



Canadian Slavonic Papers

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Source: *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes*, Vol. 34, No. 1/2 (March-June 1992), pp. 131-142

Published by: [Canadian Association of Slavists](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40869356>

Accessed: 10/06/2014 21:22

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Maxim Tarnawsky

European Influence in Ukrainian Modernist Prose

The notion of an important European influence on Ukrainian modernist literature is a fixed postulate among literary scholars. Modernism, it would appear, is the Europeanization of Ukrainian literature after the cloistered provinciality of the realist era. The erosion of populist ideology and the gradual attenuation of realist canons were accompanied by new ideas, techniques, and perspectives from western Europe. Indeed, the changes were in part a result of this European influence. However, this notion exists at the cost of an injustice to the facts. It is my purpose here to examine some of the specific elements of this European influence¹ in a few examples of Ukrainian modernist prose.

The difference between Ukrainian realist prose and its modernist continuation cannot be explained by the sheer presence or absence of influences from western Europe. Ukrainian realist prose of the late nineteenth century is traditionally viewed from a nativist perspective. Such a view is justified in a thematic and political context, but it is not appropriate in evaluating the historical and aesthetic peculiarities of the prose from this period. Lacking folkloric antecedents, the realist novel in Ukraine was spared the self-centered immutability that weighed down Ukrainian poetry in the post-Shevchenko period. The novels of Ivan Nechui Levyts'kyi, Panas Myrnyi, and Ivan Franko are certainly not wildly innovative, but they often show a dependency on European sources, particularly in their subjects. Panas Myrnyi often focuses on the moral slide from righteousness to criminality. *Poviiia* (The Prostitute), his novel about a village girl who becomes a prostitute, was likely influenced by Zola's *Nana*. Myrnyi's approach to and treatment of this subject are very different from Zola's, but the similarity of subjects underscores the parallels in cultural climate. Ivan Franko's novels are more clearly indebted to Emile Zola. *Boa Constrictor* and *Boryslav smiiet'sia* (Boryslav is Laughing) derive elements

¹ In this essay, I am using both terms, "Europe" and "influence" in conventional ways. "Europe" is the monolithic cultural leading force perceived in Eastern Europe. Its best-known incarnation in Ukraine is in Mykola Khvylovyi's juxtaposition of "Europe" and "Prosvita," which assumes that European culture is stable, united, and progressive. In fact, of course, Western Europe is culturally diverse, which further complicates the notion of a European model for Ukrainian modernism.

Influence is also a problematical idea. In speaking of an influence, I do not presume a model of direct interaction, although such interaction may exist, but only a source and direction in explaining the cause of perceived parallels.

of subject, technique, and plot from *Germinal* and other naturalist industrial novels. Ivan Nechui Levyts'kyi, on the other hand, is an admirer of French realism, particularly Balzac. Nechui's ambition to write about all levels of society is a blueprint for a Ukrainian *Comedie humaine*.² Nechui's essays on Ukrainian literature reflect a firm ideological debt to European thinkers, particularly Hippolyte Taine.³ Ukrainian realist prose, especially the novel, was never completely divorced from western Europe. After all, the very origins of the Ukrainian novel in Panteleimon Kulish's *Chorna rada* (The Black Council) were inextricably bound to the progenitor of so much nineteenth-century English and French prose, Sir Walter Scott.

Ukrainian modernist prose is, first and foremost, a reaction against Ukrainian realism. The limitations of visual descriptiveness, rural settings, and populist politics eventually produced a rebellion among writers who yearned for broader artistic and intellectual license. This simple truth already distinguishes Ukrainian modernism from its general European cousin. (For lack of space and expertise, I will limit myself to French and English literature, but a wider span would not substantially change the argument). English and French modernist prose is also a reaction against realism. Here, of course, there is a theoretical problem. Is European modernist prose embodied in J. K. Huysmans' *A Rebours* and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (decadence or l'art pour l'art), or is it Proust and Joyce (the moderns)? However we answer this question, whichever variant of modernism we adopt in western Europe, the realism against which this modernism rebels is different from its Ukrainian counterpart. Flaubert, Zola, Maupassant, and the Goncourt brothers; Henry James, Thomas Hardy, and Joseph Conrad are not constrained by populist rural descriptiveness. The rebellion against them is necessarily founded on different arguments.

