

Typologization of Myron Levytskyi's covers

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Abstract. *A typology of Myron Levytskyi's covers has been developed based on functional purpose, material, stylistic, and genre components, covering the period from the 1930s to the 1990s. The complex process of designing original cover layouts and integrating their elements into book structures has been examined. From a significant body of discovered materials, Myron Levytskyi's multifaceted approaches to composition, context, and typography in book covers have been analyzed and systematized. The implementation of Modernist trends in Myron Levytskyi's book and magazine graphics is considered in the context of Canadian multiculturalism. His stylistic and genre preferences are summarized, highlighting the influence of the Ukrainian diaspora's cultural and artistic environment and Canada's multicultural framework, through the synthesis of Modernist and pro-European tendencies. The artist's work in book and magazine design has been structured, and for the first time, a typology of Myron Levytskyi's book and magazine graphics based on function and material construction has been proposed. This retrospective analysis brings attention to issues in book illustration and typography, as essential components of graphic design. Preserving Myron Levytskyi's artistic legacy in book and magazine design remains an important issue for Ukrainian art history.*

Keywords: *Myron Levytskyi; multiculturalism; Modernist trends; book and magazine graphics; Canada, book covers.*

One of the central topics of this study is Myron Levytskyi's work in book graphics, which includes essential components such as cover design, illustration, and typography. His covers exhibit wide variability in typological classification. Each design incorporates both constant and variable elements, including typography, illustration, and compositional expression. Attention to these visual elements plays a crucial role in the layout of covers. Their varied combinations communicate distinct emotional and associative meanings.

For the first time, a significant collection of Myron Levytskyi's covers has been systematically typologized. His covers can be categorized according to functional, stylistic-genre, artistic-compositional, contextual, and authorial criteria. The dominant graphic intentions are visual-aesthetic expression and utilitarian purpose. Based on their characteristics, Myron Levytskyi's covers can be classified into the following groups:

1. Illustrative
2. Illustrative and typographic
3. Typographic
4. Ornamental
5. Contour line
6. Contextual (historical)
7. Children's literature
8. Periodicals

It is important to note that this classification is not absolute, as it is nearly impossible to locate all of Myron Levytskyi's works. New research continues to emerge, which may expand or reshape understanding of his contributions. While analyzing his covers, a stylistic diversity is evident. This fusion of visual concepts reflects Myron Levytskyi's aesthetic vision, which holds substantial value in book graphic design. Covers created or reissued from the 1930s to the 1990s were included in the analysis. Based on the established typology and structure, most of Myron Levytskyi's covers were created for books, followed by periodicals, and then by children's literature for various age groups. Differentiation is supported by stylistic, technical, artistic, and conceptual markers, allowing for nuanced classification.

Illustrative covers represent a significant portion of the collected material in the field of book and magazine graphics. These covers are loaded with meanings corresponding to their functional purpose – they serve communicative, informational, and promotional purposes. Different combinations of these markers evoke a variety of emotional and associative responses. In covers that fall into the illustrative category, the typography typically serves a utilitarian and primarily informative role. Within a broad array of recovered covers, diverse compositional and contextual approaches can be identified [1]. We regard these graphic works as communicative, utilitarian, and aesthetic accomplishments of Myron Levytskyi. His covers combine Modernist stylistic intentions with elements of national identity. The Modernist trends reflected in Myron Levytskyi's work represent a synthesis of European influences and Canadian multiculturalism, interwoven with the cultural and artistic milieu of the Ukrainian diaspora. These forces had a direct impact on the development of Myron Levytskyi's stylistic and formal priorities [2]. Based on artistic analysis of the covers, many works feature smooth curved lines and floral motifs – hallmarks of Art Nouveau. However, in our view, these covers also exemplify a synthesis of stylistic elements drawn from Neo-Byzantinism, Post-Cubism, Expressionism, and Art Deco.

According to the proposed typology, illustrative and typographic covers have been analyzed. These designs combine illustration with unique typographic compositions, placing increased emphasis on typography as a dominant visual component. In the functional-communicative context of cover design, meaning is conveyed through both the illustrative elements and the typography. Typography in these works performs various roles: it may appear as a conventional informational font set, a distinctive typographic composition, or as the basis of contemporary lettering.

In a multidisciplinary context, the principles of fine art have a significant influence on graphic design. One of the most important elements of the cover is typography. The next group in the typology includes typographic covers. Here, typography primarily serves a utilitarian function. However, its methods of execution display noteworthy variation. Myron Levytskyi is a leading expert in book and magazine graphics, having elevated the cover design to a higher artistic level. Indeed, he was an innovator in the field, as no one before him had attributed such aesthetic and

cultural importance to covers, and particularly to typefaces [3]. For the most part, covers had previously fulfilled only functional roles and lacked aesthetic value or artistic intent. Myron Levytskyi's covers stand out as some of the first to incorporate Cyrillic lettering in a stylistically sophisticated way. The fonts he created are organically integrated and distinguished by strong aesthetic appeal. Typography in his work underwent a clear transformation – from purely functional usage to one with visual and artistic significance.

