

## THE CORRELATION OF UKRAINIAN DRAMATIC LITERATURE WITH THE EUROPEAN STYLISTIC TRENDS

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**Summary:** There are some peculiarities that give grounds for comparison between Ukrainian theatre history and European theatrical development. It is the legacy of the Baroque casuistic doctrine of school theatre in different metamorphoses that was especially durable in Ukraine and that, together with folklore's verve of surrealism enrooted in mythology, has predetermined the transition to modern drama. The emergence of realistic dramatic works in the last two decades of the nineteenth century entailed stylistic compression and confusion synchronous with the formation of naturalism and symbolism, that would impact upon the rapid explosion of dramatic productions in the last decade before the First World War. The extreme restrictions of the inter-war period contributed to special efforts of narrative strategy with the special bias towards retrospective attitudes of neoclassicism.

**Keywords:** baroque, casuistic doctrine, stream of consciousness, retrospection, symbolism, naturalism, social criticism.

**Resumen:** Hay algunas peculiaridades que dan motivos para discutir la comparación de la historia del teatro ucraniano con el desarrollo teatral europeo. Es el legado de la doctrina casuística barroca del teatro escolar en diferentes metamorfosis lo que fue especialmente duradero y que, junto con el brío del folclore del surrealismo arraigado en la mitología, ha predeterminado la transición al drama moderno. La aparición de obras dramáticas realistas en las últimas dos décadas del siglo XIX implicó una compresión estilística y una confusión sincrónica con la formación del naturalismo y el simbolismo, que ejercieron un impacto sobre la rápida explosión de la producción dramática en la última década antes de la Primera Guerra Mundial. Las restricciones extremas del período de entreguerras contribuyeron a esfuerzos especiales de estrategia narrativa con el sesgo especial hacia actitudes retrospectivas del neoclasicismo.

**Palabras clave:** barroco, doctrina casuística, corriente de conciencia, retrospección, simbolismo, naturalismo, crítica social.

## THE RISE OF UKRAINIAN PLAYWRIGHTS

THE HISTORY OF THE UKRAINIAN DRAMATIC LITERATURE is not still created. One of the principal hindrances here is the lack of data concerning its stylistic development as well as its relations to the common European trends of the time. There are several works treating separate authors and respective periods without summing up their stylistic preferences and their place in European theatrical culture. Therefore, it seems reasonable to provide an outline of the history of Ukrainian playwrights' legacy before taking further steps in delineating the stylistic development of drama in proper sense. An essential support here could be found in the first two volumes of the academic history of Ukrainian theatre (edited by I. Yudkin-Ripun [2009, 2017]) that would serve as the source for further descriptive and interpretative steps in reconsidering the problem. In its turn it becomes necessary to define the temporal limits of the epoch that has played the decisive role in determining the stylistic outlook of Ukrainian drama. This epoch coincides with the historical XIX century in the broad sense (circa 1814 – 1914), and there are deep grounds for such coincidence: the matter is that the new Ukrainian language has first appeared in literature in the works of I. Kotlyarevsky (1769 – 1838) who was the leader of freemasonry in the city of Poltava.

It was just I. Kotlyarevsky who has written in 1819 the plays that are regarded as the first specimens of contemporary Ukrainian drama. One of them was the rearrangement of old French vaudeville *Le Soldat Magicien* that had also some later imitations. The other was a kind of ballad opera *The Maiden from Poltava* (*Natalka-Poltavka*), and it is this work that is regarded as the first genuine paragon of the Ukrainian dramatic tradition. It has been shown by M. Sulyma [2010: 201] that the motifs of baroque didactic play (*moralité*) on St. Alex - the God's Man – were here broadly adapted. The author was renowned with the first poetic work in new Ukrainian, *Aeneid*, and the leader of masonry in Poltava.

This continuation of the baroque tradition inherent to the old Ukrainian theatre has been attested also in another significant play – *Nazar Stodolya* (1844) by T. Shevchenko (1814 – 1861). This work represents an account on the attempt of the abduction of the bride by her sweetheart. The couple is pursued and caught by the bride's father, but all ends with the reconciliation, and it is this solution of conflict with the unmotivated reconciliation that continues the baroque casu-

istic concept of the granted grace that comes back to baroque Jesuits' theatre. The author had the opportunity to get acquainted to this concept during his sojourn in Vilnius while being a teenager. This motif of granted grace (staged usually as the unmotivated reconciliation of rivals in a play's finale) borrowed from the baroque casuistic legacy has become the important means of dramatic solution in the Ukrainian tradition. It is also of importance that the historical epoch is depicted only conventionally as appertaining to the xvii century. It concerns rural life as the world of mysterious stability. Meanwhile the mentioned works of I. Kotlyarevsky and T. Shevchenko were fully concordant with the trend of mysteries' theatre and pastorals that prevailed also in the Polish theatre, especially in the works of J. Slowacki.

