяцев (05. 1916 по 12.11. 1918) – Германии, 1 год (1918–1919) –

Therefore, over many years of existence, people here have learned to live in a multicultural context. Following certain historical events, each nation that remained brought its own traditions and customs to the common border symbiotic polyethnic culture, while simultaneously borrowing, enriching and respecting other cultures. Therefore, the experience of reflecting a national and universal mentality and mindset in the literature of the region occurs for two reasons.

Firstly, the regional literature, being in the context of a historically formed multicultural mentality, in fact, reconstructs both Russian, Belarusian, Polish, and Ukrainian cultures, and even creates a certain supranational ideology, its own specific multicultural code, a kind of multinational myth, “appealing, first of all, to the deep layers of the national archetypal property” [“апеллируя, прежде всего, к глубинным пластам национального архетипического свойства”] (Suslova, 2004). It is necessary to note that in the creative baggage of almost every poet and writer of the border region there are, on the one hand, sacralised historical stories, as ritually interpreted socio-ethnic crises of the Belarusian socio-cultural tradition, and, on the other hand, traditions of different cultures, widely represented in their interaction.

Secondly, the authors and representatives of the literary Brest region, as a border Belarusian-Polish region, have always experienced a clear difficulty with their own national and cultural self-identity. This difficulty can hardly be called a disadvantage since a long and unsuccessful search for this self-identification was inevitable. Beginning from the 17th century, a certain dichotomy has been formed in Belarusian culture: the upper stratum, using the Polish language, developed its cultural tradition with an emphasis on the metropolitan culture and the perception of pan-European spiritual values through it. As a result, there was a specific symbiosis of the paradigm of Polish culture (as an external design) and the Belarusian mentality (as an internal content). At the same time, there was and still is an autochthonous rural (folk) culture in the Brest region, which absorbed elements of many neighbouring cultures. Therefore, the search for a national identity by the authors took place both on the basis of their own ethnic culture, and other cultures that were also already clear and close to them.

Thus, studying the phenomenon of regional literature in the Brest region, we can note the coexistence and interaction within it of several language systems, a number of mentalities, their traditions, and many ethnic codes that reflect the situation of the polylogue of cultures. This means that such literature can rightly be called phenomenal and integrative because it demonstrates to the reader the

Украинской Народной Республике, 19 лет (1920–1939) – Польше, в общей сложности около 50 лет – СССР (из них с 1941 по 1944 –Германии). И только с 1991 года – Республика Беларусь стала самостоятельным и независимым государством.”

features of multicultural interaction. This is how different cultures and ethnic groups coexist peacefully in the Brest region today, enriching each other, developing both Belarusian historical and literary traditions in general and Belarusian-Polish relations in particular. And such characteristics as: symbiotic, problematic nature of national identity, conservatism of spiritual and social practices do not diminish the merits of either Belarusian, Ukrainian, or Polish cultures and their significance for the present and future social processes on a pan-European scale.

In fact, when we focus our research on the idea of unity of all people, which is becoming the most relevant in the globalized world, it turns out that today, with the growing cosmopolitanism of cultures – contradictory, but inevitable – the experience of communication between the Belarusian and Polish Borderlands may be in demand and instructive. The thing that in the era of local-national cultures is defined as a certain disadvantage and inferiority, in the modern conditions of replacing ethnocentrism with anthropocentrism, in the conditions of erasing ethno-cultural borders in a multicultural space, unexpectedly reveals its positive and creative sides. Perhaps the multicultural model of the Belarusian-Polish region, as a model of borderline cultural and creative communication coexistence, will be one of the most productive and significant in the globalized world. This means that the formation of a students' life and creative orientations, including the quality of consolidation, that is, peaceful coexistence on the border of different cultures and ethnic groups, based on the analysis of works of regional literature is obvious and significant.

It is not surprising that the aspect of nationality and universality is so clearly manifested in the works of modern regional artists of the Border region: Grishkovets, Tatiana Demidovich, Zinaida Dudyuk, Kovalevich, Nina Matyash, Krasevskaya, etc. Today, we can speak about the reflection of multiculturalism in the regional literature of the Brest-Podlasie border region, written by ethnic Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, in two aspects. In a broad sense, implying the connection of this literary tradition with the traditions of world literature and the very reality of its functioning in the Belarusian-Polish region, and in a narrow sense, assuming its internal, problem-thematic and genre-style specifics. In the experience of reflecting different cultures in the regional literature of the Belarusian-Polish border region, it is also obvious that the formation of both the Belarusian and Polish cultural codes, as well as the cultural code of Podlasie "I," which includes elements of other cultures (Russian, Ukrainian, German, Lithuanian, etc.) operating on this territory is carried out and supplemented here. Therefore, the search for a national identity by the authors of the Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian border region is based on their own ethnic culture, as well as other cultures that are already clear and close to them.

