

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2022.52.04.13>

How to Cite:

Prykhodko, V., Soloshenko-Zadniprovska, N., Viediarnikova, T., Chernenko, O., & Shulga, I. (2022). Artistic synthesis of philosophy and history in Diana Ackerman's Novel "The Zookeeper's Wife". *Amazonia Investiga*, 11(52), 123-134. <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2022.52.04.13>

Artistic synthesis of philosophy and history in Diana Ackerman's Novel "The Zookeeper's Wife"

Художній синтез філософії та історії в романі Діани Акерман «Дружина доглядача зоопарку»

Received: August 17, 2021

Accepted: February 20, 2022

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the problem of Diana Ackerman's the creativity. She created a touching and extremely objective book 'The Zookeeper's Wife' showing the people suffering from the humiliation of their human dignity. Diana Ackerman, with endless love and anxiety for her characters, describes what people close to her saw and experienced during World War II. Her novel, imbued with the intense deployment of tragic actions and deeds, does not leave indifferent neither literary scholars, nor readers. The purpose of the article is to analyze the transformation of the characters in Diana Ackerman's novel 'The Zookeeper's Wife' in the context of the development of the theme of survival in 'labor camps', Jewish 'ghetto' during the occupation period in European countries. The results of the study are understanding that the novel created is not characterized by the typical image of the main character, but the sketches do not ignore the individual features in the character of the husband, son, friends, her surrounding

Анотація

Стаття присвячена проблемі творчості Діани Акерман, яка створила зворушливу і надзвичайно об'єктивну книгу «Дружина доглядача зоопарку», що зображує страждання людей від приниження їхньої людської гідності. Діана Акерман з нескінченною любов'ю і тривогою до своїх героїв описує те, що бачили та переживали близькі їй люди під час Другої світової війни. Її роман, пройнятий інтенсивним розгортанням трагічних вчинків, не залишає байдужим ні літературознавців, ні читачів. Мета статті – проаналізувати трансформацію героїв роману Діани Акерман «Дружина доглядача зоопарку» у контексті розробки теми виживання у «трудових таборах», єврейського «гетто» в період окупації в європейських країнах. Результати дослідження вказують, що створений роман не характеризується типовим образом головної героїні, адже ескізи не ігнорують індивідуальні риси характеру чоловіка, сина, друзів, оточуючих її людей, розкривають національні

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people, reveal the national features of life. The plausibility of events in occupied Poland of historical significance is being recreated. The study concluded that the novel is the work of life-affirming, performed by a civil and patriotic pathos.

Keywords: Diana Ackerman, 'The Zookeeper's Wife', Jewish theme, children of 'war'.

Introduction

Literature as a kind of art anywhere in its existence, in any of its time cuts, is a complex dialectical unity of old and new, traditional and innovative. It retains continuity in relation to previous cultural traditions, while transforming them is in a new capacity. Real literature can change a person's life if it is typical for a person to empathize and forgive. In the 20th century, everyone had their own definition of prose and poetry, and behind each such definition is the identity of the writer to whom it belongs.

Moreover, the connection of literature of the early 21st century is close because the leading writers of the previous century are direct participants in the literary process of the 20th century. It can be said without exaggeration that literature opens with the names of Charles Belfort – the novel "Paris Architect", Jared Diamond – the author of the book "Guns, Microbes and Steel", Thomas Kenilly "Shindler's Ark", Amos Oz "My Michael", Julie Kramer, Christine Morris, etc. A century has madly and wisely exposed the catastrophe of human existence itself in a distorted world, mind has proved powerless to find answers to disturbing and keen questions of modern times.

Diana Ackerman created a moving and extremely objective book, "The Zookeeper's Wife" in English (Ackerman, 2007), showing suffering of people from the humiliation of their human dignity, translated subsequently into other languages (Ackerman, 2017). The work is life-affirming, performed by civil and patriotic pathos. The novel in the 20th century became some unexpected for us, because the topic of the Holocaust in the last century was devoted to many articles, publications and books. Literature has not ceased to be the center of life of the country, nor has it replaced philosophy and religion, morality and politics (Levchenko et al., 2021). It would seem that the topic is exhausted, but the spiritual life of the characters of the novel still remains in the focus of the writer's view.

особливості життя. У романі відтворено правдоподібність подій в окупованій Польщі, що мають історичне значення. В ході дослідження було зроблено висновок, що роман-твір життєстверджуючий, виконаний громадянським і патріотичним пафосом.

Ключові слова: Діана Акерман, «Дружина доглядача зоопарку», єврейська тема, діти «війни».

The purpose of the article is to analyze the transformation of the characters of Diana Ackerman's novel "The Zookeeper's Wife" in the context of the development of the theme of survival in "labor camps", Jewish "ghetto" during the occupation period in European countries.

Literature Review

Diana Ackerman's creative work is considered ambiguously, leaving no one indifferent. Her novel received positive reviews from critics (Max, 2007; Seaman, 2007; Beck, 2017). However, there is lack of in-depth researches that are devoted to literary creative heritage of Diana Ackerman and her novel "The Zookeeper's Wife" in modern literary science, that determines the relevance of the study of the writer's literary work.

