

EXISTENTIAL MODES IN TETIANA OSIN'S *TAVRIAN SONNETS***Lada Lichman**

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Summary

This article examines the modes of being in Tetiana Osin's *Tavrian Sonnets*, analyzing how fear, anxiety, and despair function as both thematic content and structural principles. The study reveals the impact of Heideggerian ideas, particularly *Existentialia* and *Das Man*, on the protagonist's inner conflict between authentic selfhood and social conformity. These ontological models function as conceptual frameworks that enrich the philosophical dimension of the text, structuring the lyrical subject's perception of existence and foregrounding themes of free will, stoic endurance, and personal responsibility.

The paper focuses on the theme of destiny and the culturogame of existential death, through which the lyrical heroine represents world cognition as an enduring drama of human life. Particular attention is devoted to spatiotemporal symbols that illustrate the transformation of worldview, the emancipation of consciousness, and the recognition of suffering as inherent to human experience.

The article positions the artistic space of the collection as a metaphysical landscape where time and space undergo symbolic transformation, becoming keys through which the Universe and nature are interpreted. The spatial dimension assumes the characteristics of philosophical allegory.

It highlights the poet's skill in rendering introspective themes, the intertextual projections that function as allusive dialogues with the cultural cosmos, and the poetic reinterpretation of Tavria – its landscape, spirit, and emblematic symbols.

Ultimately, the article examines Osin's poetic vision in shaping her creative identity, illustrating how this self-conception intertwines with the external world. This reveals the Ukrainian sonnet's engagement with philosophical discourse and its capacity to embody reflections on human being.

Key words: sonnet, modes of being, culturogame of symbolic death, spatiotemporal metaphors, intertextual references, human perception of the world.

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1. Introduction

Growing scholarly interest in existential themes within Ukrainian poetry necessitates new methodological approaches to contemporary poetic analysis. This study addresses two critical gaps: the underexplored intersection of existentialist philosophy with the Ukrainian sonnet tradition, and the systematic analysis of regional poets like T. Osin', whose work embodies profound existential concerns.

This broader intellectual shift toward existential phenomena as manifested in poetic texts has catalyzed the development of modern existential literary criticism, which applies the analytical framework of classical existential philosophy to literary works (*Tokman, 2020: 11*). Such

an approach recognizes the inherent compatibility between lyrical expression and philosophical inquiry, a relationship that is fundamental to existentialist thought.

The convergence of poetry and philosophy creates a distinctive interpretive dialogue that illuminates the essence of being, transcending the confines of logical reasoning. This conceptualization of poetry as a vehicle for existential understanding that transcends conventional rational frameworks resonates deeply with Ukrainian philosophical traditions. Consequently, both the poetic-philosophical dialogue and the Ukrainian intellectual heritage provide substantial theoretical foundations for scholarly investigation in this field.

This study addresses a gap in literary scholarship concerning the existential interpretation of sonnet forms, particularly in the works of underexplored Ukrainian poets like T. Osin'. Her collection represents a significant phenomenon at the intersection of poetic tradition and philosophical depth.

This research offers an integrative analysis of existential themes such as fear, loneliness, despair, anxiety, and death through the lens of Heideggerian concepts, including *Existenz* and *Das Man*. It also examines Osin's intertextual strategies, metaphorical modeling of spacetime, alongside personal experiences as foundations for existential reflection in lyrical poetry.

The study deepens our understanding of Ukrainian literary existentialism by showing how poetic language, imagery, and structure convey existential concerns. It highlights the importance of the individual voice, poetic expression, as well as cultural memory in shaping lyrical subjectivity. The findings confirm the relevance of existential frameworks for interpreting contemporary Ukrainian poetry and suggest new directions for exploring syncretic poetic forms that unite philosophical ideas with emotional and personal depth.

The analysis is **aimed at** exploring the philosophical and poetic discourse in T. Osin's collection *Tavrian Sonnets*, focusing on existential modes and philosophical allegories that clarify the artistic and aesthetic attitudes of the poet.

The **research methods** include hermeneutics, focusing on existential and dialogical literary interpretation, which interprets narratives through the categories and theories of existentialist philosophers. Existentialist frameworks by M. Heidegger, A. Camus, S. Kierkegaard, J.-P. Sartre, and K. Jaspers are applied to analyze how Osin's sonnets embody philosophical concepts via poetic form. Kierkegaard's idea of existence as an inner transformation into authentic selfhood serves as the main interpretive lens, while Heidegger's temporal ontology sheds light on themes of finitude and being-toward-death. The analysis explores loneliness through the individual's shift from mundane routine to the heightened existence of the lyrical subject, as well as the instability of human existence and "existential thinking." It also considers Kierkegaard's concept of "sickness unto death" as reflected in psychological states of fear and doubt (*Kierkegaard & Marino, 2013*).

