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### COMICS ABOUT THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR: EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL (BASED ON THE COMICS ‘CYBORGS’)

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***The purpose.** The article deals with the educational and pedagogical possibilities of comics devoted to the russian-Ukrainian war, and provides an analysis of the series of comics ‘Cyborgs’ describing the events of 2014 in the DAP, as well as the first months of the full-scale invasion. Attention is focused on understanding the role of military/war comics in the contemporary cultural and artistic space. The structural features of comics about war, including documentary comics, are identified. **Research methods.** The paper uses a system of historical, hermeneutical and structural methods. The author relies on the theoretical and empirical scientific methodology, uses the methodology of literary cognitive science, which is determined by the specifics of this study. **Results of the study.** The paper helps to identify the peculiarities of the comics about the russian-Ukrainian war ‘Cyborgs’, the specifics of documenting events in them, the peculiarities of structuring panels in which word and picture complement each other, the use of distinguishing markers to depict ‘our own’ and ‘others’, as well as the peculiarities of introducing characters. **Originality** of the study is an approach to examine and analyse the comics ‘Cyborgs’ not only as an art product, but also as a documentary literature, to identify the specifics of documentation of events in this series, and to follow the connection between the visual and the verbal. The paper emphasises the importance of using such comics in the educational process, as they not only actualise patriotic narratives, but also contribute to the formation of a new culture of reading and dialogue with students on the topics of war, identity and social responsibility. **The practical significance** of the article lies in the possibility of using the results of the study in research and educational courses dealing with the study of contemporary literature, comics, and the*

*events of the Ukrainian-Russian war, as well as at teacher professional development courses.*

**Keywords:** *comic comics, documentary comics, military/military comics, russian-Ukrainian war, cyborgs, educational potential.*

The russian-Ukrainian war has affected all spheres of Ukrainian life, and has also revealed the emergence of a new cultural code: the images of defenders, volunteers, and displaced persons. Many products of the new Ukrainian culture focus on war, heroism, and identity. These are songs, films, books, paintings, and music. Education also has to adapt to the new conditions, as new approaches to both education and upbringing, including national and patriotic education, need to be developed. The circle of readers' interests includes war literature, books where the themes of war and forced emigration become dominant. Comics are no exception, as they are becoming increasingly popular and are steadily gaining ground on the Ukrainian art market. In particular, comics about the russian-Ukrainian war play a significant role in shaping the reading interests of schoolchildren, promote reading, and are an important component of preserving the memory of events that are deeply and tragically experienced by Ukrainians.

The active circulation of war/military comics is associated with the Second World War, when they served not only as entertainment reading but also as a source of propaganda. Since then, they have had their own history and deep traditions both in the well-known superhero thematic space and in the new direction of contemporary comics - documentary comics [3].

The comic book is usually viewed as a form combining images and text that interact and complete each other in a single synthetic structure of the text, forming a multimodal narrative. It belongs to hybrid visual or verbal-visual art, related to such concepts as poster, book illustration, animation, political cartoon and caricature, but distinct from them due to its unique characteristics, the localization and classification of which are constantly being researched by specialists in the field [21, p. 208].

The culture of comics has been thoroughly studied in the works of foreign researchers such as Will Eisner, Scott McCloud, Stan Lee, Umberto Eco, and others. The specifics of graphic literature are studied by the following Ukrainian researchers: R. Voronina, O. Hudoshnyk, O. Kolesnyk, R. Koropetska, N. Kosmatska, S. Pidopryhora, B. Filonenko, E. Danylenko, and H. Onkovych. They also consider the peculiarities of using comics as didactic material.

Claude Bailey argued that comics and television should be on a par with the other seven art forms, becoming the eighth and ninth art forms. In 1960, John Hoyer Updike said at a public lecture: 'I see no good reason why a talented artist cannot create a true masterpiece in the form of a comic book'.

B. Filonenko is convinced that graphic literature in our country cannot be attributed to mass culture, and calls Ukrainian comics individual experiments of

individuals. The critic emphasises the need to create a comic book culture that is accessible to everyone. For him, it is an indicator of the development of society – when comics are in demand, when there are people who are engaged in it professionally, and when there are people who read them [22].

Comics are a special kind of art that is mostly (with some notable exceptions) narrative in nature and tells stories (McCloud, S., 2019).

Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* (1993), Randy Duncan, Matthew Smith, and Paul Levitz's *The Power of Comics* (2015) are serious studies of the history of their appearance, the formation of comic book culture, their structure and content. The first work is a scientific study, professional and serious, but in the form of comics. S. McCloud reflects on the iconic nature of images in comics, their spatial and temporal features, and possible evolution [18]. The authors of the book *The Power of Comics* talk about the history of comics, the form (storytelling, reading), comic book culture, and offer a classification of comic book genres and their narrative models [5].

O. Hudoshnyk devotes a lot of his work to documentary comics and war comics [3]. According to the researcher, war graphic narratives contribute to the healing of invisible wounds of traumatic experience and thus even affect public health, as they are an effective combination of interpretation of facts and fiction, the comic book broadcasts critical and marginal discourses, and becomes a means of disrupting established media and political approaches to the assessment of military events. The comics acts as a tool of communication, allowing you to create your own narrative of 'reading' military events. Visuals also play an important role, when the visual form helps the verbal narrative, and the narrative format of the graphic story allows it to be built sequentially, breaking the text into comic panels and assembling them into a single plot, comics about trauma break the convention of the form [4].

The purpose of the research is to identify and substantiate the cultural and educational potential of the Ukrainian comic book in the literary and educational space, to analyse comics dedicated to the Russian-Ukrainian war, in particular Cyborgs, and their role in shaping contemporary reading culture in Ukraine.

The study uses a system of historical, hermeneutical and structural methods.

The topic of the Russian-Ukrainian war is one of the most important and popular in contemporary Ukrainian culture. Since 2014, the war has become an imminent part of our lives. The heroic deeds of Ukrainian soldiers have inspired and continue to inspire new illustrated stories.

A few months after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Matsuda Juko's manga *The Ghost of Kyiv*, about Ukrainian superhero pilot who shot down many enemy aircraft, was published. The famous manga author was inspired by the heroic defence of the skies over Kyiv by Ukrainian pilots of the 40th Tactical Aviation Brigade. This defence gave rise to the urban legend

of the Ghost of Kyiv, a MiG-29 pilot who scored six victories in the Kyiv sky in the first 30 hours of the Russian invasion. This indicates certain trends in the creation of cartoon stories, where the main characters will be our military, and the plot will be based on episodes of heroic resistance to the enemy and defence of the native land [6]. Almost simultaneously, a biographical comic book about Volodymyr Zelenskyy by Michael Frizzell and Pablo Martinen was published in the United States, telling the story of his rise from actor-comedian to head of state, a strong leader on the political map of the world.

In June 2022, stories from the social comics magazine Inker, about the events of the Russian-Ukrainian war, were published. Inker searches for true stories and their participants, conducts interviews, collects photo and video evidence, which become the basis for the stories in the comic book. These are the stories of ordinary Ukrainians who heroically resist the enemy. They take us back to the events in Mariupol, Azovstal, Chernobyl, and speak to us from the occupied villages and cities. In 2022-2023, we released many episodes, including. These are stories about resistance, love for the Motherland, true friendship and love. The stories are short, full of pain, but not despair. They are based on real stories of real people, a kind of chronicle of the heroic deeds of Ukrainians during the Russian-Ukrainian war. In fact, this makes these comics similar to the Cyborgs series, but while the latter is about military resistance to the occupier, the former is mostly about civil resistance, as their characters are mostly people who woke up to the explosions on 24 February: some are forced to flee the occupation, some find themselves face to face with the enemy, some save others at the risk of their lives, and some find love.