Together with the above-mentioned samples of the late echo of baroque tradition one ought to point to numerous arrangements of folk rites that have gained popularity in the middle of the xix century. It is here to notice that folklore theatre in Ukraine remains unstudied as opposed to Polish or Bohemian folklore<sup>1</sup>. There were such arrangements as *The Summer's Peak* (*Kupala na Ivana*, 1838, published 1840) by P. Pysarevsky (? - 1839, pseudonym Stetsko Shereperya). Here the representation of the feast of St. John is intermingled with the story of matchmaking and marriage where the rivalry of the bridegrooms is solved with the assistance of gypsies who frighten one of the rivals while arranging a scene upon scene disguising action. Such practice of staging folklore rites on contemporary scene that comes back to pastorals has been transformed at the end in a kind of theatrical experimentation with the folklore rites where mythology becomes a pretext for surrealist visions. In this respect there are two plays to be mentioned here: the first is *The Salt Peddler* (*Chumak*, that's the name for the transporters of salt from the Crimea; 1862, revised 1872) by S. Rudansky (1834 - 1873), who wrote also in Polish, and *Dovbush* (1869, the name of the leader of the Carpathian rebels, a local version of Robin Hood) by J. Fedkovych (1834-1888, the full name Joseph Georg Dominic Fedkowicz), who was an Austrian officer and wrote in German<sup>2</sup>. Both these

1 The only exception is the book by I. Voloshyn [1960] that is based upon the unique collection preserved occasionally.

2 Another dramatic elaboration of the plot on the noble brigand is *Harkusha* (the name of the legendary head of the rebels from the first decades of the xix c.) by

works involve motifs of feminine revenge and treachery as the «ruling passions» in promoting dramatic action. But of the primordial weight are the attachments to magic practice and mythological imagery imparting thus the features that foresee the future surrealist plays of the xx century<sup>3</sup>. Such attitude favored the general narrative transformation of dramas enrooted in folklore. The net of reciprocal references of the idioms arising from mythological concepts furthers integrative processes within the tissue of a play and thus contributes essentially to the proliferation of its epic features that preceded the inventions of B. Brecht<sup>4</sup>.

These disperse achievements had meanwhile a lateral meaning within the development of national theatre despite their obvious importance as the indicators of stylistic trends concordant with the European theatrical history. That is why there are serious reasons to regard Gregory Kvitka (who wrote with the pseudonym Kvitka – Osnovyanenko<sup>5</sup>, 1778 – 1843) as the real founder of Ukrainian drama. It is just his play (written in Russian) *The Guest from the Capital* (1827) that has become the prototype and a probable source for the famous N. Gogol's *Governmental Inspector* (1837). The first achievement of Ukrainian drama remarkable for its attachment to the continuation of baroque tradition can be seen in *The Matchmaking at Honcharivka* (1836). It is not the usual collision of the plot but its paradoxical solution that deserves discussion. The collision itself is very simple: the daughter is intended by the parents to get married with a rich person, but she falls in love with another lad and successes in pursuing her aim with the aid of a friend of hers - the old former soldier (who plays the mask of «ingenious servant-assistant»). Meanwhile the expected happy end turns into an evasive ambivalent solution. The matter is that the bridegroom is serf and takes his sweetheart into serfdom with the marriage. The absurdity of such pretended to be achieved happiness is still aggravated with the

the above-mentioned P. Pysarevsky, published posthumously in 1862; this person was first the hero of the novel (written in Russian) by V. Narizhny (1780 - 1825).

3 It is worth mentioning that in another respect such connections between surrealism and folklore imagery have been described by J. Mukarovsky [1977: 190 ff.]

4 In this respect these works make up a parallel to the mythological dramas of the Polish contemporary C. Norwid (see I. Yudkin [2010])

5 His life and works were studied in details by S. Zubkov [1978].

pretence of relieving the grief by the half-mad soldier who declares the monologue with the glorification of serfdom. The arising absurdity comes back to the baroque device of antiphrasis where the true meaning of utterance is quite a contrary to its literal meaning. In this respect G. Kvitka can be esteemed as the forerunner of absurdity theatre.

Another G. Kvitka's work where future European trends are foreboded is *The Sincere Love* (1836, written also as a prosaic story and translated into Russian by A. Ostrovsky). While developing the romantic tragedy of fate the play represents at the same time the dramatic persona marked with the obvious symptoms of masochism unknown earlier on stage. The heroine (of a «low» origin) loves a nobleman, an officer at military service, and the love feelings are fully reciprocal. This officer matches all conventions necessary for marriage, but his bride-maid refuses because her imagery makes her refrain from this happiness on the pretext of the pretended sinfulness of such deed. Subsequently the phantom of what is esteemed by her as the conduct in due course becomes the fatal force leading her to destruction<sup>6</sup>. Noteworthy this work appeared before another play on a feminine way to death, M. Yu. Lermontov's *The Masquerade*, a peculiar version of the plot of Othello (1836, published 1842).

