

UDC 821.161.2

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32342/3041-217X-2025-2-30-7>

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## **THE NUMEROLOGICAL CODE IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN WAR POETRY: MAKSYM KRYVTSOV'S POEMS FROM THE EMBRASURE AND ANTHOLOGY LOVE 2.0: LOVE AND WAR**

Стаття присвячена декодуванню нумерологічної знаковості та числової символіки в українській поетичній системі воєнного дискурсу періоду повномасштабного вторгнення. Мета полягає у виявленні специфіки функціонування числових маркерів у формуванні художньо-сміслових домінант та онтологічних вимірів сучасної воєнної лірики на матеріалі збірки Максима Кривцова «Вірші з Бійниці» та антології «Love 2.0: Любов і війна». Завдання дослідження включають детекцію та систематизацію числової символіки, простеження трансформації архетипних числових образів у фреймі травматичного досвіду, встановлення кореляції між нумерологічними кодами й онтологічними станами ліричного суб'єкта, обґрунтування значення нумерологічного коду як засобу художньої репрезентації колективної травми.

*Методологія* дослідження будується на інтеграції структурно-семіотичного, герменевтичного, компаративного та контекстуального підходів, а також мотивного і символічного аналізу. Дослідження спирається на західну традицію числової критики (В.Ф. Гоппер, А. Фаулер, К. Батлер) і адаптує її концептуальний інструментарій до українського літературного контексту, де числа діють як гібрид мовних знаків, мітопоетичних архетипів та етичних категорій. Залучено теорію Енквіста, який розрізняє статистичні та символічні числа, архетипні інтерпретації числових тріад Вотерфілда, надбання піфагорійської системи, а також ідею Годвіна щодо числової повноти в рамках сакральної нумерології. Дослідження долучає підхід Баттса, звернене до числових структур у літературних текстах і поглиблене середньовічною трансцендентною значущістю. Адаптується методологія Фішер для виявлення у поетичній архітектурі «благородних чисел» та кабалістичних семантичних шарів, специфічних для індивідуальних поетик. Міжкультурний вимір дослідження формується культурно-контекстуальною рамкою числової символіки Гоппера та аналізом традиційних символічних систем Мейджора. Методологічний інструментарій доповнений кількісними методологіями Моретті, що спрямований на аналіз паттернів числового розподілу. Фіксує кодуювання індивідуального поетичного досвіду, дослідження вивчає, як числові коди «працюють» у поетичних системах на структурно-композиційному та символічно-архетипному рівнях, простежуючи допущення сучасними ліричними текстами навмисної семантичної амбівалентності у своїй числовій архітектурі, призводячи до того, що значення стає плінним і партиципативним, перетворюючи числову мову на екзистенційний поетичний жест, що втілює постмодерну інтерпретаційну множинність. Таким чином, підхід уможливує інтерпретацію числової символіки не тільки як елемента поетичної форми, а як динамічного способу когнітивного та емоційного опрацювання воєнного досвіду.

*Результати* дослідження засвідчують диференційовану репрезентацію числових парадигм залежно від позиції суб'єкта висловлювання: комбатантський дискурс характеризується соматичною нумерологією (50×50см, 120 кг), військово-технічною кодифікацією (200, 300, б/к, МАРЧ) та метрикою межових ситуацій (500 метрів під обстрілом, рахування до ста перед штурмом), натомість тилловий досвід визначається розмитістю нумерацією (безкінечністю днів, безліччю струн) та символічним розтягненням часу (50 днів як півстоліття). Доведено, що нумерологічний код виконує деперсоналізаційну (числа замість імен 234, 457, 451), сакралізаційну (біблійні числа 3, 5, 14, 33),



темпорально-травматичну (дати 2014, 24.02.2022) та екзистенційно-медитативну функції, трансформуючи число з математичної абстракції на онтологічний маркер війни, мову невимовного та апофатичний досвід порожнечі «після».

*Ключові слова:* нумерологічний код, числова символіка, воєнний дискурс, травматичний досвід, деперсоналізація, сакральна нумерологія.

**For citation:** Starostenko, T. (2025). The Numerological Code in Contemporary Ukrainian War Poetry: Maksym Kryvtsov's *Poems from the Embrace* and *Anthology Love 2.0: Love and War*. *Alfred Nobel University Journal of Philology*, 2 (30), 129-144, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32342/3041-217X-2025-2-30-7>

## Introduction

A fundamental semiotic axiom, rooted in the European cultural paradigm, is fully manifested in the Prologue of the Gospel of John, "In the beginning there was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" [KJV, p. 611]<sup>1</sup>. Within the ontological realm, the reality is viewed as constructed through signification; cosmogony is interpreted as the outcome of verbal creation; and existence is shaped by the act of nomination. The logocentric model of genesis, integrated into the biblical narrative, views creation as the weaving of codified elements into the architecture of being (existence). This coded matrix rejects any spontaneity and is subordinated to the logic of God's will. The numerological symbolism of the Holy Scripture is evident in the six-day cycle of creation, the seven-day temporal model, and the forty-day interval of initiation. Thus, the number is envisioned as a meta-language that constitutes the transcendent order.

The thesis that the human being is shaped by the word (the act of verbal creation), and the beast is linked to the number acquires the material forms within the digital system of the 20th century. The biblical episteme gets reincarnated within the technological frame, creating a new type of dimension that balances between the actual and postmortem world – the digital reality. Plato's "shade of shades" receives its own numerological duplication.

The military chronotope deepens the posthuman transformation, reducing the human being to a narrow function of a "combat machine" that loses the divine will of choice given by God and is subordinated to the system of orders. As a result, corporality as such discharges its natural ties and gets measured through the logic of military efficiency. The personality as a microcosmic entity is governed by tactical algorithms. The soldier literally turns into a posthuman hybrid, in which the organic body sees technological augmentation, achieved through the means of weaponization, equipment, and digital interfaces, while the human identity undergoes re-codification, being processed through the militarized numerical signification, represented by serial numbers, call signs, days spent in position, and casualty statistics. Within the outlined paradigm, numbers develop a semantic duality, working simultaneously as symbolic encodings for the war machinery and taking on the role of archaic sacred signs that facilitate the re-humanization of traumatized subjects.

After the kickoff line of 24 February 2022, the Ukrainian poetic vector becomes looped at the intersection of a dual code system – sacred numerology and the digital algorithm of war, articulating the traumatic experience by activating archaic numerical archetypes within the context of posthumanist military reality. This posthuman encoding of the military reality manifests itself through the architectonics of poetic collections, in which paratextual elements, primarily titles, serve as programmatic interfaces between the text and the reader. Within the frame, the collection *Love 2.0. Love and War* edited by Maria Koverska [2024] looks symptomatic. The digital index "2.0" activates a dual referential system, thus, on the one hand, appealing to the logic of software, where each new version entails the eradication of errors of the previous one, by updating basic parameters, and adapting to new operating conditions; on the other hand, to the evolution of the internet as a cultural phenomenon.

