

No historical epoch may be either realized or described without assessing it through a certain time distance. Today, such a time distance has been set in relation to the '90s of the previous century – an extraordinarily important period in the world literature, particularly for the post-Soviet territories. At the turn of the millennium, the world changes very rapidly, thus completing the transition to the information era. In most post-Soviet countries, the above transformation took place in a radical manner, since it was necessary to catch up with many things that had been forbidden and inaccessible before.

Despite the fact that the '90s passed almost twenty years ago, for history, such a time distance is too short to make any conclusions. It works quite differently with various literary attempts to perceive the reality of that period. Any new historical stages require, consequently, fresh literary approaches to realize them. Presently, one of the above-mentioned approaches in Ukraine is a literary reportage, which has found its place on the verge of literature and journalism (Шутяк 2015). It is about the present days, above all, but also about a very near past, whose witnesses and participants remain available for reporters. The '90s of the XX century fit this sample better than anything else.

A considerable number of editions in this genre emphasizes peculiar significance of literary reportage in current Ukrainian realities. In addition to numerous authentic editions, it would be expedient to point to a plenty of translation samples of the genre, particularly to the Polish School of reportage (Ryszard Kapuscinsky (Капусцінський 2003, Капусцінський 2011, Капушинський 2011, Капусцінський 2014, Капусцінський 2015, Капусцінський 2019), Mariusz Szczygiel (Щигел 2010, Щигел 2011, Щигел 2013), Witold Szablovsky (Шабловський 2012, Шабловський 2013, Шабловський 2015, Шабловський 2017) and others). It is also worth mentioning a considerable effect of the American School of “New Journalism” (Wolfe 1973).

The growth of genre's popularity in Ukraine has been stipulated by the Literary Reportage Contest “Samovydets”, founded in 2012. It is essential that the title of the above contest comes from the “Samovydets Chronicle”

– the Cossack chronicle in the Old Ukrainian language, one of the most significant sources of the history of Eastern Europe in the XVII century (the period of B. Khmelnytsky and the Ruins), written by the witness of historical events. In other words, the very title of the Contest presupposes appropriate understanding and description of history, which is proved by the titles of the books, published as a result of the previous contests (five almanacs with the best reportages: “The World on the Ukrainian Reportage Scale” (Veni, vidi... 2013), “Where, How and Why do Ukrainians Work” (Veni, vidi... 2014), “History Live” (Veni, vidi... 2015), “War. Life de facto” (Veni, vidi... 2016), “Why I Never Go Away” (Veni, vidi... 2017), and “The Generation of the Free” (Veni, vidi... 2018). Besides, particular emphasis should be laid on the works of the Contest winners: Oleg Khryshchuk “Ukraine. Scale 1:1” (Криштопа 2013), Denys Kazansky “Black Fever: Illegal Coal Mining in Donbass” (Казанський 2015), Elizabeth Goncharova “The War is Somewhere Near” (Гончарова 2017) and Pavlo Stech “Above the Rust” (Стех 2018).

All the books were published by the Publishing House “Tempora”, the latter also having started the whole series “The Wicked ‘90s”. Today, the series contains four books: “**Love and Hatred in Uzhhorod**” (Белей 2014) by **Les Beley**, “When Sumy Wasn’t sad” (Івченко 2015) by Vladyslav Ivchenko, “Forge Frames Dnipropetrovsk” (Беспалов 2016) by Махум Беспалов, “The Stanislaw Phenomenon” (Криштопа 2016) by Oleg Khryshchuk.

A very interesting attempt to depict the Ukrainian reality of the ‘90s in the manner of “New Journalism” is “The Wicked ‘90s: Love and Hatred in Uzhhorod” by a Ukrainian publicist Les Beley. In this work, real characters are telling real stories themselves. The book is full of details, facts, quotations, allusions to different sources, author’s “flirting” with the readers, etc. – all the techniques that are so peculiar for “New Journalism” (Wolfe 1973).

In one of his interviews, Les Beley tells about the idea of the book: “Speaking of my work about the ‘90s, it has been inspired by Mariusz Szczygiel’s “Sunday That Happened on Wednesday”, the book about the ‘90s in Poland. The Polish writer has managed to convey a thorough description of the epoch of changes: poverty, unemployment, the emergence of

Amway, etc. Reading the book, I realized the extent, to which we have neglected our '90s. What is more, our phenomena (such as racketeering, complete change of consciousness, and the abundance of Western pop-culture that collapsed upon us like an avalanche) were far more drastic than in Poland” (Троскот 2014).