The underlying principles of the modernist rebellion in Ukrainian prose are different from those in Europe, yet a number of common factors link the two phenomena. The quality most often used to characterize European modernist prose is technical experimentation. After three generations of novelists who professed that their writing was nothing more than a well-focused mirror held up to reality, modernist prose writers sought a new model for their writing. As a recent study of European modernism notes:

² Ivan Nechui Levyts'kyi elaborates his program for Ukrainian literature in "S'ohochasne literaturne priamuvannia," *Pravda*, Part 1, 1878, no. 2: 15–17. See also Oleksandr Biletskyi, "Ivan Semenovych Levyts'kyi (Nechui)," *Oleksandr Biletskyi: Zibramnia prac' u p'iaty tomakh* (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1965) 2: 337.

³ See, in particular, his (under the pseudonym I. Bashtovyi) *Ukrainstvo na literaturnykh pozvakh z Moskovshchynoiu* (L'viv: Dilo, 1981).

the Modernists broke away from major . . . conventions of the Realist novel, such as the belief that the world can be known and described in all its aspects, the assumption of a fixed relation between characters and their material conditions, the reliance on explanation by reference to psychological laws, and the use of a standard development of the *fabula* with a clear beginning and a clear ending. Instead, the Modernists described personalities who aim at intellectual freedom and launch their continuously changing views as provisional and corrigible hypotheses.⁴

In practice these changes were reflected in an expanded interest in short forms, a weakening of traditional narrative norms with regard to construction, organization, and point of view, and a greater reliance on intellectual analysis and symbolic developments rather than visual description and material events. The short story and the *poème en prose* became important genres. Subjective narration and associative or suggestive organization of descriptive passages acquired the status of stylistic norms and gained notoriety under a variety of names including impressionism, expressionism, symbolism and others. Stream of consciousness narration blossomed into a self-justifying technique.

Ukrainian prose experienced many of these changes also. The decline of the novel in favor of short fiction is a particularly striking and long-lasting phenomenon. The prose poem also appears and, as in Western Europe, does not last long although it attracts a number of writers. The most widespread technical innovation in Ukrainian modernism is the use of subjective, associative narration, i.e. impressionism and expressionism. From Kotsiubyns'kyi to Kosynka, from Khotkevych to Khvyl'ovyi, subjective narrative techniques are the dominant common feature for three decades of Ukrainian prose. In their least developed form, these techniques amount to little more than indirect narration, a feature very common in Ukrainian realist novels. In their most elaborate form they appear as stream of consciousness, a technique that is very rare in Ukrainian prose from this period. As Mahdalyna Laslo Kutsiuk unwittingly demonstrates in her attempt to tie Kotsiubyns'kyi's narrative technique to the works of Arthur Schnitzler, Ukrainian stream of consciousness is difficult to find and even more difficult to associate with specific European influences.⁵

Other changes experienced by European modernist prose in the transition from realism to modernism are difficult to establish in Ukrainian literature. The psychological portraiture that characterizes late realism in England and France is largely absent in Ukraine. Only Franko, among the realists, gives serious attention to the psychology of individual characters. In general, Ukrainian

⁴ Douwe Fokkema and Elrud Ibsch, *Modernist Conjectures: A Mainstream in European Literature 1910–1940* (London, C. Hurst, 1987) 39.

⁵ Mahdalyna Laslo-Kutsiuk, "Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi i Artur Shnitsler," *Velyka tradytsiia* (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1979) 211–235.

realism lacks the scientific positivist underpinnings that prop up late realism or naturalism in Europe. Thus, the modernist rebellion in Ukraine does not have the option of reacting against it. There is no struggle against mechanized psychology or materialist determinism. Indeed, it is specifically modernist prose, notably Kotsiubyns'kyi and Vynnychenko, that first introduces some of the ideas derived from the advances in clinical psychology at the end of the nineteenth century.

