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## **MYKOLA KHVYLOVYI AND THE FRENCH REPUBLIC OF LITERATURE: THE EXPERIENCE OF RE-READING**

Probably, everyone who attempted to identify the modern literature of France could not distinguish different features of the imperative of re-reading as a unique mode of paradoxical interpretation of the text. Thus, in the connotative semiotics of Roland Barthes, rewriting as a rebellion against utilitarian ideology qualifies as a

“starting principle, because only it can protect the text from repetition [...], raise the degree of its diversity and plurality; [...] recharging is not the text consumption, it’s a game (a game like a repetition of divergent combinations). If, therefore, we immediately read the text (I deliberately contradict the terminology), then we do it to find – like under the influence of the drug (the effect of restoration, the effect of unwillingness) – not a “true text” but a plural one: the same, as before, but at the same time updated”<sup>1</sup>.

Jacques Derrida’s strategy of deconstructing relates re-reading with “the delusion of the boundary that outlines the field of classical scholarship”<sup>2</sup> and the formation of “dual science”<sup>3</sup>, structured by two heterogeneous gestures: the reversal of the

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<sup>1</sup> Р. Барт, *S/Z*, Москва 2009, с. 60–61.

<sup>2</sup> Ж. Дерріда, *Позиції. Бесіди з Анрі Ронсом, Юлією Крістевою, Жаном-Луї Удбіном, Гі Скарпетта*, Київ 1994, с. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem.

classical hierarchy and its addition to the “vaccinations”, an accent in the text of what was not noticed by the author himself. According to the convincing criterion of the object of deconstructive re-reading, Derrida confesses the test of death symmetrical to the apocryphal gift of death (the inversion of the classical text is an infinite process, the equivalent of an analysis that does not stop: “the turning point is never a dead time”<sup>4</sup>. Derrida’s transcription / reading is analogous to the “strange manner to walk in a circle”<sup>5</sup>, which corresponds to both the experience of twisting and double regulation: staying in the center and in the vicinity, collecting selfness and simulacra.

The French death experience of re-reading is likely to be fruitful, first of all, with the choice of the subject of analysis in the text, homogeneous to France in a dual fashion: France in it means both the writing locus and a point of special cognitive attention. Here we tell about the book by Leonid Plyushch (1938-2015), a unique Ukrainian emigrant scholar who lived in Bessee until recently, called “His secret, or “The beautiful chamber” of Khvylovyi” (2006), written about an artist with French roots<sup>6</sup> captured by “conscious... French hairdressing”<sup>7</sup>, both in his own texts and in initiated newspapers, almost half of which was devoted to the literature in foreign country, the leader of the Shot Art and Literary Renaissance of the 1920s, to Mykola Khvylovyi (1893-1933). “French hairdressing”, in this case, appears as an analogue of the operation of the “smell of the word” as a phenomenon of Rudolf Steiner’s anthroposophy called for the restoration of the esoteric history of the universe and man, which began from one center, by activating a complex associative mechanism. Carried out by L. Plyushch,

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<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> Ж. Деррида, *Диссеминация*, Екатеринбург 2007, с. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Л. Плющ, *Його таємниця, або «Прекрасна ложа» Хвильового*, Київ 2006, с. 247.

<sup>7</sup> М. Хвильовий, *Твори*. Т. 1, Київ 1991, с. 123.

a scrupulous interpretation uses the polylinguistic experience, first of all, the possibilities of the French language, manifested as the equivalent of a “shot from a musketon”, “an old gun with a few holes in several balls, flying in several directions”<sup>8</sup>, and is subordinated to the teleology of conspiracy in a foreign society, which at the same time involves pass-over against any limited empirical thought, the satisfaction of which the Ukrainian Prosvita is experiencing. Already for this reason, the anthroposophical prism of Khvylovyi proposed by Plyushch is unique, especially in the context of eliminating the mystical experience of the 1920s literature in Ukraine, which became almost a topos of contemporary national literary criticism, where the statement of Yurii Sherekh was put aside: “The smell of words could be ironic. But it could be *mystical*, I would dare to use the word – *sacred* (the italics is mine, H. Kh.)”<sup>9</sup>. Leonid Plyushch’s studio is exceptional today, due to the emphasis on crossing the empirical borders in Khvylovyi’s texts, albeit with the prospect of their dialectics as a pledge of metacentricity: the open chiasm can be deformed into a double sign of splitting V, the sign of Jacques Derrida’s deconstruction. That’s why science operates with the symmetry of deconstruction of the French / “the French hairdressing”, noting the will to distinguish / differentiate it as an inherent feature of the French<sup>10</sup>.

