

## STRATEGIES OF MATURE UKRAINIAN MASHUP-PROSE: LEAVING THE MATRIX

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### Summary

The rise and prime of mashup-prose in 2000–2010s made this subgenre the most controversial in the modern literary process. The Ukrainian embodiment of mashup-prose stands out against the world background thanks to the writers' creative reinterpretation of its key formulas in combination with a critical vision of history and a pronounced folk humor. We define the specifics of the mature form of mashup expression in Ukrainian literature using the example of the story by O. Dekan (and I. Nechui-Levytskyi) "Kaydash Family vs Zombies" for the first time.

O. Dekan's reinterpretation of the mashup model "transformation of a classical artistic work" is indicative and testifies to the creative implementation of the Western artistic matrix in the mature Ukrainian subgenre of 2020s. The interaction in this story of sequentially located plot-image blocks, where the matrix is sustained and where the classic plot by I. Nechui-Levytskyi is left behind, can be considered as a hybridization of a mature mashup-form in the previously predicted by us the transition from mashup as a subgenre to the mashup as local artistic technique. The mashup-processing strategy by O. Dekan of I. Nechui-Levytskyi's story is organic to the world experience of this subgenre and, despite the shortcomings of the text, proves the writer's original attempt to develop canonized scheme to a level of a new subgenre type. The "Kaydash Family vs Zombies" among similar national texts reflects the main parameters of the updated at the beginning of the XXI century fantasy paradigm as a whole.

**Key words:** fantasy, paradigm, reception, concept, transformation, original, national variant.

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### 1. Introduction

Perhaps the most controversial from the point of view of ethics in the modern literary process is mashup-prose. The sharp rise and prime of this fantasy subgenre in 2000–2010s divided critics and readers into two camps: those who saw in the mashup a promising postmodern game, and those who were disappointed in such an attempt to renew the literary process. Emotional reviews, stimulated by the significant commercial success of the first generation of this subgenre (T. Dunn, A. Snellings, etc.), were often devoid of thorough analysis; even later fundamental academic works on fantasy novel (such as A. Anistratenko (*Anistratenko, 2020*)) have not yet included this prose. Accordingly, both classic Anglo-American examples of mashup (by S. Grahame-Smith, B. Winters, A. E. Moorat), and its later versions (by S. Hockensmith, Ya. Bakalets, Ya. Yarysh, S. Taratorina, etc.) are not comprehensively researched. Likewise, national implementations of mashup are not sufficiently studied, the research of which requires a systemic vision of the relevant national traditions and their dialogue with the world artistic

experience. The situation is complicated by the low degree of theoretical working of the actual fantasy metagenre, within which mashup phenomena actively interact and overlap with varieties of alternative history, cryptohistory, etc.

In 2020, at the global level, we are observing a decline in the popularity of this subgenre, in particular as a result of audience fatigue from the intense saturation of the cultural space with such texts and their film-adaptations. However, due to the inertia of the processes of reception, ethnic specificity, and the difference in the dynamics of the national development of literature, the mashup in local systems retains the position of a (moderately) popular phenomenon, especially in the countries of Eastern Europe. In global consideration, its influence remains at the level of artistic reception, which is motivated by the ideological closeness of the mashup for the corpus of modern fantasy as a whole. The Ukrainian embodiment of mashup-prose stands out against the world background thanks to the writers' creative reinterpretation of its key formulas in combination with a critical vision of history and a pronounced folk humor. A bright representative of a mature Ukrainian mashup is Oleksiy Dekan, whose artistic attempt "Kaydash Family vs Zombies" (2021), "based on" the well-known story by I. Nechui-Levytskyi (1878), is genetically related to the samples by S. Grahame-Smith and B. Winters. This text by O. Dekan also contains new ideological and thematic accents compared to works by Ya. Bakalets, Ya. Yarish, N. Lishchynska and S. Taratorina due to its chronologically later appearance. Being unique in its kind in national literature, the story by O. Dekan requires a comprehensive comparative study as a product of a mature mashup of the "transformation of a classical work" type, although attention has not yet been paid to it.