In the same years the commencement of historical drama can be dated with the versified plays written by N. Kostomarov (1817 – 1885). They are *Sava Chaly* (1838) and *The Night in Pereyaslav* (1841). The first of them deals with the person of the suspected traitor and the vindication of rebels upon him. The author didn't hold to the veracity of the events and indulged in anachronistic displacements. The personalities were taken for half-legendary in the general manner of romantic theatre. The next drama involves the events of the great rebellion and war against Poland in the middle of xvii c. The conspiracy against Polish rulers in a town becomes the background for a love-story between the sister of a rebel and the Polish supervisor. This combination of intrigues results in the tragic solution of the death of heroine. Though romantic as to the discourse, both works bear overt vestiges of baroque legacy, of hyperbolic images, as L. Moroz [2016: 545-546] has paid attention.

6 In a way it implies a latent disputation with Jane Austen's novel «Pride and Prejudice»

It is here to stress also that the first samples of historical drama were closely connected with folklore and didn't attach to historical veracity as such. There are two half-legendary, half-historical personalities to be singled out that constantly attracted attention of the playwrights. First of them is the above-mentioned Sava Chaly, and he appears further in the dramatic work of I. Karpenko-Kary (1899). Another is the feminine hero Marussia Churay who had omitted revenge with the assassination of her former treacherous sweetheart, was then sentenced to death but obtained mercy. This motif appeared in the play *The Sorceries* (1834, published 1837) by Cyril Topolya (Topolynski, biographical data unknown). Further the same person appears in such works as *Oh, Hryts, don't go to the Evening Party* by M. Starytski (1890).

#### THE TURNING POINT OF REALISM

The above outlined experience determined exceptionally peculiar way towards the so called *pièces bien faites* (well-made plays) in the manner of realism. The first features of realism can be traced in *Till the Sun will Rise, the Dew Erodes Eyes* (begun 1868, terminal version 1882) by M. Kropyvnytsky (1840 – 1910) that deals with the plot on misalliance concerned with the unhappy love of a landowner's son with the peasant daughter who remains hounded by the neighbors and dies. These melodramatic motifs of misalliance continue the persistent theme of sentimentalism<sup>7</sup> which in its turn comes back to balladry in folklore (attested in the inversed form in the mentioned *Sincere Love* by G. Kvitka). It concerns the widely spread plot on Romeo and Juliet in ballads studied by O. Dey [1986: 238 ff.]. Such motif implies critical attitude and protest that becomes now reconsidered and with the justification of the newly discovered societal instability.

Despite these sentimental predilections there becomes traceable an overtly critical attitude towards contemporaneity that has marked the primarily melodramatic work *Give the Heart License, and it will lead one into Slavery* (first version 1863 under the title *Mykyta Starostenko or thou will not Notice as the Harm Comes*, the last version 1872, first night 1873). The already mentioned baroque motif of reconciliation between the rivals within the love triangle is here complicated with the death

7 Witnessed in ballet theatre in the famous *Giselle*.

of an outsider constantly present in the lovers' interplay and his death with the farewell pardon. The social role of outsider was known in Ukrainian demonology in legends about Marko the Cursed (or Marko the Infernal) where the estranged personality was meant, the one replaced out of the boundary of human world. Such images refer to infernal picture of world as the baroque tool of criticism. The infernality can be easily traced in M. Kropyvnytsky's drama that takes the intermediate place between the baroque survivals and realistic trend. Together with old casuistic reconciliation here the existentialist concept of death as the terminal solution arises. And it is this existential approach that enables showing the instability of the former rural idyll. Thus, the elements of social criticism are introduced in the scenic images that have exerted decisive impact upon melodramatic motifs.

It is still to add that both these early plays of M. Kropyvnytsky belong to the kind of the so-called scenic proverbs i.e., the expanded explanations of the contents implied with the title of a work. These works stick to baroque tradition showing at the same time the attempts of new critical approach to society. Infernal world picture is being transformed into protest with discovering and displaying the instability of the former societal order.