Against this background, the most important concepts are presented by:

- K. Jaspers' concept of existence, understood as "being-in-the-world", comprises the phenomenal world, existence as "being in itself" and transcendence as the invisible boundary of all being and thought (*Jaspers 2021*);

- M. Heidegger's theory of transcendental and ontological understanding of time describes three time-dependent ecstatic relations: present, past, and future, all of which are experienced by a person as expressions of the finitude of human existence (*Heidegger, 1996*);

- J.-P. Sartre's intellectual idea of the existential worldview, which serves as the key to existential poetics, structures the stream of being through the discovery of essences rather than through the principles of hierarchy and fluidity (*Sartre, 2015*).

Loneliness is treated as a distinct category in existentialist philosophy. The fear of loneliness is universal; it serves as a fundamental and indestructible motivator in human consciousness and behaviour. Loneliness becomes a constant structure of “being with others” (Heidegger, 1996).

The legacy of existentialist philosophy has proven fruitful for the development of various fields within the humanities, including literary studies. In Ukrainian literary scholarship, numerous scientific works have focused on studying the sonnet genre (Bilostegniuk, 2016; Nakashidze, 2015; Naumenko, 2014; Radko, 2010). A correlation can be observed between existentialist ideas and the views expressed by contemporary Ukrainian poets (Anisimova, 2009; Rosinska, 2007; Tokman, 2020).

Scientists note the distinctive thinking style inherent to the sonnet genre, its encoded capacity for self-renewal, and its perfectly harmonious form in all components, which concentrates the common and natural poetic mode of reflection crowned by a lyrical and philosophical conclusion (Naumenko, 2014). Literary scholars highlight the existential motives and intentions of the text through a dialogue between literature and philosophical theories. H. Tokman insists that extrapolating existential and psychological ideas to the study of lyrics is natural, as lyrics centre on the lyrical subject's introverted interest in their lifeworld, where existential matters must be a priori considered in textual analysis (Tokman, 2020: 7).

However, despite a certain interest among scientists, the sonnet genre within postmodernism remains understudied in modern literary studies and thus requires investigation of precisely those lyrical works which contain in the text, subtext, or evoke in the metatext figuratively expressed thoughts aligned with the ideas of existentialist philosophers and depict a person's existential states as interpreted in existential philosophy.

A review of recent papers. Studying the existential modes within an individual poet's artistic world has opened broad perspectives for scientific research, including investigations of contemporary Ukrainian poets from regions previously underrepresented in scholarly discourse.

Tetiana Osin' (Nikulochkina) is a well-known Zaporizhzhia poet, literary critic, and a member of the National Writers' Association of Ukraine. The poetic paradigm of her creative experiments contains existential and aphoristic retrospections and reflections on the present, philosophy of life, human existence, and the harmony of the world around: *Autumn Versefall* (Osinniy virshopad) 2011, *Rhymed Analogies* (Rymovani paraleli) 2016, *Vivifying Word* (Zhyttiedayne Slovo) 2017, *Sunshiny Grape* (Sonyachne hrono) 2017, *Late Fruit* (Piznya zavyaz) 2019, *Blessed Suburb* (Rakhmanne peredmistya) 2020, etc. Despite such a voluminous literary output, T. Osin's oeuvre has recently attracted Ukrainian academic attention: only two literary works – *Late Fruit* and *Blessed Suburb* – have been analyzed among eleven collections of poetry.

While analyzing the ninth book of her poems, *Late Fruit*, H. Senkevych (Senkevych, 2020) draws attention to the author's stylistic peculiarities: the use of cold colour palette and inversions, characteristic of symbolist poets, and the cult of sad beauty. The scholar emphasizes the musicality of her poetry, highlights the organic combination of social and lyrical feelings, the unique synthesis of life philosophy, and the emotional content of human existence, her boundless devotion to her native country, and a rare gift for reflecting both human emotions and the public mood.