The term "Web 2.0" itself, which entered wide circulation in the early 2000s, marks the transition from static content consumption to interactive participatory culture, when

<sup>1</sup> KJV – King James Version Bible, edited by D. Cogliano [Cogliano, 2004].

the user ceased to be a passive recipient and became a creator, a co-author of digital reality. Following the logic, *Love 2.0* signifies not merely a chronological update of feeling, but rather its overall ontological transformation, when the very concept of love after 24 February 2022 presupposes a certain active engagement, collaborative survival, crowd-sourced resistance. Love functions according to the principles of social networking, in which the private becomes public, the intimate evolves into collective, and emotions turn into viral content that circulates in the digital space, as seen on Telegram channels, fundraising platforms, or online memorials. At the same time, the “2.0” code in digital culture signifies fundamental incompatibility with the previous version. It appeals to a revolutionary update that necessitates reform for the entire system. This means that love cannot exist within the old parameters; it requires a new code, a new language setting, an updated version of humanity. The digit “2” resonates with the biblical dualism (two commandments of love, two natures of Christ, two testaments), but the technological suffix “.0” secularizes it radically. The sacred number is narrowed to a version number, transcendence to software architecture, and divine code to an algorithm for survival in the networking chronotope of wartime. Thus, the title itself conveys the central theme of posthumanist poetics. The reader understands that the emotion is now encoded as a program, with human experience represented in the language of computer versioning, and traumatic reality comprehended through the metaphors of digital updates, which enforce migration from one version of existence to another, seemingly incompatible with the preceding one.

### Recent Research and Publications

Despite its semantic abundance, numerological symbolism in Ukrainian poetry after the 2022 border, especially through foreign methodologies, seeks deeper clarification. There is a string of investigations devoted to the prosaic texts of the war-time, such as *Genre Diversity of War Prose in Contemporary Ukrainian Literature* by Maryna Riabchenko [2019]; *Representation of the Warrior-Hero Image in Ukrainian Socialist Realist Literature* by Uliana Fedoriv [2020]; a chapter of the monograph *The Literary Dimension of Memory* on combat literature by Oksana Pukhonska [2018], among others. The date 24.02.2022 has boosted the production of investigations devoted to the military imagery within the cultural realm, such as *The image of the Ukrainian warrior in the traditional household culture of Ukrainians of the 20<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> Centuries* by Svitlana Boian-Hladka and Ivan Kostyshyn [2024], or studies in the field of individual poetics, for example, *Mythological Scenarios in Maksym Kryvtsov's Collection 'Poems from an Embrace'* by Halyna Matusiak [2024, pp. 69-74], or *Homo viator in the Poetry of Maksym 'Dali' Kryvtsov (based on the collection 'Poems from an Embrace')* by O.S. Derkachova [2025, pp. 85-97].

The disputed territory of numerological code and numerical symbolism as a part of textual and cultural tissue admits a lengthy and branched tradition of interpretation, being mirrored in a fundamental work *Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning, and Influence on Thought and Expression* (1938) by Vincent Foster Hopper [1938], that structured three major sources of numerical symbolism, such as elementary symbols, Babylonian astrology, and Pythagorean number theory. The author spotlights how, within the prism of medieval consciousness, numbers transcend the boundaries of mathematical abstraction, functioning as “fundamental realities, living memories, and eloquent meanings.” A significant study in the sphere of numerology as a structure-forming factor of literary text was suggested by Alastair Fowler by his string of works *Spenser and the Numbers of Time* [Fowler, 1964], *Triumphal Forms: Structural Patterns in Elizabethan Poetry* [Fowler, 1970a], and *Silent Poetry: Essays in Numerological Analysis* [Fowler, 1970b], the collection he edited, in which he details the principle of correspondence between structure and content at the numerical level pinning two dominant numerological models, represented by temporal structures and triumphal form, crowned by a centered key element. An addition to Fowler's conception is A. Kent Hieatt's *Short Time's Endless Monument: The Symbolism of Numbers in Edmund Spenser's "Epithalamion"* [Hieatt, 1960], which shows the complex numerical architectonics of poetic text through proportions of light and darkness, as well as a summarizing research by Christopher Butler *Number Symbolism* [Butler,

1970], which traces the historical continuum of numerical symbolism from the antiquity through the Middle Ages to the Renaissance across various spheres of culture.

Within the scope of Ukrainian research legacy, the issue of numerical symbolism has been systematically addressed across numerous research dimensions. N. Maslova studies Slavic karmic numerology in her book *Slavic Karmic Numerology. Improve the Matrix of your Fate* [Maslova, 2013]. K.A. Harbuzenko highlights non-traditional Ukrainian religious forms through the “magic” of Pythagorean numerological accounts in the article *From the Intellectuality of ‘a number’ to the Society of ‘a Digit’: Pythagorean Numerical Magic as a Component of Contemporary Quasi-Religiosity in Internet Space* [Harbuzenko, 2012]. The culturological vector is suggested by O.O. Yurchenko in her thesis *Symbolism of Numbers in the Spiritual Culture of the Orthodox Society of Ukrainian Lands in the 14<sup>th</sup> – Early 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries* [Yurchenko, 2016]. In the sphere of individual poetics, the number was studied by T. Slobodyan and I. Dzhochka in the article *Semantics and Symbolism of Numbers in the Poetic Discourse of Bohdan Tomenchuk and Olha Sloniowska* [Slobodyan, Dzhochka, 2025]. A bulk of literary investigations highlights the potential of the number either within the older texts or folklore. Among them, S.V. Shcherbak and O.M. Vikhrova are researching numerology within the architecture of the fairy tales in their article *The Distinctive Nature of Numerical Symbolism in Ukrainian Folk Tales* [Shcherbak, Vikhrova, 2011]. O.M. Cherevchenko studies the semantics of number in the poetry of the so-called ‘Silver Age’: *The Reception of Numerical Symbolism in Russian Literature of the “Silver Age”* [Cherevchenko, 2016]. Mykhailo Moskalenko suggested an informed piece on the subject of folk legacy, *The Symbolism of Numbers* [1993]. With that, the slide of the evaluative paradigm of the new era demands a spotlight on how the archetypal symbols extend or transform their semantics, encoding the textual tissue in an updated manner, forming a new ontology of being.

### Research Aim and Objectives

The *purpose* of the study is to identify the functional potential of numerical markers in shaping the artistic and semantic dominants, as well as the ontological dimensions of modern war poetry, based on the collection *Poems from the Embrace* by Maksym Kryvtsov and the anthology *Love 2.0: Love and War*. Within the research framework, the author seeks to identify the role of numerical patterns in shaping the textual semantic skeleton and imagery carcass, as well as their beneficial potential within the ontological dimension, in contemporary Ukrainian poetry. The accomplishment of the outlined aim involves mapping out of a set of interrelated *objectives*, implemented through the Western methodology: to detect the nature of numerical symbolism and systematize the numerological code patterns in the selected texts; to trace the transformation of the archetypal semantics under the conditions of traumatic experience and to establish correlations between numerological code systems and the existential states of the lyrical subject (embracing the reflections on death, time, absurdity, or liminal situations); and to reveal the significance of the numerological code as a means of artistic manifestation of collective trauma, sourced by the existential experience of war.

### Methodology

This research employs a comprehensive approach, integrating methods that target multiple levels of poetic text analysis. The structural-semiotic method views numerical symbolism as a system of signs with both paradigmatic and syntagmatic potential, stressing the encoding of meaning in numerical constructions and decoding their symbolic content. Hermeneutic analysis digs into the deeper semantic layers of numerical images, addressing both their ontological dimensions and authorial intentions. Comparative analysis examines how numerical symbolism works across individual poetics, detecting both common patterns and unique poetic strategies. The contextual method investigates the connections between archetypal, folkloric-mythological, religious, and philosophical traditions of numerical symbolism and the nature of their manifestation within contemporary military discourse. The analysis of motif patterns identifies recurring numerological motif-lines and researches their alteration and interaction within the poetic system of the military time.

