

INTERPRETATION OF THE FEMALE IMAGES IN ENGLISH, GERMAN AND UKRAINIAN COMEDY

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In the article the attempt has been made to characterize the combination of traditional and innovative approach in the creation of a female image, the role of a woman in the family and society in the comedies "An Ideal Husband" by O. Wilde, "Der Biberpelz" ("The Beaver Coat") by G. Hauptmann, "Zhyteyske more" ("The Sea of Life") by I. Karpenko-Karyi and "Suprotivni techiyi" ("Opposing Currents") by M. Kropyvnytskyi. The recipients observe not only traditional female images, but also new types of heroines who oppose injustice, aim at selfrealization. The female images are courageous, persistent, often more active than men in public life. The authors raised important ethical problems, connected with the spiritual search of a woman, a free choice of good or evil, peculiarities of family upbringing. The concentration of attention on revealing psychoemotional state, peculiarities of thinking, perception, behaviour motivation of female images, bearers of positive and negative character traits has been traced. The personages' psychological collisions, opposition of moral view-points and positions have been investigated. The main attention is taken from actions to the inner world. The spirit world of Gertrude Chiltern, Marusya Baryl'chenko, Mrs. Wolff, Nadezhda Khyl'ko is interpreted with the help of the analysis of ethnomental constants (individualism, love of freedom, persistence, the ability to drastic actions, humanism). O. Wilde as well as G. Hauptmann, I. Karpenko-Karyi, M. Kropyvnytskyi uses psychologism as one of the means of characterization, storytelling, staginess. It has been examined that the gallery of female types in English, German and Ukrainian comedies in the late XIXth and early XXth centuries is clearly identified in the binary oppositions «sense – nonsense» images. With their help the playwrights embodied artistically convincing personalities with strong characters who can withstand the surroundings and circumstances of life.

Key words: *the discourse of personality, female images, psychological collisions, positive and negative female behaviour models, guardian of the home, combination of traditional and innovative approach, ethnomental constants.*

Introduction. The comedy genre in English, German and Ukrainian dramatic art in the late XIXth and early XXth centuries is characterized by a special structure, specific characteristics of the form and contents, the expansion of the thematics, analytical approach of depiction. The personalities in the comedies of Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900), Gerhart Hauptmann (1862 – 1946), Ivan Karpenko-Karyi (1845 – 1907), Marko Kropyvnytskyi (1840 – 1910) are a combination of the playwrights' ways of looking at a person, her way of thinking, psychoemotional state, feelings, peculiarities of behaviour. For the last decade of the XIXth century the way of looking at a woman as a personality, her role in the society have changed. Traditional female traits in many cultures were considered to be emotionality, weakness, aspiration for other people's support, help. But the heroines of the analyzed plays are gradually becoming strong-willed, active, determined, courageous, independent, reasonable that is more common for men.

The detailed literary researches by N. Bilous (Білоус, 2005, 20 с.), S. Khorob (Хороб, 2013, С. 276–283), P. Letnianchyn (Летнянчин, 2007,

192 с.), N. Maliutina (Малютіна, 2006, 352 с.), A. Matiushchenko (Матющенко, 1996, 161 с.), H. Pearson (Pearson, 1946, 389 p.), V. Pratsiovytyi (Працьовитий, 1999, 282 с.), B. Shoeller (Shoeller, 1971, 139 S.), M. Sokolianskyi (Соколянський, 1990, 200 с.), V. Vyshynskyi (Вишинський, 2006, 174 с.), A. Zakharchenko (Захарченко, 2007, 210 с.) are dedicated to the studies of the characters in West European and Ukrainian dramaturgy of the mentioned epoch. Great attention is paid to the creation of images who emphasize national disposition, spirit. But the need of the system comparative analysis of comic images, mainly female images in the dramatic works with a significant comedy predominant idea of O. Wilde, G. Hauptmann, I. Karpenko-Karyi, M. Kropyvnytskyi determined the **novelty** of the article. M. Kudriavtsev credibly proves that a female image plays a great part "as an individual of the nation in choosing moral orientation, the sense of life, ideals which define the rise or decline, self-affirmation or degradation, humanity or heartlessness, progress or stagnation" (Кудрявцев, 2007, с. 289 – translated by H. S.).