Having analyzed the collection *Blessed Suburb*, Ya. Kravchenko (Kravchenko, 2020) highlights its complex and multi-layered semantic richness, alongside its experimental artistic forms that embody profound experiences of self-knowledge and an insightful understanding of

the world. The researcher emphasizes the vivid visualization of poetic reality, the universality of the author's worldview, and a nonconformist spirit marked by steadfastness, internal independence, and tireless creative energy. The scholar also underlines the palpable, pulsating core of the collection, its cultural contextualization, the poet's acute awareness of the spacetime continuum, and a deep sensibility to the harmony of the world. Philosophical generalization, ambivalence, aphorisms, and symbolism are identified as the defining features of the poetry.

V. Botner, analyzing the wide range of T. Osin's sonnets, highlights the elegance of the poet's artistic language and her unique insight into the human psyche, life, and inner states. The scholar also emphasizes the poet's initiative and self-motivation, as well as her deep love for Ukraine and the Zaporizhzhia region (Botner, 2020).

Thus, the poet's rich literary palette merits deeper exploration, particularly through the lens of existential awareness and the perception of life, as well as the timeless themes of human relationships – love and loneliness in the Universe.

2. Main text

Tavrian Sonnets (Tavriys'ki sonety), Tatiana Osin's eleventh poetic collection (Osin', 2021), is a natural progression of her ongoing exploration to refine her favorite stanzaic forms, the sonnet and sonnet sequence, while simultaneously deepening the perception of her poetic and mental "ego" as an integral part of the surrounding world. The collection represents an attempt at summation, including not only entirely new works but also cherished fragments of her poetry well known to readers.

The title of a literary work acts as a bridge between the external world and the inner space of the text. *Tavrian Sonnets* serves as the author's initial intrigue, introducing the collection's central theme. At its core lies Tavria, the historic steppe region of Ukraine encompassing the Dnieper-Molochansk interfluvium within modern Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts. The title encapsulates the collection's aesthetic, originality of worldview, and concentrated thematic expression. It evokes an existential understanding of Tavria, its nature, inhabitants, canonical symbols, steppes, chernozem (fertile black soil rich in organic matter), cities and suburbs, the Dnieper River, Khortytsia Island, floodwaters, sakura in the Oak Grove, and a snow-covered cranberry bush, all of which are familiar and simple to the poet. The collection's conceptual metaphor is the Road, described as a difficult yet necessary path that leads forward, causing pain and healing, offering comfort (Osin, 2021: 18). While the road may bring one back to loved ones, not every smooth path ensures victory, as hardships and bad weather occur along the way; nevertheless, the road remains a constant guide (Osin, 2021: 22).

The collection opens with the chapter *Diverse Weaving* (Rozmaite pletivo) which includes five thematic sequences: *The Road* (Doroha), *The Existence* (Buttia), *Spacetime* (Chasoprostir), *Bird* (Ptakha) and *Deluge* (Povin'). Each sequence consists of fourteen sonnets followed by the fifteenth, called the Mastersonnet (Mahistral), which functions as the thematic and compositional key following classical academic poetic forms.

Several newly published sonnets appear in the chapter *On the Scales of the Existence* (Na terezakh buttia). The poems are structured into distinct multifunctional thematic units such as the sonnet-portrait, sonnet-landscape, love sonnet, poetic manifesto, meditative sonnet, requiem, and dedication sonnet. Select sonnets from the poet's earlier books are also thoughtfully included.

The existential paradigm (or mode) in the artistic world of *Tavrian Sonnets* encompasses several key categories that shape the collection's narrative strategies: "fear", "concern",

“anxiety” and “despair” (Søren Kierkegaard); *Existentialia* and *Das Man* (Martin Heidegger); free choice and stoicism (Karl Jaspers, Jean-Paul Sartre); and the culturogame (cultural concept) of existential death.

In *Tavrian Sonnets*, the philosophical and figurative exploration of human existence and the spiritual experience of the poetic subject resonate deeply with the ideas of Danish philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard, who introduced the concepts of fear, anxiety, sadness, despair, concern, and other modes of human existence into scholarly discourse. The poetic voice contemplates the meaning of being, striving to comprehend human suffering, despair, and care while seeking the essence of selfhood. The author frames existential anxiety, turmoil, and mood as expressions of an openness to transcendence; through vivid epithets and metaphors, emotions emerge as the central elements shaping the artist’s inner world.

