This thesis explores the socio-cultural significance of the Ukrainian steppes and their destruction amid the Russia Ukraine War. Through an interdisciplinary framework combining Environmental Humanities and Identity Studies, the study examines how the steppes have shaped Ukrainian collective imagination and national identity from early history to the present day. Tracing their influence through historical turns, art, literature, religion, and political resistance, the steppes emerge not merely as a geographic feature, but as a sacred landscape central to Ukrainian culture and sovereign identity.

The analysis unfolds in three parts: first, it investigates the historical role of the steppe region in forming early Ukrainian identity and cultural narratives; second, it examines the steppes as a symbolic and literal site of resistance during Imperial and Soviet domination; and third, it considers the steppes in the context of the current war, evaluating the cultural impact of their decimation. Drawing on sources ranging from historical texts, religious writings, and artworks to environmental data, grassroots movements, and contemporary journalism, the study reveals how the erasure of the steppe biome represents not just ecological loss but an attack on Ukrainian identity and sacred heritage.

In doing so, this work critiques dominant, commodifying views of nature in mainstream wartime discourse, calling instead for recognition of ecocide as a profound human tragedy. It affirms the steppes as an enduring symbol of Ukrainian independence and highlights the urgent need to integrate more nuanced eco-cultural perspectives into discourse on environmental policy and war. This study presents landscapes as vital agents of identity, resilience, and collective imagination in an effort to center alternative land ethics long obscured by imperial and capitalist hegemonies.