The purpose of our article is for the first time to define the specifics of the mature form of mashup expression in Ukrainian literature using the example of the story by O. Dekan (and I. Nechui-Levytskyi) "Kaydash Family vs Zombies". The key factors here are a) to research the originality of O. Dekan's working of the model of "transformation of a classical work" and departure from this matrix on a subgenre background, as well as b) to study reflection in this artistic text of the updated at the beginning of the XXI century fantasy paradigm.

After the first attempts of a comprehensive analysis of the Ukrainian version of the mashup by A. Gurduz in 2013–2023s (which were synthesized later (*Gurduz, 2023: 395–422*)), the study of the problems of the development of the national reception of mashup-poetics was taken up by T. Khomiak (*Khomiak, Ivashchenko, 2014*), O. Nikolova, Ya. Kravchenko (*Nikolova, Kravchenko, 2020*) and some others. The concentration of recent articles exclusively on specific texts or their components without taking into account the fantasy background and its radical changes at the beginning of the XXI century significantly narrows and sometimes problematizes the conclusions of these works, which are not always correct (*Khomiak, Ivashchenko, 2014*). Even in its early manifestations, the Ukrainian mashup is marked by a variable noticeable departure from the formulas declared by J. Rekulak, that imply of transformation of a classical artistic work and a mashup processing of the biography of a historical figure (*Dunn, 2014*), however, such important aspects of the national variant of this subgenre remain outside the attention of researchers. Commenting on the question of the system of images and the type of conflict in mashup-prose, O. Pochapska-Krasutska, T. Khomiak, O. Nikolova and Ya. Kravchenko ignore the problems of the evolution of the subgenre and its principles, although its ideological inspirer J. Rekulak warned about it (*Dunn, 2014*). We substantiated the decline in the popularity of the mashup in the end of 2010s and local experiments with it as a subgenre and technique (*Gurduz, 2023: 402*), now these changes find vivid confirmation in "Not People, People, Not-Humans" (2018) by N. Lishchynska, "Lazarus" (2018) by S. Taratorina, etc.

In the unexplored mashup of the reinterpreted original type “Kaydash Family vs Zombies” (R. Onyshchenko devoted to it a somewhat controversial remark: “The plot of this story is not about the Kaydash family at all, although the author took a lot from the original work” (*Dekan, 2023: 140*)), O. Dekan qualitatively transforms the subgenre matrix, practically going beyond its limits, which deserves attention as a perspective study of evolutionary processes in national and world literature of the XXI century in the circle of topical issues of fantasy study.

## 2. Action of the “transformation of a classical work” matrix

One of the few examples of a Ukrainian mashup in the plane of transformation of a nationally significant text, “Kaydash Family vs Zombies” by O. Dekan “based on” the story by I. Nechui-Levytskyi corresponds to the classic principles of this subgenre. This native work testifies to the writer’s assimilation of the Western European and North American mashup experience and, at the same time, the corresponding cultural space. At the same time, O. Dekan’s thesis about the global growth of mashup popularity as a “genre” in 2020s (*Dekan, 2023: 5*) is wrong, although in Ukrainian literature an artistically valuable sample of the subgenre has a chance of success, which is proved by the novel “From the Seventh Bottom” by Ya. Bakalets and Ya. Yarysh.

The preservation of the elements of the classic story is emphasized in the preface to “Kaydash Family vs Zombies” (*Dekan, 2023: 6*), and it is consonant with the statement about the mashup-prose ideas of J. Rekulak (*Snellings, 2022; Dunn, 2014*); this approach allows one to fully appreciate O. Dekan’s own contribution and the nature of the fantasy arrangement of I. Nechui-Levytskyi’s work, which is decisive for the mashup-modification. The factor of an irrational threat to the world, of which the Kaydash family is a part (the living dead, as in the earlier “Pride and Prejudice and Zombies” by J. Austen and S. Grahame-Smith, “Lazarus” by S. Taratorina, etc.), complicates the plot by an order of magnitude, the confrontation with mystical evil simultaneously groups the characters, increasing the intrigue tension. Characterizing his version of the classic story, O. Dekan reasonably points out that “...before the threat of an external enemy, there is almost no time left for petty family quarrels” (*Dekan, 2023: 6*). However, it is actually impossible to compare the degree of misunderstandings among Kaydash family members of updated and classic works, since in O. Dekan’s text family disputes of the characters are rather commented on as a fact and mostly omitted; figuratively speaking, the factor of confrontation within the family is transferred to the outside and, determined by fantasy circumstances, is already positioned as a universal disaster.