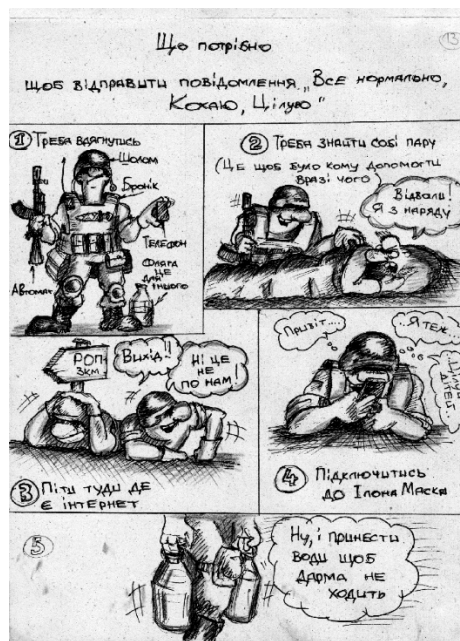
‘enWar Mental’ (Yaryna Katoroz) is a story that describes the environmental consequences of war. It is a part of the enWar Mental project, which tells about the impact of 21st century wars, urban renewal and Russian ecocide in Ukraine. The main characters of the comics are 15-year-old Yurko and his 7-year-old sister Myroslava. They are fleeing from the war and see how the occupiers abuse the animals of the Kharkiv Ecopark, what they have done to the protected areas of Kherson, the waters of Donetsk and Luhansk, and the landscapes of Zaporizhzhia. They witnessed not only ecocide, but also how Ukrainians are saving nature at the risk of their own lives. The author notes that enWAR\_mental is a special prism through which we are trying to show as many people as possible the horrors of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The aim of the project is not only to tell the story, but also to interest readers in the investigation of the ecocide. These comics contain the following sections: ‘Forest Fires’, ‘Destruction of Ecoparks’, ‘Water Poisoning’, ‘Destruction of Protected Areas’, ‘Destruction of Landscapes’. It deals not only with the disasters, but also with their consequences for Ukraine in the future.

‘We’ll be back soon...’ by Oleksandra and Yurii Shapovalov (2022) shows the forced emigration of a family during the war. The protagonists (a family of mice - mum, dad, children Horzhynka, Hrytsyk, Liana), who live in

the Forest Country, wake up to loud explosions. And so the war began. This illustrated story is about home and its loss, mutual help, support, as well as about responsible attitude to information dissemination, development of critical thinking and safety rules in wartime. The narrative is interrupted from time to time by informative inserts on how to consume information correctly and what to take with you on the road during evacuation. In 2023, a sequel to this story, 'Home on the Palms', was published. In addition to an interesting story, the comic book develops the skills of critical evaluation of media messages and a responsible attitude to the consumption and dissemination of information.

As we can see, the events of the russian-Ukrainian war are expressed in various ways in comics: fictional depiction of the war, documentary, social and didactic. They aim not only to tell about the events, but also to preserve the memory of them, to teach young readers how to act properly in times of war.

Especially valuable are comics that contain a documentary narrative plot, taken from the stories of participants or created by combatants themselves. They contain not only battle scenes, but also reflect the everyday life of soldiers. For example, Ruslan Pichota's Military Comics from the War (2024). Ruslan, nicknamed Pichota, was a technologist in a children's publishing house in civilian life, and now he is a fighter with the Kharkiv Territorial Defense Battalion. He gained national popularity thanks to his colorful comics, cartoons, and caricatures about the lives of Ukrainian soldiers on the battlefield. They were widely shared on social media, even posted on the official page of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Over time, there were so many drawings that they were published as a separate book. Here are a few pages from it:



Ruslan draws his stories from real life - every strip, drawing or cartoon has a story. However, at the same time, almost all of them are typical, meaning they happen to many soldiers from other units [2].

The most interesting, in our opinion, are the comics of the Cyborgs series, which can be classified as documentary, because they describe not only real events but also those recorded on behalf of their witnesses.

In 2016, the first comics of the Cyborgs series were published. The publication was carried out by the public organisation 'Faithful to Traditions', founded by soldiers, volunteers and activists who oppose Russian aggression, primarily in the information space. The comics were inspired by real events - the battle for Donetsk airport and the memories of the soldiers who took part in this battle. It all started with the stories told by soldiers who came out of the airport. The stories are written as authentically as possible, without any artistic embellishment. The idea's authors explain that one of those being taken from the battlefield was very fond of drawing comics. He used to draw them on the wall at the airport. Dok, coordinator of the organisation 'Faithful to Tradition', notes the following: 'These are the stories of the cyborgs that they told themselves. Donetsk airport has become a legendary point. It's like a modern-day Cossack Sich. These stories contain many incredible things, self-sacrifice, and humour. There are stories about superheroes - X-Men, Superman and others. And we wanted to start a few series about our heroes.'

'The Story of Three' is about two warriors who carried a wounded soldier. It's a very interesting story! If Spielberg had a story like this, he would cry, make a new Oscar-winning film, and everyone would cry with him' [20].

It is worth mentioning that the word 'cyborgs' first appeared in 1960 in the article 'Cyborgs and Space' in the Astronautics journal by Manfred E. Clines and Nathan S. Kline [25]. Since 2014, the word has been used in the Ukrainian public space to refer to the defenders of Donetsk airport, and it has even become the word of 2014. The battle for the Donetsk airport was one of the most violent and difficult in the war with Russia in the east, as it lasted from May 2014 to 20 January 2015 (over 242 days).