Explaining one part of the book title, which has initiated the whole series, Les Beley remarks: “This decade [the '90s], regarding our part of the world, is most often referred to as Russian *wicked nineties*, which means cool, brave and, at the same time, dangerous, something like the *roaring twenties* in America” (Белей 2014:1).

The other part of the title (“Love and Hatred in Uzhhorod”) is an apparent allusion to the work by a well-known American journalist H. S. Thompson “Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas”. The author mentions in the preface: “In his book “Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas”, Hunter Thompson gives a unique description of the search for American Dream in the XX century. The '90s in Ukraine may also be regarded as the time of Ukrainian Dream, the latter, however, not being Protestant-American, but profoundly Slavic, that is chaotic and inconsistent, with just one step from success to failure, almost as from love to hatred” (Белей 2014:7).

That Ukrainian Dream, in the broadest sense, was our own state. The description of the processes, related to its formation, is a matter of history. Instead, Les Beley sets a different goal. “It has been quite long since the '90s passed by. It means that the present days have already said goodbye to them (at least, I would like to believe so), whereas history has not started comprehending them substantially yet. I wonder how various textbooks will describe this decade in about hundred years or so? [...] Will there be anything about hyperinflation, deficits, racketeering, privatization, emergence of oligarchy? Will these textbook contain anything about the benefits of Western civilization, about weak attempts to integrate ourselves into pop-culture, about Coca-Cola, Snickers and action movies?” (Белей 2014:1-2). To put it differently, L. Beley is keen on the history that touches, above all, upon an ordinary human being. “I see a hero of the '90s as a man wearing glasses, who got suddenly into a warm room from the frosty winter air: the man is warm, but his glasses got sweaty, and it will take him a while to see something in the room, to stop moving at random” (Белей 2014:4).

So, what is Ukraine of the '90s like in Les Beley's book? It is a private story of certain people's destinies, which, like the pieces of a puzzle, make up the overall picture. Beley points out: "In my book, I was eager to emphasize social-culturological processes of the '90s, purposefully avoiding any political aspects" (Белей 2014:8). "Writing about Uzhhorod of the '90s, I occasionally leave the city boundaries and begin describing the all-Ukrainian context. Sometimes, I allowed myself to go beyond the time limits of the '90s" (Белей 2014:6). Here, it is essential to point to the following things. Firstly, many facts, described on the local example of Uzhhorod, may be easily applied on the all-Ukrainian scale. Secondly, the peculiarities of the reportage about a specific period of the past presupposes a kind of a double prospect. We are considering it from the today's point of view, at the same time comparing it with the previous period. Thus, we can see distinctly, how late and how chaotically everything was happening in Ukraine.

Compositionally, after the preface, the author describes the '90s in the way children see them, through the subjects, without which it is difficult to imagine childhood of that time.

Above all, it is the sweets, which were so desirable, yet forbidden and not always available. Compared to the previous generations, the children of the '90s had a considerably wider assortment due to the Western culture. For instance, chewing gums: Orbit, Stimorol and, of course, Turbo and Love is..., since the latter contained stickers. It is very hard for today's children to imagine that a chewing gum could be used for a few days. The same was with Kinder, Snickers and Bounty, whose popularity has been stipulated by commercials. A very typical example, characterizing the whole epoch, is Snickers. One chocolate bar was usually divided between all the members of the family so that everyone could try a piece.

Particular emphasis in the book is laid on toys (Lego, Barbie Dolls, Jumpers, Caps, Rainbow, Yo-Yo, etc.), electronic games (Tetris, Tamagotchi, Dandy, Computer). Not everyone could afford them. Another sign of the epoch was to lend something in order to play some game, as it was impossible to buy it.

Education also had much to do with the children. The turn of the epoch has generated a new social hierarchy, and children were particularly alert to it. They start realizing that, beginning with a kindergarten, con-

tinuing with a school and ending up with Universities, which no longer allow career promotion (making students look for some additional earnings), the social discrimination is getting more and more obvious.

L. Beley seems to be quite enthusiastic about subcultures (hippies, heavy metal rock and Depeche Mode fans), as well as about such a new phenomenon as “disco dances”. They are closely associated with fashion: clothes, jeans, hairstyles, music, together with beauty contests and fashion business, known for its rough rules.

The transformation processes of the ‘90s are also closely related to TV. This period may be easily defined as the Time of TV. L. Beley writes in detail about cartoon and TV serials, action movies, entertainment shows, music contests and many other things that have had a huge impact on the image of the ‘90s.