The next category among the proposed groups includes ornamental covers. The dominant feature here is floral ornamentation. In terms of stylistic and figurative language, Modernist intentions prevail. The central visual element across these covers is stylized floral ornamentation that often fills the entire layout. Within this expressive framework, smooth and angular lines are juxtaposed, and the stylistic language incorporates elements of Art Deco.

Following this is the group of contour line covers. A key characteristic is the use of curved lines – either symmetrical or asymmetrical – that reflect the influence of avant-garde movements. These covers feature an abundance of floral elements, and in some cases, dominant abstract aesthetic solutions. Human figures or silhouettes are elongated, exaggerated, and at times rendered as amorphous shapes combined with floral patterns or starkly contrasting lines.

The next group includes contextual covers. Myron Levytskyi possessed a clear artistic vision shaped by experiences across various cultural and artistic settings – Poland, Austria, France, and Canada. He sought to convey more than simple information; he believed that any visual object could carry conceptual and aesthetic meaning. The fact that Ukrainians form one of the largest Slavic diasporas in Canada became a key catalyst for the development of Ukrainian educational institutions and other national and cultural initiatives. This environment created a strong demand for the promotion of Ukrainian literature and periodicals. The research presented here focuses on the conceptual underpinnings of Myron Levytskyi's works and the evolution of his graphic language as an expression of national identity.

Among the typological categories, the next group comprises children's publications. When examining covers for children's books, it is evident that they often follow a consistent visual approach, with stylistic similarities across many examples. Typography plays a secondary role, while illustration and narrative are prioritized. The artistic and figurative language tends toward realism, aligning with the perceptual abilities of preschool and school-age children. However, we believe that this visual approach effectively communicates narratives in a way that is understandable for its young audience.

Structurally, children's book covers can be divided into two categories: those intended for preschool-age children and those aimed at school-age children. Differentiation is made according to function. A single cover may incorporate multiple visual styles and concepts. In this context, it is essential to highlight both stylistic choices and artistic-figurative strategies. Children's periodicals served a utilitarian

function while also transmitting Ukrainian customs and traditions. In doing so, they contributed to the promotion and preservation of Ukraine's national and cultural heritage for future generations. Preschool publications were often initiated through sociocultural efforts by the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada. Myron Levytskyi conveyed national cultural values through the medium of children's book covers. His works helped to promote Ukrainian cultural traditions and foster a sense of national identity. In his covers for fairy tales, Myron Levytskyi employed ethnic motifs with a unique execution style distinctive to his body of work. He brought attention to nuanced and meaningful themes within fairy tales through these artistic choices.

The final category includes periodicals. Graphic works in this group are further divided into book publications and magazine or newspaper formats, including magazines and calendars. We propose analyzing periodicals based on this distinction. The cultural and artistic environment within Canadian multiculturalism absorbed and reinterpreted modern artistic currents in unique ways. Modernism, in its many forms, had a wide influence, though several specific tendencies dominate Myron Levytskyi's periodical covers. Art Deco, ornamental designs, and floral motifs are especially prominent. In terms of stylistic and figurative language, modern elements are clearly visible – particularly in the stylized depiction of human figures, combined with flowing linear patterns and idealized natural forms. These illustrations are rendered in a planar, decorative style. Through a typological study of covers for the magazine *“Zhinochyi Svit”* (*“Women's World”*), certain stylistic and visual patterns in Myron Levytskyi's work can be identified. He developed new covers for this publication, working on typography, illustration, and ornamentation, and significantly reshaped its style and compositional structure. He combined floral motifs with illustration, integrating national identity into the broader Canadian multicultural context. In these covers, ethnic visual features were reinterpreted through a modern lens, and the focus gradually shifted toward expressive typography.

Conclusions and suggestions. In conclusion, the book graphics of Myron Levytskyi are of substantial importance and remain highly relevant today. His works demonstrate a high degree of ideological depth and artistic refinement. Based on the research presented in this article, the following key points are highlighted:

- Myron Levytskyi's book and magazine graphics have been organized and typologized into distinct groups through a combination of theoretical and empirical methods. It is worth noting that his artistic development was significantly shaped by cultural and artistic environments in Poland, Austria, France, and Canada.

- The stylistic and genre features, as well as the visual language of Myron Levytskyi's work from the 1930s to the 1990s, have been clarified. Based on this analysis, the dominant artistic trends that influenced his creative vision have been identified.

It has been established that Myron Levytskyi's book and magazine graphics underwent a transformation – from purely utilitarian functions to fully-developed

artistic works. This transformation elevates discussions not only about artistic value but also about the evolving role of graphic design. As a result, despite debates within multidisciplinary fields, Myron Levytskyi's contributions have made a lasting impact on both the fine arts and graphic design. The material serves as a foundation for scholarly discourse in theoretical, empirical, and practical contexts. The book graphics of the Ukrainian diaspora are vital – not only for promoting Ukrainian culture but also for enriching the nation's cultural and artistic legacy.

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