Such (uncharacteristic for a mashup of this type) removal of significant volumes of the invariant text, instead of their genre adaptation to the parameters of the new work, sometimes leads to a violation of the logic of plot transitions in the mashup version, which is negatively felt for a reader familiar with both texts; this conventionally shares the “Kaydash Family vs Zombies” into two parts: with the sustained structure of I. Nechui-Levytskyi’s text and without it (the second part lacks plot autonomy and needs a close echo with the original story). The specified motif of resistance to external global evil is inherent in the mashup, it is a subgenre marker and makes the intrigue somewhat predictable, which, however, does not prevent the modern co-author from showing his writing talent in the case of working with a classic text.

As in “Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter” by S. Grahame-Smith, the American war against evil is a metaphorical war for the freedom of the nation, so the confrontation with evil in the XIX century in “Kaydash Family vs Zombies” is interpreted in a patriotic sense. Since

structurally this Ukrainian story is related to “Pride and Prejudice and Zombies”, then, following T. Dunn (*Dunn, 2014*), we can qualify it as a “real post-postmodern text” with a new ideological vector.

It should be emphasized that in the reinterpretation of “Kaydash Family” O. Dekan tries to combine the national sense and foreign experience of the subgenre (first of all, by S. Grahame-Smith and B. Winters), forming his own artistic work as a result of intercultural dialogue. However, there is no the organicity of “own” and “other” in the text of 2021, and the exotic element stands out here, just as it remains a “foreigner” (*Dekan, 2023: 17*) the Kaydash mother-African among the inhabitants of the Semigory village. In B. Winters’ transformation of “Sense and Sensibility” by J. Austen, the exotic factor is woven into the fabric of the text systematically and thoroughly at various artistic levels, in particular the lexical one (*Gurduz, 2023: 417*), while in the mashup of the Ukrainian writer such systematicity is not so consistent.

Transformed episodes of an invariant text make up the first conditional part of mashup about Kaydash family and contain successful decisions from the point of view of the subgenre, which are original and consonant with the corresponding foreign artistic experience; here O. Dekan manages to give to scenes by I. Nechui-Levytskyi a new meaning. So, Omelko Kaydash didn’t just “...sat in the shed on a bench and tinkered” (*Nechui-Levytskyi, 1986: 153*), but he “...sat in the shed on a bench and made some new strange tool, which only from a distance looked like a pitchfork” (*Dekan, 2023: 12*). The uneasiness of the fantasy line is also preceded by a changed landscape, where the focus of admiration of I. Nechui-Levytskyi for the beauty and harmony of *living* nature shifts to the O. Dekan’s combat *mortality*:

– “The dams are lined with hundred-year-old willows. In the deep ravine, a velvety green belt seems to curl, on which silver ornaments, as if inserted into a green frame, shine. Two rows of white houses under the mountains turn white, like two rows of pearls on a green belt. Near these houses turn green in thick old gardens” (“Kaydash Family” (*Nechui-Levytskyi, 1986: 153*));

– “The dams, once lined with hundred-year-old willows, now, everywhere you look, here and there abound with sharpened and old moss-covered tree trunks. Like spears abandoned by the ancient gods, they were bristling, ready to fight and defend at any time. [...] In the deep ravine, a green velvet belt seems to curl, on which silver ornaments shine as if inserted into a green frame. Several abandoned boats as dead carcasses are slowly swaying on the water...” (“Kaydash Family vs Zombies” (*Dekan, 2023: 9–10*)).