Loneliness emerges as a fundamental existential condition throughout the collection. The lyrical subject questions her emotional state with characteristic introspection: “what use is caution to me / amidst sadness and loneliness and heaviness” (*Osin*, 2021: 126). This transcends mere melancholy, revealing profound existential anxiety that the protagonist projects onto seasonal imagery, particularly autumn as a metaphor for spiritual desolation. The endless circular motion, without beginnings or endings, mirrors the monotonous rhythm of rain, which becomes the landscape of the heroine’s soul, as reflected in the sonnets *Reefs and Rhymes* (Ryfta rymy), *Music of Insomnia* (Muzyka bezsonnia), and *Winter Diptych* (Zymovyi dyptykh): “I’m breaking free of daily routine, but the wall / stands in a way – the wall of secular concerns”, “My memories limit has been infinite / I take them to my heart, until the early hours”, “Unsettling autumn musicians / who strike a raw nerve” (*Osin*, 2021: 176; 128; 104).

Heidegger’s *Existentialia* denotes authentic selfhood – the irreducible core of individual being that emerges through confronting existence directly. *Das Man* represents everyday conformity where individuality dissolves into anonymous public opinion. In *Osin*’s sonnets, this tension manifests as the protagonist’s struggle between social expectations and authentic self-expression, particularly evident in her rejection of “mundane cares” for poetic vocation. Thus, these concepts highlight the tension between individuality and conformity in human existence.

In this context, the protagonist’s quest and her striving to affirm the authenticity of her existence vividly illustrate an existential awakening that ultimately frees her from the confines of everyday life. The self in *The Road* feels compelled to break free from the monotony of routine and listen to the voice rising from the depths of human identity a call to a higher purpose “He that chooses a goal in advance will lead an exciting life with dignity and for the benefit” (*Osin*, 2021: 20).

Meanwhile, the trivial world is represented in the sonnetarium through the lyrical depiction of daily life in the section *The Existence*. The poet portrays mundane responsibilities such as work, household chores, and childcare as alternately manageable and emotionally burdensome (*Osin*, 2021: 26; 75; 220). She characterizes the surrounding mundanity as an incomplete, nebulous realm that lacks clarity or spiritual depth. In exploring routine, *Osin* underscores the exhausting nature of domestic duties, which encompass an unending cycle of washing, cooking, and cleaning (*Osin*, 2021: 42). Simultaneously, she contemplates the human struggle to resist emotional numbness, questioning whether it is more vital to discover an existential key to life or to simply break free from the paralyzing grip of indifference and routine (*Osin*, 2021: 65).

The common thread running through *Tavrian Sonnets* is the concept of two existential modes: authentic existence and its opposite. The inauthentic one represents a world of mass consciousness manipulated by external forces. In contrast, authentic existence belongs

to personalities who oppose mundanity and challenge established standards and values in pursuit of their existential truth. This authentic mode of being is a search for spiritual harmony. The author leans toward philosophical generalizations and captures the most essential truths.

Seeking to escape the monotony of everyday routine, T. Osin' imbues her poetry with symbolic meaning: "A symbol is always general and, no matter how precise its translation, an artist can only convey its movement – there is no word-for-word rendering" (*Camus, 2013: 112*). Specific names, images, and symbols drawn from world culture carry emotional associations, blending the concrete with the universal to convey the concept of existence.

A central symbol in the collection is the reference to the medieval physician, philosopher, and thinker Avicenna, who formulated seven postulates of a healthy lifestyle: (1) equilibrium of temperament; (2) careful selection of food and drink; (3) evacuation of effete matters; (4) safeguarding the body; (5) maintaining purity of the air breathed; (6) guarding against external contingencies; and (7) moderation regarding bodily movements and mental activity, including cycles of sleep and wakefulness (*Khan, 2015: 92*).

Equally significant is Osin's mention of Gilea, a forest in Scythia revered as a sacred grove and noted by Herodotus in ancient times, alongside her reference to the sacred bird in Eastern mythology symbolizing happiness. These allusions play a crucial role in the poet's concept of existence.

Parmenides is aptly invoked as a reminder of his philosophical inquiry into being and knowledge. The poet also draws attention to the symbolism of Ambrose (Bitter) Bierce, the American short story writer and poet known for his sardonic style and uncompromising candor. Additionally, there are references to Argus, the all-seeing giant, depicted as unsuccessfully guarding the treasures of heaven, and to Lel, the Slavic god of love and son of Lada and Svarog, whose presence is associated with the loss of a spring-well and the persistence of mundane burdens such as daily struggles with the old patterns. Each of these figures is imbued with symbolic meaning that enriches the existential framework of the poetry (*Osin, 2021: 140, 147*).