## Discussion and Major Findings

The numerical architecture of a literary text functions as a multi-layered semiotic carcass, with numbers acting simultaneously on multiple phases of meaning. The text tissue may incorporate both (a) real numbers working as a mere statistics or realistic temporal markers, and (b) symbolic numbers with a range of *contextual probabilities* [Enkvist, 1964, p. 29]. As conventional sign-bearers within semiotic systems, numbers incorporate cultural, mythological, and structural semantics, activating distinct dimensions of meaning across multiple interpretive registers. On the narrative level, numeric codes emerge through classic folkloric triple repetition of motifs, the mythological hero's seven trials, or Hercules's twelve labors, operating as markers of cyclical closure. In Modernism and Postmodernism, numerical codes transform into metafictional devices. Borges plays with infinity and recursion, Cortázar constructs *Hopscotch* as a combinatorial structure with variable chapter sequences, and Georges Perec employs mathematical algorithms (the biquadrate, the knight's move) to organize narrative in *Life: A User's Manual*, when numbers reveal their constructive nature, turning text into a puzzle.

Symbolic interpretation draws upon archetypal codes with numerical capacity manifesting itself through sustainable associations. These archetypal numbers serve as immediate cognitive markers, triggering a multitude of expectations and revealing interpretive layers without requiring explicit explanation. The three signifies what Waterfield calls *triad* and *triunity* [Waterfield, 1988, pp. 49-54]; the seven represents Ptolemy's number of completeness and sacred order [Godwin, 1993, pp. 21-39]; the four embodies Pythagoras's symbol of integrity, absorbing the four cardinal directions and four elements [Waterfield, 1988, p. 56]. Numbers shape textual architecture by providing numerical scaffolding through cyclical repetition, scene clusters, and episodic distribution. The sevenfold division of cantos in Dante's *Divine Comedy* constitutes a numerical matrix organizing textual space. Numbers as tools of the textual design manifest within conventional triadic structures (exposition, climax, resolution), set rhythm, organize temporal perception, and strengthen thematic symmetry, as seen in William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience*.

Michael Batts describes meaningful numerical structures in German literature [Batts, 1964]. In sign-dense Medieval and religious discourse, numbers assumed transcendent significance and were interpreted as keys to the divine architecture of the world [Batts, 1964], and were seen as ciphers to occult knowledge. The word as a creative brick merges with the numeric wholeness of the World-Soul [Godwin, 1993, pp. 3-6]. The gematria dimension, particularly prominent during the Medieval and Renaissance periods, appealed to the numerical validity of letters or nominations that accumulated into meaningful totals. In Dante, for example, Beatrice is associated with the number nine (she dies in the ninth hour of the ninth day of the ninth month) that inscribes her into the cosmological scheme of the nine celestial spheres. Such textual architecture grants metaphysical significance to every narrative thread, penetrating into a sphere of computable poetics when the text can literally be "calculated."

Barbara Milberg Fisher emphasizes the dichotomy between numerals and alphabetic letters [Fisher, 1997, p. 24], highlighting the mathematical nature of language syntax while identifying "noble numbers" within the innate structure of the poetry [Ibid., p. 25]. She observes: "For poets and storytellers the word is a supple and complex medium. Yet language in its infinite wisdom contains words that merge numerical with verbal meanings. In English, for instance, we use account, accounting, tell and tale in both narrative and quantitative senses. The "teller" tells a "tale," relates a story, or tells, tallies, i.e., counts up, the tale of monies behind the teller's window at the bank – just as a nun "tells" her rosary beads one by one. Shakespeare's "remembrance of things past" sonnet (sonnet 30) strikingly, tellingly, deploys the doubleness of "tell" and "account" when it reminds us that memory can "from woe to woe tell o'er / The sad account of forebemoaned moan." Edgar Allen Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," a story about murder, dismemberment, and madness, suggests in both title and content that the meeting ground of both counting and telling lies in repeated rhythms: the heavy knocking at a door, the beating of a disembodied heart" [Ibid., p. 25]. Numbers operate as building blocks of characterization through recurring numerals, counting patterns, or associations between protagonists and specific numerology that marks fate, status, or psychological fixation. Fisher distinguishes the kabbalistic level of semantics in the poetics of individual authors [Ibid., p. 13].

Whether explicit (as in Dante) or hidden (as in Proust's cyclical time), the load-bearing structure of numerical architecture remains significant. Numbers serve as memory signifiers, activating intertextual and sociocultural markers. Numerical expressions from folklore like "seven gates," "two roads," "three wishes", automatically trigger a cultural-literary web of associations sourced from folktales, myths, and religious texts. Through these references, authors appeal to the cultural depth of knowledge, engage in dialogue with tradition, or deconstruct expected meanings by placing familiar numerical formulas in unexpected contexts, as seen in Post-modern literature.

Ethnic identity molds numerical perception and "programs" the writer's code with cultural variations that require knowledge of specific symbolic systems. In the Chinese literary tradition, the four European elements expand to five, incorporating the center: wood (木, mù) = growth, spring, east; fire (火, huǒ) = expansion, summer, south; earth (土, tǔ) = transformation, center, transitional season; metal (金, jīn) = contraction, autumn, west; water (水, shuǐ) = conservation, winter, north. These elements interact cyclically: wood feeds fire, fire creates earth (ash), earth births metal (ore), metal generates water (condensation), water nourishes wood [Major, 1993, pp. 29-43]. In the Islamic cultural map, ninety-nine alludes to the names of Allah, while nine in Scandinavian heritage references the worlds of Yggdrasil. The European literary canon, meanwhile, again evokes Dante's circles of Hell. The receptive function determines how readers "decode" numbers. Understanding numerical codes requires socio-cultural footage; without context, the symbolic meaning of numerals remains concealed. Contemporary hermeneutics treats numerical markers as "interactive" elements demanding reader participation for recognizing allusions, connecting with myth, and discerning patterns. Certain branches of literary studies offer methodologies for quantitative and qualitative analysis of the frequency and distribution of numbers in texts as a means of revealing authorial strategies [Moretti, 2013].

The poetic system, much like the organizational frameworks of other genres, may hold a numerical code on both the structural-compositional level (numerical patterns serving as structural principles, as noted by Fisher) and within the symbolic, archetypal dimension ("eloquent" meaning, "fundamental reality" according to Hopper [1938]). The codes, whether expressed in words or numerals, in contemporary poetry may discard their sharp definitional boundaries, creating a situation of deliberate semantic ambiguity. Therefore, the meaning, losing its fixation, becomes fluid and expansive, leaving readers space for decoding a range of senses sourced from the same linguistic signs. Basically, this reinforces the postmodern concept of the multiplicity of truth. The semantic plurality transforms language itself into an existential act within certain poetic systems. The contextual frame doesn't merely modify word etymology; it fundamentally reshapes the terrain where lexical and grammatical boundaries operate. Through this process, language reaches toward forms of content that exceed its own systematic capacities (those pre-linguistic, unconscious dimensions that resist conventional symbolic representation).