At various times, special forces of the 3rd separate regiment, soldiers of the 93rd and 72nd mechanised, 79th, 80th, 81st, 95th airmobile brigades, the 1st and 17th tank brigades and the 57th motorised brigade, the 90th airmobile battalion and the 74th reconnaissance battalion fought directly at the airport and at nearby facilities, the 1st and 17th separate tank brigades and the 57th separate motorised infantry brigade, the 90th separate airmobile and 74th separate reconnaissance battalions, the Dnipro-1 regiment and Ukrainian volunteers. Many of them received state awards, some posthumously. The defence of Donetsk airport showed that the strength of the Ukrainian spirit is stronger than Russian weapons. Ukrainian defenders can resist any enemy, even if they have significant advantages [1].

Dynamo, one of the cyborgs, author of memoirs and a comic book hero, has this to say about the origin of the word 'cyborgs':

- Guys, who are you?

And we are them:

- The 3rd Regiment...

- Where are you from?

- From Kirovohrad...

- Special forces?

- Special forces...

- Where are your armour and helmets?

We looked at each other then... We had already thrown away the packages from the ATB, because we were really ashamed of them...

- This is what we were wearing...

They looked at us like animals from the circus...

- Are you guys fighting like this?

- ...

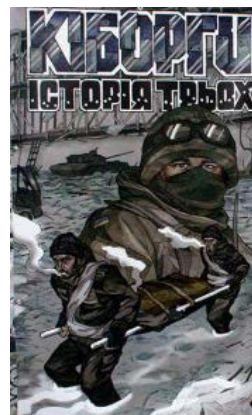
- No, you guys are really crazy... You're like cyborgs...

At the time, this word didn't bother me, I wanted to eat and sleep... But then, when the orcs called us that in their radio conversations, I remembered that the first to call us that were the guys from the 95th, who had already worked in peacekeeping missions, smelled the powder and couldn't imagine any war without an armoured helmet [7]

The first issue that started the Cyborgs series was the comic book 'Cyborgs. The Story of Three'. The story takes place in January 2015, when the 80th Assault brigade of Lviv was tasked with defending the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The main characters are Ivan Kamianchyn, Petro Chornyi and Ihor Rymar. Ihor Rymar was seriously injured. On 8 January, negotiations with the enemy lasted for about 12 hours, as a result of which the occupiers agreed to evacuate him on the condition that two unarmed soldiers would take the wounded to an enemy checkpoint. Ihor Rymar died on 25 January in a hospital in Kyiv, and Petro died after the second explosion in the terminal. Only Ivan Kamianchyn survived. The photo of Petro Chornyi, which once became popular all over the world, was used by the artist on the cover.

These comics set a general model for the creation of the following ones: a short story explaining the events depicted in the comics or a brief overview of the heroic Ukrainian past. The DAP series includes the comics: 'Cyborgs. The Beginning. Volume 1', 'Cyborgs. The Beginning. Volume 2', 'Cyborgs. The Legend of the Invincibles. Volume 1', 'Cyborgs. The Trap' (3 stories). The Chronicles of the 3rd Regiment series includes the following books: 'Cyborgs. Chronicles of the 3rd Regiment. Volume 1', 'Cyborgs. Chronicles of the 3rd Regiment. Volume 19', pilot series – 'Cyborgs. Unbreakable: DAP Mission', 'Cyborgs. Assault. Volume 1', 'Cyborgs. Under siege. Volume 2'. The publication 'The Special Forces of Ukraine. Cyborgs: the first selection'.

Illustrators: Danylo Lys, Dmytro Tkachenko, Levko Kvit, Pavlo Pryimych, Vitalii Mishuk, Oleh Ivaneko, Kurkuma.



Soldiers of the 3rd Special Forces Regiment and the 95th Automobile Brigade secured Donetsk Airport in March 2014. On 17 April, the enemy first attempted to seize the airport, and on 6 May, all flights were suspended. On 26 May, the occupiers again tried to take control of Donetsk airport: they entered the new terminal. It was on this day that sniper Vokha made the first shot from the roof of the old terminal, which gave rise to the history of cyborgs and the story of cyborgs. The enemy was driven out, and the airport was completely taken over by the ATO forces.