T. Osin's reflections focus on the creative power of the Demiurge, the artisan-like figure responsible for shaping and sustaining the material world, and his striving to perfect it. At the same time, the author introduces a philosophical warning: "As time goes by, the decline of life becomes a marked price: that is the Demiurge's evil caprice" (*Osin' 2021: 148*). The poet also invokes the figure of Don Quixote: "Whether the Don Quixote age / will touch us... Where is the hidalgo, whose heart is afire with truth?" This timeless character embodies the pursuit of idealism and moral courage (*Osin' 2021: 173*).

The collection underscores the existential dilemma of constant choice and the necessity of stoic endurance, responding to Camus's core question of whether life is worth living. In Osin's poetic universe, the answer is affirmative: life has meaning precisely because it allows for freedom of choice. To exist is to choose. This existential freedom is rooted in the Poetic Word, which becomes a source of strength, moral integrity, and inner dignity in the face of adversity. These ideas are woven into lines that contemplate the cost of survival, the tension between obedience and resistance, and the creative act as a form of self-affirmation (*Osin', 2021: 43; 44; 142*).

The poet's focus remains on the inner realm of the lyrical subject, who, despite anxiety, routine, alienation, and loneliness, strives for transcendence. Creativity becomes a form of resistance. Personal agency emerges through internal motivation, urging individuals to confront challenges, cultivate resilience, and shape their destinies. These themes resonate in verses that invoke Shevchenko's advice to act decisively against enemies and express a stoic defiance in the face of fate, even when only nature seems to respond with sympathy (*Osin', 2021: 81; 88*).

When faced with difficulties, the heroine reflects on her inner turmoil and recognizes poetry as her sole talisman. The lyrical voice perceives escape from tragic existence through transcending her “inauthentic” existence to discover her true “ego” identity. T. Osin’ pursues the truth and authenticity of her being, striving to shape her destiny: “The Almighty handed us our fates / But the choice is ours: either the sky or the thickets” (*Osin’ 2021: 135*). The poet deliberately embraces the sonnet form as her chosen mode of expression, appreciating its precision, intensity, and profound symbolic resonance. The poetic subject feels compelled to rise above the mundane and heed the voice emerging from the depths of the self. Contemplating how to endure with dignity amid life’s despair, the lyrical heroine invokes the emblematic figure of Sisyphus: “Sisyphean labor, routine, severe” (*Osin’ 2021: 75*). For the heroine, resilience is anchored in “a stable family, like a shield / which is strong, reliable, with a top grade” (*Osin’ 2021: 55*). Her existence is fundamentally supported by “three pillars, / whose names are Love, Family and Faith...” (*Osin’ 2021: 143*). Crucially, the protagonist consistently pursues her central vocation: “I’m weaving quatrains in Blue, the neighbors are churning new gossips” (*Osin’ 2021: 193*). At every juncture, the lyrical subject identifies with Sisyphus, symbolizing the spirit’s victorious perseverance in the face of fate.

Death functions as an existential horizon that gives urgency and meaning to present experience. The protagonist confronts mortality without despair, contemplating whether the final journey leads to enlightenment or darkness, while acknowledging the uncertainty of what lies beyond (*Osin’, 2021: 88*). The poet articulates a profound acceptance of death’s inevitability, envisioning it as an ultimate embrace – something that may comfort rather than terrify, despite its fearsome reputation (*Osin’, 2021: 132*).

Life is conceived as inherently intertwined with death, and the contemplation of mortality evokes paradoxical reflections on the finite nature of existence while simultaneously suggesting the presence of something eternal within it. The poet acknowledges death’s triumph over life’s brief span, recognizing that silence inevitably follows existence. Yet this recognition does not give rise to despair, self-pity, or mourning. On the contrary, the poet rejects self-humiliation through pity, proposing instead that to live passionately is itself a form of loss (*Osin’, 2021: 243*).

The work concludes with a philosophical meditation inspired by Jerzy Lec’s aphoristic insight into human mortality, affirming that people ultimately die not from external forces, but from the very intensity of living itself (*Osin’, 2021: 239*). This reference underscores a philosophical acceptance of death as an intrinsic yet paradoxical aspect of life.