Also, there is analyzed a number of studies and works devoted to the literature depicting the period of the Second World War and Holocaust, its specifics, the main trends and problems that it considers (Brosman, 1992; MacKay, 2009; Sokoloff, 2020; Zimmerman, 2020; Goloborodko et al., 2021); in particular, a wide range of works examining the problems of the Holocaust literature is considered (Abzug, 1985; Roskies, & Diamant, 2012; Kokkola, 2013; Vaul-Grimwood, 2007; Zack, 1991, Stavans, 2021; Kluge, & Williams, 2009; Badstübner-Kizik, 2020). Such analysis allowed to understand in more detail the content and background of the analyzed novel,

Methodology

According to the paper's purpose the following methods are used: the method of scientific literature analysis, analytical, critical, comparative literary research, method of literary analysis and the method of conceptual analysis. In the presented paper the important role also has the descriptive method, which includes

generalization and systematization of the data. Also, the authors of the article apply literary text analysis which reveals the novel's plot, its genre, the history of period, the historical time and events depicted in the novel. The material for the study was Diana Ackerman's novel "The Zookeeper's Wife".

Results and Discussion

The purpose of the article is to analyze the transformation of the characters of Diana Ackerman's novel "The Zookeeper's Wife" in the context of the development of the theme of survival in "labor camps", Jewish "ghetto" during the occupation period in European countries.

Diana Ackerman, with endless love and anxiety for her heroes, describes what people close to her saw and experienced during World War II. Her novel, imbued with the intense deployment of tragic actions and deeds, does not leave indifferent neither literary scholars, readers, nor viewers of the film shot on the novel. Her work has an independent view of the events in occupied Warsaw, the true history of the war and the participation of the Zhabinsky family in saving people from the Jewish ghetto. The belief that man can easily achieve unlimited power over nature and people conflicts with reality.

During the war, human life flowed irretrievably into a common brotherly grave, the Babi Yar. The personal fates of heroes are interfaced with the tragic course of history, often unbearable by drama situations in which heroism and cruelty built on contrasts got mixed up.

The novel created is not characterized by the typical image of the main character, but the sketches do not ignore the individual features in the character of the husband, son, friends, surrounding her people, reveal the national features of life; the plausibility of events in occupied Poland of historical significance is being recreated.

Based on Diana Ackerman's novel "The Zookeeper's Wife" a film of the same name was created featuring Jessica Chastain and Daniel Brühl in 2017, that film was released on all world screens. D. Ackerman devoted her novel to the "zoo keeper" – Antonina – and her family: "to people and animals" by the will of the case also "lived in same hole" and found themselves in the "cage" of the occupation authorities. In 1942, those who fled the ghetto hid in deserted animals,

sheds and storerooms, and also ways through the labyrinths of the sewerage helped.

So, in the writer's novel the family of Zhabinsky saved people by hiding them in their zoo. The temporary asylum for the heroes of the novel – Pavel Zelinsky, Maurius Pavel Frenkel became the deserted "Lion's House", "Pheasant House" and other hidden and secret cages for birds and animals. "Furs Farm", "Pigs Farm" were created on the initiative of the zoo owner Jan Zhabinsky to cover and shelter the "unsubdued". As Jan explained this to the family: "We will have to hide in front of everyone". And many hid until they found safe shelters or obtained official permission to travel abroad with false documents.

Indeed, the World History knew real historical cases when haunted and persecuted people had to hide. People who confessed Catholicism during Queen Elizabeth's reign in England for their religious beliefs and their commitment to faith were outlawed. Charles Belfort demonstrated one of such examples in his book: in the "lair" a priest took cover under the very nose of papists searching the house (Belfort, 2017, p. 3-4).

Working on the novel "The Zookeeper's Wife" the writer used documentary materials as an artist, interpreted them as a historian-thinker, and her very style is the style of non-scientific, but an artistic work, overgrowing the scope of document. The method of D. Ackerman's rethinking of documentary sources, memoirs based on the disparate notes of the zoo keeper herself and her husband, photographs of the family, reports in Polish and Jewish newspapers, stories of Warsaw's underground workers, memories of Ackerman herself and others, is one of her creative path in the creation of this novel.

Her mother's parents were originally from Poland, and legends, fairy-tales, myths and stories about the daily lives of Poles she heard from her grandfather and from her mother. Besides her ability to sense and understand the tragic aspects of what was happening, the intransigence of conflicts, the bitterness of inevitable losses, D. Ackerman had an amazing ability to perceive the harmony of reality, building invisible bridges between people and animals, people and their animal nature.

Care of one's neighbor, whether husband, son, nurse-maid, cook or favorite tamed animal – a minor detail characterizing the family life of the married couple of Zhabinsky: a cat with a bandaged paw, a crow with a broken wing or a

parrot with a wound on the neck, friendly gathered in the living room of the house. All this demonstrate a special charm to the real little picturesque details of peaceful pre-war life, compassion and joy as a standard of being. The style of the beginning of the narrative is characterized by clarity and naturalness.

The writer entered the reader into the excursion of the appearance of German and Polish zoos in the past centuries, noted that the wildlife of Belovezhskaya Pushcha, between the borders of Belarus and Poland, was traditionally the famous hunting grounds of kings and tsars, where nobility and bourgeoisie came to shoot rare wild animals and birds, and later was given to scientists (for scientific observations) and politicians as "Hunting grounds". In the memory of contemporaries, ordinary people who lived at the end of the century not such memories of Belovezhskaya Pushcha were left, most often they were connected with the break of the Soviet Union, when waves of bloody conflicts swept through its territory.