One of the centers of mysterious evil in the mashup-variation naturally becomes the forest opposite the field as a “different” territory compared to the inhabited “own” space of the village; the forest acquires the status of a taboo place, it returns people and give them its own seal – otherness. Popular in the fantasy prose of the end of the XX – the first decades of the XXI century the concept of the Other here is synonymous with the “hostile otherworld”. Let us compare:

– “There is a light gray fog over the valleys. Those valleys from afar seem to breathe cold, forest dampness in your face, beckoning you into the shadow of a dense old forest” (“Kaydash Family” (*Nechui-Levytskyi, 1986: 153*));

– “There is a light gray fog over the valleys. They seem to breathe coldness and dampness in your face from afar, beckoning you to the shadow of a dense old forest. But it was strictly forbidden to go to it alone. And those fools who dared... they came back, but different” (“Kaydash Family vs Zombies” (*Dekan, 2023: 12*)).

Natural for the Ukrainian cultural tradition, the strengthening of the feminine principle in modern fantasy is also noticeable in “Kaydash Family vs Zombies”.

So, I. Nechui-Levytskyi's Lavrin of a lyrical nature would like to choose a girl "...beautiful as a flower, as a viburnum in a meadow, and quiet as a quiet summer..." (*Nechui-Levytskyi, 1986: 156*), and his mashup version dreams of a wife of a different nature: "...she is beautiful as a flower... And she must be fast as a deer, and she must know how to deal with weapons, she should not be afraid of either the sight of blood or the rising evil spirits..." (*Dekan, 2023: 22*). Later, Melashka saves Lavrin, and Karpo is charmed, in particular, by Motria's ability to shoot with a crossbow: "That's the girl is, that's how she shoots, she'll give Lavrin himself a head start" (*Dekan, 2023: 50*).

The desired virtues of potential brides in the dialogue between Lavrin and Karpo of O. Dekan with the actualization of the characteristics of a female warrior capable of protecting herself and her relatives are similar to those traits that are added to the standard traits of a secular woman in "Pride and Prejudice" by J. Austen in a mashup-transformation by S. Grahame-Smith:

"A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address..." ("Pride and Prejudice" (*Austen, 1991: 35–36*));

"A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages; she must be well trained in the fighting styles of the Kyoto masters and the modern tactics and weaponry of Europe. And besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address..." ("Pride and Prejudice and Zombies" (*Austen, Grahame, 2009: 34*)).

The difficult character of Marusia-"Funania" (*Dekan, 2023: 24*) Kaydash is motivated here, among other things, by the exclusivity of her origin as a representative of the older generation. This dark-skinned heiress of a West African family brings to the life of the Kaydash family the peculiarities of her national culture, which is manifested, in particular, in elements of clothing (a turban (*Dekan, 2023: 39*)) and appearance in general ("a deer skull mask" (*Dekan, 2023: 16*), tattoo on the face (*Dekan, 2023: 18*)), in speech (she knows three languages (*Dekan, 2023: 20*) and addresses her sons in French), and in the way of life (she practices witchcraft and voodoo magic), etc. "Funania" is compared in B. Winters' manner to a "black panther" (*Dekan, 2023: 23*), with a "mad elephant" (*Dekan, 2023: 126*); she, unlike the artistic prototype (who is morally corrupted during the period of serving the masters), respects the village community and is not fully accepted by it, but plunges into memories of her past in moments of nostalgia.

The textual analysis of "Kaydash Family vs Zombies" and the earlier "Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters" by J. Austen and B. Winters allows us to reveal the closeness of the figures of Marusia-"Funania" and Kukafahora – the concubine of Sir John Middleton, the "princess of a tribe indigenous to a far-flung atoll" (*Austen, Winters, 2009: 27*). So, we can assume with a high degree of probability the reception by O. Dekan of the corresponding material of colleagues (the fact of using a machete by Sir Middleton from "Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters" (*Austen, Winters, 2009: 27*) and by Lavrin (*Dekan, 2023: 98*) draws attention). At the same time, if Kukafahora is kidnapped from her native tribe and forced to become part of a Western European family, where this woman does not fully adapt, then Marusia Kaydash is saved in time and marries Omelko for mutual love.