Tavrian Sonnets explore the fragmented nature of human existence, the anticipation of death, and the inexorable law of mortality, guiding the reader to confront the end as part of the natural order. In the sonnet *Bright Day*, the narrator intimately recounts the death of her father, portraying the profound experience of loss through a philosophical lens that acknowledges life’s transience while simultaneously affirming hope: “It began – thank God? – a bright day” (*Osin’, 2021: 115*).

Equally significant is the treatment of the perennial theme of fate, depicted as a test that everyone must face. The poet presents destiny as manifesting through various life challenges, whether in competitive sports or social encounters (*Osin’, 2021: 77*). However, rather than emphasizing its absolute inevitability, she adopts a philosophical stance toward these limitations, expressing a sense of acceptance for perceived shortcomings. Ultimately, she asserts that despite potential hostility from such forces, they can be overcome through the transformative power of love, patience, and accumulated wisdom. The primary protective symbol invoked

by the poetic subject is conceptualized as a divine gift – a sacred flame that serves as spiritual guidance (*Osin*, 2021: 169).

The collection's spatiotemporal framework functions as an existential geography, where the external landscape mirrors internal psychological states. Tavrian topography – the steppe, Khortytsia, and the rain – transcends mere regional description to become a philosophical allegory. Geographic specificity grounds universal existential themes in particular cultural soil, creating what might be termed "existential regionalism".

The unity of spacetime in *Tavrian Sonnets* is profoundly conceptualized and embodied through original imagery. The character's environment is perceived not only emotionally and aesthetically but also philosophically. Spatial and temporal dimensions are presented as inseparable, forming a coherent existential continuum. The sequence of artistic events unfolds within narrative time, while the interpenetration of temporal layers reinforces the structural unity of the text. Both time and space are metaphorized, becoming symbolic tools for understanding the universe and the natural order: "Everything deserves understanding / from the infinite space to the tiniest seed" (*Osin*, 2021: 41).

The spacetime of the big city accentuates the heroine's loneliness and disorientation, with these sensations intensified by recurring lexical motifs such as "rain" and "routine." The spatial imagery is rendered with clarity and specificity: "Khortytsia, the Dnipro..." Ultimately, the collection's artistic space transforms into the existential heroine's inner world, acquiring the qualities of a philosophical allegory.

Unlike space, which is grounded in concrete toposes, time in the collection is portrayed as conditional. The progression of events unfolds within narrative time, while the author emphasizes moments of intersection between temporal layers that generate both structural and existential cohesion.

A particularly significant role is assigned to the sonnets that explore the relationship between the human and the natural world. The author deeply humanizes nature, projecting her emotional states onto it. The soul's landscape, psychological parallelism, and impressionistic aesthetics, characterized by precision in conveying tonal nuances, subtle shifts of light, atmospheric movements, and weather changes, all contribute to forming the harmonious artistic universe of *Tavrian Sonnets*.

A significant theme of *Tavrian Sonnets* is love, understood as the subtlest and most sensitive of human emotions, long celebrated by poets. According to the speaker, love is a transformative force: "It was love that gave us gift and wings, / and something both magical... and earthly..." (*Osin*, 2021: 128). Love unites ("love unites us..."), brings comfort and soothes jealousy ("I'm burning, sleepless"), prompts reflection ("When did a dilemma rise between us: / to reconcile or keep walking the edge?"), and helps overcome indifference, sorrow, and life's burdens. Without this gift, a person cannot live fully on Earth: "I must veto the lovelessness" (*Osin*, 2021: 66, 193, 235, 152).

A defining component of the author's collection is her reflection on the nature of artistic creativity. In the author's view, the poet's Word is meant to inspire, strengthen the individual, and provide existential support. The entire sonnet collection breathes with faith in the transformative power of language: "...And stubbornly / I don't shy away from dictionary truths, / because I believe in the Word. And I'm still learning" (*Osin*, 2021: 170).

One of the poet's unquestionable merits is her sincere effort to share with the reader the mystery of her craft by portraying the creative process of composing sonnets, which is marked by verbal precision, rhythmic sharpness, and poetic enchantment: "I won't write long ballads, /

I'd rather plunge into the magic of the sonnet. / I'll leaf through dictionary tips again / and turn the apt and useful into rhyme" (*Osin*, 2021: 190).