Contemporary regional authors speak about the culture of Russia, Belarus, Poland, Germany, and Estonia. The poets of the Brest region naturally fit into this context, reflecting a wide range of thematic and problematic themes such as: “past and future,” “the connection of times,” “the unity of nature and the inner world of a man,” “the meaning of life,” “the spiritual world of a man and the purity of human existence,” “the unity of the Slavs” – themes that today run through the diverse fabric of poetic modernity. This paper will show how these themes are reflected in the works of regional poets of the border by analysing certain works by Krasevskaya, Kovalev, Kuchminsky, and Fronczek.

Вся жизнь моя – хождение за границы... [*My Whole Life Is Going Abroad...*].² The last collection of the Brest poet Lyubov Krasevskaya *На два голоса* [*For Two Voices*] can be prefaced with such lines. The first part of *Две Родины* [*Two Homelands*] begins with the poem of the same title, which is a confession of a man who, by the will of fate, found himself far from his ethnic homeland. The title is symbolic and closely connected with the fate of the poetess, and her understanding of multiculturalism. Krasevskaya was born in the Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russian in essence and spirit. But, judging by the name, her roots are somewhere here, in the land of the “Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.” Having settled in Brest, the poetess flourished here as a poet and citizen, but she will burn her heart with memories of Siberia, the homeland of her flesh and spirit. It is no coincidence that the collection includes the poem *По-русски* [*In Russian*]:

I was born on that continent,
Where the Tunguska meteorite fell.
I speak Polish,
I think ... I think in Russian.

It is not necessary to judge by one line –
I am not all in it, just bunches of thoughts.
I sing in Belarusian,
I think ... I think in Russian.

The burden of being ... and to God – light
On the circle of conversation chosen and narrow.
I prayed in the Church language,
I thought ... I thought-in Russian...³

² Here and further the poems are quoted, taken from the collection by Krasevskaya (2009, pp. 8–16).

³ “Я родилась на том материке, / Куда упал метеорит Тунгусский. / Я говорю на польском языке, / А думаю ... а думаю – по-русски. / Судить не стоит по одной строке – / Я в ней не вся, а только мыслей сгустки. / Пою на белорусском языке, / А думаю ... а думаю – по-рус-

The strong positions of the poem *По-русски* are the title and the first and last phrases that indicate the importance of the poetic image of Russia. The keywords “Siberia” [*Сибирь*], “Poland” [*Польша*], “Belarus” [*Беларусь*], “Being” [*Бытие*], “God” [*Бог*], “Language” [*Язык*] allow the author, using the subtext information (two voices), to determine the dominant, which is the subject of the poem and points out the idea: to sing in two voices, in Russian and Belarusian. Polish and Russian is not easy, but this kind of singing only enriches the singer, fascinates the listener...

The poetess once again emphasizes that communication in a multicultural context is somewhat different from the communication in an ethnically homogeneous environment. And this is understandable, because here you need to speak so that you are understood, listen to the language of the environment, and get used to a foreign culture. Works can be created in this language, but still “thoughts are focused” [*мыслей сгустки*], ideas are always born in their native language. And so, no matter what language the lyrical heroine speaks, she still thinks “in Russian.” That is why the main idea of the poem is so clearly outlined by the poetess – the inseparable connection of the heroine’s inner world with the small Motherland and the homeland acquired.

The retrospective plan of the poem helps to understand the eternity and invariability of the problem not of choice, but of unity. The phonics of the poem is also peculiar. The abundance of sonorous consonants [p], [m], [h], [z], [b], [r], [v] is associated with the unforgettable mighty, proud, and free Siberian land, with rumbles of thunder, with echoes in the mountains, and with rebellious rivers, which the soul yearns for, although the heart has long belonged to Belarus. Assonance (repetitions of vowels: [я], [а], [у], [е], [о], [ю], [и]) creates a picture of the unity of the lands, the unity of the Slavic people, the common language, history and culture of the Slavs. The work contains a lot of significant parts of speech (nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs), which suggests that the author draws a very real picture of the world. All the verbs except the verb “to judge” [*судить*] are personal, which indicates a confidential confessional character. The lyrical heroine enters into a dialogue with the people around her and hopes for understanding. At the same time, she also turns to her own soul, to her “I,” to make sure that the decision made is correct.

In the third stanza, the mood changes. The antithesis (“the burden of being – and to God light”) [(“груз бытия – к Богу налегке”)] contributes to the logical strengthening of thought, very clearly indicating the connection of phenomena. The hustle

ски. / Груз бытия ... а к Богу – налегке / На круг общения избранный и узкий. / Молилась на церковном языке, / А думала ... а думала – по-русски.”

and bustle of life, the activity in understanding the multicultural Universe and the calmness before going into nonexistence. This concept is important for the poetess because her work is not limited to only one native language and culture, “bunches of thoughts” are built on the knowledge of different cultures, on understanding the momentary and eternal within us. This allows you to talk always about the most intimate things silently, unobtrusively, sincerely and confidentially, to sing about the homeland and people, the history and traditions of the Slavs in “two voices,” while understanding and accepting different cultures and dialects. It so happened that Krasevskaya was always in the midst of the cultural life of Russia, Belarus, and later Europe:

The soul flied apart:
On borders
And cities,
On pages,
And trains...⁴

This gave her the opportunity to understand the philosophy of life of Russians, Belarusians and Europeans, to form an idea of happiness and the meaning of life, of eternal and faithful love, of honour and dignity, to sing about the Motherland and its people, history and traditions:

I reviewed the pages of the past.
I do not want to read that book anymore.
My whole life is going abroad,
That is why I want to fly.⁵

The poems of the poetess in this collection are united by one concept: “It is the fate to understand in every dialect” [“На то она судьба, чтобы понимать на всяком наречье”] (Iosif Brodsky). It is not surprising that Krasevskaya speaks with love and tenderness about Belarus, Poland, and Germany. In the poem *Белая Русь* [*White Russia*], the lyrical heroine admires the white, pure, holy land of Belaya Rus and sings about it warmly, calmly, and sincerely. Her second homeland is perceived by the poetess as something unearthly, heavenly:

I thought in my youth:
It is necessary to sing loudly, easily,
That is just gain experience, knowledge and strength ...

⁴ “Разлетелась душа на части: / На границы / И города, / На страницы, / На поезда...”

⁵ “Пересмотрела прошлого страницы. / Ту книгу больше не хочу листать. / Вся жизнь моя – хождение за границы, / Вот почему так хочется летать.”

But the years passed.
 It is already painful to sing loudly –
 I sing about you sincerely, my Belarus.

 It was full of songs and children's laughter,
 And the roots were filled with juice
 But it got lost and not I remember it
 The simple joy bright... They

 Once upon a time, got along here on these lands
 Life-being with a dream in half.
 Not all traces of the wind have been erased yet.
 Not everything is gone. Burned – not to the ground.

 Well, how will I live in the world from now
 Without-God-ordained-basics?
 Call of the ancestors of the century before last
 Heard.
 I came to this call.⁶

In the poem *Посмотри мне в глаза* [*Look into My Eyes*] Krasevskaya rightly notes that: “if you have two homelands – / then there is no peace in either” [“если есть у тебя две Родины – / То покоя нет ни в одной”]. The poetess speaks about the culture of Russia, Belarus, Poland, and Germany, using appropriate language elements. Thus, in the poem *Влодавское направление* [*Vlodava Direction*] the reader sees the Brest-Podlasie borderland, a polyethnic people inhabiting it, a specific language with a multi-faceted dialect, so close to Belarusians and Poles, a specific culture, which has long intertwined customs and mores, traditions of the Belarusian, Polish, Ukrainian and Russian people are presented. The poetess notes that, despite the difference in cultures, this multicultural space still managed to preserve the main thing – the unity of souls, which knows no borders... The reader also comes to this conclusion when getting acquainted with the poem:

The dialects of the people were melted down
 For centuries – in unique words.
 And across the Bug – no bridge, no wade...
 The country is different – a common rumour.

⁶ “Я в юности думала: / Петь надо громко, раздольно, / Вот только опыта, знаний и сил наберусь... / Но годы прошли. / Громко петь уже больно – / Пою о тебе задушевно, моя Беларусь. / И песнями, и детским смехом наполнилась, / И наливались соком карані / Но затерялась и не мне запомнилась / Простая радость светлая... Они / Когда-то здесь на этих землях ладили / Житьё-бытьё с мечтою пополам. / Ещё не все следы ветра загладили. / Не всё ушло. Сгорело – не до тла. / Ну, как отныне проживу на свете я / Без – Богом предначертанных – азов? / Зов предков позапрошлого столетия / Услышан. / Я пришла на этот зов.”

All the same “piaski”, “laski” and “karaski”
 Still the same wind on both sides
 Autumn spreading paint,
 Pre-winter colours dreams...

Again, a bridge is seen across the river,
 When we did not know the boundaries yet...
 On-over the water swirls a leaf –
 One of the unread pages.
 A great book about the great past.⁷

There are works in her book in which the multicultural layer is small and is in the subtext. But there are also such poems, as for example, *Alles gut!* [*All Is Well!*], which is almost entirely based on the cultural material and foreign language elements.

Alles Gute, danke, heute, braun –
 I oppress my native language.
 Say, bitte, deutsche Frau,
 Only, if possible, not with me.

By the blue waters of the Donau
 Chills the scarlet blood in the veins.
 Deutscher Mann und auch deutsche Frau,
 I give you the memory of love.⁸

Inter-language and inter-culture create a special atmosphere in the poem – of joy and flight of the soul. It is well known that language barriers do not exist for those who want to be understood and want to hear and understand other people, because all souls speak the same language. And here the reader feels a sense of unity of all people because, despite the different dialects, the language of the soul remains the same for all people.

In the world there is Mephistopheles there is also Faust
 And it is not Goethe's fault.
 May God protect you, deutsche Frau,

⁷ “Переплавлились говоры народа / Веками – в уникальные слова. / А через Буг – ни мостика, ни брода... / Страна другая – общая молва. / Всё те же «piaski», «laski» і «karaski» / Всё тот же ветер на две стороны / Осенние разбрасывая краски, / Предзимние окрашивает сны... / Вновь через реку видится мосточек, / Когда ещё не ведали границ... / По-над водою кружится листочек – Одна из непрочитанных страниц. / Великой книги о великом прошлом.”