### 3. The ways of rejection from the “transformation of a classical work” matrix

O. Dekan's choice to create a mashup based on the “Kaidash Family” is successful from the point of view of post-colonial discourse, which is popular today, particularly in fantasy. Thanks to this the text “Kaydash Family vs Zombies” is organic not only for the genre-synonymous “Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters”: Ukrainian text is also close to example of another subgenre – “Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell” by S. Clark with a pronounced experience of post-colonial syndrome on the example of servant Stephen Black. Omelko Kaydash's memory of the historical serfdom for Ukraine is “supplemented” in O. Dekan's work by the exoticized memories of Marusia-“Funania”, a native of one of the “British colonies” (Dekan, 2023: 23): “But when she grew up, she was surprised to learn that she, like her entire family, belonged to a respected general from London” (Dekan, 2023: 24). Karpo opposes such a reality (“...all people are equal” (Dekan, 2023: 63)), and it is in this context that the resonant maxim inserted by O. Dekan into the mouth of the mostly silent Omelko from I. Nechui-Levytskyi's story: “Empires flourish and decline... And Semyhory have stood and will stand” (Dekan, 2023: 33). A similar replica could not belong to the classic Omelko due to the constitution of this character and censorship, and in the text by O. Dekan the old Kaydash undergoes a significant change in the direction of heroization, in particular thanks to the confrontation with the evil (“Once this gray-haired grandfather was a skilled lad, a real warrior... one whose name was feared all local and distant villages...” (Dekan, 2023: 23)).

Compared to the artistic prototype, Omelko of O. Dekan is elevated intellectually and spiritually; it is to him that the words about the Motherland at the time of the fight against evil belong, which refer to the history of Ukraine: “Then, even in Kyiv, our tactics were adopted, and Ukraine stood up in this difficult battle, because our people are united... We must build our state, and do not whine for the former usurper” (Dekan, 2023: 33). Such rhetoric, in particular with the recognition of the character's life mistakes, is unexpected for Omelko in I. Nechui-Levytskyi's story, created under conditions of increased censorship. At the same time, only the old Kaydash in the text by O. Dekan is able to summarize his own and national historical experience as a person of respectable age. New in the artistic work of 2021 is, among other things, the mystical accusation of Omelko Kaydash in the murder of the king, whose servants allegedly turned into a kind of inanimate and undead (Dekan, 2023: 59).

When I. Nechui-Levytskyi pays more attention to the characters of the sons of Kaydash and their wives, O. Dekan focuses, first of all, on the older generation of the family, whose image has been radically changed compared to the classical one. The pagan belief of Kaydash-mother contrasts with the Christian atmosphere of Semyhory, and such a shift of content accents in the mashup makes it possible to avoid the thesis of primitiveness of the religious fears of I. Nechui-Levytskyi's Omelko. In general, we note that the criticism of the church expressed in I. Nechui-Levytskyi in O. Dekan's story is weakened, although the satirical opuses about superstitious villagers of Semyhory in the protowork are supported and sometimes dramatized. An example of the latter position can be read in Marusia Kaydash's attempt to save her husband: “...Marusia was banging on a wooden tambourine, cutting her body with a knife and convulsing on the floor, as if she had an epileptic fit. But dark voodoo didn't help either. She even began to call for help the gods in whom her husband believed, the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints she could remember – all in vain” (Dekan, 2023: 43).

The combination here of appeals to Christian and pagan spiritual forces is natural for the fantasy of the first decades of the XXI century manifestation, the already dramatized version of which can be found in “Moon Maiden” by D. Kornii, where during the saving ritual the molfar

calls out: “Creator of light and Creator of darkness, help me to persuade, to conjure and order all evil. I call on all the saints, I beg the Mother of God for help. I conjure all the spirits of the mountains...” (*Kornii, 2019: 334*).