Push for creation of zoos in Poland, as Akerman notes in the novel, was the creation of a room with artifacts at the yard of the Tsar Jan III Sobeski in the 17th century. It should be noted that in the same century, in Russia, at the yard of Tsar Alexey Mikhailovich, called "Tishayshiy" (founder of the first noble theatre with the staging of German pastor Johann Godfrid Gregory), who aspired to follow the way of European enlightened countries. Russia cut its lag with Western trends, creating its Kunstkamera Museum in St. Petersburg, where The Peter the 1-st turned it into the Museum of artifacts.

Interestingly, Austria's famous ancient zoo originally also belonged to the imperial family for centuries, but had been opened to ordinary people in the 18th century. According to the New Year tradition of Northern Europe, shooting was carried out on birds and small animals (squirrels), preserved since pagan times, when frightened away evil spirits with noise and sacrificed to gods.

Continuing the excursion on the history of zoos, we emphasize that royal or tsar zoos were private, required enormous costs and proved not only the true passion of their owners for the "wildlife" tamed by man for themselves, but also for their high status. Not everyone could organize a mini-zoo, for that it was needed to gain certain knowledge, proper, correct conditions of animal care (appropriate food and sufficient water), great cost of their maintenance.

In the near past, wealthy nobles in Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic sometimes hosted private beasts in their estates, and bowing to all of foreign nature, Russian landlords, nobles could afford to maintain a rare breed of dog or cat, falcon or eagle, even a bear, to demonstrate their wealth. Here it is worth to remember the "pranks" of the despot landlord Kiril Petrovich Troekurov from the famous story of A.S. Pushkin "Dubrovskiy", who kept a bear in a cage for fun showing to his guests, when an unsuspecting guest was pushed into a cage with a brown bear, and the owner made fun over clumsy attempts of that guest to get out of it.

Finishing the excursion on the history of zoos, it should be noted that, recently in the 1990s in Ukraine, local party kings, who came out of power, also got great opportunities to create their beasts, having neither experience in dealing with wild animals, nor desire to entrust them to the concerns of zoologists and specialists, neither having veterinary education, but their only inherent great powers and ambitions.

They kept and keep wild animals, peacocks and a rare species of flamingo or pheasants (their meat was a delight at all times) in their elite cottages, country houses and at home. Today unfortunately on TV shows there and here there are news that somewhere at private possess horses die, moose are frozen and some animals or parrots "chased" to the city, striped piglets of wild boar escaped from the open-air cage in search of food to nearby villages, causing fear on the residents.

It is commonly known that the former President of Ukraine V. Yanukovych in "Mezhyhirya Residence" kept his private zoo and especially he "cared" about the ostrich and pheasant farm maintaining. Today many oligarchs and well-to-do people still own forest lands to shoot off a deer or moose on vacation and this often led to tragic consequences, death by negligence of the owner or his guest.

Of course, defenders and connoisseurs of disappearing species of wild animals and birds in modern times in zoos created on a scientific basis, try to resume for example the population of buffalo on Zakarpattia through the efforts of volunteers, to preserve the unique species of some animals and birds. In the whole world they are independent defenders of the ecosystem and the human being in it.

It seems to us that as actual and tragic warning for living people and as reminder of the terrible

consequences of the war, the burning military conflicts in the world, and in Ukraine, became the prophetic book by Diana Ackerman. The theme of war, military conflicts is reflected in the work of many writers. Let us mention only the famous writer Amos Oz, who knew about the Iran-Israel conflict not from the publications. Amos Oz took part in that conflict. His works have been published in 38 languages in 36 countries of the world and the novel "My Michael 1968" is included in the list of the 100 best novels of the 20th century by the International Association of Publishers. In 2018, Amos Oz won the Bialik Award, the Goethe Award, the Kafka Award, the Yasny Polyana Award in the "Foreign Literature" nomination. In our view both D. Ackerman's novel and other books about the war should remind a modern reader of the six-year conflict in Donbass, still causing grief and suffering to the citizens of Ukraine and its defenders.

So, what did the main character of the novel – Antonina – know about the war? The deep call of strong grief (Antonina's father – Antony Erdman, Polish railway engineer and Antonina's stepmother were shot in 1917 only for being "intellectuals") permanently left an indelible mark on her life and her memories. The horrors of a revolution with evil power shaped the character of a nine-year-old girl who saw that there was a different intelligentsia nearby, declaring: Peace to huts, war to palaces!

As it is known, Lenin appeared on the balcony of the two-leveled palace (the famous ballerina Kschessinska) and uttered revolutionary slogans in front of an enthusiastic crowd. This utopian ideal, in which all earthly will be shared and life order will come, has never covered the totality of human relations with the world. The few who saw Lenin at the time could consider a rare detail of his clothing: "The sleeves of Lenin's shirt adorned diamond plugs... There were rumors around the city that his wife was dressing at the best couturier of Paris and Berlin" (Revay, 2009, p. 45).