On 1 January 2015, there was a fierce battle. On 13 January, massive shelling began again, but the Ukrainian military continued to control the territory of the new terminal. On the night of 14 January, the last rotation took place at the airport, and the battle on 16 January lasted from 6am to 2am. On the night of 16-17 January, reinforcements from the 90th Airmobile Battalion arrived. On 17 January, our soldiers recaptured part of the airport. The fierce fighting continued on 19 January, with the Ukrainian military suffering the greatest losses. Over the next few days, the Ukrainian military was forced to retreat (The Battle for Donetsk Airport: Chronicle of Events, Figures, Facts, Findings and Lessons).

The title 'Cyborgs' means that the main characters will be Ukrainian defenders, new superheroes. Classic superheroics emerged through a mix of fantastic powers (supernatural abilities), costumes (the hero becomes easily recognisable) and double lives (for example, an ordinary clerk by day and a superhero by night). Our cyborgs are easily recognisable thanks to the pixel and chevrons, not all of them were military in their past lives. And what they did is still surprising and impressive. And the pro-social mission is to use our powers for the benefit and protection of humanity, to fight evil.

The first Cyborg comics describe the main and important events of this period on the following days: 26.05, 31.05, 29.07, 03.09, 25.11.2014, 08.01, 17.01.2015. Later, the comics 'Cyborgs. Separate Volume 2: The SDF of Ukraine. The first selection. 23.11.2015-05.12.2015', 'Cyborgs. The Legend of the Invincibles. 5.08.2014' Volume 2', 'Cyborgs. Minted by Hell. January 2015', 'Cyborgs. Battle for Kyiv. Gostomel. Introduction. 03.03.2022', 'Cyborgs. The Battle of Kyiv. Borodyanka. 27.02.2022'. They are also based on real events and were created based on the stories of participants in those events.

The events are told by the warriors who took part in them: Voha, Titan, Commander, Klishch, Tall, Director, Tourist, Dan, Slider, Beard, Old Man, Slime, Doc, Cascade, Adam and others. Their memories and reflections interrupt the general plot of the story, reminding us that the story that comes to life on the comic book panels is real, with real characters and real events, with strict adherence to chronology and time codes. Direct, lively stories without pathos, stories about the days of defending not only the Donetsk airport, but something bigger, more meaningful, because the airport has become a symbol of the invincibility of the Ukrainian army and Ukraine.

On the comic panels we see scenes of battles, the life of cyborgs, and some details or objects necessary for understanding the story and creating the appropriate emotional load.

The DAP control tower often appears in comic book panels. First intact, then destroyed. It fell on 13 January 2015. This tower was a symbol of the airport's defence, as well as a symbol of Ukraine's ability to resist. The tower was the main observation point of the Armed Forces of Ukraine for the enemy, so it is not surprising that the enemy was constantly shelling it.

Each issue of Cyborgs has its own story, but they are all united by the characters, place and time of action.

Soldiers of the 3rd Separate Special Forces Regiment and the 95th Automobile Brigade took over the protection of Donetsk Airport in March 2014, and on April 17, the enemy first tried to seize the airport, and all flights were suspended on May 6. On May 26, the occupiers tried to take control of Donetsk airport again: they entered the new terminal. It was on this day that sniper Vokha made the first shot from the roof of the old terminal, which marked the beginning of the history of cyborgs and the story of cyborgs. The enemy was forced out and the airport was fully controlled by the ATO forces. On July 10, the russians fired mortars at the position of the 72nd Brigade's anti-aircraft gunners. One soldier was killed and another died later from his wounds. These were the first combat losses at the Donetsk airport.

Heavy fighting began in September. Our troops held the new and old terminals, and the territory adjacent to the airport was controlled by the 2nd Battalion Tactical Group of the 93rd Mechanized Brigade, units of the 3rd Separate Special Forces Regiment, 74th Separate Reconnaissance Battalion,

79th and 95th Airmobile Brigades of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and volunteers. Fire support artillery was also in the village of Pisky. On September 28, two battles took place, in which 9 soldiers were killed and 14 were wounded. On October 3-6, the enemy again attempted to take the airport. Then 11 Ukrainian soldiers were killed. On November 29-30, two soldiers were killed and 6 were wounded during the occupiers' storming of the old terminal. Our military left the old terminal. From November 30 to December 11, the military rotated. Ukrainian positions were occupied by soldiers of the 90th Airmobile Battalion, which became part of the newly formed 81st Airmobile Brigade. On January 1, 2015, a fierce battle took place, during which another Ukrainian defender was killed. On January 13, there was another massive shelling, but the Ukrainian military continued to control the territory of the new terminal.