In post-2022 war poetry, numerological codes and numerical symbolism generate branched interpretations, vectored by the subject articulating them. Thus, the category of combatant poets (individuals, locked within the direct military reality of the battlefields) and witness poets (authors from the rear) utter numerical paradigms with some varying degrees of ontological tension and traumatic intensity. Combatant discourse is typified by somatic numerology, where numbers emerge as corporeal markers of human reduction (50×50 cm as the metric of personality reduced to geometric form, 120 kg of living weight versus the immeasurable weight of a dead body), military-technical codification (200, 300 as euphemistic designations for death and injury, ammunition codes, call signs functioning as abbreviated ciphers of survival), and the metrics of liminal situations (500 meters under fire, 25 km to hell as spatial gradations of fear, counting to one hundred before an assault as if literally counting down to the brink of death). Similarly, within the frame of the collection *Poems from the Embrace* by Maksym Kryvtsov [2024], we observe what Vincent Foster Hopper defined as the transformation of number from mathematical abstraction into "fundamental reality," when "eloquent meaning": numerical markers instead of referring the reader to arithmetical operations, sneak into the dimension of existential depersonalization of identity [Hopper, 1938, p. X]. The system of numbers operating in the role of name substitutes, functioning as a mechanism of depersonalization, when a person is transformed into a conventional numerical code on a grave cross, is the most pronounced numero-

logical paradigm in the poet's textual corpus. In the text *He Moved to Bucha*, this tendency manifests itself through a recurrent formula: «*На хресті наче на айді-картці написано: // тут спочиває номер 234 вічна пам'ять*», «*тут спочиває номер 457 вічна пам'ять*», «*тут спочиває номер 451 вічна пам'ять*»<sup>2</sup> (“On the cross, as if on an ID card, it is written: // here rests number 234 eternal memory, “here rests number 457 eternal memory,” “here rests number 451 eternal memory”) [Kryvtsov, 2024]. **The numbers 234, 457, 451 function as anthroponomic substitutes**, crowning the existential reduction of personality to a statistical unit recorded in the context of mass deaths. By applying Alastair Fowler's principle of correspondence between structure and content on the numerical level, it can be asserted that the chaotic character of the numerical sequence exposes the absurd nature of the mechanisms that record the deceased. The numbers form no logical progression and contain no symbolic meaning; they are random, just as the death of each person is. The parallelism between the cross and an “ID card” or the “bulletin board” bears a symbolic significance, with the contemporary media metaphors underscoring the absurdity of death's bureaucratization, in which a human being with its individual microcosmos turns just in a number in a trauma database. The culmination of this numerical model is the litany of the dead: «*Тут спочиває номер 176 вічна пам'ять // тут спочиває номер 201 вічна пам'ять // тут спочиває номер 163 вічна пам'ять // тут спочиває номер 308 вічна пам'ять*» (“Here rests number 176 eternal memory // here rests number 201 eternal memory // here rests number 163 eternal memory // here rests number 308 eternal memory”) [Kryvtsov, 2024]. **Four numbers create a rhythmic structure of commemoration that resonates with Fowler's “triumphal form”** [Fowler, 1970b], which, however, gets inverted: instead of a centered key element, we receive the equivalence of all four positions, where no number acquires a prevailing density of validity, with each number serving as an allusion to a separate life, a separate fate, a separate trauma, reproducing the idea of equality before death (death as a great leveler). Simultaneously, the author utters a protest against such merciless system of depersonalization, which is achieved by the means of parallelism or the appeal to markers of peacetime existence: «*Хотілося // рахувати дні до літа // рахувати кошенят // рахувати дітей // рахувати зорі // рахувати до ста, засинаючи*» (“I wanted // to count days until summer // to count kittens // to count children // to count stars // to count to one hundred while falling asleep”) [Ibid.]. **Within the outlined frame, counting serves as juxtaposed to the life-affirming practice antonymous to counting the dead, therefore, starting an ontological conflict between the desired (organic, natural) and the real (necrological, traumatic). Falling into a conflict corresponds to Hopper's opposition of number as “living memory”** [Hopper, 1938] (*days until summer, kittens*) contrasted to number as a marker of death (*numbers on crosses*).

Contributing to the same semantic cluster are numbers, operating as biographical markers of age or destiny. The poem *Dropping from the Sky* contains the number 27, which serves as a significant milestone: «*не пішов із життя у 27 // я не рок-зірка*» (“didn't depart this life at 27 // I'm not a rock star”) [Ibid.]. The represented context alludes to twenty-seven years, which is the legendary age for rock icons, often associated with premature death (Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Kurt Cobain, Amy Winehouse). The lyrical subject denies any possible connection to the so-called “Club 27,” declining the romanticization of death; however, the mere mention of this number transforms it into a threshold between youth and maturity, rendering a moment of existential choice. Within the military frame, 27 becomes the number of those who didn't have time “to become”, whose biographies were cut short before the symbolic borderline, corresponding to Hopper's interpretation of number as a “source of meaning.” Here, 27 is not an arithmetical quantity but rather a cultural code saturated with the collective memory of artistic premature deaths. Meanwhile, the number six in the lines «*Коли мені виповниться шість // я запишусь на плавання*» (“When I turn six // I'll enroll for swimming”) [Ibid.] builds some paradoxical temporality: an adult man projects himself into childhood to rewrite his own biography as preparation for the present moment. Six (the number of a human within biblical numerology, the day of Adam's creation) symbolizes the beginning of an individual path, but the retrospective projection (“when I turn”) twists linear time

<sup>2</sup> The texts by Maksym Kryvtsov and other Ukrainian poets here and further are translated by Tetiana Starostenko.

into cyclical, where future and past merge at one point of desire, corresponding to Butler's number vision as an instrument of symbolic mastery of time across numerous cultural traditions [Butler, 1970].

Age may be regarded as a code of existence. In the poem *To the Boy*, the number six- or seven marks childhood captured by war: «Йому десь шість чи сім // на ньому тонка кольорова шапка» ("He's about six or seven // wearing a thin colored hat") [Kryvtsov, 2024]. Six-seven as a vague boundary (not exactly a precise number but rather an interval) determines the uncertainty of childhood age within the military space. The child does not yet receive a clear numerical marker since he hasn't lived long enough to be really counted (probably here the author hints at the recruiting register for military service). This uncertainty contrasts with the adult world of military codes, where everything adopts a precise numerical value (caliber, coordinates, ammunition). The child remains outside the numerological system of war, in a space of approximation, which ironically makes him more human than adults labelled by their precise numbers. This phenomenon resonates with Hopper's thesis regarding numbers as a system of ordering reality [Hopper, 1938]: the child who exists outside the numerical system preserves connection with the pre-numerical, archaic, organic dimension of being.

Within the space of Kryvtsov's texts, biography is also numerologically registered, for example by 54 years: «їй було 54 // вона працювала у комунальному підприємстві» ("She used to be 54 // she worked at a municipal institution") [Ibid.], and death is pinned to the fifth of March: «її вбили п'ятого березня» ("She was slain on the fifth of March") [Ibid.]. Five as a transition number (five fingers = the measure of the human, five elements in Eastern tradition) marks the moment of existential rupture when the woman who «була хранителькою осені // і хранителькою спогадів» ("was the autumn keeper // and the memories keeper") [Ibid.], transforms into already familiar number 451. This transformation again illustrates Butler's concept of number within the universal scope of cultural heritage (five in Chinese cosmology, Christ's five wounds) [Butler, 1970].