As we know, a century later, sleeves of white shirts of modern leaders or the Swiss watches on their wrists also adorn "our patriots", but they embarrassing hide them, trying not to make them visible to simple defenders of the fatherland, who were sent by this fatherland to protect. All this permanently remind us of the past events of 2014-2020 in Ukraine.

What about Antonina's character? Going thru suffering made possible of the development of

the exclusivity of Antonina's human identity, a vision of the unique national world of different nations. Perhaps it is connected with the fact that 9-year-old Antonina was brought up by the aunt: a girl lived in Uzbekistan, studied at a music school at the Tashkent Conservatoire, when she returned to Warsaw studied foreign languages, drawing and painting, especially interested in animalistic art. Enthusiastic and fun, loving people and animals with the same passion, in her maiden years she was close to her pets but her look became wider and deeper as she grew older in times when tragic events took place in the world.

In Warsaw, she met zoologist Jan Zhabinsky, very experienced man, who was ten years older than her. In 1929 they bought the zoo a few minutes from the city center by tram, in 1931 they married. They were linked by a lot of things: love, common work, feeling of happiness, their hospitable villa in the style of modern and mysterious world of nature. Antonina's favorite pets in the country house – in the valley of the river Bug – were Barsunya's badger, three-week animal babies – bobcats – Tofi and Tufa, all fed milk from a bottle. And it happened so that according to Catholic tradition Antonina chose for her son, born in 1932, the name after the saint – the boy named Rishard, at home he was lovely called bobcatty. Antonina's husband tenderly called her "Punya" friends called her "Tola". The bilingual Polish, born in Russia and returned to Poland, felt herself here as at home, still feeling a continuous relationship with the whole world.

The family chronicle of the novel is inseparably linked to the real historical events that are shown in the perception of the Zhabinsky couple, their grown-up son Rishard, involved in this crucible of death, allowing to picture this world at a special angle. The family involved by the will of destiny in fateful historical events, acted as it was supposed by duty, conscience, and their actions aimed to save people of different nationalities – Jews or underground workers – consider quite natural and humanistic.

The novel describes that in peacetime the family lived seasonally like the zoo schedule – days and nights differed: season periods of animals and humans did not match (for example, at night while giving birth of giraffe Rosa, when she could not help her newborn to get on his feet as her baby felt his head forward) and other animals especially needed Antonina's care, and in general required human attention.

There were no nameless animals in the family of the main characters: Jan's devoted friend and his permanent companion on the zoo's daily detour was a large moose called Adam. Names or nicknames were given to the monkey Adolf-Kidnapper, who stole a baby from Martha and presented him to his girlfriend Nelly (hence the nickname – the kidnapper), with a hidden hint of rejection of the Czech Republic by the Germans, female macaque Martha, elephant Kasya and her daughter Tuzinka, born in bondage, badger «Barsunya» and others. In many of them instincts merged with human habits, while maintaining unique identity inherent in a beast, distorted by modern life-making, contrary to nature and human being: Antonina's "babies" learned to walk at the same time: her son, lion babe and chimpanzee.

We understand that generalized characteristics of animals, which are not affected by time and space, always play as implementation of distracted morality or allegory (for example, in classical texts of Lafontaine's, Krylov's fables). In Diana Ackerman's opinion, animals' behavior is based on a collision of characters, acts, overtures, cunning, simplicity or guile. From the first pages we obey the authority of an amazing intonation of narrative, a complete sense of harmony with the world around us, its pure sincerity and openness, youth and internal freedom. Antonina's soul finds a source of life in fusion with nature, in unity with laws of Mother Nature with its untold secrets.

The intonation of the novel is rooted exactly in the perception of the shero, in the persistent, constant desire to measure the life of birds, bugs, horses and people by a measure that hates any measures and obstacles - general violence and especially violence against animals, intolerance to evil and injustice, by this test of humanity of the shero emotional features. When the tiny fur clumps of lynx spilled on Antonina's hands, began to bite and scratch, she already felt that they were afraid of human hands, of people loud voices, sharp light of a lamp. It was like sixth feeling, some intuition and that was actual for her from her early childhood when she constantly got into the world of wildlife.

River and forest, flowers and stars were spiritual for the hero. Early became an orphan, naturally optimistic, gay and inventive, being constantly among birds and animals, studying their habits, Antonina lived in luxury of communication with them, considering them her adopted children. Jan considered Antonina's gift to be a unique ability to understand animals – strange one, mystical,

magical. It is quite natural that a man living in the wild and an animal possessed a set of ancient, finely tuned feelings which helped to survive.

Antonina knew that, for example, starvation for animals is the only way that helps an animal overcome physical illness, disease; it is an age-old, purely animal natural instinct. People imparted with abilities ordinary for animals were called magicians, witches, shamans by people of the West and Europe. But today generation of people lived in civilization for so long that they lost this instinct of "starvation" even in a case of disease and today few people possess the "gift of healing" of sick soul and body. Pets, like humans, also gradually lost many survival instincts in the process of evolution.

But the novel is not about zoos with its unique world as Antonina was the wife of the zoo keeper and she kept their zoo for many years, acted as the administrator and sometimes as a tour guide for friends.

In the festive brightness of the first pages of the novel other intonations start to come out, full of mood of anxiety, doubt, containing the main nerve of the novel, its pain and indignation as it shows the history of the World War and greatness of the Zhabinskiy's family who hid and saved about 300 persons in devastated open-air cages from the Jewish ghetto and underground workers.