⁸ “Alles Gute, danke, heute, braun – / Притесняю свой язык родной. / Говорите, bitte, deutsche Frau, / Только, если можно, не со мной. / Голубыми водами Донау / Алу ю студила в жилах кровь. / Deutscher Mann und auch deutsche Frau, / Я дарю вам память про любовь.”

And Vivat, Germany, Vivat!⁹

The poetess is sure that all the people of the world, women of all nations and people, German, Polish, Belarusian, Russian, just want to be happy:

Two countries met on Kuppelnau –
Interests of women of all times.
Swabian Aryans, deutsche Frau
And our Slavic female Beau Monde.¹⁰

As we can see, the artistic work of Krasevskaya is the cross-cultural mediator that helps the reader to form a picture of the world. Foreign, in this case, German speech, is present here not as the background, but as an element of German culture, which the poetess knew. Thus, we can conclude that in the works by Krasevskaya the foreign elements enter into the dialogue. And the dialogue of languages in poetry testifies to the author's desire to "gather the contradictory world, divided into the poles, into one single whole, and thus give the reader a true knowledge of the world" ["собрать расколотый на полюса противоречивый мир в одно единое, целое, а значит, дать читателю истинное знание о мире"].

From the given fragments of analysis, it is clear that the full meaning of the entire context of creativity is realized not in two, but three languages and cultures. The complementarity of the elements of German, Polish and Russian cultures is obvious. As a result of this creative synthesis of language and cultural systems, a kind of "inter-culture" is crystallized in the consciousness and creativity of Krasevskaya, which is both a product of the interaction of these systems and their structural representation projected on the individual map of the author's world. Inter-language and inter-culture, as well as their creative synthesis, which is manifested in the entire work of the poetess, serves mainly as a guide for the reader to understand the philosophy of life and its values.

A deep sense of Motherland, common Slavic destinies, brotherhood, and friendship of peoples is inherent in the talented poet Dmitry Mikhailovich Kovalev (1915–1977) (Kovalëv, 1982, p. 9). In the poem *Родился я и вырос на границе* [*I Was Born and Grew Up on the Border*], he writes:

I was born and grew up on the border
Of Russia,

⁹ "В мире Мефистофель есть и Фауст / И не Гёте в этом виноват. / Пусть хранит Господь Вас, deutsche Frau, / И виват, Германия, виват!"

¹⁰ "Две страны сошлись на Куппелнау – / Интересы женщин всех времён. / Швабские арийки, deutsche Frau / И славянский женский наш бомонд."

Ukraine,
 Belarus.
 And I have –
Друзья,
Сябры,
И друзи, (friends)
 Three brothers in arms:
 Gomel,
 Bryansk,
 Chernigov,
 Partisan forest –
 And there is no end in sight.
 И *мати* родная,
 И *нэнько* ридна,
 И *мать* родная – (*and my mother*)
 How many countenances and faces!
 Slavutich Dnepr with its living water.
 Shared road –
 Highway over the dam.
 Yarilo keeps the olden time.
 And virgin soil under the *eternal* star.
 Through their own any people are understandable,
 Like the light of birches, viburnums
 And willows in spring.
 I am happy that all such borders
 Will be seen by the sun of friendship without spots.¹¹

The poem is perceived as a beautiful civil message to contemporaries – Slavs, whose destinies have been so long and firmly intertwined with history. It is also perceived as a warning against the destruction of this solid unity of souls and destinies. The first sentence already testifies to the autobiographical nature of what was said, the confidence of the author's monologue, which will be delivered. The lyrical hero is equally dear to everything connected with his small ethnic homeland, in which several cultures get along perfectly. This multicultural context makes it possible for people of any ethnic group to feel at home here, as people here are friendly and live in peace and harmony. Everywhere *сябры, друзи, друзья* ["friends" – in Russian, Belarusian

¹¹ "Родился я и вырос на границе / России, / Украины, / Беларуси. / И у меня – / *Друзья,* / *Сябры* / *И друзи,* / Три ратных брата: / Гомель, / Брянск, / Чернигов, / Лес партизанский – / И конца не видно. / И *мати* родная, / И *нэнько* ридна, / И *мать* родная – / Сколько лиц и ликов! / Славутич Днепр с его живой водою. / Огульный шлях – / Большак через плотину. / Ярило старину блюдет едину. / И новь одна под *вечною* звездой. / Через своё любой народ понятен, / Как свет берёз, калин / И верб в кринице. / Я счастлив, что такими все границы / Увидит солнце дружества без пятен."

and Ukrainian]. The feeling of belonging to the native land and responsibility for its history is experienced equally by both Belarusians, Russians, and Ukrainians. The native Polesie region for all warmed by the love of the mother country, no matter that it is pronounced differently: *мать, нэнька, маці* [“mother”]. The author uses trilingualism: Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, emphasizing their Slavic unity, to strengthen the connection of the continuity of human destinies that have developed over the course of history. The lyrical hero does not hide his sense of belonging to the common culture of the Borderlands. He is happy that “all such borders / Will be seen by the sun of friendship without spots” [“такими все границы / Увидит солнце дружества без пятен”]. Kovalev is sure that everyone should always remember their native roots. In the poem *Родословная* [*Genealogy*] he says:

My mother is Russian, my father is Belarusian, –
I am again,
As in Kievan Rus, united,
Like the water that you drink,
The bread that we eat...¹²

And then:

My mother is Russian, my father is Belarusian –
I am not Ivan, who does not remember kinship!
The princes were proud of their genealogy,
Boyars and nobles: from the roots!...
Our family is both nobler and older.
And in it the sovereign labour of all Russia!
The font is mine! Lightnings of Kobzar,
A riot of Habakkuk
And Kupala’s cry...¹³

“Family,” “parents,” “relatives,” “genealogy” – What do these words have in common? Of course, the family is the beginning of the beginning. The lyric hero of the poem is sure that he owes his birth to two States and two cultures, two families – Belarusian and Russian, whose blood flows in his veins. The strong positions of the poem suggest the theme: my roots, the origins of my family. And the idea of how important it is for each of us to be able to preserve the dignity and honour of

¹² “Мать русская, отец мой белорус, – / Я вновь, / Как в Киевской Руси, един, / Как та вода, что пьём, / Хлеб, что едим...”

¹³ “Мать русская, отец мой белорус – / Я не Иван, не помнящий родства! / Гордились родословными князья, / Бояре и дворяне: из корней!... / Наш род и благородней и древней. / И в нём державный труд Руси всяя! / Купель моя! Зарницы Кобзаря, / Бунт Аввакума / И Купалы клич...”

our kind. Personal pronouns (“I,” “my,” etc.) indicate the confidence and confessional nature of what is said. The lyrical hero is proud of his ancestors and their achievements. The ring composition of Kovalev’s poem only emphasizes the idea of the polyethnic family circle, the family culture associated with the enlightenment of descendants, and family traditions.

The works of Vladimir Kuchminsky (2017, p. 3), an ethnic Ukrainian who writes in Russian and Belarusian, also attract the reader with their frankness of judgment, during which the reader communicates not only with the text, but also with the cultural context. The new stylistic tools created by the poet, the use of foreign language vocabulary and elements of his ethnic culture also help in this. Note that the theme of Kuchminsky’s work is diverse, as is the genre component. Here there are philosophical and patriotic, social, and family, love poems and poems for children. Here there is a remake, and lyrical miniatures, and fables that reveal many aspects of modern life, including the peculiarities of the border region. Patriotic poems of the poet are connected with the arguments about the Motherland, about how important it is for a person to serve the Fatherland faithfully. Perhaps that is why Kuchminsky is so attentive to the Belarusian folk art in the poly-cultural region. The author studies and compares the folk humour of Ukrainian, Belarusian, Polish, and Russian cultures. That is why he presents in an original way in his lyrical miniatures, poems written in the Belarusian language, such as in the poem *Без перакладу няма ладу* [*There Is No Order without Explanation*] (Žigalova, 2017, pp. 23–24), the zest of folk humour of different people, sometimes very subtle and appropriate, is not noticeable at first glance:

The grandfather from Ukraine
 Arrived at the granddaughter:
 I have not seen my great-grandson yet! What
 fun!
 Was in Russia, Kazakhstan, now in
 Belarus
 (The fate has scattered children all over the former
 Union).
 The granddaughter is pulling forward to the grandfather’s
 chair –
 (That table is almost breaking from
 delicacies).
 And grandpa looked at the
 dainty
 Then he asked his granddaughter,
 just in case:
 – Where does your beloved work?
 I see, you are well off.

– He manages the brewery,
Dad wrote to you.
– Just only a brewery,
And everything is in the house –
If he will manage an entire beer factory –
You will live richly.¹⁴

The eventfulness of the poem emphasizes its relevance, points to time and space, that is, to the historical events that took place in the united Soviet Union, when all people studied, served in the Army and worked in different parts of country, regardless of their origin, and were happy.

The time and place is specified in the poem *Параскідваў дзяцей лёс па былым Саюзе* [*Fate Has Scattered Children All over the Former Union*]. The introduction of a text-dialogue in two languages is also not accidental, because in the former Soviet Union, everyone who knew and used Russian as the language of interethnic communication could speak their native and ethnic language freely, preserving its colour in any situation, by which the author has always emphasized his ethnic independence and freedom to choose not only the language but also life values and styles. Therefore, Ukrainisms in the poem carry a semantic message.

Firstly, they emphasize the nationality and character peculiarities of the lyrical hero – the Ukrainian grandfather, point to his life values and his assessment of the household situation – the material wealth of the granddaughter’s family. Secondly, they perform an evaluation function, because in the poem only one word “brewery” [*пивзавод*], said and written differently in two Slavic languages, Ukrainian (*пив-заводом*, that is, half of the plant) and Belarusian (*піўзавод* – a plant for the production of beer) changes the meaning of the entire poem. It seems that the lyrical hero is slightly ironic about the prosperity (“That table is almost breaking from delicacies” [“Ледзь не ломіцца той стол ад дэлікатэсаў”], “dainty” [“прысмакі”]), which is earned in a short time by the young family because he does not believe in an honest way of earning. At the same time, the lyrical hero is happy with the quiet and successful family life.