Such transformation of the condemnation of infernality into social criticism and protest took place in the last decades of XIX c. This transition is marked with at least two peculiarities. First, it is attached to the growth of comic verve together with melodramatic effects in the dramatic discourse. It is old baroque tragicomic mode that has gained renovation and entailing the prevalence of grotesque imagery that grew at the same time on the soil of humor. The priority of humor is attested in the development of dramatic genera with the baroque interludes where the images of vanity were displayed, and this experience has been inherited in the mentioned vaudevilles. It is comedy where the way towards realistic drama has been paved. Thus, the grotesque images in drama were introduced especially in the works of M. Kropyvnytsky. Second, another peculiarity of Ukrainian theatrical realism is indebted to the rural domination of the societal relations and subsequently with the rapid cultural transformations. The concise period of transition to realistic drama determined the compression of stylistic development. The rise of realistic dramatic works in Ukraine coincides with the for-

mation of the so called analytical new drama in Scandinavian countries and with the advancement of naturalistic theatre as the means of social criticism (E. Zola, G. Hauptmann). A little later symbolism in theatre has arisen as the reinterpretation of melodramatic fairy plays (M. Maeterlinck) and the conversational drama has appeared (B. Shaw). These features of Ukrainian theatrical realism give grounds for seeking parallels in the Italian contemporary trend of the so called *il verismo* where the similar phenomena were to be observed.

Together with M. Kropyvnytsky there were two other personalities that began their creative way in the 1870-s and fulfilled their mission of the founder of contemporary drama in the 1880-s: M. Starytsky (1840 – 1904) and I. Karpenko-Kary (pseudonym, the genuine name Tobilevych, 1845 – 1907). The new demands on drama in the 1870-s were especially clearly reflected in numerous rearrangements accomplished by M. Starytsky. The works of I. Karpenko-Kary who has become the central personality in theatrical realism are too significant to be discussed in a separate article. Here it would be convenient to point only to his work from the last period of his life, *The Sea of Life* (1905), where the features of realism grow from the grotesque picture of social criticism: it goes about adultery of an actor with an actress, she pretends to suggest the mutual suicide, but the hero refuses in the last moment. The development of grotesque as a realistic device attains its utmost degree in the last play of M. Kropyvnytsky, *Rubbish* (1907), where the inversion of a well-known balladic plot on the arrival of a soldier (taken for killed) at the marriage of his wife (who was taken for widow): the action is attributed to the events of Russian Japanese war and thus imparted with social criticism.

The rise and rapid transformations of the newly-created societal drama within the compressed time of two decades can be demonstrated with the works of I. Franko (1856 – 1916) who lived in the Ukrainian lands included in the Austrian state. His most successful dramatic work, *The Stolen Happiness* (1893) is based upon the adultery story described in a folklore ballad. While using this collision the author followed the established and approbated European tradition; he continued such paragon as *Woyzeck* by G. Büchner. That I. Franko was apparently acquainted with the works of this writer can be proved with the fact that the mentioned play was first discovered and published in 1875 by

K.E. Franzos (1848 – 1904) who belonged to the circle of the Ukrainian supporters in the Austrian Galicia (let only be mentioned such his work as *The searchers for truth* (*Die Wahrheitssucher*) dealing with the peasant mutineers) and was known in the local intellectual circles. The police sergeant becomes the lover of a peasant's wife, and the rivalry predetermines the tragic solution: the sergeant is killed; nevertheless, he forgives his killer in the manner of the above-discussed baroque granted grace<sup>8</sup>. At the same time the play demonstrates the features of the romantic tragedy of fate where the fate is incarnated in the environment of the triangle. The tragedy is that the participants of such triangle are deprived of the right to choose and inevitably progress to their destruction. The diversity of habitual details of daily life acts here as the veil of the fate where the devil is hidden. That is why one can find here the embryo of the future expressionism as well as in is with the mentioned *Wozzeck*.

As far as the style is regarded still more prophetic are the scenic sketches created at the beginning of the xx century. It concerns *The Cabin N. 27* (1902) where the situation of the future *Lulu* by F. Wedekind (tuned by A. Berg) can be seen in the inversed outlook. The action takes place near the railway station (hence the play's title) where the seducer occasionally encounters his former and forgotten sweetheart who has become a local beggar. And it this ruin of feminine gender suddenly arises before her spoiler as the girl redressed in the very skirt that she wore many years ago. It turns out that she kept this disguise zealously into custody for all these long years, and it is now that she performs the act of vindication with claspings the seducer into her arms and throwing him together with herself under a train. The details of naturalism become the means of grotesque so that the very death acquires the outlook of a carnival disguise. Thus, an old beggar becomes the reincarnation of the ancient Goddess of Revenge Nemesis that makes the rogue recall all his former life.

Another version of feminine character that commits suicide in the manner of ancient Lucrece is to be found in I. Franko's sketch *Whether She has Gone Crazy?* (1904) where the situation has common traits with the famous *La Voix Humaine* by J. Cocteau (tuned as opera by F.

8 The work being put to music in Julius Meitus opera, it makes up parallel to such contemporary operas as *Cavalleria Rusticana* by P. Mascagni.