The novel makes us wonder how deep the roots of their actions are, how inseparably all is interconnected in this world, and how the life of an individual crosses and interacts with history. It's the history of everyone and the history of each of us, the history of the world and the personality in it. The reader of the novel must realize the real causes of evil, get inspired with the author's attitude towards surrounding evil - to get to know the truth because present anti-Semitism – not only dangerous degradation of mind but also spirit: "Blame me if all failed doing something" (Frizman, 2018, p. 65).

And D. Ackerman's novel is penetrated by greatness of spirit. Spirit during life trials, according to Antonina's world, is to live happily and funny, without losing vigilance, without pity for yourself, without frustration, which was one of the sins of the Christian commandment; and the main character Jan was helped by the constant inherent "hardness of spirit" in extreme situations.

The corresponding film was shot based on the novel. The film "The Zookeeper's Wife" emphasizes the attention of the audience on the bombing of the zoo and on the setup of Jan's underground activities to rescue Jews from the ghetto. Touching episode in the film – Antonina does not kiss the sleeping son in the morning with maternal love traditionally shown in literature and on screens, but kisses and hugs a little lynx babe (this moment is captured on the cover of the translated book).

The tragic episode in the film - in a car next to his father, a frightened seven-year-old boy is coming the ghetto, watching the flows of children dragging themselves and exhausted old men, while returning - the father leads a truck and the saved man under the feet of the frightened son.

Jews had to change their clothes, repaint their hair, Jewish women had to wear wigs and use much cosmetics, skillfully giving themselves an Aryan appearance. The title of the film should be not "The Zookeeper's Wife", but "The Zookeeper" which is typical of a cinema picture, connecting the natural essence of the novel and some scenes of conditional character (through image-symbol of the rescued raped Jewish girl who in memory of a shot family named a rabbit after the dead brother – "Peter") or the birth of a baby 's elephant; Jan's and his friends' underground activity, scenes of Resistance taking much time of watching in the film.

The following statement of a German officer who took out the best exemplars of valuable breeds of animals and birds to his private Berlin Zoo, in fact stole them under the cover of humanity, is insincere: "Helping animals is happiness", at the same time shot with cold blood a rare breed of eagle and ordered to make it stuffed for his collection.

All these scenes of the film are tragic, make a viewer experience horror as their own, few viewers can watch calmly, without tears at the suffering of animals, jumping kangaroos, running monkeys on the streets of Warsaw and other dramatic views when a human cannot help anything and only watches their strange behavior from a window. But screen images and views do not express the depth of suffering of the Zhabinsky family.

The Jewish theme, the fate of the Jewish people occupies a worthy place in Akerman's creative work. It is analyzed within wide time segment of the century. There is such a popular legend that

says: "One cannot escape one's destiny". The poet Naum Moiseyevich Korzhavin repeats the same phrase: my people have "Such a fate!", it is the Jewish fate of those who lived in Russia (or in France, Poland or other countries) by the will of destiny, found themselves occasionally in European lands in occupation.

The phrase is emphasized three times: indeed, "there is such a fate", there was such a Jewish fate during the Stalin regime in Russia. And today you can't reject the past by just snapping fingers. In the work it states with bitterness: "Such a fate! – now I know for sure", "Such a fate – the very center of Earth chaos..." "Such a fate! /And now and in other time. /I live on earth like all the rest/and as three's a crowd.../And it is still tempting/to sacrifice myself, – /all blame on me, /if all failed something" (Frizman, 2018, p. 64-65). "You can get away from habitat but not from fate. Especially from the Jewish fate in the twentieth century" – says the poet (Frizman, 2018, p. 44).

The famous literary scholar L.G. Frizman (1935-2018) shares his views on the Jewish theme and all its complexity, who called his book simply "Such a fate. The Jewish theme in Russian Literature". Fate may be different for everyone, but Frizman, having left the affirmative verb "is" and having lived his entire intelligent life under Soviet regime, reflects on his life experience and "untold". Today "people who did not live under Soviet regime can now hardly imagine how total, deep-penetrated was the domination of lies at that time... the war with the truth did not stop for a moment... The truth was learned not from newspapers and television programs but from what was happening in front of people" – such was the sentence to the totalitarian regime given by L.G. Frizman. (Frizman, 2018, p. 135).

In the novel "such" the Jewish fate of heroes and heroines, Antonina's warm and strong friendship with sculptor Magdalena Gross, the energetic and charming woman who created a unique series of animals from their zoo, her friend Frenkel, who tried to kill himself in the ghetto but was rescued by Jan, Magdalena's friends – Rahel Auerbach and Dvoira Fogel, Zhabinsky's friends – Adam and Wanda Englert, Jan's selfless devotion, of the veteran of the World War First, ex-officer, participant of the Warsaw underground and many others – became a certain extra burden for the writer who started to develop this difficult topic.

The savage annihilation of Jews on the occupied territories by the Nazis was total but people born and being their neighbors in Poland and Ukraine gained all the pain of the life of Jewish people, who suffered numerous massacres and devastations in large and small cities: people cried and kept silence, prayed and hoped for salvation. The facts of anti-Semitic hysteria were well known in Poland, and the case of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, which was accused of giving Crimea to America, was astonishing by its foolishness. The Museum of Warsaw Rebel, the Museum of Holocaust in Washington, the Holocaust story is a true story about true humanity, it is a stunning story about compassion and love to one's neighbor.