Within the poetic tissue woven by Kryvtsov, numbers obtain a transformative potential evolving into letters and manifesting themselves within the framework of military numerology as codes for operations or units. In the poem *Digging the Earth*, the phrase «хлопці з АК» ("guys from AK") encodes a military unit through an abbreviation that might hold multiple meanings (Kalashnikov rifle, army corps, artillery complex). Thus, letters serve as numerical substitutes, call signs that depersonalize soldiers, converting them into functional units within the system. At the same time, AK, as an acronym, creates a numerological dyad (two letters = two digits in a code), denoting pairing, mutual assistance, and dialogue between fighters. Military abbreviational numerology, as manifested within the ZSU (the Armed Forces of Ukraine) and TRO (the Territorial Defense), carries branching semantics, as seen in numbers 200 and 300. The poem *He's in ZSU* dwells on the paired logic of coexisting presence: «Він в ЗСУ // вона в ТРО» ("He's in ZSU // she's in TRO") [Kryvtsov, 2024]. **ZSU (three letters = three) and TRO (three letters = three) create mirroring symmetry of codes**, where two people exist in parallel numerological systems, linked by love, and at the same time, separated by different forms of service. The abbreviations operate as identification codes that substitute names; instead of "Ivan and Maria," we get "ZSU and TRO."

Meanwhile, the code 200 in the poem "A leaf falls torn by the wind" signals as another tanathological marker: «веземо 200» ("we're carrying 200") [Kryvtsov, 2024]. The number 200 (military code for the deceased) serves as a numerological euphemism, an indirect way to avoid naming death directly by addressing it through numbers. Yet 200, as a doubled hundred, symbolizes more than deflection: it marks the transition into the duality of being and non-being, where a person exists simultaneously as present (a body being transported) and absent (a personality extinguished).

Within the poetic space of "Where you are the dominant height", the number "one hundred" functions as a ritual formula of a countdown before launching the attack: «Порахую тихенько до ста» ("I'll be counting down quietly up to one hundred") [Kryvtsov, 2024]. **The calculation technique within the range of one hundred is an archetypal practice of self-calming**, reminiscent of childhood counting before sleep, which serves as a meditative tool. In the context of a military raid, it narrows down to a countdown to death, operating as a final attempt to impose order upon chaos through a numerical sequence. The threefold repetition of this formula in the

text creates a numerological triad, in which the triad stands for the completeness of the ritual (alluding to trinity, three attempts of the fairy-tale hero, three days until resurrection). One hundred operates as the number of completion (10×10, the square of fullness) and marks the boundary between the possible and impossible. After one hundred, there is only the leap into the unknown, represented by the assault on the height, the encounter with death's likelihood.

Repetitive numerical clusters form litanies and mantras. The poem *Where are my Dreams?* structures itself through the threefold repetition of one question: «Де мої сну? // Де мої сну? // Де мої сну?» ("Where are my dreams? // Where are my dreams? // Where are my dreams?") [Kryvtsov, 2024]. Three, as the numeral of magical incantation, appealing to the triadic structure of things, three witches, three wishes, encodes the question into an obsessive mantra, embodying an attempt to activate vanished dreams through ritual echoing. Yet unlike classical magic, where threefold enchantment bears effective power, within Kryvtsov's context, the three prove their own inefficacy: the dreams do not return, remaining hooked somewhere in the trenches, in the space of the unreachable. An analogous structure manifests in the repetition of "Where is my mind?": "Where is my mind? // Where is my mind? // Where is my mind?" [Kryvtsov, 2024] displays a bilingual numerological parallel, within which the English phrase (a quote from The Pixies, an American alternative rock band founded in Boston in 1986) duplicates the question expressed in Ukrainian, thereby doubling the existential anxiety through an interlinguistic triad.

The numerological code reaches its traumatic apex in the category of measurement, where the human body is reduced to calculation in centimeters, a formula bearing the cold semantics of mortality. In the poem "We're rebooting the body of 'V.'," there takes place a horrifying mathematics: «він тепер десь 50 см на 50 см // замотаний в носі // розміром, наче великий наплічник» ("he's now about 50 cm by 50 cm // wrapped in cloths // the size of a large backpack") [Kryvtsov, 2024]. **The equation 50×50 (2,500 square centimeters) reduces the human to geometric abstraction, a square containing what was once a person.** This numerology of absolute depersonalization intensifies further through weight markers: «"Д.В." розповзлося // наче тісто // 120 кг за життя і я не знаю, скільки тепер» ("D. V.' spread out // like dough // 120 kg for life and I now don't know the full amount") [Ibid.]. The number 120 marks the weight of a living man; the dead body weighs nothing detectable. When the body ceases to be whole, it forfeits its numerical capacity. A mirroring numerology of loss reveals itself: «Я дивлюсь на себе в дзеркало // обличчя розірване навпіл» ("I am looking at myself in the mirror // my face being parted in half") [Ibid.]. The fraction 1/2 (0.5) resonates with fractured identity. The face torn in half enacts this division: one part stays tangible; the other disappears into the realm of unspeakable trauma.

The breathing rhythms are rendered graphically through the numerology of syllables, as in the poem "Hangs": «є // не // бо // гост // ре // мі // фа // соль // ля // сі» ("the // re // is // sharp // sky // mi // fa // sol // la // si") [Kryvtsov, 2024]. The syllabic splitting of word vectors aligns the semantics with a musical scale (mi-fa-sol-la-si = five notes = five), creating a numerical score where each syllable becomes a note, akin to a metronome beat. In *In the Field*, this graphic structure enacts a numerology of explosion, intensifying through gradation: «вибухай // ви // бу // хай // ви // бу // хаю» ("explode // ex // plo // de // ex // plo // ding") [Kryvtsov, 2024]. The word "exploding" decomposes into five fragments, each syllable a separate micro-explosion, a detonation of meaning. Five, like the number of fingers, culminates in the image of the patched body, denoting the person reduced to a numerical sequence of traumas.

Calendar symbolism also qualifies as a rupture point. The number 2014 functions as a temporal marker of traumatic time's outbreak: «а ту // яку назвали // Білою // підібрали на вулиці в 2014-му» ("and the one // they called // White // was picked up on the street in 2014") [Kryvtsov, 2024]. **2014 becomes year zero, inaugurating a new era, the moment when the world fractures into "before" and "after."** In the poem *Once upon a Time*, this date assumes ontological significance: «Одного разу // десь навесні 2014-го // я заснув // декілька років не прокидався» ("Once upon a time // somewhere in spring 2014 // I fell asleep // couldn't wake up for several years") [Kryvtsov, 2024]. The spring of 2014, marking the moment of fusion with historical reality, consigns all subsequent years to prolonged sleep without awakening. The number's semantic validity extends beyond the calendar cycle, crowning entry into alternative temporality, where linear time yields to trauma's cyclical repetition.

The temporal-spatial semantics of locality gain particular significance within the context of war. The phrase «місто // яке розташоване за 25 км від пекла» (“a city // within 25 km from hell”) [Kryvtsov, 2024] creates a spatial code of numeric distance to death. Twenty-five kilometers, representing a concrete, numerically measured distance between normality (a city where they make the sweetest halva) and hell (the front line), converts space into a numerological map charting the gradation of fear. The smaller the number, the closer to death; the larger, the farther from trauma. But the irony lies in the fact that even 25 km from the danger line, people make halva and live ordinary lives, as if numbers didn't matter, as if metric distance couldn't measure the real proximity to absurdity.