Time to move on to the next author. It is the poet and writer, winner of national and international literary awards, author of more than thirty books, including collections of poems, short stories, essays, novels published in all countries of Europe,

¹⁴ “Да ўнучкі з Украіны дзядуля / прыехаў: / Праўнучка яшчэ не бачыў! Гэткая ж / уцеха!
/ Быў у Расіі, Казахстане, цяпер у / Беларусі / (Параскідваў дзяцей лёс па былым / Саюзе).
/ Унучка дзеду да стала падстаўляе / крэсла – / (Ледзь не ломіцца той стол ад / дэлікатэсаў).
/ А дзядуля паглядзеў на тья / прысмакі / І ўнучку раптам запытаў, на выпадак / усялякі: /
– Дэ ж коханный твій працуюе? / Бачу, е дастаток. / – Піўзаводам ён кіруе, / Вам жа пісаў тата.
/ – Всього тільки піў-заводом, / А вжэ вэс е в хаті – / Цілым будэ кіруваты – / Зажывэш богато.”

founder and editor of the magazine *Lublin. Culture and Society* [Люблін. Культура і общество], Zbigniew Włodzimierz Fronczek. His book *Анёлы, черці і кабеты* [*Angels, Devils and Women*], written with a warm Polish humour that makes you want to laugh and cry, was translated by Pavel Lekhnovich in 2017 into Belarusian and published in the Brest Publishing House “Alternativa.”

Addressing the Belarusian reader, Fronczek emphasizes that “I am most willing to talk about love, crimes, God, angels and devils... about joy and death, about women and ghosts, about friends and revelations... about what I’ve learned myself, what I’ve heard and read” [“ахвотней за ўсё распавядаю пра каханьне¹⁵, злачынствы, Бога, анёлаў і чарцей... пра радасьць і сьмерць, пра жанчын і зданяў, пра сяброў і адкрыцьці... пра тое, што я ўведаў сам, што пачуў і прачытаў”] (Frončak, 2017, p. 5). He is sure that information does not die, because “the actions of people, the memory of their beliefs and actions are eternal” [“дзеі людзей, памяць пра іх перакананьні і ўчынкі – вечныя”] (Frončak, 2017, p. 5). But most of all, as the author admits, in his prose, he likes to combine “the cases and personalities of the Polish province with figures known from history books, sensational films and literary works, I like to refer to famous proverbs, sayings and poems...” [“выпадкі і асобы польскай правінцыі з постацямі, вядомымі па падручніках гісторыі, нашумелых фільмах і літаратурных творах, люблю зьвяртацца да вядомых выслоўяў, сказаў і вершаў...”] (Frončak, 2017, p. 4).

Speaking about the value of any book, Fronczek believes that only the book that has a message, that is, thought, advice, science, is really useful to the reader. It is not surprising that in his book *Анёлы, черці і кабеты* a valuable message is also captured, expressed by the author in the last phrase and designated as: “Have the courage to be happy” [“Майце адвагу быць шчасьлівымі”]. This phrase emphasises both his character and his vision of the philosophy of life, which is reduced to the simplest but most important values that requires every person to have a firm character and courage: to tell the truth, to appreciate people and to be optimistic, not to be afraid of work and not to avoid it, and always to worship God.

Fronczek admits that he inherited this vision and character from his ancestors:

Once, under the influence of my grandfather Alexander, I wrote that only good wins in the struggle between good and evil. Many years later, I heard our beloved Pope, the Slavic Pope, John Paul II, say: “Defeat evil with good.” That’s why I try not to offend with words, I try to sow kindness and mutual trust in words... and my book also reminds me of this, sometimes in a humorous form, sometimes in a serious one, because life is the same, love and death are the same. (Frončak, 2017, p. 7)¹⁶

¹⁵ The article preserves the translator’s spelling.

¹⁶ “Неяк пад уплывам дзядулі Аляксандра я напісаў, што ў барацьбе добра са злом перамагае толькі дабро. Праз шмат гадоў пачуў, як наш улюблёны Папа, Папа-славянін, Ян

What *linguistic and cultural elements* does the Polish writer use in his book and how do they help the reader understand the philosophy of life in the border region? Before turning to specific examples, consider the theoretical component. It should be noted that despite the widespread use of this term, introduced into the use from classical grammars, the researchers emphasize that today there are still not enough clear criteria for determining the *realities of life*, and that the specifics of the language units that denote these realities have not been studied yet.