However, it is perhaps due to the admiration for the idea of the integrity of Rudolf Steiner that Leonid Plyushch did not allow the sphericity of the signs of the fragmentary and anti-ethical experience of Khvylovyi’s death, structured by the qualification of logic as impossibility, but because of the inability to reconstruct anthroposophical knowledge, the impossibility of

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<sup>8</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>9</sup> Ю. Шерех, *Хвильовий без політики*, [в:] Пороги і запоріжжя. Література. Мистецтво. Ідеології, Т. 1, Харків 1998, с. 57–68.

<sup>10</sup> М. Ямпольский, *Материальность политического (Гейне, французская идея свободы и ее немецкое прочтение)*, [http://www.litmir.me/br/?b=200785&p=49#section\\_17](http://www.litmir.me/br/?b=200785&p=49#section_17), [10. 06. 2017].

a logical convergence to the truth-archaea: conversation “on the bridge” in the story “Arabesque” (1927). It is not at all about the writer’s denial of enigmatic truths, but about putting forward the question of the possibility of manipulating them, the possibility of knowing the secret, if it has lost its unity with the split beginning and exists in separate fragments – in the text there are the ninth and fourteenth chapters. The decontamination of death is carried out by Khvylovyi not in the metatext space, but according to the law of crossbones / “touches” to the linguistic fragments, separate words or their parts generated by heterogeneous associations ruling the mechanism of “walking around the circle”. Thus, the name of Kanashkin from the Introduction Story (1927), which in the infinitude of his connotations, given by the odious author of many dubious articles-catalogs by Anatoly Mashkin, cannot but be correlated with the figure of Ivan Ivanovych Kanayev, scholar from the circle of Mikhail Bakhtin: he is known first and foremost as the commentator of the “theory of hydra”, according to which the smallest part of this creature is capable of complete regeneration under the law of the entelechy of Aristotle<sup>11</sup>. For Khvylovyi, the vitalist axiology of Kanayev is questionable, first of all, in the realm of death: the unequivocal denial of the metaphysics of fate is unacceptable to him because of its limitations, that is already marked in the “false” word “vitaism”, which was included into the program for the Wapletees as the notion of “romanticism of vitaism”, intended to signal to immanent capability of the column. As an adherent of Friedrich Nietzsche and his idea of amor fati, the Ukrainian writer perceives fatality as a worthy endorsement of the antithesis of “necessity / chance”: the person in the world is not a slave to fate, but a fate itself, its part that feels completely free, unaffected by unity as causa

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<sup>11</sup> И. Канаев, *Современный витализм*, [в:] Фрейдизм. Формальный метод в литературе. Марксизм и философия языка, ред. Г. Н. Шелогурова, Москва 2000, с. 46–65.

prima, for the world does not know unity either as a sensorium, or as a spirit: the sky is “the space for the dance of the Lord’s affairs, [...] the Lord’s table for the Lord’s playing dice and for the dice players”<sup>12</sup>. Such acceptance is a way of playing with the word, in this case, “Kanashkin”: a possible connotation with the word “canal”, which in the Latin reception of the pre-Socratic is the metaphor of verbal derivations-filias from the word in the stream of speech, designed to convey the terrible story of the demiurge’s activity to the cosmos of the crazy Hatred, which creates the world of plurality, separating it from the divine Unity and the God of One, and condemning the plurality of forcful ananka (returning the integrity of the scattered world only with the help of Love, which returns it to One)<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, the paradoxical association of death with the loss / gain of integrity that it truly spherically provided was fundamental to the anthroposophy of Kabbalah (the cause of death was the gap between Neshama, the spirit, Ruah, the soul, Nefesh, the body, the purpose of death is the restoration of the unity of the Man and the Creator<sup>14</sup>. It undergoes a wave shift made by Khvylovyyi in the sphere of contradictory values: the word “капелюш” (*kapelush* – “the hat”), from which “тече чомусь синя вода” (“somehow blue water flows”)<sup>15</sup>, in etymological terms, correlates with the Egyptian “Кеп”, “Kopp”, “Keb”, “Kob”, Jewish “Gab”, “Kebb”, “Kebet”, which means “to hide, close”<sup>16</sup>, literally – deformation under the influence of water signals at least the need to find a new point of view for tight knowledge. Deconstruction of the word as it’s re-read in

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<sup>12</sup> Ф. Ніцше, *Так казав Заратустра. Книжка для всіх і ні для кого*, [в:] Так казав Заратустра; Жадання влади, Київ 1993, с. 163.