Poulenc) that was written four decades after. That the heroine reminds the image of G. Verdi's *La Traviata* is attested with her name Camilla referring to the title of A. Dumas' *The Dame with Camellias* that was the source of the mentioned opera. Besides, it is worth paying attention to the situational similarity with R.M. Rilke's *Die Eckfenster*. In both plays the girl meets her boyfriend at home. In Franko's work she throws herself from the window with the aim of her corpse being fallen before the face of this boyfriend as he has just left the room. In Rilke's case this suicide becomes the result of the visit of her rival that arrives just in the moment. The glorification of feminine dignity opens here the imagery of the century to come.

All these novelties in societal dramatic works have exerted impact upon the transformation of historical drama that is indebted to P. Kulish (1819 – 1897). The analysis of P. Kulish's *Dramatic Trilogy* (1882 – 1893) gives grounds for the statement that the development of his historical viewpoints was conformed to staging possible roles. In this work the new type of historical drama has been created that took the intermediary position between the baroque allegorical theatre and the modern conversational play, where the historical dramatis personae represent the impersonal historical powers. The experience of P. Kulish's achievements in the creation of mystery theatre (*Herod's Humbug*, 1868, and *The Farmer's Girl*, 1869) has become the base used for conceiving history. His experience of cryptography from the epoch of his participation (together with the above-mentioned N. Kostomarov) in the conspiracy of «Cyril-Method brotherhood» has contributed to the multiplicity of interpretational opportunities inherent in his utterances.

Therefore, the ancient metaphors «history - theatre» and «history - book», that will gain revival in the xx century, has turned to become productive already in P. Kulish's creative work while becoming thus the sources for historical mythmaking as the instrument of mental (artistic) experiment. Etiological myth turns into eschatological one where the reader would stand before the open questions. The possibilities inherent in historical events are put under examination on stage, and the imaginary historical portraits are made up. The problem of idiography (the description of unique historical phenomena) that has been arisen in the methodological discussions of the time is suggested by P. Kulish to be solved with the virtual world of scenic historical images presupposing

thus the expansion of interpretational opportunities<sup>9</sup>. P. Kulish has used the experience of baroque allegoric manner with the aim of creating the new type of historical drama as the tool of the exploration of historical personalities. The metaphors of the global theatre and «history - book» are implemented as the tools of for the cognition of the past. The historical myth is used for artistic experiment. The ambivalence of baroque casuistic concepts together with the contamination within the folkloristic and interpretational practice has contributed to the development of historical hermeneutics on stage with the subsequent interpretation of events on the ground of feedback or recursion between the episodes and the entire epoch. The reconstruction of historical events is achieved with rhetorical devices so that the problem arises about their apperception as the eidetic images on the intuitive way.

There are two circumstances that have played especially important role for P. Kulish's philosophy of history that exerted impact upon all further Ukrainian historical theatre. First, it is the devices of self-referential texts' construction of the baroque casuistic doctrine with the ensuing ambivalence together with playing roles under various masks in the sense of baroque metaphor of universal theatre that have contributed essentially to the disclosure of antithetic relations, alternatives and contradictions that are hidden behind the historical events<sup>10</sup>. Second, the habits of contamination in the folkloristic and interpretative practice furthered the development of the devices of poetical reflection and especially the feedback of the proper poet's creativity with the source base. The historical past is seen as the repository of prototypes and precedential texts to be put into dialogical relations of creative procedure. The cycles of historical events are conceived in P. Kulish's poetical intuition as the eidetic images incarnated with the life cycles of historical personalities<sup>11</sup>.

9 The theoretical works of P. Kulish as the historian are inseparable from the writer's wholesome inner world and are to be regarded as the continuation of scenic experiments.

10 It is to be traced especially clearly in the works that initiated Ukrainian oriental poetry – Marussia Bohuslavka, Mahomet and Hadyza.

11 As the paragon of such eidetic personification the poem Hryts'ko Skovoroda is to be mentioned that has become the precedential text for the analogous work of P. Tychyna (1940). P. Kulish's lyrical philosophy of history has become the intermediary link between the baroque epoch and the neoclassicism of the XX century.

## TOWARDS THE ADOPTION AND ADAPTATION OF THEATRICAL MODERNISM

All these achievements of newly created realistic societal drama and re-considered historical drama were summed up and synthesized in the last decade before the First World War, the period marked with the real explosion of theatrical creativity in Ukraine. The leading positions within this period were occupied with Lesya Ukrainka (pseudonym, the name L. Kosach, 1871 – 1913) and V. Vynnychenko (1880-1851). In Lesya Ukrainka's dramas the dialogue with the culture of decadence is conducted that entails the prominent place of the theme of melancholy and the derivative motifs of solitude, non-existence, fate, martyrdom that imply multivalent interpretations. There are the meaningful layers behind the chief plot lines that presuppose different possible explanations. Tragic dominance relates to the relationship towards decadence. It reveals itself in reconsidering the thorough theme of melancholy (in the form of the so called agelasticism that's the abstinence from laughter) peculiar for all dramatic works. While applying the decadent idioms Lesya Ukrainka remained not only perfectly autonomous but also went ahead of the European humanitarian thought advancing with her artistic discoveries.