On the night of January 14, the last rotation at the airport took place, and the battle on January 16 lasted from 6 am to 2 am. On the night of January 16-17, reinforcements from the 90th Airmobile Battalion arrived. On January 17, our soldiers recaptured part of the airport. On January 19, fierce fighting continued, in which Ukrainian soldiers suffered the greatest losses [1]. Over the next few days, Ukrainian soldiers were forced to retreat. The Cyborgs comics describe the key and important events of this period.

The comic book 'Cyborgs. Chronicles of the 3rd Regiment. Volume I' (memoirs of the mechanic Roma, Special Forces soldiers Monakh, Scythian, Alpha) - a story about a diversionary operation of a group of fighters of the 3rd Special Forces regiment in the territory controlled by militants; 'Cyborgs. The Beginning. Volume 1', 'Cyborgs. The Beginning. Volume 2' (memoirs of the Special Forces soldiers Vokha, Lysyi, Serhiy, Yarik, Dynamo, Commander, and Andriy) - a story about the first battle for Donetsk airport on May 26, 2014; 'Cyborgs. The Legend of the Invincibles. Volume 1' (memoirs of cyborg of the 72nd Brigade Zavuch) - a story about the defense of the DAP after the first assault on the airport; 'Cyborgs. Chronicles of the 3rd Regiment. Volume II' (memoirs of Monakh) is a story about the summer of 2014 and the search for two Ukrainian pilots who ended up in enemy-controlled territory; 'Cyborgs. The Trap' (memoirs of Krol, Commander) - a story about the Special Forces of the Special Forces and the fighters of the 156th Anti-Aircraft Missile Regiment of the Armed Forces of Ukraine about the Russian-Ukrainian war in the summer of 2014; 'Cyborgs. Unbreakable: The DAP Mission' - the story of the 93rd Brigade volunteers about how they tried to enter the Donetsk airport on the 'road of death' and the risks and dangers associated with it; 'Cyborgs. Assault. Volume 1', 'Cyborgs. Under Siege. Volume 2' - became a real Testament of our Friend and Fellow Caban... He is one of the Heroes of this incredible Saga about the crew of Bilochka's 'beha', who will go through fierce battles in the DAP itself, and get to the enemy's rear with a seriously wounded comrade, and will be able to go through all the

circles of hell to return to all deaths The story of the Volunteers of the 6th Company of the 93rd Brigade in the memoirs of a deceased comrade with a detective plot that even the 'eternal queen of detectives' Agata would envy...' [7].

Language, which serves as a distinguishing marker between 'ours' and 'others', military and national symbols drawn on the panels, and details such as the flag on the tower also play an important role in comics: 'There you go. And so that everyone can see that DAP is ours! Glory to Ukraine, guys!'

The reader of these comics is completely immersed in a narrative in which everything is real: events, facts, heroes, and... the war.

Many comic book artists use bright colors to attract the reader's attention. In these paintings, the color of the panels depends on the season: if it's summer, green and brown colors prevail, if it's winter, white colors are used. Similarly, the color scheme (light - dark) depends on the time of day when the events take place. It is through colors that we determine the place and time of the action. Also skillfully used are shadows, which draw attention to a specific point of the panel or a character. Against this background, the Ukrainian flag is especially bright. Also, yellow and blue colors serve as a marking of 'ours'. According to Ann Miller, color makes it easier to perceive, as it makes the characters recognizable across all panels.

Aspects of paralanguage are conveyed visually through changes in the size and thickness of the sound-imitating words.

Our attention when reading these comics is influenced by distance. The background gives us a sense of place. It shows the location of the Donetsk airport or places near it. The double shot is used to show the interaction of characters and their reactions.