Financial hardships are presented in the book as a problem, very common for the ‘90s: inflation, deficits, street markets, as well as connected with them smuggling, racketeering and counterfeits. In addition, the author mentions the rebellions of local criminal “kings”, their further transition to politics and, eventually, the emergence of oligarchy.

All the above signs of the epoch are very thoroughly laid out in the book. Nevertheless, the way that is done causes particular interest.

At the very beginning of the book, L. Beley says: “I have been trying to recreate all events, which I either did not or could not witness myself, relying on the narratives of their participants” (Белей 2014:7). Among them are his parents and relatives, as well as other numerous eyewitnesses of the epoch, with whom the author has spent much time together: hippies, bartenders, D-jays, police officers and others. The writer gives a detailed depiction of the interviews with all those people, whereby he actively uses direct and indirect speech, the “voices of the heroes” – Veronica, Oleh, Marcel, painter Victor, Charlie, customs officer Borys, etc. In the text, their testimonies are italicized. According to Roman Kabachiy, “these conversations, as well as the articles in mass media, which L. Beley has thoroughly looked through in the library, make up an integral image of somewhat confusing, however, very amusing Transcarpathia of the ‘90s” (Кабачій 2014). Thus, while writing his book, L. Beley was using the basic techniques of a reportage – interviewing the witnesses and working with the sources.

Unlike the “new journalists”, who never concealed the real names of their characters, L. Beley applies some sort of fictional technique: “In the book, most of the names have been changed because I did not intend to expose or to slander anyone famous today” (Белей 2014:7). However, the above technique has nothing to do with text authenticity and fact reliability. “Reportage, in the classical sense of the word, does not give its author any right to fudge. I did not invent anything by myself. It is absolutely different with my interlocutors. I have checked up everything I could, all the rest is their responsibility” (Шутяк 2014). In this way, the author emphasizes the credibility of his text, yet denies standing responsible for the words of the others.

The book has been written in the first person. The writer constantly reminds about his presence at the scene of events: “I spoke about the birth of automobile business with the manager of a big car dealership Vitaliy...” (Белей 2014:218), “I got interested in crime rate in Uzhhorod in the ‘90s, therefore a friend of mine has made an official enquiry...” (Белей 2014:266). From time to time, he changes the narration format, speaking on behalf of his characters and “trying on” their roles.

Like other “new journalistic” works, “The Wicked 90-s” by L. Beley contains different fonts, including direct speech. This technique allows to strengthen certain thoughts, to make them sound specifically.

The text is full of documental facts: “The resident of Odesa Valeria Lukyanova (1985) has undergone numerous plastic operations 800 000 dollars’ worth to look exactly like a Barbie Doll, with a perfect skin, huge blue eyes, a tiny nose, full lips and a frail 48-centimeter waist” (Белей 2014:28); “The program was broadcast by the ICTV channel daily from September 17, 1995 to September 17, 2000. Program presenter – Anzhelica Rudnytska” (Белей 2014:125); “Without Taboo” was on air from 1997 to 2001 on “1+1” (Белей 2014:137); “The first program release was air in 1991 (on the Russian channel RTR), the last one – in 2006. From 1993 to 1996 “Maski Show” was shown on UT-1” (Белей 2014:139); “In 1999, 30 000 of the Transcarpathian population were engaged in transborder retail trade” (Белей 2014:192); “In 1998, the car sale equaled 50–60 thousand vehicles, in ten years the amount has risen up to 700 thousand” (Белей 2014:221), etc.

L. Beley pays a lot of attention to reference information that regards the invention of “Tetris” and “Tamagotchi”, subcultures, the history of the festival Sziget, the creation of cartoons “Tom and Jerry” and “Well, Wait”, the gossip about actors, the business of the ‘90s, financial crisis, goods scarcity, criminal wars – all the social-economic markers that can be found in the texts by “new journalists”.

The author uses extensively numerous dialogues, quotations, interview abstracts (in particular, he recollects the real book by Lubko Deresh “A Little Bit of Darkness”, as well as adds its author’s comment, which he purposefully took for his own book). The above peculiarities appear in the following lines: “The ‘90s were extraordinarily dynamic, – says Pavlo Petrovych. – In comparison with the previous years, when it took about 10–15 years for any changes to take place, now something new happens annually” (Белей 2014:46); “In 1988, I created “Snack”, – this is how Duri-Bachi starts his narration” (Белей 2014:183); “The former Depeche Mode fan Lina describes her subculture...” (Белей 2014:87); “There is a paradox, – Ihor admits, – You are craving for something, yet on achieving it, you realize that no one needs it” (Белей 2014:135); “Bandyi told a lot of stories in the book “Little Space: Sziget and Other Stories”, “Once, a Polish student wrote about his Motherland in a composition...” (Белей 2014:195); “Anatoliy recalls his staying overnight in some hotel, in the morning, he found his car had been stolen” (Белей 2014:200), and others.