National accents are also included in the mashup-story: irrational evil in the XIX century, according to O. Dekan, originally raged in the lands of imperial tsarism; people of Semyhory will never recognize Kaydash-mother, an African woman, as native, although they seek her help as a healer, and her mulatto sons also feel a certain barrier in communicating with their environment (Motria replies to Karpo: “I would stand with a dark man, but not with you, a gypsy” (*Dekan, 2023: 47*); Lavrin is asked: “Did you, so dark all over, emerge from the black forest or from hell?” (*Dekan, 2023: 92*)). By the way, manifestations of negative national stereotypes can be traced in the case of representatives of certain nationalities in alternative Kyiv in “Lazarus” by S. Taratorina.

The attributive emphasis of the concept of boundary in various modifications, which is characteristic of the fantasy of 2000-2020s, can also be traced in “Kaydash Family vs Zombies”, for example, Karpo tells his future wife about himself: “My mother’s ancestors were from ancient African warriors and witches, but my father is no need to be introduced to anyone... And I am the son of two powerful peoples, the explosive mixture is in my blood...” (*Dekan, 2023: 47*). Accordingly, in a distant metaphorical perspective, the images of Karpo and Lavrin here are correlated with the characters of Nathan Bern from the “Half Life” by S. Green, Deiv from “The Wind Mountain” by A. Bahriana, Liubava from “...When the sun was hundred-eyed. Amulet of the sorcerer” by O. Radushynska and others. It is symbolic that the mashup by O. Dekan also mentions “French vampires and double-soul monsters, or English werewolves, who are the most evil in the world” (*Dekan, 2023: 62*). Moreover, the “three-soul monsters” are also named here (*Dekan, 2023: 65*).

Reading in the system of foreign analogues can certainly affect the perception of “Kaydash Family vs Zombies”. Thus, protection of Karpo Motria from pigs, which transformed into monsters (*Dekan, 2023: 48–49*) looks natural in the rural color of Semyhory, although somewhat stylistically reduced in comparison with the confrontation of the characters with more “substantial” enemies in “Pride and Prejudice and Zombies” by J. Austen and S. Grahame-Smith, “Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters” by J. Austen and B. Winters, “Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter” by S. Grahame-Smith, etc. What is unexpected is that in the story by O. Dekan, the lexeme denoting an irrational creature (zombie) is included in the title of the work, but it is not used once in the text and is indicated by synonymous descriptions: “the walking dead” (*Dekan, 2023: 53*), “the living dead” (*Dekan, 2023: 118*). The metaphor of the living dead here is semantically inconsistent and contains internal paradoxes, because it is interpreted differently in different sections. If the named undeads in the text are able to transform another people and even animals bitten by them into their own kind, then the interpretation of these irrational creatures in the story as remnants of the tsarist system of the XIX century is problematic (besides, Omelko Kaydash, whose anti-tsarist rhetoric we quoted, after his death turns into such a dead man). Also controversial is the specific relationships between the living dead and the inhabitants of Biivtsi village (beast people): monsters don’t like people like that and mostly do not touch.

I. Nechui-Levytskyi’s humor in the mashup-version of the story becomes less, as individual episodes of the work take on the color of horror, although the sense of folk humor in O. Dekan’s text is undeniable: looking at the body of a killed monstrous pig, Karpo regrets: “This lard is already irretrievably spoiled” (*Dekan, 2023: 50*).

Let's pay attention to the thesis included in the story of O. Dekan, which is organic to the modern corpus of the mashup: Marusia Kaydash thinks about the ruthlessness of the universe (*Dekan, 2023: 23*), and we recall a similar position in Elizabeth Bennett's words from the "Pride and Prejudice and Zombies" by J. Austen and S. Grahame-Smith: «God has no mercy» (*Austen, Grahame, 2009: 58*).

At the same time, we note certain lacunae in the plot of "Kaydash Family vs Zombies" – in conditional second part of the story, which is incomplete without connection with the classical work. These lacunae probably arose in connection with an incompletely thought-out artistic concept of the work, and, as a result, with an overload of fantasy metaphors. Paradoxes affecting the logic of Christian thinking are also found in the I. Nechui-Levytskyi mashup. So, in the church, Lavrin is preparing to marry Melashka, the plot representative of the beast-men (*Dekan, 2023: 96*) (although the popularity of the motif of personal relationships between humans and non-humans in fantasy is currently growing). Understanding that the scene of strange visions of I. Nechui-Levytskyi's Omelko in the Saturday church (*Nechui-Levytskyi, 1986: 244*) "prompts" O. Dekan to develop this episode to the level of horror, as well as the fact that in the texts by S. Grahame-Smith, B. Winters, S. Taratorina and other modern fantasy writers, the Christian element often falls into a weak position, we, however, consider the weaving into the fabric of "Kaydash Family vs Zombies" a naturalistic scene of a terrible murder of a priest by an undead man unjustified (*Dekan, 2023: 98*), as well as the fact of the violence of the dead in the church.