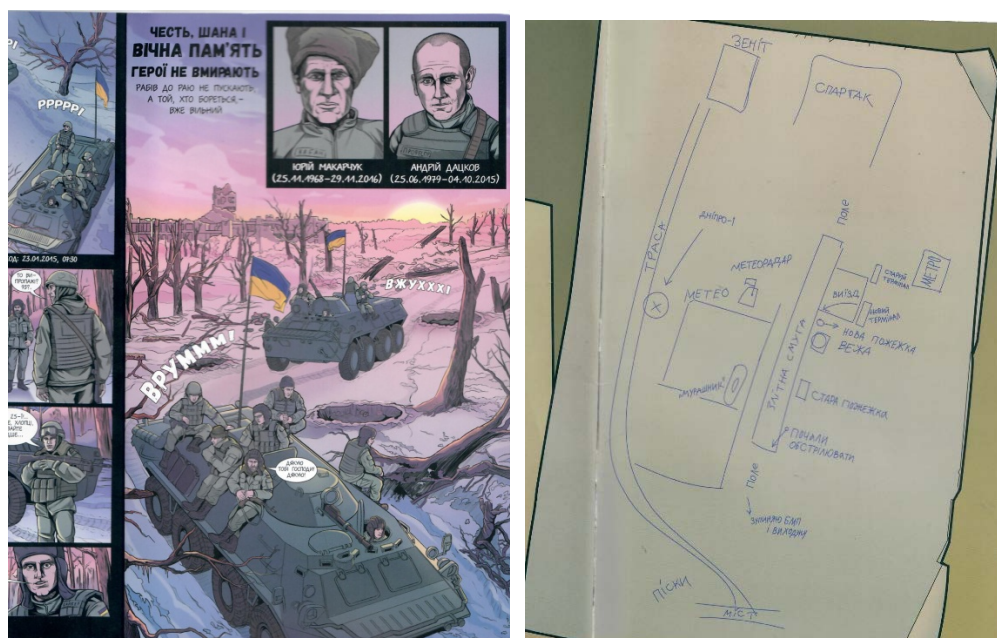
In some issues (e.g., Story of Three, Assault), close-ups are used mostly, while in others we have a combination of several close-ups with very close-ups to emphasize important details, for example, we can see their call signs on the cyborgs' uniforms as well as their eyes and smiles.

As we know, the drawings in comics are static, but they can implement primary and secondary movement [5]. Primary movement is the movement of characters and objects in the frame, which is conveyed as an image of characters, objects, metonymy and synecdoche. By changing the point of view in a sequence of panels, you can simulate the five basic movements of a frame in a movie: pan (horizontal camera movement), tilt (vertical camera movement), fly around (sideways tilt or full turn), tracking (following a moving object), and 360-degree camera movement [5]. In different issues of Cyborgs, we have such imitations of panel movement.

These comics focus on the story. Each issue has a different narrative, but they are all united by characters, place, and time. The images and text are synchronized, and the text reinforces the meaning of the panel content:



The peculiarity of this series of comics is that they are not only based on real events, but they use real testimonies, have a clear link to locations, time codes, maps, portraits of heroes, quotes, documents, and characters who are real combatants:



Iselin Kaspersen identified 7 ideal types of soldiers: warrior, defender of the nation, law enforcement officer, humanist, state builder, ideologue and contractor, noting that the new nature of military operations is based on a combination of different tasks, both traditionally military (peacekeeping, psychological resistance, border control, etc.) and non-combat (disaster relief, training). Another factor in the paradigm shift in the perception of the military was the mediatization of its image, where social expectations and individual interpretations significantly affect the behavior of soldiers and operations [24]. Among the heroes of Cyborgs, we have heroes of defenders of the nation, for whom participation in the war has patriotic and national motives, as they protect the nation from the threat of losing its territories and independence.

According to O. Hudoshnyk, 'Cyborgs' in the comic book format continued the tradition of historical commemoration started by projects to memorialize the defenders of the DAP. It is noteworthy that the creators of the Cyborgs series were committed to maximum documentation: as opposed to the fictional superheroes of classic comic series, the authors offer real heroes in real circumstances. Documentary compliance with the details was also observed in the artistic realization of the project.

In our study, we examined comics devoted to the events of the Russian-Ukrainian war, some of which describe the events of 2014-2015, such as 'Cyborgs', which tells the story of the heroic struggle of Ukrainian soldiers against the enemy, others were written after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and tell the stories of Ukrainians who were under occupation and re-

sisted the enemy, saved others, held on with dignity at Azovstal and in captivity, believed in victory and did everything to bring it closer. They are based on real stories, events, characters and facts. Such literature should be made part of the educational process, as it teaches us to remember the experience of war. In addition, this is a good example of Ukrainian comics. They can become part of the reading interests of both students and schoolchildren. The 'enWar Mental' and 'We'll Be Back' comics can be used in various classes, as they contain not only history but also a certain factual and didactic corpus: how to behave during the war, how to check information for accuracy, how to grow up to be an eco-responsible person.