The aim of the research. The **objective** of the work is to characterize the discourse of personality in the light of the psychological collisions of the female images in the comedies of English, German and Ukrainian playwrights at the turn of the XIXth–XXth centuries. The outlined objective requires the fulfillment of the following **tasks**: to analyze the role of a woman in the family and society, to discover peculiarities of a person's psychoemotional structure, to show positive and negative female behaviour models, to concretize the combination of traditional and innovative approach in the creation of a female image in the comedies "An Ideal Husband" (1895) by O. Wilde, "The Beaver Coat" (1893) by G. Hauptmann, "The Sea of Life" (1904) by I. Karpenko-Karyi and "Opposing Currents" (1900) by M. Kropyvnytskyi that constitute the **object** of the article.

Theoretical framework. O. Wilde in the comedy "An Ideal Husband" comprehensively depicted the psychological portrait of Gertrude Chiltern, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs' wife. Gertrude as well as Marusya Baryl'chenko in I. Karpenko-Karyi's comedy "The Sea of Life" is morally stable. Robert's wife denies every luxury that can tarnish her husband's honour, rejects dishonourable ways of gaining power. Gertrude emphasizes the exceptional role her husband plays for her and the surrounding world. Lady Chiltern doesn't understand Robert's opinion of supporting the building of the Argentine canal. She can't comprehend the motive that stimulated him to come to such a decision. She is not convinced by her husband's assurance that the change of his point of view on the Stock Exchange speculations is necessary. Mrs. Chiltern puts emphasis on it in the following dialogue:

"Lady Chiltern: It can never be necessary to do what is not honourable. Or if it be necessary, then what is it that I have loved! But it is not, Robert; tell me it is not. Why should it be? What gain would you get? Money? We have no need of that! ... Power? But power is nothing in itself. It is power to do good that is fine – that, and that only. What is it, then? Robert, tell me why you are going to do this dishonourable thing!

Sir Robert Chiltern: Gertrude, you have no right to use that word. I told you it was a question of rational compromise. It is no more than that.

Lady Chiltern: Robert, that is all very well for other men, for men who treat life simply as a sordid speculation; but not for you, Robert, not for you" (Wilde, 1978, p. 177).

Gertrude and Marusya are models of perfection for their husbands. Robert and Ivan highly appreciate their wives' opinions. Chiltern is sure that

Gertrude would have never married him if she had known her husband's real way of getting the post of the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. She is stable as to her moral convictions, her knowledge of life hasn't affected the firmness of her world view. But it's important to notice that Mrs. Chiltern's beliefs are idealized to some extent. The image of the man created in her imagination is the result of inadequate reality perception. It's a great pity that Gertrude can't forgive Robert the mistake of his youth which has been atoned for many years.

Marusya Baryl'chenko's statements about marital fidelity in the play "The Sea of Life" are consistent with her actions. In the first act of the work the author showed Khvylya's obtrusive kindness to Ivan Baryl'chenko's wife. Platon Pylypovych tries to convince the woman to break marital faithfulness. He swears that his feelings are sincere and dreams that his passion for his friend's wife will be reciprocated. However, the captain's eloquent arguments cannot shake Marusya's moral stability. She loves her husband infinitely and is happy with him in marriage. Respect and love of the heroine of the play for her husband have a strong harmonious basis, by the depth of their emotional tension they are diametrically opposed to the desires of Ivan's friend for bodily pleasures. Therefore Marusya with dignity sends the captain of the ship from the house.

In the image of Ivan Baryl'chenko's wife the playwright portrayed a bright character of a Ukrainian woman. The Ukrainian people can be understood and identified only if the "national centre" is considered to be a mother who is at the same time a devoted wife, the guardian of the home. The image of Marusya Baryl'chenko embodies the high moral traits of Ukrainian women: kindness, diligence, love, sense of human dignity, prudence, patience, determination, sacrifice. Insincerity of relations, sly morals implying uncontrollable passions are unacceptable for her. The woman is not capable of moral decline, her emotional and rational feelings are harmoniously balanced. The Ukrainian comedy writer showed these characteristics of the actor's wife in the following conversation:

«Іван. О, ха-ха-ха! Це річ звичайна: один сезон – Ваніна, другий – Платонина!.. А ти трошки ревнива...

Маруся. Ні, мій любий! Ні! Поки я вірю, ніщо мене не тривожить, а потерю віру – ніщо мені віри не верне! Я не здатна ні на ревність, ні на компроміси! Зрада і смерть – для мене одно! Хто мені зрадить, той умирає для мене назавжди, без повороту» (Карпенко-Карий, 1961, т. 3, с. 100).