In addition to technical similarities, thematic links between European and Ukrainian modernism can also be established. There are a number of subjects that they share in common; this paper shall examine two: art and sexuality. The more significant of these is the attention given to the role of art. Realist canons in Ukraine and in western Europe had precluded an explicit focus on art and the artist in a literary work. Even devoted craftsmen and theoreticians such as Gustave Flaubert and Henry James keep their theoretical musings about art separate from their works. Not so with their modernist successors, who, it seems, seldom stray very far from this subject. Ukrainian modernists also pay particular attention to art in their works. Kotsiubyns'kyi's "Tsvit iabluni" (Apple Blossom), a story about a writer who watches his daughter dying, is an obvious example. Less obvious, but more substantial, is his *Tini zabutykh predkiv* (Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors), a story about the alienation of a sensitive and creative man, which is to say, an artist, from his community.

Kotsiubyns'kyi's variant of the artist as hero theme is closer to the model evident in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* than to the one in Wilde's *Dorian Gray*. The primary focus is on the relation of the artist to his community, on the social function of art or its lack of such a function. In its broadest formulation this is a subject shared by Ukrainian realism and modernism. Nechui and Franko are often concerned with the role of the intellectual vis-à-vis society. Franko, in particular, has a very personal attachment to this subject, which is most evident in the long poems from the latter years of his creative period. Indeed, his poem *Ivan Vyshens'kyi* presents the characteristically modernist dilemma of an artist choosing between personal integrity and social responsibility. Hnat Khotkevych, like many other western Ukrainian modernists, challenges Franko. In his *Aviron* he examines the question of art as propaganda and the relation of the artist to society.⁶ Unlike his realist predecessors, Khotkevych dismisses the social function of art as a perversion of its intrinsic aesthetic value. But the subject of his discourse is still

⁶ See Maxim Tarnawsky, "Modernism in Ukrainian Prose," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 15, 3/4 (December 1991): 263–272.

defined by the old truths. He has turned Franko's values upside down, but he is still using Franko's definition of the problem.

Ol'ha Kobylians'ka and Volodymyr Vynnychenko address the theme of the artist and society in a different context. Kobylians'ka's "Valse mélancolique," for example, presents three women, two of whom are artists. In this story, art is not measured in social terms. For the painter Hannusia and the pianist Sofia, art serves as the vehicle for personal fulfillment and escape from the base reality of mundane existence. The artist must rise above the rest of humanity, Hannusia tells her practical and warm-hearted roommate:

Я – артистка і живу відповідно артистичним законам, а ті вимагають трохи більше, як закони такої тіснопрограмової людини, як ти. Ти можеш обмежитися на своїм ґрунті, бо мусиш; він вузький, але моє поле широке, безмежне, і тому я живу таким життям. . . . Коли б усі були артисти освічені і виховані, почавши від чуття аж до строю, не було б стільки погані і лиха на світі, як тепер, лиш сама гармонія й краса.⁷

I am an artist and I live according to the laws of an artist, and they require something more than the laws of a narrowly utilitarian person, like you. You can confine yourself on your own terrain, because you must. Your field is narrow but mine is wide and boundless, and that is why I live the life I do. . . . If everyone were brought up and educated as an artist, from their sensibilities to their clothes, there wouldn't be as much ugliness and evil in the world as there is now, only harmony and beauty.

In this story, Kobylians'ka is transposing the idea of the absolute value of art from European literature, particularly from Nietzsche. This is reflected in the critical response to her works, particularly from such critics as Serhii Iefremov, who chastised her for not writing in the populist mold. The degree to which Kobylians'ka's early works are independent of Ukrainian realism makes them unique in the domain of Ukrainian modernism. They are equivalent to translated works and, as such, are the best indicators of a direct European influence. But as Kobylians'ka's career develops, these influences diminish. Ten years later, her novel *V nedilii rano zillia kopala* (On Sunday Morning She Picked Herbs) is inextricably bound to Ukrainian traditions, but it has also lost much of the European flavor of her earlier works.