In the O. Dekan's scene of the "treatment" of old Kaydash by Palazhka, we also see a logical inconsistency. If in I. Nechui-Levytskyi's work the invited Palazhka is positioned as a "healer" (*Nechui-Levytskyi, 1986: 247*), then in the mashup she "was a famous village witch" (*Dekan, 2023: 115*), and although her order here is already devoid of curious repetitions of the lexeme "cross", which are in I. Nechui-Levytskyi's text ("A cross on me, a cross on my back, I'm all in crosses, like a sheep in burdocks" (*Nechui-Levytskyi, 1986: 248*)), but it contains the following words: "I, the servant of God Palazhka, am going to the servant of God Omelko to drive away all evil from his veins..." (*Dekan, 2023: 115*). Therefore, drawing in the specified context the figure of a "witch" who heals with an appeal to the Christian canon causes dissonance. The modern author's lexical replacement of "healer" with "witch" is probably related to the desire to emphasize the mystical element in the story.

O. Dekan uses the technique of regrouping the details of the text of the original story in a new work, and with variable heroization and different artistic success. For example, the episode in "Kaydash Family", where the eldest son beats the father, in the mashup-version is transformed into a forced due to plot logic Karpo's murder of Omelko after the old man, drowning in a puddle, turns into the living dead. The drama of this scene is enhanced by the outline of the son's love for his father, who is now a zombie and an enemy of humanity: "I love you – probably the first time since childhood Karpo said these words to his father" (*Dekan, 2023: 119*). It is Omelko, not his wife, who loses an eye in "Kaydash Family vs Zombies", and the sad event does not occur in a family quarrel, but during the protection of the house and Kaydash himself from the evil one: the arrow of Lavrin's crossbow pierces the undead man's skull along with Omelko's eye. In this way, I. Nechui-Levytskyi's grotesque in the indicated scene is transformed into heroic pathos.

In the mashup-version of the "Kaydash Family" the game principle introduced by the co-author of the XXI century dominates; at the same time, logically for the subgenre, there is patriotic pathos actualizes in the O. Dekan's text. Semantic shortcomings and gains of the mashup-version compared to the original are noticeable, if the reader is familiar with the original story, which is not principle for perceiving a mashup-product (*Genette, 1997: 397*).



#### 4. Conclusions

O. Dekan's reinterpretation of the mashup model "transformation of a classical artistic work" is indicative and testifies to the creative implementation of the Western artistic matrix in the mature Ukrainian subgenre of 2020s. The interaction in the story "Kaydash Family vs Zombies" of sequentially located plot-image blocks, where the matrix is sustained and where the classic plot by I. Nechui-Levytskyi is left behind, can be considered as a hybridization of a mature mashup-form in the previously predicted by us the transition from mashup as a subgenre to the mashup as local artistic technique.

The mashup-processing strategy by O. Dekan of I. Nechui-Levytskyi's story is organic to the world experience of this subgenre and, despite the shortcomings of the text, proves the writer's original attempt to develop canonized scheme to a level of a new subgenre type. At the same time, the "Kaydash Family vs Zombies" among similar national artistic texts reflects the main parameters of the updated at the beginning of the XXI century fantasy paradigm as a whole, which speaks about the community of the processes in Ukrainian fantasy to the global tendencies of this metagenre 2010–2020s. The further comparative study of the evolution of national versions of mashup-prose is perspective, because it will allow a deeper understanding of the logic of national receptions of this subgenre, and its transformation as a whole. A non-comparative research of this artistic corps, as we can see, is untenable.

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