Shock to imagine a motive of suffering and death in people life on the occupied territories of France and Poland, the Czech Republic and Russia, in other occupied countries, continuous and painful overcoming of life in hell, in chaos. We are sure that the motive of death and salvation of the Jewish nation is not shown as bright as in works of art. The motive of violence, the anticipation of torture and malicious insults, hopelessness is permanent here, but writers always bring together their heroes with the opposite, life-affirming beginning. "Better to be alive in a pit than dead upside" (Belfort, 2017, p. 86). Such the suffering conviction have the heroes of Charles Belfort's novel about the salvation of Jews "Parish architect", which forces Jewish women and men, old people and children to fight for survival in inhuman conditions.

Zhabinsky's family in different way succeeded in hiding and saving close Jewish friends, and friends of their friends, this picture of catastrophe of European Jews, gray haired men and women, teenagers and children. They are under the Christian ethic of sacrifice, the Christian morality learned by European humanist culture.

In the novel "The Zookeeper's Wife", Diana Ackerman emphasizes that Jan's father grew up in one of poor Warsaw families, surrounded by their carefree children, considering them the same as himself. Jan expressed the warmest feelings to his game mates, gradually absorbing their traditions, customs, holidays and thus Jewish culture. But it was the father, the solid atheist, who influenced the formation of his son's worldview in childhood, and that worldview constantly improving under the influence of the environment, convinced Jan that any accusations against him and his contemporaries as unwitting participators in crimes during the occupation period of the country are wrongful, unjust.

Being a reflection of the social processes taken place in Poland, one can see the gradual change of the novel characters mind, who imagine that they can stay away from events and hardly overcome hesitation: whether the peace remained by the summer of 1939 even for those who did not expect any attack by Germany and did not fully realize the extent of danger. In the film, the scene of the meeting of the Zhabinsky family's German friends gets social depth. Wishing to humiliate Antonina, one of the German ladies, confident in the superiority of her race, called her "a ragged cat", hoping that the mistress would not hear her or understand the insult, did not soften the keen dramatic conflict. The author does not idealize society, does not individualize his characters' language but tries to understand the complex nature of "humiliated and insulted" found themselves in inhuman conditions of occupation, to understand a measure of the monstrous violence of "civilized" fascists.

We remind that V.S. Grossman created a work in the form of an essay prose, which was named «The Hell of Treblinka» (Grossman, 2014), it was first published in 1944. Treblinka, which was less important than Auschwitz, was initially a usual "labor" camp for untrustworthy elements with its "victim killing technology and conveyor plough arrangement" (Frizman, 2018, p. 51), or, as Ackerman noticed, the "death mill" for Jews. Such mills were Treblinka and Maidanek. As it is well known, Treblinka, a town near Warsaw, was the largest of the death factories in which the fascists carried out the notorious "solution of the Jewish question."

No one assumed that this was only the first step towards a well prepared and detailed murder of French, Poles, Jews, people of Slavic appearance left in cities for minor misconducts, for significant misconducts – sentence to immediate death. The French were taken to Drancy Camp and then to "Polish resorts" in Treblinka. Created ghettos in cities left people with no freedom of choice, the right to privacy.

No one in the world spilled so much blood, no one committed such brutal crimes – neither Herod, nor Nero, nor Kaligula, as fascist "non-humans". The writer recalled Treblinka in her novel, expounding part of the warning encrypted message received by Antonina, which stated that the family who lived near Treblinka should find new housing outside the city, as well as for all "your brothers and children of Israel".

The writer worked on the book for a long time, carefully collecting and analyzing materials. It is

quite obvious that the novel is not only a story about the history of the zoo creation, it is not completely so. But the beauty of the story lies in its description, the elements of natural forces that rage here. We see browsing fallow-deer, goats and wild sheep, horses and deer quickly fall in panic at danger due to their panoramic vision; wild cats do not like sharp movements etc. Here squatters, bramblings sing and cuckoo monotonously cries “cuckoo”, gibbons scream and their females yell with all strength.

Very observant D. Ackerman narrator recorded the outgoing picture of peaceful Warsaw with documentary accuracy, its unique architectural style, its Town Hall, Market Square, ancient streets, houses painted in beige, turquoise, pink, yellow, red colors, bright colors of copper etc. Also, the view of the Old Town is captured, its unique style: the roofs of the houses were covered with curved tiles overlapped as pigeon feathers. The description of the Jewish quarter and its appearance, organically connected with legends and myths of the past, with its hopes for free street life, is quite eloquent.

The novel lovely describes the large Jewish quarter which laid behind the Old Town. In past times it was a shelter for Jews fleeing from persecution and disorders in England, France, Germany and Spain for many centuries and according to legends, it was Poland as the guardian of “peace and silence”. The writer describes popular belief that once even for a theft of honey and a damage of hives one was sentenced to death, approved in Mazovsh province legislation in the 15th century. That time it was believed that lime (tree) and honey were the link between church and servants of the Lord.