Another technique, which is actively applied by L. Beley, is status detailing: “A cheap analogue of football boots is called “kickers”. They were made of denim and had rubber socks and spikes. On their sides, there usually was an emblem of the latest or the nearest Football World Cup. “Kickers” were bought once a year because they did not last longer: the spikes wore out, the sole cracked, denim was entirely torn. When new, “kickers” had a pleasant smell, but caused blisters” (Белей 2014:33); “Boys had short hair and wore tracksuits (today, it is popular and trendy with the hooligans, yet at those times, it was a “mainstream”). Apart from tracksuits, it was very stylish to wear jeans – pants and jackets, best worn and “boiled”. Crude shirts were worn tucked into pants, whereas there had to be a baseball cap on the head with the signatures Adidas (or Abibas, Abbas, Abidos), Nike, Puma and USA California” (Белей 2014:69). Following

his colleagues, L. Beley pays particular attention to a detailed description of his characters and their surroundings.

The text is widely used slang, dialectic, surzhyk: “Vania Faq!...Dinis Fak You!” (Белей 2014:56), “O, eta moi razmier, davai mieniaiem-sia shkarami, u tiebia kl'ovyye” (Белей 2014:93), “siharietchyky” (Белей 2014:208), “Vas privietstvuiet ukrainskii riekiet, prihatovtie piisiat dolarov” (Белей 2014:227), “Nu, mamasha, eta vy naiekhali! Nu-ka, daite adres etovo Hvozdia...” (Белей 2014:249). These and other words and expressions bring a special meaning to the text, successfully complement the characters of the book. In “The Wicked ‘90s” L. Beley experiments with narration, uses sound inheritance, vividly conveys emotions: “Anzhelika Varum (Vishnia, vishnia, zimniaia vishnia), Murat Nasyrov (Mal'chik khochiet v Tambov, chiki-chiki-chiki-chiki-ta), Tatiana Bulanova (Iasnyi moi sviyet), Dyskoteka Avaryia, Ruky Vverkh i nest' im chysla i imia im lehion” (Белей 2014:71), and others. These techniques enhance the effect of the author’s presence at the epicenter of events and provide receptive communication with the reader.

In the book “The Wicked ‘90s”, the author applies all the possible techniques of “New Journalism”, suggested by T. Wolfe (Wolfe 1973). Their presence in the text not only makes it possible to refer this work to “New Journalism”, but also proves the emergence in Ukraine of a new literary tradition.

On the whole, L. Beley underlines the double attitude to the ‘90s. On the one hand, “people would like to forget this decade, despite its radicalism, unpredictability and significance” (Белей 2014:4). Such a desire is mostly related to both the criminal situation of that time and extreme poverty. On the other hand, “the ‘90s in our mind have already been “covered” with a slight nostalgic flair” (Белей 2014:5). L. Beley tries to explain this phenomenon by means of a very capacious metaphor that regards the whole generation and the whole country: “To be young in the XX century, the latter being more than 90 years old, is the same as to live together with a granny. You are about twenty, she is over ninety; she does not hear you, you do not understand her. You can neither leave her nor run away from her, whereas she cannot influence you any longer. Your youth has coincided with her helplessness, so you have to wait and entertain yourself in the way that will not get on her nerves” (Белей 2014:108-109).

In conclusion, one more metaphor, which dates back to the reality of the '90s. At that time, they turned off the electricity very frequently. That was a great excuse for kids not to do their homework. "Sometimes it seems that our life looks exactly like it is due to the fact that we have not done our homework in the '90s" (Белей 2014: 359).

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**Maia Jaliashvili**

*Georgia, Tbilisi*

*Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature*

### **Breaking of the Closed System (According to Otar Chiladze's Novel „The Basket“)**

The Soviet system for Otar Chiladze was a kind of closed system that suppressed a freedom and prevented the country or persons from rights and developing. The writer with metaphorical, mythological paradigms, expressed the desire of the Georgian people towards independence. In the novel „Basket“ it was well demonstrated the real demonic pseudo