The invincible power of phantoms created with human imagination and violating the person that has created them is presented in *The Blue Rose* (1896, first night 1899, published 1908) written more than a decade before M. Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird* (1908) and a century before the postmodern simulation has come to existence. It is remarkably that the scenic life of the work was common with that of A. Chekhov's *The Gull*; both weren't approved at the first night. The motifs of solitude peculiar for decadent epoch are attested in *The Lawyer Martian* (1911) and developed in a new version of stoicism that becomes the foreboding of future existentialist drama. In *Cassandra* (1907) the problems of solitude and fatalism are reconsidered in such a manner that the paradox of observer becomes discovered that belongs to themes of the philosophical discussions of the xx century. The statement on the fatalistic predestination of future is here disproved with the deed if the heroine when she in the final scene already as a captive refuse to warn Agamemnon and as the result to preclude his assassination. The future comes out to be the consequence of human decision and deed without fatality.

The motif of death as transfiguration and resurrection for a new life is developed in detail in *The Forest Song* (1911) and gains there the central place. The obvious influence of G. Hauptmann's versified fairy tale *The Sunken Bell* (*Die versunkene Glocke*) that had gained enormous popularity in the preceding years has resulted in the creation of this Ukrainian version of Rautendeley the mermaid. Noteworthy two years later another continuation of G. Hauptmann's work appeared, *The Tale of the Old Mill* (1913) by S. Cherkassenko (1876-1940). The versified work as well as its paragon it has given a rather modern arrangement of the conflict arising between technically advanced baseness and deeply human traditional society. The similar idea of the liberation through death in *The Court Dame* (*Boyarynia*, 1910) gives a pretext for the re-consideration of the double suicide as the protest against despotism. Still earlier the expediency of a victim is substantiated with the ideas of such liberation through death in *The Mad Girl* (1901). The psychoanalytic interpretation of the image of Don Juan in *The Stony Host* (1912) has become principal novelty in the world literature. The famous seducer has been treated here as a puppet in the interplay of mighty women. It is not the widow that becomes the victim of seduction but the seducer himself falls as such victim. Psychological analysis has enabled the detection of the roots of fanaticism, as Parvus in *Ruphin and Priscilla* (1907 - 1911), radicalism, as Anthei in *The Orgy* (1913), and individualism, as Richard in *The Woodland* (1897 - 1909). It is worth mentioning that it is in *The Woodland* that the phrasal unit «American dream» was created and used in the hero's monologue. In the social underground *In the Catacombs* (1905) the growth and ripening of the history's moving forces is artistically explored. All dramas are united with the thorough idea of the presence of nonexistence's borderline within everybody's personal life.

Another outstanding personality of the epoch, V. Vynnychenko (1880 - 1951), has immediate connections with the European theatrical trends of the day staying chiefly abroad during the pre-war decade. Of interest are his attachments to the rise and development of the contemporary artistic trend of «stream of conscience» where the sources of theatrical performing practice have found their imprint. The grounds for such conjecture are that here the tradition of inner monologue (soliloquy) has been continued where an author's image is to be conceived as that of an actor playing upon the global stage with the aim of dis-

closing the infernal essence of daily life. Drama uses the model of reiterated reflection as the generalized device of the so-called scene upon scene that is peculiar for «the tragedy of fate» of early romanticism that has won its revival in the decadent movement. These peculiarities of V. Vynnychenko's creative attitude are to be demonstrated at a large scale in his prosaic works (in his novellas). In his dramatic works the features of this stream of conscience are to be found in specific motivation (or the pretended lack of it) and the spontaneity of the deeds of *dramatis personae*. Therefore, the flow of thoughts and images are often to be detected within the background for taking important decisions.

Thus, in *The Deception* (1910) the wife of an engineer is blackmailed by the confidential friend of hers with her letters to her former lover that were detected and stolen by this pretended friend. She agrees for the proposal of the blackmailer to drink poison as the proof of her innocence and sincerity, so that the action comes to practical suicide. Noteworthy in this play the development of comic forms has come to the rise of tragicomedy where the cumulative compilation of jokes resulted in tragic solution: for instance, the promise of the heroine to commit suicide is perceived as a mere jest and the dialogues look like an exercise in witty humor so that the solution appears an unexpected casualty. The real motifs of this deed remain hidden and disguised as a plain error in taking medicine. It goes here about the restoration of some peculiarities of old Spanish «drama of honesty» of P. Calderon: that it was this genius of Baroque who had been elected as the stylistic paragon can be proved with the fact of Calderon's legacy being glorified by V. Vynnychenko together with his Polish contemporary S. Przybyszewski.