The author expresses her opinion that Poland attracted Jews for long time as coins of the 12th century had inscription by old Jewish language and sounded like ‘polin’ (“rest here” – highlighted by Diana Ackerman). The Jewish Quarter had its own theatre, cinema, clubs, newspapers and magazines.

The clarity of the poetry language and composition of the novel emerged in the description of contrasts and comparisons of street and theatrical interiors: houses with flat roofs and with iron balconies in the Jewish quarter were close to and above each other as balconies in opera, but filled not with people, but with pots with tomatoes and flowers.

All events of real life are given through the prism of the author’s perception, author’s assessment. The author-storyteller is the systematizing center of the novel, she determines the unity of its composition. Numerous storylines adjoin the composition symmetry. The Jewish quarter is a “maze” and web of streets, where women in wigs and men with side curling hair met. It is the unique city with religious dances during the holiday “Pesach” (very important day for Jews). It was the special quarter with a special flavor, the quarter filled with a mixture of patois and dialect. It seems to us that a sorrowful color is typical for the Jewish quarter: black (like Hassids’ clothes) but not their religion: the religion of orthodox is light – dances and songs, love, joy and fun but at the same time distinctive mysticism and meditation, green like moss pale pink. It was impossible to conciliate the Holocaust and the Hasidism, the same it was impossible for a teacher of the God’s Law to heal mental and physical wounds and suffering during the occupation, and “only through miracle and strength of spirit one could overcome physical decay of daily life” in the occupation – that is the writer’s reflections conclusion (Ackerman, 2017, p. 183).

The universality of the author’s narrative made influence in the approach to picture of the phenomena of reality - objective, multilateral, historically supported by documents approach. Of course, every literary phenomenon has universal human, historical significance, is distinguished by art content and richness of form. Diana Ackerman’s work is full of independent, enduring aesthetic value. She is amazingly focused on a thoughtful reader, her narrative contains hope for understanding, a heart review, hope that a reader shares her values, understands her endless compassion and sympathy for her own emotional experience and the heroes of her novel.

In her review posted on the side of the book: “The Wonderful Story of the Holocaust it may seem like a monstrous oxymoron but with the help of her book... Diana Ackerman states the opposite” – the author notes a specific artistic form of reflection of contradictions in people lives, keen clash of opposite human acts (Ackerman, 2017, p. 1). Since oxymoron is a combination of opposite-meaning definitions resulting in a new meaning concept (usually an oxymoron is used in poetic work), we would suggest paying attention to the way in which thoughts are expressed through the language of the work, through its peculiar form, to mixing of different styles in the text (Demchenko et al., 2021).

As we know V. Vishnevskyi entitled his play "Optimistic Tragedy". This phrase seems "wrong", absurd, but Ackerman's novel also is represented as the optimistic tragedy. Inventiveness in the composition and story organization of the work, in genre characteristic close to symbolist prose, full of creative freedom – records something similar to being community in culture, and all this surely brought fame and popularity to her novel.

Ackerman "recreates" life in German-captured Poland with few but expressive touches, life so usual for other occupied countries. Citizens were unable to get food for any money, but it was possible to buy for huge money (highlighted by us) on the "black market" or to take advantage of relations with the invaders. In all occupied countries people were left without money, without work. There was a lack of everything. Not to die of hunger, Parisians ate pigeons and ducks, many bred rabbits on their balconies and let domestic cats and dogs away, unable to feed them.

Antonina's family survived thanks to the kept stock consisting of dead rooks and crows killed by shells. There were rabbits settled in the "Pheasant House" instead of pheasants; the mistress worked hard, she baked bread for the large family, they had food cooked from mushrooms and berries, supplied in advance; the estate and land generated modest income - the family was afloat due to Antonina's pure European pragmatism. It was more complicated regarding those rescued Jews who ate only kosher food. Animals and birds, corpses of antelopes, deer and horses which became meat after bombings and given to hungry citizens by the Zhabinsky's family – in such a way burnt nature could as much help people as possible.

In the novel D. Ackerman creates a laconic but very accurate picture of the general trouble that hit the country. Her voice is perceived as generalized voice of all the women of Poland, gripped of fear for their children and husbands, the horror of common disaster in those terrible years. Ackerman assumes, on the one hand, real patterns of the social environment, view of the modern ordinary life of the zoo, and on the other – she claims the defining role of physic nature, the feeling close to modernism in its style, which contrasted the variety of subjective interpretations of human being, the image of man in his connections with the world, to traditional thought.

In her diary notes the author creates characters of the strong people full of energy and passions. Those notes concentrate on the image of the heroines' inner world (heroines of the Jewish origin – Wanda, Magdaléna Ros nicknamed the Starling or tenderly – Madzyna; the Polish old women - owners of a shop of lamp shades, covering the Jews, the Polish heroines – Barbara (Basya) Temkin-Bermanova and her girlfriend Yanina, preventing Germans and helping Jews). The novel brings to life the images of the struggle of the Polish Resistance, members of which acted bravely and adroitly, and Jan's friends risky deeds and Jan himself per saving Jews and their families, young underground men, are admiring as much as their constant readiness for self-sacrifice.