The author seeks answers to life's fundamental questions through her communion with nature and human experience. She describes how, when the winds howled and insomnia struck, verses came to her that "innocently sobbed" with rhyme and rhythm. Despite the "foreboding of winter" that hurts, she remains capable of enduring "rain and sunshine and snow" (*Osin*, 2021: 210, 197, 200). Poetry becomes her pathway to eternity, connecting disparate worlds such as the inner and outer realms, emotions and their expression, while making the sublime accessible and imbuing the mundane with profound meaning. She observes that everything deserves understanding, from the infinite space to the tiniest seed (*Osin*, 2021: 41).

The poet's sonnets address both existential questions and pressing contemporary themes. Her reflections encompass fear, identity, the meaning of life, patriotism, national memory, devotion to the Zaporizhzhia region, the sustaining force of hope, harmony with nature, and the creative power of the poetic word. In her lyrical vision, the present is interwoven with the past, rooted in ancestral memory, the fertile Tavrian landscape, and the idea of home. Memory appears as a faded yet enduring trace, likened to the inner radiance of labradorite (*Osin*, 2021: 198, 172).

Sunlight and warmth become sources of renewal that restore the soul through unity with the steppe. The poet expresses a desire to follow the symbolic path of Taras Shevchenko, urging openness to the spiritual meanings of Khortytsia. She offers consolation through images of nature's generosity: the gentle sun, the fullness of summer, the flowing waters of the Dnipro (*Osin*, 2021: 34, 35, 36, 81).

The book captivates through its distinctive dialogue with the cultural cosmos. Its intertextual dimension unfolds through references to iconic figures such as the Demiurge, Fibonacci, Petronius, Laozi, Freud, and Epicurus, weaving allusions that resonate deeply with intellectually attuned readers. The author places particular emphasis on the understanding of truth, drawing on the idea that it resides within us, in line with Proust. This notion recurs as a leitmotif throughout the collection, as the poet reflects on paradoxes, invoking Petronius while reaffirming her unwavering belief that everything in the world requires measure (*Osin*, 2021: 151).

The poet further invokes P. Verlaine, noting his belief that there is enough torment in the heart and that neither benefit nor sense can be found in it (*Osin*, 2021: 161). She places him alongside M. Kundera, Ch. Dickens, J. Lec, and A. Camus, whose works she reportedly read in a solitary bedroom (*Osin*, 2021: 163). She also evokes the spirits of renowned painters and musicians, including Caravaggio, Degas, Dalí, Tintoretto, Grieg, and Liszt. Autumn, in her vision, luxuriates in crunchy November and unrestrained Liszt; the sky appears as if painted by Dalí; and the morning garden, rendered in tender pastels, recalls the style of Degas (*Osin*, 2021: 161, 163, 201, 237). These rich references cultivate an atmosphere of authenticity, illuminate the poet's refined aesthetic sensibility, and reveal the intricate, sophisticated fabric of her allusive framework.

3. Conclusions

The study of the existential modes in *Tavrian Sonnets* supports the assertion that the conceptual sphere of the collection is closely aligned with an existential perception and experience of being in the Universe. The philosophical dimensions of T. Osin's poetic worldview are fundamentally existential yet distinctly shaped by the Ukrainian national and cultural mentality. Her existential engagement is most clearly reflected through spacetime symbolism, where the poetic

subject's space of insight becomes metaphorical, serving as a symbolic framework for comprehending the universe and nature, and ultimately acquiring the qualities of philosophical allegory.

The collection reveals the poet's refined ability to explore human relationships, particularly love and loneliness, through an existential and philosophical lens. It also demonstrates her reflective engagement with her creative process, her intertextual dialogue with the broader cultural space of the Universe, and her existential reinterpretation of Tavria, its landscape, and its symbolic imagery.

The author's lyrical and philosophical sonnets are marked by a unique syncretism, where natural landscapes and intimate lyrical scenes are interwoven with deep philosophical reflection. Her poetry exemplifies a distinctively Ukrainian form of literary existentialism – one that avoids despair, hopelessness, or nihilism, and instead embraces a vitalist worldview. Death is not depicted as a source of fear but is viewed as a moment of ontological stillness that invites reflection on life's meaning and purpose.

The poetic world presented in the collection affirms the central existential question of human existence, a question that has long occupied human thought and leads to philosophical generalizations and essential insights. Osin's sonnet collection reinforces this existential pursuit, offering a compelling example of a literary text in which form and content are organically unified. The work stands out for its expressive and convincing use of imagery, its deep philosophical engagement with the surrounding world, and its sincere emotional resonance through the soul of the poetic protagonist.

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