Like Mrs. Chiltern in the comedy “An Ideal Husband”, Marusya is serious-minded, she thinks and acts sensibly. The playwright masterly made a psychological portrait of the woman. To portray the character of Marusya Baryl’chenko and that of Gertrude Chiltern, I. Karpenko-Karyi and O. Wilde, respectively, resorted to various techniques, the most common of which was the disclosure of the inner world of the heroine through external circumstances. The dialogues and monologues of the comedies “The Sea of Life” and “An Ideal Husband” are characterized by witty remarks and the clarity of each character’s world-view. The playwright made the most of internal monologues.

Laura Cheveley, Gertrude Chiltern’s former classmate, is the exact opposite of the latter. Mrs. Cheveley resorts to bribery and blackmail, trying to convince Robert Chiltern of the importance of building the Argentine canal. Laura Cheveley’s peculiar way of thinking becomes obvious when she describes the bleak future of the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs if he rejects her request: “My dear Sir Robert, what then? You are ruined, that is all! ... Scandals used to lend charm, or at least interest, to a man – now they crush him. And yours is a very nasty scandal. You couldn’t survive it” (Wilde, 1978, p. 170). There are vivid elements of satire in the remarks made by Mrs. Cheveley with regard to Robert. This shows the superficial nature of the so-called “high” morality of the English beau-monde. B. Shaw used similar motifs in “The Devil’s Disciple” (1897). As well as O. Wilde, B. Shaw, who later wrote the drama “Pygmalion”, linked these motifs to Puritanism. In this respect, it is worth mentioning the correct conclusion made by P. Letnianshyn: “In the melodrama, in addition to the relevance of the problems raised, the vividness of the situations and the dynamic actions, B. Shaw revealed the negative features of the Puritan community. The dramatist depicted Richard’s relatives, who practised asceticism for the sake of appearances, through the prism of satire” (Летнянчин, 2007, с. 79 – translated by H. S.).

By the end of the first act, the mild, good-natured humour of O. Wilde’s play acquires a strident, more dramatic sounding. The distinct change, however, does not significantly affect the genre tone of the play. This is supported by B. Minchyn in the following quote: “The comic effect is not normally found in “pure”, isolated form either in reality or in art; it is characterized by many mutual transitions to/from the beautiful, high, and tragic effect” (Мінчын, 1959, с. 41 – translated by H. S.).

In his adventurous naturalistic comedy “The Beaver Coat” Gerhart Hauptmann depicts the risky adventures of Mrs. Wolff. Outlining the psycho-

logical peculiarities of the main character of the play, we should point out that she has a goal and is focused on achieving it. Mother Wolff has set herself the task to secure the future of her children. She believes that an acting career is exactly what can improve the well-being of the family.

At the beginning of the first act of the play, there occurs a comic situation in Mrs. Wolff’s house, which is depicted by the German playwright in a humorous way. Leontine, the woman’s daughter, works as a maid for wealthy people, but all of a sudden she flees her service to her masters. Mother Wolff is outraged by this action of her daughter’s, since it took her much time and effort to find a decent job for her. Mrs. Wolff tries to force her daughter to resume her former job, using irony and threats:

“Frau Wolff war bemüht, ein Stück Rehwild aus dem Sack hervorzuziehen. I, schinden tun se dich also bei Kriegers? Nee, so a armes Kind aber ooch! – Mit so was komm mer ock uffgezugen! A Frauenzimmer wie a Dragoner...! Nanu faß an, dort unten a Sack! Du kannst dich woll gar nich tälscher anstellen? Bei mir haste damit kee Glicke nich! ’s Faulenzen lernste bei mir erscht recht nich! Beide hängen den Rehbock am Türpfosten auf. Nu sag’ ich dersch aber zum letzten Male...”

Leontine. Ick jeh’ nich mehr bei die Leute hin. Denn jeh’ ick lieber int Wasser, Mama!

Frau Wolff. Na, daßte ock bloß keen’n Schnuppen krigst“ (Hauptmann, 1966, S. 486).

During a consistent dialogue, Mother Wolff displays her core traits. She is a woman of character and at the same time has a cheerful disposition. Despite her maternal feelings for her daughters Leontine and Adelheid and her desire to help them to be successful in life, Mrs. Wolff is adamant in her beliefs and is eager to be the decision-maker of the family. On the other hand, the laundress is good at putting an end to conflicts and sharp disputes. This weakens the drama of the play, characteristic of G. Hauptmann’s other works such as “Before Daybreak”, “The Reconciliation” and “Lonely Lives”.