Another bright sample of subconsciously motivated decision is to be found in *Black Panther and White Bear* (1911). The behavior of the painter who is fully absorbed with his creative inspirations and imagination causes death of his newly born son and entails the disaster of his young wife who vindicates upon him with poisoning him. The necrophilia symptoms of the contemporary society are scrutinized here via the images of fate or fortune that become active forces. The triumph of death in the manner of mediaeval mysteries is here demonstrated as the result of fast instinctive action. In *The Nailed Down Persons* (another title *The Crucified* (1916) the son of the family of an intellectual is obsessed

with the phantom of bad inheritance and the result resigns his loving bride and commits suicide. The ideas of the spoiled lineage that were widely spread in the decadent opinion (to begin with E. Zola) are here reincarnated in the intellectual environment and presented for stage.

In *The Sin* (1919) the author elucidates the relations between the police colonel and the suspected revolutionary girl. She betrays occasionally a little secret during the interrogation, and it gives opportunity for the colonel to make her a secret agent. At the end she liberates herself with committing suicide. Death and freedom become thus equal and comparable entities. In *The Law* (1922) the author foresees the phenomenon will be spread much later – that of substituted or adoptive pregnancy: a secretary of a professor agrees to become the mother of his child because of the sterility of her wife, but after the birth she refuses to render the newly-born child to the woman. The instinct of motherhood turns out to be more important than rational arguments. *Bazaar* (1910) shows the revolutionary conspiracy, where a beautiful girl takes part. In her soul the split arises between the societal duties and the self-conscience of her sex-appeal. Such conflict of beauty and duty makes her first to spoil her face and then to commit suicide while helping in the escape of the prisoners. It is here to notice, that one of the first scenic pictures of the whirls of the current societal life were given a pair years earlier in *The Snowy Storm* (1908) by the above-mentioned S. Cherkasenko. The daughter of the mine's owner sympathizes with a protestant worker, and it is this worker who kills her at the rebellion erroneously while aiming at her father. The scheme of the early romantic tragedy of fate (*Schicksalstragödie*) is here at hand.

All this experience is to be considered while dealing with the new conditions of theatre's existence that have arisen in the inter-war two decades and have been marked with numerous conventions of due conduct. They're existed constant demands of radical novelty which were resonant with the European trend of expressionism, especially in its German version. There were also implemented certain restrictions as to the choice of artistic means that concerned also behavioral patterns. Such prerequisites of current situation in theatrical life lie beyond this article, and here it will suffice to say that it is neoclassicism with its retrospective attitude that turns out to become the most productive under the conditions of the period.

As a paragon of the adherence to traditionalism one would point to the personality of I. Kocherga<sup>12</sup> (1881 – 1952) that has managed to find the optimal narrative strategy under the temporal circumstances. These strategies in dramas do use at great scope the opportunities of the abstract interpretation of customary, habitual details peculiar for theatre. The transition to abstract notions enables making a distance towards the reality of current life and to conceive dramatic conflicts in generalized meaning. The motivation of the deeds within the space of these notions determines textual integration.

Such abstractedness of utterance enabling retrospective reconstruction of the past revealed itself as an explorative tool nest of all in historical dramas. While continuing the tradition of historical drama elaborated by P. Kulish and his successors I. Kocherga sought for mythological archetypes as the playground for mental experimentation so that myth-making devices play a heuristic role in the artistic investigation of history. It concerns legendary imagery connected with the martyrdom and the idea of victim, the concepts of fate and of the duality of human soul. Thus, in his historical drama *The Fairy Maid of the Bitter Almonds* (1926), the landowner is in searches for the beloved taste of his childhood and finds his bride in poor peasant girl (the action refers to XVIII c.). Here the motif of Cinderella from fairy tales serves as the device of displaying the mythology of infernal world of serfdom. *The Diamond Millstone* (1927) deals with the mythological motif of the searches for the lost wedding-ring, but it becomes only a pretext for the efforts of the girl to rescue her bridegroom condemned as the participant of the peasant riot. In *The Marriage of Candle* (1931) the rite of the XVI c. becomes the background for the plot about the salvation of a lad by a wise girl, and the struggle for the removing the forbiddance to enlighten homes at night acquires the outlook of the Promethean myth. At last, *Marko at the Hell* (1928) reproduces the structure of baroque interludes.

The principal achievements of I. Kocherga are usually seen in such historical dramas whereas his habitual, societal pieces remain beyond the attention of the researchers. At the same time, it is already the prohibition of three his works dealing with the contemporary topics be-

12 The works of the playwright have been scrutinized at least twice, by Ye. Starynkevych [1947] and by N. Kuzyakina [1968].

tween 1927 and 1940 years that attest the existence of «Aesopian language» deserving and needing special analysis. It is the metasystem of abstractions that needs to be taken into consideration in a dramatic work as the necessary premise of textual integration. Subsequently the ordinary customary situations become the metonymic designations of abstract notions. The author indulges in leaving far away the realities of contemporary life and in exploring its essence within the abstract space. The unity of a work is determined with such abstractions that are to be found. The basis of this unity becomes delineated with the interrelations of the dramatis personae as the incarnations of such abstractions as in baroque allegories. Such approach enables tracing the transformation of characteristic details into symbols through metonymy as the device most apt for stage.