The numerology of repetition produces semantic stretching. In the poem *Listening to Her New Song*, the number twenty appears as an obsession marker: «і вмикаю її пісню // написану на її вірш // уже двадцять» (“and I am switching her song // laid to her words // for the twentieth time at a row”) [Kryvtsov, 2024]. The twenty-fold listening, as a numerological practice of repetition, operates as an attempt to achieve catharsis through the quantity of iterations, to gain understanding and alleviate pain. Twenty ( $20 = 2 \times 10$ ) as doubled fullness (ten) symbolizes abundance, the excessiveness of the desire to stop time in a moment of beauty, while simultaneously denoting the impossibility of satiation. If one cycle were enough, the twentieth would never have occurred.

The detail «Шнурків по 150 см не було надсилаємо по 75 можеш зв'язати» (“There were no 150 cm shoelaces, so we're sending 75, you can tie them together”) [Kryvtsov, 2024] inscribes itself in the domestic code of trench life. 150 centimeters (1.5 meters) as the standard length of a shoelace contrasts with 75 centimeters (half), which requires tying together. This mathematics of deficit ( $150 / 2 = 75$ ) becomes a metaphor for the brokenness of everything in the military context, when the mere shoelaces lose their integrity, every aspect craves connection, stitching, and the tying of knots. The symbolic validity revolves around pure fragmentation of being, where nothing arrives complete, only in halves that seek connection.

The poetic collection by Maksym Kryvtsov is woven through with sacred codes. The text ‘*Maria*’ to ‘*Golgotha*’ constructs a complex numerical system from the Christian tradition of sacred architecture, with 300, denoting the military code for wounded, serves as its double-edged center: «У нас двоє 300 // у нас двоє 300 // як прийняла: // прийом» (“We have two 300s // we have two 300s // did you copy // over”) [Kryvtsov, 2024]. The number 300 functions as a technical term signifying the evacuation of the wounded, but in the context of Golgotha (the place of Christ's crucifixion) invokes the archetype of sacrifice. This symbolic duality intensifies through the numeral five: «П'ять маленьких // п'ять маленьких: // ми будемо» (“Five little // five little: // we will be”) [Ibid.], where five signifies five minutes until arrival while invoking the five wounds of Christ, the five loaves of miraculous feeding, and the Pentateuch as a universal symbol of grace and salvation in Judeo-Christian tradition.

Numeric measurement structures the text through four evangelist names: Maria, Matthew, John, and Magdalene, witnesses forming a quartet, where the four symbolizes the completeness of testimony (four Gospels, four cardinal directions, four arms of the cross). The biography of the *Robber*, by contrast, operates through the number 14: «він чекав останньої неділі кожного місяця // щоб піти на прогулянку зі своєю // чотирнадцятирічною донькою Анною» (“he was looking forward to the last Sunday of each month // to go for a walk with his // fourteen-year-old daughter Anna”) [Ibid.]. The number also resonates with the fourteen Stations of the Cross. The date February 28 (containing doubled 14) marks the moment of existential choice: «28 лютого // він прокинувся раніше // ніж заспівав перший півень» (“On February 28 // he had woken up earlier // than the first rooster crowed”) [Ibid.], Here, the rooster's crow evokes Peter's betrayal, the morning evokes the hour of crucifixion.

Esoteric traditions assign special significance to the number 33, which reflects the age of Christ at his death: «“Хесус” із механізованої, час накладання турнікету тридцять третій // рік від Різдва Христового» (“‘Hesus’ from the mechanic unit, the time of tourniquet application in the thirty-third // the year of the Birth of Christ”) [Ibid.]. The ambiguity of the phrase (the 33rd hour of tourniquet application or the 33rd year since Christ's birth) creates a temporal paradox where historical time merges with biographical time, and war trauma intersects with archetypal sacrifice. Notably, the author himself died at the age of 33.

In the poem *On War's Needle*, the number turns into the formula of mourning meditation: «Як Арія Старк // рахувала імена тих // кому потрібно помститись // я рахую імена тих // за кого потрібно помститись» (“Like Arya Stark // counted the names of those // who need to be avenged // I count the names of those // who need to be revenged”) [Kryvtsov, 2024]. The sequence «один... // ... // Три... // Чотири... // І так до тридцяти // чи до нескінченності» (“one... // ... // Three... // Four... // And so to thirty // or ad infinitum”) [Ibid.] forms an open numerical sequence where thirty functions as the boundary of verbalization of grief (thirty pieces of silver obtained by Juda, thirty days of mourning), while the lyrical hero acknowledges the impossibility of completing the count since the death of appeals to the lost micro-cosmos: «але тут і один – нескінченність» (“but here even one is already an infinity”) [Ibid.]. The phrase is philosophically charged, since each individual life bears absolute value; therefore, even one death alludes to the infinity of somebody’s loss. The graphic scheme of counting represents the interruption of breathing, a pause of silence, the impossibility of continuation. The ellipsis after thirty visualizes an apophatic experience, implying that the unnamed entity exists in the emptiness that follows the end number.

Numeric anaphora resembles the liturgical structure. The poem *Welcome Everyone to the Most Horrifying Talk Show* suggests a grotesque triad of guests: «перший гість... другий гість... Коля “Сновидіння”» (“the first guest... the second guest... Kolya the Dream”) [Kryvtsov, 2024], with the numerical sequence (one-two-three) mocking the television template, twisting out the trauma into a performance. The absence of a number for the third guest (only a name with a nickname) highlights the rupture of numerological logic, rendering it impossible to continue the count in the realm of absurdity.

In the poem *Everything will End*, the number five is played on as an allusion to the gospel miracle: «він розривав п’ять упаковок анчоусів // і п’ять тостів-камамбер // <...> // і вистачало усім // окрім нього самого» (“he tore open five packages of anchovies // and five camembert toasts // <...> // and there was enough for everyone // except for himself”) [Kryvtsov, 2024]. Five references are described in the gospel episode of five loaves and two fish used by Jesus Christ to feed five thousand [KJV, p. 567]. The recitative of the number five (five packages + five toasts = doubled five) accumulates an excess of grace, accompanied by the paradoxical «Господь київських вулиць» (“the Lord of Kyiv streets”) remains hungry; the sacrifice feeds the others but not himself, reproducing the archetype of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice within the framework of the postmodern logic through contemporary products (anchovies instead of fish, camembert instead of bread).

The poem *I Met My Girl* appeals to number sixteen: «Вона мала //, шістнадцять пар крил» (“She had //, sixteen pairs of wings”) [Kryvtsov, 2024]. Sixteen is not one of the numbers with direct biblical equivalence (traditionally, seraphim is depicted with six wings); however, its excess nature (sixteen instead of six) symbolizes the hypertrophy of the angelic, the supernatural exceeding of the canonical boundaries. Sixteen, as the doubling of eight (the number of infinity), constructs an image of boundless flight, at the same time falling into monstrosity (too many wings for one being). This seraphim-girl with a “lion’s face” and sixteen wings conveys an apocalyptic vision where numbers lose logic and multiply up to absurdity, thus, vectoring the reader out of the realm of being, into the realm of mathematical infinity.