<sup>13</sup> *Фрагменты ранних греческих философов. Часть 1. От этических космогоний до возникновения атомистики*, Москва 1989, с. 405.

<sup>14</sup> Папюсь, *Каббала, или Наука о Боге, Вселенной и человеке*, Санкт-Петербург 1910, с. 91, 231–241.

<sup>15</sup> М. Хвильовий, *op. cit.*, Т. 1, с. 120.

<sup>16</sup> Папюсь, *op. cit.*, с. 88.

Khvylovyi's texts – a way of liberation from dox, folk etymology, which testified to its presence in the flickering association “conaty (to die) / canalya” (terrible, sly person). In French literature, the idea of death-impossibility is established, because “death, just like the language, brings something invisible with it. Moreover, death brings unpredictability with it. Nescitis diem neque horam (we do not know the day or time of death)”<sup>17</sup>.

The deconstruction of death structuring Khvylovyi's “Introductory Story” is a logical wish for a writer who realizes himself as a genius, to re-read his own texts, and it was supposed to precede in a three-volume edition. Hence there is its new, provocative, and not explanatory function. Introductory text is given by Khvylovyi as a second-level encoding space. Lexication code:

“Tomorrow I will go to the grave of the communar, the author of “Strikes of hammer and heart”. I will carry him a bunch of blue-eyed violets and there I will remember my mysterious death”<sup>18</sup>, –

separates from the set of relays (an attempt to read them in the article<sup>19</sup>) that signals the connection with the essay “Vas. Ellan” (1927). Actually, already in this journalistic text, Khvylovyi outlines the reception of the overturning of Leo Trotsky's paradigm-trivial formula: “The poet died! Long live poetry!”. And replacing it with another slogan: “Watch out: a living poet! Consequently, the war to poetry!”<sup>20</sup>. The obvious meaning of this gesture is the maneuver of the phenomenon of the deceased poet, who obtains endless life in the recreation of his texts alive, to the modernist topos of the early twentieth

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<sup>17</sup> П. Киньяр, *Ладья Харона*, Москва 2012, с. 138.

<sup>18</sup> М. Хвильовий, *op. cit.*, Т. 1, с. 124.

<sup>19</sup> Н. Хоменко, *Mysterious death as constructive point of Mykola Khvylovyi's “Introductory Novel”*, [в:] European Applied Sciences: modern approaches in scientific researches, Stuttgart 2013, p. 226–229.

<sup>20</sup> М. Хвильовий, *Твори*, Т. 2, Київ 1991, с. 640.

century: the death of art in general and the art of poetry in particular, interpreted by Khvylovyi himself as a reduction to “social fanaticism”, to “*real politics without sentiments*”<sup>21</sup>. It was a signal about the poet as an analogue of the Greek eredeos: in the philosophy of the death of art, he structured the theory of art-enthusiasm, directed by the artist’s inner god. In “Introduction Story” Khvylovyi resorts to his own statement, leading the language of the deceased poet as more alive than living, and thus putting true poetry into the sphere of death, “mysterious death”, and therefore the distancing from the simplicity and clarity of propaganda texts. The meta-theory of the enigmatics of death as a criterion for poetry was discovered in the 1920s by Khvylovyi and his Kharkiv circle in France, the country of social and aesthetic revolutions.

“In the world the only things growing are pseudo-poetic propaganda, songs of will, agitation writing, tendentious drama and in general something like them, sick, white, without chlorophyll. True poetry fades from the light and builds its coral nests at dusk”<sup>22</sup> –

these words could be read in Ukrainian Les Kurbas’s translations of Viktor Objurten. However, antithetic vaplitees were no less impressed by the theory of “death / resurrection of art” in the version of the German expressionist Georg Gross who saw France of the early twentieth century as a usual European country, the country “intellectually and spiritually dead”<sup>23</sup>: in the 6th issue of VAPLITE magazine a review of his book “Art in Hazard” (1926) should have appeared; while the first issue contained a “Conversation with George Gross” in Paris in October 1926, which referred to Dadaism as an absurd rebellion

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<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>22</sup> В. Обюртен, *Мистецтво вмирає*, [в:] Березіль: Із творчої спадщини, упоряд. та авт. прим. М. Г. Лабінський, Київ 1998, с. 350.