Volodymyr Vynnychenko presents a similar phenomenon. Like Kobylians'ka, he introduces the themes of art and the artist without necessarily tying them down to social functions. Myron, the central male character in his *Chesnist' z soboiu* (Honesty with Oneself), is a painter. His idea of personal ethics and individual liberty is reinforced in his dedication to art. The beauty,

⁷ Ol'ha Kobylians'ka, "Valse mélancolique," *Vybrani tvory* (Kiev: Dnipro, 1974) 394.

liberty, and nobility of art is underscored in the novel through a characteristic Vynnychenkian device. Dara, Myron's eventual partner in the novel, returns home to her husband, the sickly Serhii. The contrast between the amoral but energetic Myron and the honest but sickly Serhii produces an emotional outburst by Dara punctuated with Serhii's interruptions:

І посміхнувшись, Дара схилила злегка голову до нот і сильно вдарила по клавішах. Зпід них звуки, сміливі, сильні. Вони, як коні; гриви буяють, голови підняті, дзвінко та міцно б'ють копита. Дикі коні, вуха притиснули, шарпнулися витяглися, скажено несуться, летять; грудки землі летять зпід копит.

“Даро!”

Згуки, – як вітер; зтомлено дихає, сил більш немає. . . . Блідими устами ніжно цілує сиві колоски, вони томно схиляють голівки і тихо шепочуть про щось темно блакитним василькам.

Вмить вітер шарпнувся. Ні, то не вітер, блідий хтось і лютий. Хапає кривими руками крики з дна серця, шпурляє їх в небо, у землю, у Бога. Тісно йому, душно йому! Більше мук, більше!

“Даронько!”

Несеться потік. Піна, як клоччя, на берег летить. К чорту перепони! Раз, раз! Несеться потік. Дитину схопив, – з берега, – закрутив, змахнув і об скелю, раз! – і нема. Котиться каміння з жахом, велике, безсиле каміння. Грохит, рев, свист, сиві смуги небо розсікли, небо кров'ю налялось. . .

“Даро!”

Земля здригнулась і тріснула. Кінець. Годі, нічого нема. . . ⁸

With a smile, Dara lowered her head to the notes and struck the keys sharply. Strong, bold sounds emanated from the keys. They are like horses—manes waving, heads raised high, hooves stamping out a loud ring. The wild horses pull back their ears, lunge forward, stretching, reaching in wild flight; clumps of earth fly beneath their feet.

“Dara!”

Sounds are like the wind; its tired breathing, no more strength. . . . Pale lips kissing the gray stalks. They bend their tired heads and quietly whisper something to the dark azure sweet basils.

Suddenly the wind wrenches. No, not the wind—someone pale and angry. Seizing with twisted hands the screams from the bottom of the heart. Throwing them into the sky, the earth, into God. He feels cramped, suffocating. More suffering! More!

“Dara!”

The water charges. The foam sprays the shore. To hell with all obstructions! On! And on! The water charges. It seizes a child from the shore, spins it and tosses it against the cliff. On! And on! And no more! Boulders roll in fear, great powerless boulders. Crashing, rumbling, roaring, whistling gray streaks have cut open the sky, which is saturated with blood. . . .

“Dara!”

The earth trembled and cracked. The end. Enough, there is no more. . . .

⁸ Volodymyr Vynnychenko, *Tvory* (Kiev: Dzvin, 1919) 10: 38–39.

The passage mixes a number of different codes. The sexual psychology is essentially naturalistic. The metaphorical descriptiveness is more in keeping with modernist principles, but the passage is noticeably lacking rhythm. This is not a modernist poem in prose but rather a romantic piece of melodrama. In narrative technique, the passage embodies Vynnychenko's characteristically dramatic method (he is after all a prolific playwright), but it fails to make a specific association between the metaphorical images and the subjective consciousness of the character involved. The music itself carries these qualities. Here, art is a surrogate for reality, as it is for Oscar Wilde, but it is also a medium of communication that provokes Serhii into suggesting sex, which Dara rejects. The presence of the word *blakytmyj* (azure) meets my personal litmus test condition for modernism. But the novel is an assessment of the practicability of a new sexual morality. The central characters are socialist intellectuals. Morality is seen as a social issue. Art, too, cannot escape a social function. Myron's current canvas is a Phoenix rising from the ashes, an emblem of the social change he preaches.

