

Images of European culture in Ukrainian history textbooks

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Abstract – The paper attempts to describe the image of Europe in textbooks on history that are connected with the problem of the quality of the school textbook. The articles for research were chosen from the Ukrainian textbooks; they cover the question of what historic school courses should be prevailed is relevant. Should we emphasize national history, world history, or history in general, and what criteria should be decisive for formation of the image of Europe culture in Ukrainian textbooks.

Keywords – textbook analysis, heritage, mosaic ambivalence

I. Introduction

The topicality of the study of the peculiarities of the reflection of Europe in Ukrainian textbooks on history is determined by the European choice of Ukraine, the scientific dialogue between Ukraine and Europe. Nowadays Ukraine like many other post-communist countries seeks to become a member of the European community. In practice, it means adopting many changes that will be aimed at harmonizing Ukrainian rules and standards with those that prevail in the West.

The relevant changes are happening at the moment. Obviously, they should continue their development in the education system. Therefore, in our opinion, it is important in school textbooks to present Europe thereby to develop in the younger generation the desire to develop their own state taking into account European aspirations for the correct settlement of conflicts preserving their dignity, tolerance (but at the same time fundamental one) to the conflicting party.

The geographical location and affiliation of parts of modern Ukraine to various state institutions during different historical periods contributed to intercultural interaction. Therefore, of course, many objects of historical and cultural heritage were created through this interaction. It is important not just to present a list of architectural monuments or monuments in the textbooks a list of architectural memorials or monuments, but to explain the historical context of their appearance. Analyzing the historical didactic of the period of independence, Ukrainian historians partly consider the questions of the fact how the development of culture, the creation and functioning of memorial of historical and cultural heritage is highlighted in the textbooks and educational materials¹. The purpose of our research is to trace how the historical and cultural heritage of Europe is reflected in the Ukrainian school textbooks and how the components of the image of Europe are actualized nowadays.

Therefore, it is necessary to find out what information and images presented in the Ukrainian textbooks on history form an idea and conception of European culture. The main attention of our research will be focused on Ukrainian textbooks on world history, as in contradistinction to the textbooks on Ukrainian history, more information on Europe and the world as a whole is provided there.

Analysis of Ukrainian history textbooks

In the textbook on the history of Ukraine (for the 5th grade), during a narrative on the universities in Ukraine it is stated that one of the oldest universities of Europe and the world is Sorbonne University. There is also a brief information about the history of this institution².

Thereby, we see in what manner the cultural values of Europe and the historical past of cultural and educational institutions are transmitted. This takes place in the form of comparison and implication of historical and cultural memory of Ukraine into the European space (inheritance).

Book writing as a cultural phenomenon appears to us in the context of inter-state and interpersonal relations. In the textbook for the 5th grade, it is said that the daughter of the mighty ruler of Kyivan Rus Yu. Wise (1019-1054 AD) Anna brought with her a book of the Bible. It was the book on which the French kings coming to the throne took an oath for centuries. Consequently, according to the text of the textbook, in the 11th century Kyivan Rus was spreading its cultural heritage to other European countries (shared its treasures)³.

In the textbook for the 5th form in the narrative about the architectural features of Ukraine it is mentioned that in Europe there is a territory whose name is interpreted as "the land of castles". It's about Castile which is famous for its castles in the whole world. Today about 400 of them are preserved, and this is the largest amount than any other structures of antiquity. The proprietors fortified their castles, decorated and given the notable names to them as follows: "The Great Ship of Castile", "Castle of Honor", "Rock of the Falcon", etc. Today, many ancient castles in Castile become museums, schools, and other cultural institutions. Such stories about the peculiarities of European culture illustrate the architecture of European territories different from Ukrainian architecture². After reading this information the pupils have the opportunity to learn more about the architectural styles of the Middle Ages from the Ukrainian textbooks on history. In addition, the wide coverage of the architecture and the art of the Medieval Europe combined with similar texts and drawings about Ukraine gives an opportunity to understand the image of Ukrainian culture in a single space with Europe as a whole.