In portraying the cheerful laundress the German playwright resorted to a theatrical effect, which was necessary for creating the dramatic image on the stage. The abundance of dialogues and monologues in the Berlin dialect in the play “The Beaver Coat” is due to G. Hauptmann’s intention to make readers and viewers understand the psychological state of the characters. The elements of the dialect in the characters’ speech of the comedy emphasize their individuality and uniqueness. R. Cowen rightly notes that “the dialect beloved by naturalists is shown to its best advantage in this comedy – better than in any other work of literature, which, however, does not feature the

active types; this is exactly why the characters are more distinct" (Cowen, 1973, S. 207 – translated by H. S.). Mother Wolff's values are due to the influence of the environment in which she lives. This is an important genre feature of G. Hauptmann's play. In particular, the ideological purpose of "this type of comedy is to depict the impact of the environment on each character and show how everyone becomes a part of this environment in his/her own way" (Christoff, 1944, S. 71–72 – translated by H. S.).

Unlike Mrs. Cheveley in the comedy "An Ideal Husband" by O. Wilde, Mrs. Wolff is an attractive, if dishonest, character. According to the indisputable reasoning of R. Cowen, she "will remain one of the unforgettable images of the German-language theatre, and it is obvious that her character combines many features of the traditional comedy" (Cowen, 1973, S. 207 – translated by H. S.).

M. Kropyvnytskyi, M. Starytskyi, I. Karpenko-Karyi and I. Franko made a powerful contribution to the drama of critical realism, analysing the most difficult problems of the time. Having a thorough knowledge of the life of the people, admiring their industriousness and spiritual beauty, the playwrights created convincing socio-psychological characters. They paid much attention to the disclosure of the social and psychological features of the women characters based on the philosophy of individualism and the fundamentals of psychoanalysis. At the turn of the centuries, the range of female characters in the Ukrainian drama was multifaceted and included the peasant woman, often despised by society, and the intelligent, highly spiritual, independent woman. In addition, comedy writers often portrayed a new type of women who did not limit their activities to household chores, but also took an active part in social life.

Nadezhda Khyly'ko, a hard-working and ambitious girl, the main character of the comedy "Opposing Currents" by M. Kropyvnytskyi, makes significant efforts to improve the level of literacy and promote education in rural areas. Similar to Omelian Tkach from the comedy "The Teacher" by I. Franko (1894), she tries to instil the love of learning in rural children, teaches them to count, read and write. The girl is also engaged in ethnography, the study of folklore. She enjoys considerable respect of the village inhabitants.

Being well-educated and well-bred, Nadezhda is able to defend her beliefs. She is level-headed and controls her temper in any situation. These traits of the girl's character manifest themselves when Havrylo proposes her marriage to Demyd Zhovtyak. Nadezhda Khyly'ko rejects the proposal and stands her ground. The girl receives great sup-

port from her father, who shares her aspirations and backs her decision:

«Надежда. Куценька буде розмова, вже така куценька, що куціш заячого хвостика. Отакісінька! (Показує кінчик пальця.) А що вам татко відповіли, то цього я не дочула.

Андрій. А те одповів, що в тебе своя голова на плечах і свій розум, а до того ще й серце у тебе своє» (Кропивницький, 1990, с. 443).

In the researched play M. Kropyvnytskyi convincingly depicted clumsy forms of life in the Ukrainian village which led to suffering and loneliness of people. Nadezhda Khyly'ko is a reformer who calls for solving some problems through active opposition. Andriy Khyly'ko's daughter, as well as Vivie Warren in the play "Mrs. Warren's Profession" (1893) by B. Shaw, Anna Mahr in the drama "Lonely Lives" (1891) by G. Hauptmann, Anna Zadorozhna in the work "Stolen Happiness" (1891) by I. Franko, opposes selfishness, superstitions of fellow villagers, outdated stereotypes. The girl is not afraid of expressing her own thoughts, putting them into practice, she is not guided by the views and interests imposed on her by other people. Nadezhda Khyly'ko firmly and courageously strives to win her right to free choice, her experiences, personal drama are caused by the change in worldviews.

Research findings. In the comedies "An Ideal Husband" by O. Wilde, "The Beaver Coat" by G. Hauptmann, "The Sea of Life" by I. Karpenko-Karyi, "Opposing Currents" by M. Kropyvnytskyi one can observe not only traditional female images, but also new types of heroines who oppose injustice, aim at selfrealization. The female images are courageous, persistent, often more active than men in public life. Modelling female images, the writers raised important ethical problems connected with the role of a woman in the family and society, her spiritual search, a free choice of good or evil, peculiarities of family upbringing.