Thus, in the play *Nature and Culture* (forbidden 1928) the situation of the reconciliation between the divorced woman – the peasant Mokryna – and her friend who becomes her daughter's bridegroom, refers to the abstraction of the mentioned donated grace from the baroque drama. Mokryna personifies the abstraction of victim and reveals her defenselessness before the antagonist of her husband, so that the expectation of jeopardy becomes the last word of the play. The play *The Masters of Time* (the primary title *A Watchmaker and a Hen* with which it had been forbidden in 1933) deals with the existential situation of a human being between the irretrievable flow of time and the vanity of daily life. The protagonist Lydia demonstrates tragic fate that dissolves in the chaos of fortuity that is symbolized with the hen-coop.

The drama *If Thou go, Thou Will not Return* (1935, as well as the previous version *The Ransom*, 1924) represents the early romantic «tragedy of fate»: one of the partners of «the eternal triangle» commits suicide, the message about it compels the heroine (and, in the later version, the other sweetheart too) to return from the travel, and it rescues the life because the train smashes. The central protagonist Lyubasha becomes the allegory of feminine stoicism, she discloses her invincibility before the fate's trials.

*The Name* (1937, in the remade version *The Oath*, 1949) is the so called «drama of honor» (that has been developed in the mentioned *The Deception* by V. Vynnychenko) where the interplay with the canonical detective story's scheme can be observed: the crime is demonstrated

for the spectators in the particular scene (the murder of a scientist and the robbery of his papers simulated as a suicide) instead of its investigation, and the very detection of the murderer is replaced with the defense of the authorship accomplished by the scientist's daughter Zhura. It is just this feminine person that incarnates the concept of honor conceived as the affair to which the life is dedicated. *The Truth* (1948) gives a version of the previous plot where the thief comes to the scientist's daughter already after the death of scientist, and his intentions are detected by her friend Nina who rescues her. She incarnates the redemption as Nemesis of the myth and becomes the protagonist.

*The Choice* (1938. forbidden 1940 after three performances) arrogantly depicts the Great Terror with its atmosphere of irresolution and hesitation, and the justification of the arrested scientist is treated as a kind of wondrous event in the manner of baroque miracle. The protagonist – the scientist's wife Vera – ventures to give to the institute the packet left by her husband because she is disappointed with her friend and is in the state of depression that becomes the abstract motivational force. «*The Night Alarm*» (1943) is the parable of the contestation of the woman that has born the son and the woman that has brought him up. This abstraction is represented through the imagination of the observer – the adopted girl Helene who becomes the arbitrator and the bride of this son. *The Exam in Anatomy* (1940) demonstrates the examination of the relations between the poet Shelest and the professor Nina Topolya. The heroine wins victory because she discloses the ability of critical evaluation of her own deeds. *The Chinese Flask* (1944) as a fairy play takes a separate place as it introduces in the contemporary customary life the magic oriental thing that detects the genuine nature of those opening it. The protagonist here is the painter Susan whose relations to the poet Ocheret are tested with the disappearances and the finds of the flask.

This short outline permits to enumerate some constant traits attesting the close attachment of Ukrainian dramatic art to European stylistic history. First, it is the constant presence of baroque casuistic concepts and motifs that reveal their vitality still in the first half of the xx century. The formation of realistic drama with its social criticism was enrooted in the infernality of the world's picture, whereas it is the comic elements that are obligatorily at hand in transition from humor to

grotesque. There are motifs of balladry spread all over Europe that were constantly used in Ukrainian plays. Melodramatic elements as well as the details of naturalistic picture get abstracted interpretation and become symbols. Heuristic games with mythological motifs provide experimental exploration of the past in historical dramas. The preference of retrospective attitudes of neoclassic in the inter-war decades is concordant with the respective European trends of the time.

To sum up, one can say of a compressed and abridged stylistic development recapitulated in Ukrainian theatre. The epoch of the historical XIX century with its reminiscences in the interwar decades of the succeeding century has procured space enough to display a kind of stylistic compendium with special dramatic means. Ukrainian drama can be said to perform the role of a diminishing glass for an estranged observer of the European cultural history. A peculiar casuistic verve of the Jesuit baroque dramatic art has built up a background for all developmental trends in Ukrainian drama as the shadow of the epoch in European history. Being a peripheral version of European theatre the Ukrainian drama bears witness of its most essential stylistic shifts taking place within the observed temporal limits.

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