Ackerman tells not only about what she saw and experienced but also transfer the psychological state of society which experienced stressful situations: everywhere there was destruction and hunger. Warsaw was flooded by soldiers in red uniform of "gun metal color"; the novel dramatically intensifies the tragic beginning. The German fascists entertained "joke corporal punishments" before killing their victims, bullying that took place per the fantasy of the initiators of the massacre: "But life happened hateful to me \ as I remember: it happened \ men tormented children" (Frizman, 2018, p. 53).

Children in occupied countries are children of "war" – and men by whom fascists are meant, "true devils" as they were called in Poland. These are two worlds, two types of moral. The author's special attention is drawn by sad, broken, sorrowful world of childhood. For children of war, it was a new world in which they did not seek to penetrate, but where the war threw them. The heroine's son Ryshard showed the usual children's curiosity for everything alive and new at the zoo, overheard talks about the military actions of young scouts who came to help adults at the zoo, but forever firmly learned the rule that must not say a word about any "guests" to anyone.

Adults tried to protect the boy from the horrors of war, so the best friend for him was the badger Barsunya who was raised in their house. We watch a funny and touching picture in the novel: on a walk not Lynx leads him on a leash, but the tamed badger quickly pulls the boy behind him. Playing with the favorite tamed piglet Morys in a game "coward" – the piglet ran away and hid from a sharp noise, pretending to be frightened, – communication with animals replaced the boy's communication with people for some time.

Despite the tragic notes, especially strong in the scene of the piglet's death by the hands of the Germans, compositionally based on the contrasting intersection of life and death, despair and optimism, the novel inexorably combines deep lyricism and humor. By the power of artistic generalization, the novel would certainly stoke many other works about the "structure" of folk soul, folk truth.

Alternating comic and tragic aspects (game with the badger, the piglet), describing the unexpected death of the playful tamed piglet who trusted people, not afraid of people and dead by the hands of German soldiers – the picture gets features of deep human emotional experience. Spiritually the teenager became an adult quickly when he saw that Shmuel Kenigswine, risking his wife – Regina's life and the Zhabinsky family, and his life too, carried out sleeping children from the ghetto (Ackerman, 2017, p. 249), perfectly understanding that endangers all inhabitants of various shelters (bunker, underground etc.).

Ryshard behaved as an adult throughout the war, took part in the rescue of the Jewish doctor Maurytsyi who hid on the veranda. The casual witness (a cook who accidentally entered the veranda and suddenly saw the doctor) was in a state of sincere obscuring for several months. She did not manage to understand from where and how he ended up in their house.

Early grown up, the friends Rysya, Marek and Zbyshek, appeared for a moment, as if rare animals searching for adventures or as food getters for the family, at the same time understanding different kinds of truth, secrets: "mystery which is shared" and "mystery which one keeps". The demanding head of the family Yan clearly explained to the children or banned all the consequences of their activities when they used fictitious food cards or tried to mount the Polish flag they painted over the zoo.

The Germans explained the advantages of their race over all other nations, underlined the noble features of German character, immensely loved their dogs and cats and simultaneously hated people of non-Aryan appearance. Police officers, members of their families, ready to enrich themselves at the expense of the victims, removed shawls from girls, women who had to wait for execution. Their lovers were not squeamish about receiving with minor gifts – all of them accepted silent agreement with what was happening, filled with a primitive desire for their own profit at the cost of others. Gestapo officers

tried to expropriate the antique collections from wealthy Jews.

By order from Berlin the top German officers removed antiques from the museums of the occupied countries, robbed private collections of paintings and sculptures. They took for themselves the German "rich collection of souvenir spoons... each of which represented its own city" (Ackerman, 2017, p. 308) from the house of Antonina's relatives. They took out rare breeds of animals and birds to their private zoos. One such a story, based on documentary materials, is included in part of its narrative by the author.

The Director of the Labor Bureau of the Warsaw Ghetto Ziegler illegally, fraudulently got out the well-known collection of beetles similar to precious stones (Palestinian green beetles, racing beetles, red-green beetles, leopard-stain beetles, brown beetles, warty cyan-blue palm beetles and other rare specimen). The owner of that rare collection was entomologist Shimon Tetenbaum. With knowledge of origin of insects found in ditches or drainage pipes, the author describes in details and admiring the beauty of this range of beetles in her novel. The collection was saved, but from the Shimon's family only golden dachshund Zharka survived (Shimon died, his daughter was shot by Gestapo officers, the wife got in ghetto). It would seem that the author pictured the prose of life, living images, minor episodes of reality (when Ziegler wanted to possess the valuable collection of beetles), but the images of brutal reality are assembled into a murderous picture of sentence to German invaders.

Conclusions

There is a complicated interpenetration of artistic and documentary elements of narrative prose in the Diana Ackerman's novel, combining the features of novel, essay and autobiographical notes. It is characterized by strong author, personal beginning, which is created in her work, and her feelings energy forces us to look at the world more broadly, without closing into the national framework.

It took Ackerman to recreate multiple individual lines of her characters' behavior, episodes of defending "one's truth" which reflects resistance, ability to survive and preserve human dignity in incredibly difficult conditions of war and occupation. The writer creates a rich spiritual world of her heroine, the main heroes, expressing universal human origin, creating a picture of the

life of an individual, but including everything that surrounds an individual in one's life, allowing to see root in events and people, to highlight the spiritual meaning of their existence. The prospects for further research may be related to the analysis of other Diana Ackerman's works.

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