Meanwhile, the within the lyrical experience of the poets of the rear the numerology is either scarce, or the numerical signs construct different connection ties. «У четвер двадцять четвертого» (“On Thursday the twenty-fourth”) in the text by Antonina Kornuta, the date is viewed within its realistic perspective as the temporal point of beginning of the war, a ritual date marking the kick-off of the reality “after” [Koverska, 2024, p. 25]. Within Hopper’s frame, which labels the number as a “source of meaning” and a “living memory,” the date February 24 transforms into a sacred numerical code, transparent to the reader, functioning similarly to conventional biblical dates like Christmas or Easter, or known historical milestones in folkloric tradition. Thursday (the fourth day of the week) within the Slavic world vision is linked to Perun and, therefore, thunder, reinforcing the symbolism of the date and crowning the moment of catastrophic rupture. The number 24 (2×12, doubling of the dozen seen as fullness) acquires the meaning of excess, temporal overflow, the exit beyond the frame of the normal calendar, corresponding to Butler’s analysis of numerical symbolism as a way of marking the transition from *profanum* to *sacrum*.

Witness-author texts often hold paired repetitions, featuring their state of unrest: «*Стоп. Не обіцяй мені нічого, // Стоп. Я не питаю, що буде далі...*» (“Stop. Don’t promise me anything. // Stop. I didn’t ask what will happen next...”) (Dmytro Lazutkin) [Koverska, 2024, p. 31]. Here, the double “stop” identifies the refusal of foreknowledge, a nervous unacceptance of prophecy; the two signify the number of prohibitions, a boundary resonating with the folkloric motif of double taboo, when you can’t cross the road twice, or you can’t return after forgetting something. Within Hopperian terminology, this appears as the “elementary symbol” (two fingers crossed = a protective gesture), transformed into a poetic formula of rejecting the unasked prophecy. «*Навколо міста війна. // Навколо війни спочивають інші міста*» (“Around the city there is war. // Around the war there are other cities resting”) by Mykola Kulinich demonstrates the encirclement, corresponding to Fowler’s “triumphal form” intensified with inversion. However, within the model, we may observe the substitution of a centered positive element by a centered negative one (the war), resulting in the core being surrounded by a peripheral area (victim-cities). There we get a certain concentric structure, where two marks the movement from the periphery to the center and back, forming a closed circle without exit. And the lines «*Далі. // До міста плывуть човни. // Далі. // До міста летять хмари із сарани*» (“Further. // Boats float to the city. // Further. // Clouds of the locusts fly to the city”) [Koverska, 2024, p. 22] by Mykola Kulinich, convey the rhythmicity of movement. The double “further” creates temporal progression, which, in the context of Butler’s analysis of musical numerology, can be interpreted as a two-measure structure, with each “further” operating as a separate measure of an apocalyptic symphony (boats as an image of the flood, locusts as a sign of biblical punishment). The two functions as the number of catastrophic escalations.

The textual numeration can be blurred, devoid of specificity: «*пройшли блокпости безкінечних зимових днів*» (“There have passed the checkpoints of the endless winter days”) by Iryna Tsiylyk [Koverska, 2024, p. 34]; «*щоб у душах провалля та діри // затягалися безліччю струн*» (“so that the chasms and holes in our souls // would be tightened by multitudes of strings”) by Pavlo Vyshebababa [Koverska, 2024, p. 42]. This sort of blurring of the number contradicts Hopper’s principle of number as “fundamental reality” since the number dissolves into indefiniteness («*безкінечних*», «*безліччю*» / “endless,” “multitudes”), marking the loss of the ability to count, a certain archaic fear of the uncountable, boundless, chaotic. In folkloric tradition, “multitude” is always opposed to “three” or “seven” as magical numbers of Plato’s arithmetic order [Godwin, 1993, pp. 3-6]; the refusal of a concrete number in the poetry of the rear signifies the impossibility of symbolic harnessing of trauma, its failure to acquire a distinct numerical structure. All that corresponds to what Fowler called “silent poetry,” the poetic text, in which the numbers stay silent because they cannot be articulated.

The two in the texts denotes the family couple: «*...малих обіймаю // За обидвох*» (“...I’ll embrace the little ones // For both of us”), Maryana Lelyk [Koverska, 2024, p. 44]. The two reaches its most archaic meaning as the number of marriages, a couple, or union (two within the biblical tradition becoming one flesh), resonating with Hopper’s analysis of the number two as a symbol of duality and union. The phrase “for both of us” marks the absence of one from the pair, creating the mathematics of loss:  $2 - 1 = 1$ , where one becomes a symbol of incompleteness, the brokenness of what should have been the whole. In folkloric tradition, two deprived of a pair indicates the violation of cosmic order (an odd number of animals in Noah’s ark, a single boot as a sign of trouble in Ukrainian tradition).

There occurs the symbolic stretching of time: «*– П’ятдесятий день, хлопці, – тихо каже він. – // Це ж дні, просто дні! А мені... як пів століття*» (“The fiftieth day, guys, he says quietly. – // These are days, just days! But for me... they are like half a century”), Maryana Lelyk [Ibid., p. 45]. Here the number 50 (fiftieth day) contrasts with metaphorical “half a century” (50 years), leading to a numerological paradox: 50 days = 50 years, where time loses linearity and signifies some subjective experience. The number 50 in biblical tradition is the jubilee, time of liberation and forgiveness [KJV, p. 72], but within the outlined context, the fifty-day jubilee of war transforms into eternalization of suffering. “Half a century” as half of 100 (the number of fullness according to Fowler) symbolizes incompleteness, the brokenness of time frozen between the beginning (day one) and the impossible completion (day one hundred, which will never come). This

corresponds to Butler's view of number as the bricks for structuring temporal experience; when time loses measurability, number becomes a metaphor rather than a metric.

The temporal manifestations of the slowed movement of the clock within the situations of loneliness are also numeralized: «світає // тут п'ять плюс один // не сплю // і тебе тут немає» (“the dawn breaks // here it's five plus one // I'm not sleeping // and you're not here”) [Koverska, 2024, p. 47]. The formula “five plus one” instead of the expected “six” creates numerical disintegration: time breaks down into component parts, where the sixth hour of the morning cannot be named as a whole number but only as a sum (5+1). This corresponds to Hopper's concept of counting through the fingers, which includes the so-called finger reckoning, where five fingers of one hand plus one finger of the other are used as an archaic way of counting, reflecting the fragmentation of time in a state of loneliness. The five as the number of what alludes to the characteristics of a human that possesses five fingers and five senses, plus one that serves as a sign of loneliness, referencing the monad, equals six, the number of imperfections in biblical numerology (the day of human creation, but not the day of rest). Breaking the number into addends marks the impossibility of a holistic perception of time; as a result, each minute is counted separately, like each separate suffering. Concurrently, we receive the expansion of the grief of two, a couple within the social frame: «ти всіх протиріч на сторіччя // й страхів тих що спільні на двох // і ще на 48 мільйонів облич» (“you all the contradictions stretched for a century // and fears that are shared by two // and another 48 million faces”) [Ibid., p. 48]. In this way, we observe the mathematical progression from two (an intimate couple) to 48 million (the population of Ukraine at the time of the full-scale war's outbreak), transforming the numerological structure from a microcosmic to a macrocosmic level. The number 48 million functions not as exact statistics (actually the Ukrainian population was a far way modest size) but as the symbolic fullness of the nation, linked to the well-known social advertisement of the 1990s, corresponding to Fowler's concept of “numbers of time,” when the time is measured rather in population than in the conventional system of years, the quantity that will survive. The two as the marker of the intimate sphere expands to the 48 million linked being to the national sphere, as a result, constructing a fractal system that frames each couple into the experience of the millions with the same baggage of fears that is carried by the lyrical heroes. This resonates with Hopper's analysis of Pythagorean doctrine, where “two is the principle of multiplication,” and within this context, it denotes the multiplication of trauma and its expansion from the personal to the collective. The number 48 (4×12) also bears the biblical connotations, appealing to the four Gospels multiplied by twelve apostles, which gives 48 the symbolic fullness of the Christian world; however, this type of fullness plays with the fullness of suffering.