Vynnychenko's modernist European link is balanced by a Russian class-conscious, realist connection. Myron's relation to his sister, Marusia, is the key issue in determining his sincerity and consistency. If his views of free sexual morality are applied consistently, he must allow his sister, the prostitute, to practice her trade as she wishes. In a spirit reminiscent of Dostoevsky, Marusia defends the rights of prostitutes to be what they choose despite the pretentious moralizing of upper-class hypocritical intellectuals. Moreover, she indirectly blames Myron's art for introducing her to the world of nude models, who are merely one step away from prostitutes. Vynnychenko presents a similar predicament in his earlier story, "Chudnyi epizod" (A Strange Episode). After an argument with his beautiful but very materialistic girlfriend, a painter encounters an ugly prostitute, who turns out to be a sculptor. The subject of her work is ugliness. In this story, Vynnychenko explicitly focuses on the relation between the ugly and the beautiful. External material form is contrasted with internal spiritual beauty and strength. In principle, the question is abstract and aesthetic, but in practice, Vynnychenko has tied it to social issues. Prostitution is depicted as a social ill that can be excused when the woman is a struggling artist but must be condemned if the woman merely seeks material possessions and physical delights.

The association Vynnychenko draws between the artist and the prostitute points to the other subject shared by European and Ukrainian modernism, namely sex. Sexuality and the larger area of human instincts and desires is an important and widespread subject in Ukrainian modernism. Vynnychenko's name is, for many readers, synonymous with licentiousness. Many of his works depict

the conflict between an individual's sexual desires and the social, moral, and interpersonal restraints that limit their fulfillment. Others, particularly the novel, *Chesnist' z soboiu*, are nothing less than a sustained examination of sexual norms. Myron, the artist who stands at the center of this novel, is an advocate of sexual liberation. In Myron's Nietzschean opinion, there is no justifiable reason for moral or social norms to restrict the individual's pursuit of his or her own desires, provided they do not impinge on the freedom of others. Specifically, he rejects all moral systems as tools of oppression created by the ruling class. "Honesty with oneself," that is the harmonization of reflective reasoning with instinctual drives, is the only barometer of correct behavior Myron allows. But in his relation to his own sister, Myron is apparently a hypocrite. Although Vynnychenko does not resolve the question of Myron's inconsistency in the novel, he clearly advocates an ethical stand that ascribes positive value to human instinct, particularly sexuality. At the end of the novel, Dara leaves her husband for Myron. From the ashes and corpses of the old rises a new and vital individual, as in Myron's painting.

Among European modernists, sustained advocacy for sexual liberation is not a widespread trait. D.H. Lawrence is notorious for his advocacy of this cause, but few of his contemporary writers shared his passion. This relative absence of sexual rebels can be explained, in part, by the sexual explicitness and freedom of the French naturalist novel. James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Marcel Proust do not avoid sexuality but they make no special issue of it. As far as rebelliousness in the abstract is concerned, the shock value of sex had been reduced by Zola, Maupassant, and others. As a practical matter, a focus on sexuality would distract the reader from the aesthetic and intellectual issues on which these modernists wanted to focus.

Ukrainian modernists show less restraint in approaching sexuality. Kotsiubyn's'kyi, admittedly, avoids the subject but it is just below the surface in much of Kobylans'ka's work. More significantly, both Khotkevych and Iatskiv give serious attention to sexuality, much like Vynnychenko. Khotkevych's *Kaminna dusha* (Stone Soul) continues the author's lifelong fascination with social rebellion, but it is also a detailed study of instinctual sexual drives. Perhaps the most focused study of sexual drives in Ukrainian modernism occurs in a little-known work by Myxailo Iatskiv entitled *Blyskavytsi* (Lightning bolts). This short novel (*povist'*), first published in the *Literaturno-naukovyi visnyk* (The Literary-Scientific Herald) in 1912 and recently reprinted in the collection of Iatskiv's works, *Muza na chornomu koni* (Muse on a Black Horse),⁹ concerns a free-spirited painter, Iur Krysa, and his relations with