Many authors give an approximate meaning of this term. For example, Andrij Fedorov writes about words (without giving them any name) that

“denote the *realities* of social life and material life,” i.e., those that denote “a purely local phenomenon, which has no correspondence in everyday life and in the concepts of another people.” (Fedorov, 1983, p. 175)¹⁷

Gienadij Tomahin gives the following definition:

Realities are the names of objects of material culture inherent only to certain nations and peoples, historical facts, state institutions, names of national and folklore heroes, mythological creatures, etc. (Tomahin, 1988, p. 15)¹⁸

The classification of linguistic and country-specific components by Tomahin includes: *geographical realities (toponyms)*, especially those with cultural and historical associations (large cities, famous tourist places); *anthroponyms* – names of historical figures, public figures, scientists, writers, characters of fiction and folklore: *ethnographic realities*: life, food, drinks; clothing, shoes; housing, furniture, dishes; transport; labour, designation of people of labour; art and culture customs, rituals; religion; measures and money monetary units; and *socio-political realities*: administrative and territorial structure; ranks, titles, addresses, and institutions.

Taking into account the size of the article, we will be selectively guided by this classification. Let us refer to the translated text of the book by Fronczek and show how the author’s philosophy of life (stored in books) is captured in the linguistic and country-specific components of stories by Fronczek, namely in the linguistic

Павел II казаў: »Перамагай зло добром«. Таму і імкнуся не прычыняць словам прыкрасьці, словам стараюся сеяць дабрыню, узаемны давер... І пра гэта таксама нагадвае мая кніжка, часам у жартоўнай форме, часам у сур’ёзнай, бо гэтакае ж і жыцьцё, гэткая каханьне і сьмерць.»

¹⁷ «обозначающих *реалии* общественной жизни и материального быта», т.е. таких, которые обозначают «чисто местное явление, которому нет соответствия в быту и в понятиях другого народа».

¹⁸ «*Реалии* – это названия присущих только определенным нациям и народам предметов материальной культуры, фактов истории, государственных институтов, имена национальных и фольклорных героев, мифологических существ, и т.п.»

units that fully reflect the national culture of the Belarusian-Podlasie border region; realities that characterize the philosophy of life of the characters.

National features of the polyethnic culture of the border region are actively manifested in the author's use of *anthroponyms*. So in the story *Цёця Маня ляціць у Амерыку* [*Aunt Manya Is Flying to America*], Fronczek uses the Belarusian name "цёця Маня" ["aunt Manya"] and the Polish "сын Крыштаф" ["son Krzysztof"], which indicates *ethnically mixed marriages* in the border region. However, the Polish writer speaks about such important character traits as the *diligence* of the heroine ("will clean, cook, take care of the garden" [будзе прыбіраць, гатаваць, даглядаць садочак]); "every year cultivated a wagon of beets and potatoes. Alone..." ["штогод урабляла вагон буракоў і бульбы. Адна..."]) and *life optimism* ("She's 65 years old. And life is just beginning" ["Ужо 65 гадоў. А жыццё – толькі пачынаецца"]) (Frončak, 2017, p. 9). The poet does not hide the desire of the people living in the border region, to know a different, happier life, for which reason the characters go to distant countries.

In the story *Навошта грошы далакону* [*Why Does a Gravedigger Need Money*], the writer emphasizes that there is nothing better than the native places in the world. Despite the fact that the hero of the story, having gone abroad, lives rather comfortably, yet he could not become himself there: "A few years ago, I went from Radawiec to Greece via Lublin, Warsaw, and Budapest..." ["Некалькі гадоў таму паехаў я з Радаўца ў Грэцыю праз Люблін, Варшаву, Будапешт..."], "I didn't get attached either to the places or to the people..." ["не прывязаўся ні да месцаў, ні да людзей..."]. He still dreams of his "small homeland," of the people of Podlasie. In the pursuit of material wealth, however, he does not become callous or greedy. Despite the circumstances, he is able to retain the ability to sympathize: "In the bed of one of the dead, he found a small bag full of drachmas. He held it in his hand, and then the dead man's sister appeared. She was so unhappy and upset..." ["У ложку аднаго зь нябожчыкаў знайшоў мяшэчак паўнюток драхмаў. Трымаў на далоні, і тут – сястра памерлага з'явілася. Была такой няшчаснай і засмучанай..."], honesty: "gave her the bag of money" ["мяшэчак грошай аддаў ёй"] (Frončak, 2017, p. 10).

At the same time, Fronczek's book warns the younger generation living in the modern technologized world against its influence on the deforming moral world of man. In the story *Немец плакаў* [*The German Was Crying*], the author speaks about the widespread fraud in many areas of modern life, including the automobile markets:

I've heard another argument in the Lublin car commissions, or as now: car dealerships. Not technical, but psychological!

– The German cried as he sold! – the owner quietly assured the potential buyer...