<sup>23</sup> Г. Гросс, В. Герцфельде, *Париж как город искусства*, [в:] Мысли и творчество, Москва 1975, с. 49.

against the “sacred art that contemplated Gothicism and Cubism, while generals wrote a canvas by human blood”<sup>24</sup>; Gross’s art is recognized dead, if it is distanced from life, is not able to plunge into life and become the source of life itself. The enchantment of the antithetics of Europe affected the paradox of “living dead poet” in Khvylovyyi’s texts: the writer saw him in the figure of Vasyl Ellan-Blakytny, who was a master of poetic puzzle, homogeneous endlessness:

“On the windows – winter networks  
In star-white pattern.  
With red light of fires  
An unfinished picture is burning”<sup>25</sup>.

The magic of the unfinished artifact was decoded by F. Nietzsche, who called it “stimulating incompleteness”, whose irrational force was in the awakening of a powerful imagination of the sea, which, “like a fog, conceals another shore, that is, limitation...”<sup>26</sup>. The game of the end and infinity transforms the “infinite figure” into a split / deconstructed thanatological code, the meaning of which is defined between the anthroposophical assertions of metaphysics and its nomination as questioned by the witnesses of the metaphysical crisis. It, on the one hand, testifies to the high sense of sudden and premature death:

“the death of the young is wisely woven into the universal fabric of being. For the spiritual talent of people who need all humanity, originates from the dead young”<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> А. Г-в, *Розмова з Георгом Гроссом*, “Вапліте. Літературно-худжній журнал”, № 1, 1927, с. 134.

<sup>25</sup> В. Еллан-Блакитний, *Поезії*, Київ 1967, с. 86.

<sup>26</sup> Ф. Ницше, *Человеческое, слишком человеческое. Книга для свободных умов*, [в:] Ф. Ницше, *Сочинения*, ред. К. Л. Свасьян, Т. 1, Москва 1990, с. 343.

<sup>27</sup> Р. Штайнер, *Смысл преждевременной смерти. Случайность, необходимость и предвестие. Восемь лекций, прочитанных в Дорнахе с 23 августа по 6 сентября 1915 г.*, Ереван 2013, с. 157.



On the other hand, it is devoid of any meaning: the “non-completed picture” corresponds to the “endless” knowledge that Jacques Derrida associated with “the work of diversity” / *différance* (with “a”),

“timing, bypassing, postponing, through which intuition, perception, application, one word of attitude to the present, attributing to the present reality, to the being always dispersed. Different in accordance with its principle of difference, which states that none of the elements function and designate, acquire and provide “meaning” other than referring to some other element, past or future, within the saving of the words-prints”<sup>28</sup>.

However, in this dyad of the values of “mysterious death” Khvylovyi himself chooses neither the first nor the second: his priorities belong to the third, connected with the ability to complete / finish the conceived, in the measurement of which any death is incomplete. Completed death equates to “artisan” courage to put aside the chisel so as not to spoil the work with an extra touch. It was the science of the ability to put the last point in the reflections of Khvylovyi during the last encounter with Arkady Lyubchenko, as discussed in the essay ‘His mystery’ (1943). Khvylovyi did not conceal its source – the philosophy of Nietzsche, who has such a death corresponds to timely, complete death, which is rather a blessing than a curse of life, which is unlikely for unnecessary people who are not able to take their time. The French deconstruction gives this position a special “vaccine”: the ability to complete is interpreted as the imitation of the man in the very nature, which constantly strives to advance in gusts and breaks, so “a courageous man is a strange blacksmith of time and death, which adapts to this pace and adapts it to himself”<sup>29</sup>. At the same time, the talent of completion is

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<sup>28</sup> Ж. Дерріда, *Позиції*, *op. cit.*, с. 45.

<sup>29</sup> П. Киньяр, *op. cit.*, с. 175.

“this ability to learn in the act of killing something capable, of killing what is left of life in death. Only “courageous nature” forces such a sacrifice. To do this, one must be prepared to “put a point” – to be able to end his life, to break love, and this requires determination, not dissolved in barren conversations or in a changing mood, but conscious and reckless”<sup>30</sup>.