On belonging of Ukrainian culture to the pan-European one is also described in the textbook for the 5th form: "Slavs are called a large group of modern European nations. These include, in particular, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Russians, Poles, Czechs, Slovenes, Slovaks, Bulgarians, Macedonians, Croats, Montenegrins, Serbs. All of them are united by a common origin, and therefore, the proximity of languages. After all, once the Slavs were the people who lived in the center of Europe in ancient times"³. Thus, we can see that the textbook's author endeavors to emphasize the common cultural and linguistic belonging to the European heritage.

While presenting the material about the origin of the primitive art and religious beliefs, the authors of Ukrainian textbooks repeatedly cite the examples of rock paintings located in Europe (6th grade, Pometun) along with the same ones found in Ukraine⁴. This, obviously, should form the perception of Ukraine, Spain and France

as being included in a single space. In the history of Ancient Greece, the textbook's author emphasizes the social factors of existence in connection with the confrontation between the demos and the aristocracy ⁴.

In textbook on history for 7 and 8 grade we can observe that Ukrainians imported their printed books from other countries (Poland, the Czech Republic) for a long time, because on the territory of Ukraine wasn't their own typography. Consequently, the authors of the textbook, G. Serhiienko and V. Smoliiy emphasize the influence of European cultural and educational factors on the development of the situation in Ukraine ⁵. However, in the presentation of the material about the object of interest of the old Ukrainian language and art, "Peresopnytskyi Gospel" (1556-1561), there is no information that it was translated and concluded on the basis of the Lutheran New Testament of Seclusitsyan of 1553 ⁵. This, in turn, would allow to consider cultural processes in Europe and in the world in connection with historical processes in the territory of Ukraine

In Ukrainian textbooks on history, European culture at the end of the 18th century – 19th century is considered first and foremost in the form of romanticism whose representatives, according to the texts, are R. Shelley, O. Pushkin, M. Lermontov, L. Van Beethoven, G. Heine, F. Schiller, J. Goethe, F. Goya and H. Daumier. In particular, the two latter ones in the textbook published in 2011 the following information is provided: "Goya tagged on his canvases arrogant aristocrats, ministers of the church, and Daumier depicted in his canvases the pompous faces of the bourgeoisie who sought wealth and power." In our opinion, the presentation of European culture in such a light may give the impression that for hundreds of year the European cultural space has been penetrated by socialist slogans and an appeal to fight the "bourgeoisie" ⁶. Therefore, it is obvious that in the textbook it is not necessary to use the discussion concepts of this nature and to cover only one discourse.

The narrative on the literary authorities mentioned in the textbook and on their works is put in the context of the modern era for them. Therefore, the reader can comprehend not only the main idea of the works, but also perceive the nature of the historical period. For example, in the light of the information on the German writer Bertold Brecht it is said that he became a reformer of the drama of the interwar period, the "father" of the "epic theater," and his drama "Mother Courage and her children" is filled with anti-war pathos and allegorical meaning, the tragic fate of human virtues in war conditions ⁷.

The fact can also be added that the work of the representatives of the new (appeared in the 20's) literary direction – the literature of the "lost generation": Eric-Maria Remarque, American-American Ernest Hemingway, Frenchman Henry Barbusse and others has special features. The main theme of their works is the meaninglessness of the war, the physical and moral damages of its participants, the loss of a whole generation whose destiny was lost.

Such a reflection of the nature of works enables to understand more deeply not only the peculiarities of works, but also the social mood in that time.

Conclusions

Modern Ukrainian textbooks are characterized by the transition from a monocratic look at history to a pluralistic one, a desire for a certain objectivism, a greater weighting of historical characteristics and assessments. The Ukrainian textbooks of the new generation are aimed at avoiding unambiguously ideologized assessments, alternative points of view on the events are often presented. So in this study of Ukrainian textbooks on history, we can observe a "mosaic ambivalence" that observes in the desire to distance itself from the Soviet legacy. At the same time, in the textbooks for pupils of grades 5-11 there are some formulations that were laid down earlier in Soviet times.

Consequently, the historical education experiences an intensive process of development. Among its features – the work on qualitative improvement of school courses in the history of Ukraine, and, consequently, modernization of relevant textbooks.

Those subjects in which the textbooks present the European context and significance of European civilization influences on Ukrainian history, for example, in the 8th form – Renaissance ideas, reform and counterreformational movements in Ukraine, etc.; in the 9th form – the influence of the ideas of Western romanticism on the Ukrainian nation-building of the XIX century, needs to be expanded, precised and systematized.

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