



ივანე ჯავახიშვილის სახელობის თბილისის  
სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი  
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University



შოთა რუსთაველის სახელობის ქართული  
ლიტერატურის ინსტიტუტი  
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**Roman Dzyk, Liliia Shutiak**

*Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University*

*Ukraine, Chernivtsi*

### **The Reverse Side of the Socialist Realist Canon: the Experience of Ukrainian Literature**

Although the concept of literary canon originates from a completely different tradition, it turned out to be surprisingly organic for description of what has been formed for a long time through totalitarian state mechanisms, in particular, in Ukrainian Soviet literature. Such canon is extremely structured, but not frozen because it experienced transformations depending on changes in the “party line”. The totalitarian nature of this canon meant that nothing could exist outside of it. What was outside these limits was either forbidden or condemned (and often it was not in the metaphorical, but quite literal sense of a word). This is exactly what we mean by the flip side of a socialist realist canon. The collapse of the totalitarian state, with all its supervisory and punitive mechanisms, seemed to lead to the fact that the reverse side would automatically turn into the front side. At least as a research object it’s worthy of due attention. It is about the comeback from oblivion of forbidden and undeservedly marginalized authors and texts. And we have been observing such processes for the last thirty years. At the same time, the work of once “canonical” authors is undergoing a regular reconsideration. In it, the emphasis shifts to the same reverse side, which was previously branded as certain deviations from the only correct path. In both cases, two demonstrative examples of the poets Pavlo Tychyna and Vasyl Stus can be given. On the other hand, we can state a certain vitality of the Ukrainian socialist realist canon in various guises until our time. As the latest studies show, it is impossible to fully understand its reverse side without a thorough study of this phenomenon.