⁹ Kiev: Dnipro, 1989.

women. In addition to his wife, Krysa is attracted to two women. His wife, L'ota, is a very tolerant and accomodating woman who raises no objections to her husband's amorous affairs and even absents herself from their home for the bulk of the story. The two other women are a study in contrasts. Al'va Serpens is a physically slight and intellectual Jewish woman who seems to be emotionally unstable. She is a disillusioned idealist. She often speaks of her disenchantment with the negative aspects of life and society. In a conversation with Krysa, for example, she suggests that an epileptic neighbor of hers should be poisoned and that crippled beggars should shoot themselves. Her relation with Krysa is strained by her refusal to have sexual relations with him. As a child she was apparently raped by a boy with whom she was playing.

Ol'ha Kalyniuk, on the other hand, is a physical and sensual young woman. Krysa is first attracted to her by the size of her breasts. Their first sexual contact occurs when she comes to his bed while spending the night in his studio. Eventually Krysa loses interest in her as she makes demands on his feelings and behavior. She runs off with a psychology student, who soon leaves her and she disappears into the social underworld.

The central event in the story is Al'va's first and only sexual encounter with Krysa in chapter 20.

Надворі ясний день, в робітні прислонені вікна. Криса пригортав Альву. Бліденьке личко, оксамитні рамена і шия упоювали його. Задавлював її в обіймах. Дивувався, що тих ніжних, прегарних ліній не догадувався навіть у неї ніколи. Аж тепер, коли роздягнув її, лежала біля нього омліла з прикметними віями, як скарб краси, як живий, сердечний твір його душі. Окружив її раменами легенько, щиро і вдивлявся в неї, як в цвіт лотоса. В духовій мандрівці, в тузі за красою витав з захватом осю творчу хвилю. Притулив уста до чола Альви і шептав:

“Ти не розчарувала мене . . .”

Заплітала довгу, буйну косу.

Він взяв ножиці.

“Дай мені свою косу.”

“Придержувала кінець лівою, а пальцем правої мірила по косі.

“Дати тобі? Досі? Досі? . . .”

Жаль йому стало дівочої окраси, але Альва наставила косу до нього.

“На, втинай, скільки хочеш.”

З сердечною, дикою жадобою, яка нараз виринула в нім, обімив ножицями на п'ядь коси. Хруснула сталь, і се діткнуло його так, що віцлувався знов в уста, а потім в голову Альви, так як цілується гарну, кохану дитину . . .

Сховав волосє в альбом Aubray Beardsley і сказав:

“А ще маю твою білу рукавичку.”

“Тоту з парку?”

“Так. Се мої пам'ятки і трофеї.” (484)

Outdoors, it was a bright day; in the studio the curtains were drawn. Krysa was caressing Al'va. Her pale face and velvet neck and shoulders intoxicated him. He was

strangling her with his embrace. He wondered that he had not even imagined these tender, beautiful curves in her. Only now, when he had undressed her and she was lying beside him in a swoon with her remarkable eyelashes, a treasure of beauty, a live, sincere work of his soul. He put his arms around her softly, lovingly and he sank his gaze into her, as into a lotus flower. In his spiritual journey, his longing for beauty, he welcomed with rapture this creative moment. He pressed his lips to Al'va's forehead and whispered:

"You did not disappoint me."

She was braiding her long, flowing hair.

He took a pair of scissors.

"Give me your ponytail!"

She held the end of her braid in her left hand while with the fingers of her right hand she measured off her hair.

"Shall I? This much? This much?"

He felt sorry for her beauty, but Al'va stretched out her ponytail to him.

"Here! Cut as much as you want!"

With deeply felt, wild desire, which suddenly welled up in him, he put the scissors up against the root of the braid. The steel crunched, and it so moved him that he kissed her on the lips and then on the head, as you kiss a dear, pretty child.