The re-reading / completeness eliminates the slightest reason for interpreting Khvylovyi’s choice within the science of survival. Rather, on the contrary, he appears as embodied courage, as the integrity of completeness.

And again, re-reading the experience of the “last point” is a deconstructive aporia. Its design is carried out by Khvylovyi in terms of his favorite secondary route. Referring to the manifestation of the experience of France and Ukraine, Khvylovyi notes the anti-traceability of two fates not only in the implicit formula “Kharkiv-Not-Paris”,<sup>31</sup> but also in explicit reflections on Ukraine as a country – “newcomer”, which generates “the depth of the evening thoughts...”<sup>32</sup>, where the melodies of genius Mykola Leontovych are performed “in the church with incense”, while “his works are sung by French children”<sup>33</sup>. However, the death of the artist provides an inversion of emotions, giving rise to a source of vital stress and energy. This is how the new version of Christmas appears as a winter event when the composer dies, in the novel “Chumaks’ Commune” (1922):

“Winter came.

...Frost is cheerful, like a young nettle, strong as alcohol.

...At night, it snowed for the first time – the streets went grey.

...Hello, my hilarious snowflakes!

...Hello, my youth-blizzard!

A springing body, a springing mind.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>31</sup> М. Хвильовий, *op. cit.*, Т. 2, с. 204.

<sup>32</sup> М. Хвильовий, *op. cit.*, Т. 1, с. 146.

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem, с. 147.

Frost.  
Ex-cel-lent”<sup>34</sup>.

The updated reading of Leontovych’s story and the interpretation of his music seems possible due to the Steiner’s version of the Nativity of Christ:

“... the Feast of Christmas [...] is a holiday of a sense of harmony with the whole cosmos, the Feast of the feeling of grace, the Feast that again brings us closer to the idea that whatever our environment seemed to us [...] all the same, in nature and in the being of man there is [...] something that needs to be alive before the soul, so that our origin always manifests itself from the forces of good, from the forces of truth. The idea of Christmas points to the origin of man in the distant past”<sup>35</sup>.

For Steiner, the Feast of Christmas is a time of reading the impressive hieroglyphs left by people of antiquity, which gives birth to the experience of the integrity of life: Christmas thoughts are memories of the origins / roots from which the human soul grows the tree of truth.

However, the anthroposophical method of reading the signs of Christmas cannot satisfy the gifted will to unravel the mystery of the death of Khvylovyyi, fixed in the crazy design of new rings. The deconstructive strategy of Khvylovy was fixed in the symbol of the “oak-driven storm”<sup>36</sup>, which is repeated in the story “Elegy” (1924). In the text, this symbol is not only a connotative match to the total experience of Derrida’s shattering, but also has a specific Christmas allusion: “This was a new testament that we, the wise men, see in the east on a dark night of crystal Bethlehem...”<sup>37</sup>. In life, “the joy of

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<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, с. 229–230.

<sup>35</sup> Штейнер, Рудольф. *Рождество как праздник инспирации. Лекция в Берлине 21 декабря 1911 года*, bdn-steiner.ru/cat/Ga\_Rus/127f.doc, [05. 07. 2017].

<sup>36</sup> М. Хвильовий, *op. cit.*, Т. 1, с. 295, 297.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, с. 292.

rebellion against logic”<sup>38</sup> will direct the writer not only to the non-canonical Christ-suicide bomber known from the times of John Donne’s “Biothanathos” (1607), but to imitate the Savior’s suicidal gesture, to imitate the sun which, in its love for earthly life, also loves death at sea depths, to the credibility of the sun’s ambiguity in the version of Friedrich Nietzsche, which became one of the lines of such “forging” of its own suicide that would be an exemplary object for Jacques Derrida’s *différance* (with “a”). So the French experience of Khvylovy was structured outside the world of the French, thanks to the maneuvering of the French: his thanatological deconstruction was a bunch of a set of thanatological notions of non-/ French.

As one can observe, the paradoxical considerations formed by the expression of inversion / overturning, split / doubling, fragmentation, infinite complementarity, and nuanced refinement of Mykola Khvylovyi’s mortal thinking, are due to the philosophy of re-reading in modern France as an addition to “deconstruction to deconstruction”. The value of its experience Leonid Plyushch was anticipating when he wrote about the lack of anthroposophy as a Ukrainian dimension.

*Translated by Natalia Opryshko*

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<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, c. 318.