An important role in forming readers' interests and keeping the memory of the heroic events of the Russian-Ukrainian war is played by the documentary comics of the Cyborgs series, where stories about the heroic and majestic struggle emerge from stories intertwined with jokes, scenes of military life, memories and reflections on the importance of the army for the state and military duty: '...and everything is ridiculously simple: if there is no army, there will be no Ukraine' (Commander), 'In every war, there is a place that becomes a symbolic point of the struggle between good and evil... But I am sure of one thing: no matter what kind of orcs set foot on my land with weapons, we will have the last shot...' (Vokha). And these real stories from the cyborgs' voices are deeper, more alive than just a list of dates and events, because the history of the battle for Donetsk airport is shown through the story of the personalities, the soldiers who created it and became part of it. As Monakh said: 'All names are temporary, all portraits are replaceable, and our Ukrainian Army is already the most stable and formidable powerful part of the Ukrainian state - independent and strong...'. This series offers a new type of hero - a Ukrainian warrior who is ready to defend his Motherland until his last breath, a hero not canonized and fictional, but alive, real, who did not plan to become a hero in peaceful life, a hero whose superpower is love for his native land and its defense. Real stories and quotes from real warriors are included in the comic book text. A selection of memoirs precedes the comic panels, there are brief historical references to the battles, excerpts from the soldiers' stories, portrait resemblances, clear references to geographical locations, etc. As one of the warriors who appears on the pages of this comic book noted, '...We write our History every day... Just as the Russian-Ukrainian war is written every day with the lives and blood of our Warriors and the fates of our orphaned families... However, these stories - written down and immortalized by the Memoirs of true Warriors in the graphic novel - once again convince us that we will win! When and how - depends only on us and our conscious historical choices...'

The Cyborgs documentary comic book series is a unique publication because it is based on real events - the battle for Donetsk airport, battles during the full-scale invasion - and tells the story of the defenders. It features the heroism of

Ukrainian soldiers, patriotism, loyalty to the state and readiness to defend their land from the enemy to the last breath, as well as humor, modesty and unpretentious simplicity. Reading such comics introduces students to the history of Ukraine's struggle against the Russian enemy, personalizes history, inspires admiration for the heroism of Ukrainians, and inspires them to live and fight.

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### КОМІКСИ ПРО РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКУ ВІЙНУ: ОСВІТНЬО-ВИХОВНИЙ ПОТЕНЦІАЛ (НА МАТЕРІАЛІ КОМІКСІВ «КІБОРГИ»)

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**Мета.** У статті розглянуто освітні та виховні можливості коміксів, присвячених російсько-українській війні, а також пропонується аналіз серії коміксів «Кіборги», що описують події 2014 року у ДАП, а також перші місяці повномасштабного вторгнення. Зосереджено увагу на розумінні ролі військового/воєнного коміксів у сучасному культурно-мистецькому просторі. Визначено структурні особливості коміксів про війну, зокрема документальних. **Дослідницька методика.** У дослідженні використано систему з історичного, герменевтичного та структурального методів. Авторка опирається на теоретико-емпіричну наукову методику, використовує методологію літературознавчої когнітивістики, що зумовлюється специфікою цього дослідження. **Результати дослідження.** Дослідження дає змогу виявити особливості коміксів про російсько-українську війну «Кіборги», специфіку документування подій у них, особливості структурування панелей, в яких слово та малюнок взаємодоповнюють одне одного, використання розрізнявальних маркерів для зображення «своїх» та «чужих», а також особливості введення персонажів. **Наукова новизна** дослідження полягає у спробі

розглянути та проаналізувати комікси «Кіборги» не лише як мистецький продукт, а як зразок документальної літератури, виявити специфіку документування подій у цій серії, простежити зв'язок візуального та вербального. Підкреслюється значущість використання таких коміксів у навчальному процесі, адже вони не лише актуалізують патріотичні наративи, але й сприяють формуванню нової культури читання та діалогу з учнями на теми війни, ідентичності та суспільної відповідальності. **Практичне значення** статті полягає у можливості використовувати результати дослідження у наукових студіях та навчальних курсах, пов'язаних із вивченням новітньої літератури, коміксів, подій українсько-російської війни, а також на курсах підвищення кваліфікації для вчителів.

**Ключові слова:** комікс, документальний комікс, воєнний/військовий комікс, російсько-українська війна, кіборги, освітній потенціал.