The personages' psychological collisions, opposition of moral view-points and positions form the basis of the plot of the analyzed plays. The conflict "personality – society" is observed in the comedies, the conflict "woman – society" in particular. The main attention is taken from actions to the inner world. The spirit world of Gertrude Chiltern, Marusya Baryl'chenko, Mrs. Wolff, Nadezhda Khyly'ko is interpreted with the help of the analysis of ethnomental constants (individualism, love of freedom, persistence, the ability to drastic actions, humanism). The main characters need self-expression, but not ordinary existence. O. Wilde as well as G. Hauptmann, I. Karpenko-Karyi, M. Kropyvnytskyi uses psy-

chologism as one of the means of characterization, storytelling, staginess.

The main heroine of the play “An Ideal Husband” by O. Wilde Gertrude Chiltern like Marusya Baryl’chenko in the comedy “The Sea of Life” by I. Karpenko-Karyi is stable as to her moral convictions, is capable of making her husband reinterpret his own mistakes of life. O. Wilde psychologically convincingly depicted Mrs. Cheveley, Gertrude Chiltern’s opponent. Mrs. Wolff’s risky actions are portrayed in an original way in the adventurous naturalistic comedy “The Beaver Coat”. The play by G. Hauptmann shows how an ordinary woman aims at becoming respected and prosperous. Depicting Nadezhda Khylyko on the pages of the comedy “Opposing Currents” M. Kropyvnytskyi

emphasized the features of a representative of the new generation of Ukrainian women.

Conclusions. The gallery of female types in English, German and Ukrainian comedies in the late XIXth and early XXth centuries is clearly identified in the binary oppositions “sense – non-sense” images. With their help the comedy writers O. Wilde (“An Ideal Husband”), G. Hauptmann (“The Beaver Coat”), I. Karpenko-Karyi (“The Sea of Life”), M. Kropyvnytskyi (“Opposing Currents”) embodied artistically convincing personalities with strong characters who can withstand the surroundings and circumstances of life. The plays are characterized by lively dialogues, persuasive portrayal of emotional experience and feelings of female images.

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ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЯ ЖІНОЧИХ ОБРАЗІВ В АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ, НІМЕЦЬКІЙ ТА УКРАЇНСЬКІЙ КОМЕДІЇ

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У статті здійснено спробу охарактеризувати поєднання традиційності й новаторства у творенні образу жінки, її роль у сім'ї та суспільстві у комедіях «Ідеальний чоловік» О. Вайлда, «Боброва шуба» Г. Гауптмана, «Життєве море» І. Карпенка-Карого, «Супротивні течії» М. Кропивницького. Спостерігаємо не лише традиційні жіночі образи, а й нові типи героїнь, які протистоять несправедливості, прагнуть до самореалізації. Жіночі образи захоплюють своєю мужністю, наполегливістю, часто активніші за чоловіків у суспільному житті. Автори порушували важливі морально-етичні проблеми, пов'язані з духовними пошуками жінки, свободою вибору між добром і злом, особливостями сімейного виховання. Простежено зосередженість уваги на розкритті психоемоційного стану, особливостей мислення, сприйняття, мотивацій поведінки жіночих образів, носіїв позитивних і негативних рис характеру. Досліджено психологічні колізії, зіткнення моральних поглядів і позицій дійових осіб. Основна увага переноситься із зовнішньої дії у внутрішній світ. Внутрішній світ Гертруди Чілтерн, Марусі Барильченко, фрау Волф, Надежди Хилько осмислено за допомогою аналізу етноментальних констант (індивідуалізм, волелюбність, наполегливість, здатність до рішучих дій, гуманізм). О. Вайлд, як і Г. Гауптман, І. Карпенко-Карий, М. Кропивницький, використовує психологізм як один із засобів характеротворення, сюжетобудування, сценічності. Увиразнено, що галерея жіночих типів в англійській, німецькій та українській комедії кінця ХІХ – початку ХХ ст. – чітко ідентифіковані в бінарних опозиціях «сенс-нонсенс» образи. З їхньою допомогою драматурги втілювали художньо переконливі особистості з потужними характерами, здатними протистояти середовищу та обставинам життя.

Ключові слова: дискурс особистості, жіночі образи, психологічні колізії, позитивні та негативні жіночі поведінкові моделі, берегиня домашнього вогнища, поєднання традиційності й новаторства, етноментальні константи.