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[Rev.:] Oksana Petrìvna Âkovina, *Metaphysics in Poetry: Ukraine of the 17th Century*, Scholarly and Publishing Centre "Opillya", L'viv 2010, 216 p. (Series *Depository Opillya. Education and Science*)

For the first time in Ukrainian literature attention was drawn to metaphysical poems by compilers of the anthology *Ukrainian Poetry: The Middle of the 17th century* – Volodimir Krekoten and Mikola Sulima (Kyiv, 1992, in Ukrainian). They published some anonymous texts called metaphysical poetry (under the subtitle: religious and philosophical poems) dividing them into following groups: prayer poems, Christmas carols, homiletic poems and poems about death. The next step in the study of this topic in Ukraine was a monograph by Tetiana Riazantseva *To Paint a Thought: Conceptism as a Trend of Metaphysical Poetry in European Baroque Literature* (Kyiv, 1999, in Ukrainian). In fact, before that there had been no tradition of research into Baroque metaphysical poetry in Ukraine.

Oksana Yakovyna's monograph is based on her candidate thesis (Ph.D. thesis) *Metaphysical Ukrainian poetry of the second half of the seventeenth century* (2002). The researcher is well prepared to deal with such a topic. Oksana Yakovyna has a doctoral degree in Philology and an M. A. in Religious Sciences. She studied philology at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv and theology at the St. Thomas Aquinas Higher Institute of Religious Sciences of Kyiv (the Branch of the Pontifical University "Angelicum", Rome, Italy). Now Oksana Yakovyna carries out research on the subject of metaphysics in art and on Christian theology as a Fellow of the Shevchenko Institute of Literature at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

As Dr Yakovyna points out herself, in her book she examines the ways of combining the metaphysical worldview of a particular person with the worldview of a particular epoch as a means of self-cognition through poetry. The method offered to the readers enables connecting modern problems of literary theory with medieval studies in the context

of national mentality and religious tradition. By conducting comparative, cultural, philosophical, theological and literary analyses of Baroque poetic texts Oksana Yakovyna investigates problems of personalism and hierarchy, humility and dynamism of the will of man, freedom and dependence on God. The author's purpose is to reconstruct the character of metaphysical thinking with the help of baroque texts. This enables an understanding of the affinity between Ukrainian and European spiritual and social traditions. The author follows the stages of her study and invites the readers to get to know the unique essential existence of the poetic world through metaphysics.

Oksana Yakovyna explores the content and form of the Ukrainian metaphysical poetry of the 17th century (the works of Ivan Velychkovskii, Ivan Ornovskii, Samiylo Mokryevych, Danylo Bratkovskii, Stefan Yavorskii, Pylyp Orlyk, Ivan Maksymovych). She draws the reader's attention to different faces of metaphysical poetry in the works of these authors and to the striking richness and symbolic meaning of the metrics of their poetry. The principles of metaphysical existence of the man and the world can be expressed not only through the content but also through the form or unity of content and form. If we compare Ivan Velychkovskii's epic and didactic poetry and Ivan Ornovskii's lyric and dramatic poetry, we see that metaphysics of both authors is deeply rooted in an intimate, personal experience of reality. However, the first-mentioned poet is a man who looks at the world, as it were, from the side, noticing all its flaws and strengths. Ornovskii's texts are different in this respect: they represent pain and a certain confusion of the man who is like an accomplice of these contradictory elements in this world. Metaphysical feelings of the poets are substantially different, in spite of the fact that they come from the same generation and that their biographies are similar.

The Ukrainian metaphysical poetry of the 17th century dealt with the issue of human transience, impermanence and futility; it expressed a hope of salvation in God, and also referred to the temptations, weaknesses and passions of man's life in the world of the matter. These texts reveal an attitude of a man torn between the flesh and eternal life. He is aware that he should live in order to reach salvation, but cannot resist temptations of the world in which he lives, he cannot overcome his weaknesses. As Oksana Yakovyna says, the structure of "the image of the world", created by Ukrainian metaphysical poets of the Baroque period is compiled from such oppositions as Christian, sacred and profane elements, multilingual environment and form's unity in their

complex and universal alloy, which integrates scholastic philosophy with a national experience of the world.

The Ukrainian researcher tries to delimit metaphysical, religious and philosophical poems as separate categories. It is an ambitious task; there are more common features than differences between metaphysical, religious and philosophical poems: God, Love, Death, the Person and the World are key notions for all of them. Religious thinking was dominant in the Baroque period, the meditation's poetic model was superimposed on the traditions of philosophical lyrics, which are derived from Antiquity and the Middle Ages. The art of meditation was the basis of the poetic art of the Baroque period. As Oksana Yakovyna says, metaphysical cognition in the Ukrainian Baroque poetry of the seventeenth century manifests itself primarily as rational process, through which poetic emotion associates with cognition, intuitive and supernatural (mystical). Philosophical cognition within Baroque poetry is usually linked with the sphere of *ratio*, in which emotion, unlike metaphysical poetic discourse, does not have transcendental functions of the connection with *verum, bonum, pulchrum*, but serves only as a means of filling the rational thought with a specific visual sense. Religious cognition is unique and, by its nature, does not create communicative situations. Thus, the basis of religious cognition is the practice of faith, the basis of philosophical cognition is *ratio* (including intuitional philosophy and religious philosophy), and the system knowledge is a result of rational intercourse, which is synthesized through faith with mentality.

According to many researchers, the essence of the highly intellectualized metaphysical poetry defies precise definition. Neither thematic criteria, nor metaphysical consciousness are not enough. As T.S. Eliot in his classical essey *The Metaphysical Poets* (1921) said, not only is it extremely difficult to define metaphysical poetry, but difficult to decide which poets practice it and in which of their poems. "Metaphysical poets" is a term coined by the poet and critic Samuel Johnson to describe a loose group of British lyric poets of the 17th century, whose work was characterized by the inventive use of conceits, and by speculation about topics such as love or religion. Their style was characterized chiefly by wit. The metaphysical poetry was written in 17th-century England, France, Germany, Holland, Spain, Italy etc. Christoph Mrowtsevich (Krzysztof Mrowcewicz), who compiled an anthology of Polish metaphysical poetry of the Baroque (1993), believes that the discussion on metaphysical poetry is still open.

As Oksana Yakovyna underlines, the Ukrainian metaphysical poetry of the seventeenth century was created within the cultural traditions of the the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and predominantly in Polish (literary and state language). The features of metaphysical Baroque poetry were conditioned by a struggle of different traditions, cultures, religious faiths, ideologies and governments in the Ukrainian consciousness. The author sees the identity of the Ukrainian metaphysical poetry in striving for hierarchical unity of internal human life and in a especial role of the creative emotion. Orthodoxy, which traditionally did not stress the personal factor in man, placed the Common above the Personal. Oksana Yakovyna says that the Polish formula "Me and God" has something in common with the inversed formula of the Ukrainian metaphysical poetry - "God and Me". In our opinion, this view upon the features of the Ukrainian metaphysical poetry (compared with Polish) in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth requires additional argumentation.

A future task in this research field is to consider links between Ukrainian metaphysical poetry and logic, which was for the metaphysical poets a tool of emotions. It is significant that the sonnet, a lyrical form, so popular in metaphysical poetry, has been called by Herbert Grierson " a poetic analogy of the syllogism".

In conclusion of the above it should be underlined that Oksana Yakovyna's monograph is undoubtedly a significant contribution to the study of the Ukrainian metaphysical poetry of the 17th century.

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