He put the hair into an Aubray Beardsley album and said:

"I still have your white glove, too!"

"The one from the park?"

"Yes. These are my mementos and trophies."

A number of features of this passage deserve special attention. First, there is the deliberate juxtaposition of Krysa's aestheticism with his instinctual sexual gratification. The references to Al'va as a treasure of beauty, a lotus flower, and a product of his spirit are ambiguous and even sarcastic. The raw sexual energy that surfaces in the passage describing the scissors cutting her hair is not in keeping with his display of fashionable aesthetic refinement in the form of an album of Beardsley reproductions. The trophies he keeps of his sexual conquest are not in keeping with his professed values. A few moments after cutting Al'va's braid he tells her that he cannot turn either her or his wife into private property. His opinion of women in their sexual function is evident from the dream he has about Ol'ha after she writes him a chastising letter.

Ішла до него гола, ширша в плечах, ніж в бедрах, з маскою усміненого черепа на лиці, з кровопийними устами, розкилювала рамена, як вампір крила, й обіймала ними весь світ, як жрекиня полового розпусу. Перед світлом жмурила очі і хмарила чоло, – вночі виділа обіймами і конала в розкоші з лебединим нимранєм насолоди, схожим до голосу крілика і кітки. (480)

She came to him, naked, wider in the shoulders than in the hips, with the mask of a smiling skull on her face. With blood-sucking lips she spread out her arms and embraced the whole world, like a priestess of sexual debauchery. In the light she squinted and wrinkled her forehead. At night she saw with her embrace and drowned in pleasure with a swan-like gurgle of delight that resembled the voice of a hare or a kitten.

Krysa collects trophies because women are essentially wild animals. This explicit indictment of Krysa needs to be balanced by both his status as an artist and by his stand on the question of women's rights. *Blyskavytsi* opens with a description of a business meeting of a cooperative. When the time comes to elect a new executive board, one of the young men at the meeting makes a motion that the meeting should not elect women. This provokes Krysa to nominate Al'va Serpens, who has been angrily and loudly denouncing the motion. Throughout the story, Krysa has maintained three simultaneous but distinct views of women. The three are embodied in the women of the story. Ol'ha is a sexual object, an animal, a pet. His wife, L'ota, is an aesthetic object. She can provoke Krysa into chivalry and kindness, but the relationship is unstable and, like the flowers he picks for L'ota, withers in a very short time. Al'va is a female human being. At first, Krysa treats her with attention and respect. But he cannot long maintain this respect. After his instinct is aroused and then deflated by Ol'ha, he literally fires his pistol at Al'va, who has now become his prey.

The coupling of sexuality with feminism in the thematic framework of the story ties this work to Vynnychenko's, Khotkevych's, and Kobylians'ka's. The general configuration of art, sex, and feminism is rather peculiar to Ukrainian literature. All of the components of this configuration are identifiable in European modernism, but their particular blend in the works we have examined here is a result of the specific circumstances of Ukrainian literature in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The Europeanization of Ukrainian literature in the modernist period was not a matter of copying European modernist techniques or subjects in Ukrainian works but rather of looking at Ukrainian subjects from the perspective of a European observer. Ukrainian modernism was consciously directed at an urban intellectual audience. It was in order to appeal to this reader that Ukrainian modernists adopted a European perspective. The building blocks of this perspective were the actual components of European modernism, but the result was something distinctly Ukrainian. Not only was the setting itself Ukrainian, but the choice of components was also. The European department store of modernist styles and subjects provided the customer with the products he sought. The shopping list depended on the customer. Galicians showed slightly more decadent taste than did central Ukrainians. Aesthetes, nationalists, and social reformers all had to correlate their new clothes to their existing wardrobe. But whatever they bought, the goods turned out to be less durable than expected. Largely as a result of the changes in the composition of the Ukrainian reading public, the European modernist department store soon lost its fashionability. Writers like Iatskiv, Khotkevych, and Kobylians'ka returned to

more familiar domestic approaches. Only after the segmentation of the reading public that resulted from the revolution could Ukrainian writers return to the modernist department store, which by then had acquired a new line of merchandise.