– Germans do not cry when they sell cars. (Frončak, 2017, p. 11)¹⁹

Fronczek's book also reveals the specifics of the multicultural border environment, which is filled with different voices, both linguistic and socio-cultural:

He did not use the Polish language for years, but during his rare contacts with Poles here called (*M.P.: Belarusian writer Ales Filatav*) proverbs, sayings, and appeals known from childhood. (Frončak, 2017, p. 47)²⁰

In the story *Польскія коні ў Беларусі* [*Polish Horses in Belarus*] the author talks about the friendship of Poles and Belarusians, who can always come to each other's aid: "They wanted to return the horses, so after some deliberation, everyone grabbed the horse's leg and moped them centimetre by centimetre towards Poland" ["Хацелі коней вярнуць, таму пасля пэўных развагаў кожны ўхапіўся за конскую нагу і сантыметр за сантыметрам пасунулі іх у бок Польшчы"] (Frončak, 2017, p. 47). The short story *Чалавечы голас каня* [*The Human Voice of a Horse*] tells about the traditions of *kutya* on the feast of Christmas in the border region:

In a beautiful carol *God Was Born* the great Polish poet Franciszek Karpiński described the miracles. This always popular song continues to be heard in Polish churches, but people do not often understand that they are singing about miracles, about phenomena that will not be comprehended by human thought. (Frončak, 2017, p. 194)²¹

Recalling the history of the border region, the author emphasizes its specificity and quite natural modern polyethnicity of society, which has developed during many wars: "Where from? Where is the gold in the ground from? It was buried by Poles, Turks, Tatars, Jews, Russians..." ["Адкуль? Адкуль у зямлі золата? Закопвалі яго палякі, туркі, татары, жыды, расейцы..."] (Frončak, 2017, p. 195). It is also filled with the stories about Poland's economic ties not only with the Belarusian border, but also with Russia: "And many years later, in the seventies and eighties of the last century, it was we, the Poles, who carried gold from them – rings, earrings, chains. Who loved what, who needed it?" ["А шмат гадоў пазьней, у сямідзесятых і васьмідзесятых мінулага веку, гэта мы, палякі, вазілі ад іх

¹⁹ "У Любэльскіх аўтакамісіёнках, ці як зараз: аутахаўзах, пачуў я яшчэ адзін аргумент. Не тэхнічны, псіхалагічны! / – Немец плакаў, як прадаваў! – прыглушана запэўніваў уладальнік патэнцыйнага пакупніка... / – Немцы ня плачуць, калі прадаюць аўто."

²⁰ "Гадамі не карыстаўся польскай мовай, але падчас рэдкіх кантактаў з палякамі прыпамінаў (*М.П.: беларускі пісьменнік Алесь Філатаў*) вядомыя зь дзяцінства прыказкі, выслоўі, звароты."

²¹ "У прыгожай калядцы *Бог нарадзіўся* апісаў чуды вялікі польскі паэт Францішак Карпіньскі. Гэтая заўжды папулярная песня працягвае гучаць у польскіх храмах, але людзі часта не разумеюць, што спяваюць аб цудах, аб з'явах, якіх не ўстане ахапіць чалавечая думка."

золата – прясцёнкі, завушніцы, ланцужкі. Хто што любіў, якая каму была патрэба?”] (Frončak, 2017, p. 195).

Discussing how the philosophy of life of the people of the border region was formed, the author points out to the reader its universal character, because: “A wise man knows what he says, a fool says what he knows...” [“Разумны чалавек ведае, што кажа, дурны кажа, што ведае...”] (Frončak, 2017, p. 196). In many ways, this philosophy of life was shaped by religion and its traditions. Explaining Christmas in the border region, the author describes in detail how the celebration took place:

An unusual night is approaching. People gather at the Christmas table, over the decorated Christmas tree and sing merrily:

Christ was born to save us,
The angels play, greet the King,
The animals kneel, the shepherds sing,
Miracles, miracles are proclaimed.
(Frončak, 2017, p. 197)²²

In the story *Аднойчы над Бялай* [*One Day near Biala*], the author talks about human happiness and ways to achieve it, that only human desires and perseverance in achieving the goal can make a person of any nationality happy: “It’s all up to you. Have the courage to be happy” [“Усё залежыць ад вас. Майце адвагу быць шчаслівымі”] (Frončak, 2017, p. 221). Thus, the linguistic and cultural elements in the language of Fronczek demonstrate the reflection of the material and moral conditions of life of a polyethnic society on the Brest-Podlasie border region. This makes it possible to compare and search for common and different cultures that have been peacefully coexisting and developing on the Brest-Podlasie border region for many years in the context of effective intercultural communication.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, we see that even such a fragmentary analysis of the creativity of individual authors of the Belarusian-Polish border region convinces us that the regional polyethnic literature is an important component of the formation of a person, the choice of his/her life and creative values because the poetry of the regional authors of the word reflected not only elements of native, Belarusian, culture, but also of

²² “Набліжаецца незвычайная ноч. Людзі збіраюцца за калядным сталом, над прыбранай ёлачкай і весела сляваюць: / Хрыстос нарадзіўся, каб нас збавіць, / Анёлы іграюць, Карала вітаюць, / Укленчыўшы жывёлы, пастухі сьпяваюць, / Цуда, цуда абвяшчаюць.”

other cultures of the border region, namely Polish, Russian and Ukrainian. So, the regional poets are included in the spiritual biography of the reader, become their constant companion, helping everyone to find answers to complex questions of life with their creativity.

Translated into English: Margarita Sviridova

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