### Conclusions and Investigation Perspectives

Thus, the numerical symbolism in the post-2022 war poetry emerges as a multi-layered semiotic and philosophical phenomenon that integrates the experience of collective trauma, corporeality, sacrality, and temporality. Within the corpus of contemporary Ukrainian war lyrics, the numerological code performs a series of interrelated functions: a) the depersonalizing one, when numbers replace names, transforming a personal microcosmos into a code or statistical unit, manifesting the reduction of a human being within the liminal conditions brought by war; b) the tool of sacralization, when the biblical and the archetypal numbers, like 3, 5, 14, 33, reproduce the Christian paradigm of sacrifice, resurrection, and salvation, falling into the mystical dimension as the only possible to comprehend the loss; c) the temporal-traumatic, when the normal calendar dates, like 2014, 24.02.2022, and the temporal numerical markers fix pivotal moments of collective memory and structure the historical experience in a prolonged act of pain; d) the existential-meditative, when counting becomes a form of self-preservation and an attempt to order chaos, dragging the arithmetic constructs into a spiritual practice of resistance to the non-being. The number in the post-2022 poetry loses its pure quantitative role and acquires certain ontological weight; it turns into a sign of the boundary between the life and the death, the presence and the absence, the personal and the collective. The numerological code stands out as a language that allows speaking about the unspeakable, like the mass deaths, loss, fear, or the attempt to preserve humanity in an inhuman situation. Through the numbers, poets construct a new semiotics of being, where counting is not merely

a recording but an act of memory, prayer, and love. Thus, numerical symbolism within the post-2022 war discourse performs the role of a mediator between the chaos and the meaning, transforming trauma into the artistic experience and forming a new ontology of the Ukrainian lyrics in the era of wars.

The prospects for the further investigations are envisioned in the in-depth study of the numerical symbolism as an intermedial phenomenon of the contemporary war culture, manifested through a variety of forms of the artistic expression, such as poetic, performative, visual, and digital. The particularly productivity is seen in the comparative analysis of the Ukrainian numerological poetics as opposed to the European and Middle Eastern war-literature traditions, which would allow the delineation of the universal archetypes and the nationally specific strategies of the numbers' semiotization as a metaphysical marker of war. The cognitive-psycholinguistic aspect of numerical imagery as linked to the mechanisms of the impact of counting, repetition, and numerical formulas on the psychological experience of trauma and the construction of a collective memory carcass requires further comprehension. A promising direction of the inquiry is the gender optics of the military discourse, that can revolve around the identify distinct models measured in terms of representing the experience of loss, pain, and survival within both male and female poetic narratives, particularly through numerical codes as a form of internal articulation and semiotic self-defense.

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**THE NUMEROLOGICAL CODE IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN WAR POETRY: MAKSYM KRYVTSOV'S POEMS FROM THE EMBRASURE AND ANTHOLOGY LOVE 2.0: LOVE AND WAR**

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32342/3041-217X-2025-2-30-7>

**Key words:** *numerological code, numerical symbolism, military discourse, traumatic experience, depersonalization, sacred numerology.*

The article examines the numerological code and numerical symbolism in the Ukrainian poetic tradition of the military discourse within the period of the full-scale invasion. The research focuses on the ways numbers operate as semiotic, mnemonic, and existential categories, mediating between trauma, language, and memory. The *purpose* of study is to identify the functional potential of numerical markers in shaping the artistic and semantic dominants, as well as the ontological dimensions of modern war poetry, based on the collection *Poems from the Embrasure* by Maksym Kryvtsov and the anthology *Love 2.0: Love and War*. The main objectives include detecting and systematizing the types of numerical symbolism, tracing the transformation of archetypal numerical images under traumatic experiences, establishing correlations between numerological codes and the existential states of the lyrical subject, and substantiating the significance of the numerological code as a means of artistic representation of collective trauma and postmemory.

The *methodological framework* integrates structural-semiotic, hermeneutic, comparative, and contextual approaches, as well as motif and symbolic analysis. The study draws on the Western tradition of numerical criticism (W.F. Hopper, A. Fowler, C. Butler) and adapts its conceptual tools to the Ukrainian literary context, where numbers function as a hybrid of linguistic signs, mythopoetic archetypes, and ethical categories. Enkvist's distinction between statistical and symbolic numbers, Waterfield's archetypal interpretations of numerical triads, and Pythagorean integrity, as well as Godwin's analysis of completeness in sacred numerology, have been incorporated. The study employs Batts's approach to numerical structures in literary texts along with Medieval transcendent significance, while adopting Fisher's methodology for detecting the "noble numbers" within the poetic architecture and kabbalistic semantic layers specific to individual poetics. Hopper's cultural-contextual framework for numerical symbolism and Major's analysis of symbolic systems across traditions inform the cross-cultural dimension of this investigation, complemented by Moretti's quantitative methodologies for analyzing numerical distribution patterns. Focusing specifically on lyrical poetry, this research examines how numerical codes operate within the poetic systems at both structural-compositional and symbolic-archetypal levels, studying how contemporary lyrical texts may employ deliberate semantic ambiguity in their numerical architecture, wherein meaning becomes fluid and participatory, transforming numerical language into an existential poetic gesture that embodies postmodern interpretive multiplicity. Thus, the approach enables the interpretation of numerical symbolism not merely as an element of poetic form, but as a dynamic mode of cognitive and emotional processing of wartime experiences.

The results demonstrate differentiated numerical paradigms that fluctuate according to the speaker's discursive position. The combatant discourse reveals somatic numerology (50×50 cm, 120 kg), military-technical codification (200, 300, b/k, MARCH), and the metrics of liminal endurance (500 meters under fire, counting to one hundred before the attack), expressing the bodily and procedural nature of survival. Conversely, the rear discourse features blurred numeration (endless days, countless strings) and symbolic temporal dilation (50 days as half a century), articulating the psychological stretching of time and the instability of perception under prolonged uncertainty.

It has been established that the numerological code performs several core functions: depersonalizing (numbers instead of names, like 234, 457, 451), sacralizing (biblical and archetypal numbers, including 3, 5, 14, 33), temporal-traumatic (dates 2014, 24.02.2022 as mnemonic nodes of collective experience), and existential-meditative, where counting becomes a ritual of resistance and a means of preserving mental integrity. Numbers thus transcend their quantitative nature, transforming into ontological markers of war, mediating between speech and silence, presence and absence, memory and oblivion.

The study concludes that the numerological code in Ukrainian war poetry after 2022 constructs a distinctive semiotic and philosophical model through which poets articulate the ineffable dimensions of trauma and convert loss into a form of symbolic creation. The number emerges as a vehicle of apophatic expression, a language of the unspeakable that preserves the sacred memory of war within the evolving cultural space of Ukrainian resistance.

*Дата надходження до редакції / Submitted: 05.02.2025*

*Дата прийняття до публікації / Accepted: 08.10.2025*

*Дата публікації / Published: 02.12.2025*