

**The Images of the “Old-Time Priests and Their Wives”
in A. Svidnytskyj and B. Antonenko-Davydovych Works**

The image of priest or pastor is one of the dominating for Ukrainian literature. It went through numerous transformations over a several hundred years period: the wonder-workers and the saints mentioned in Kyiv-Pechersk *Lives of the Priests*, the apostates from polemic literature, I. Vyshenskyj's pilgrims, warrior-saints in P. Kulish'es works, old-time priests and their wives in I. Nechuj-Levytskyj's works, wealthy ones in I. Franko's texts to the immoral religious characters in texts by Soviet writers. Each of these incarnations is marked not only with the author's piety level, but also with the atmosphere and character of the whole epoch.

Because of the long years of atheism in our country the image of a priest in modern literature is still uninvestigated duly and it mainly appears in studies of certain literary works or styles (in researches by S. Efremov, O. Biletskyj, I. Syvkov on I. Nechuj-Levytskyj's creative works or in studies by M. Zerov, N. Danjuk on A. Svidnytskyj's creative work). The aim of this article is to show the main principles of the priest image embodiment in realistic literature of the 19th and 20th centuries as well as to trace the level of its dependence on the literary style and the world-view characteristic for a certain epoch. The research is based on A. Svidnytskyj's novel *Lyuboratski* (1861 – 1862) and B. Antonenko-Davydovych's short story *Temptation* (1968).

Both works tell the reader about the decay of the priests' families under the influence of political and social circumstances. The Lyuboratskis family – Priest Gervasij, his wife, his son and three daughters, live in Podillya region in the middle of the 19th century, just the moment when that territory became a part of the Russian Empire. Thus time and place acquire an additional semantic value in the novel. Podillya

stands as a territory between two centers which extend their power over it: the Russian Empire and Poland.

The space of the novel is built with the help of such core images as a house (khata), educational institutions, a landowner's yard and a tavern. The first image – a house – serves as a Ukrainian old-world embodiment. The characters leave it for their studies, and return there to observe its decay and destruction. The educational institutions are depicted not as knowledge and science centers, but mainly as the institutions of Russian and Polish cultural intrusion. Depicting them the writer mentions quickly the subjects studied there devoting much more attention to the mode of life and usual order set there: bribing, snitching, stealing etc. Thus the author pushes a reader to a thought that the result of such learning is the distortion and perversion of moral values.

Time in the novel is biographical and highly connected with the mode of living. It is measured in tune with the folk calendar, which Ukrainian villagers had been using since old times. The essence of such a calendar is that every holiday serves as a sign to start certain activities. This folk calendar together with Antos' studies cause the cyclic character of that time.

A short story by B. Antonenko-Davydovych *Temptation* partially repeats the motive structure of *Lyuboratski* but in modern times. The action is set in an unnamed town (Ohtyrka is mentioned), which appears to be the object of Denikin, Bolshevist and Ukrainian parties struggle. The map of the territory is drawn with the help of front news: Kharkiv is seized, troops retreated from Melitopol, troops were stopped in Bohoduhiv. This news shows the struggle of Bolshevist and Denikin troops, while Ukrainian army is left behind the plot. Priest Joseph believes the city to be the part of a greater empire and in this struggle he supports the army of volunteers, as he believes the latest would defend the Christian faith from the atheists. The action is set in two core images: Fedorovskyj's house and the church, which appears to be a spiritual center of the town. In Priest Joseph's house there is no peace and harmony which is noticed at the beginning of Luboratski's chronicle. As if the characters of B. Antonenko-Davydovych's short

story literary were the children of the younger generation from Svidnytskyj's novel: Joseph's father-in-law makes profit out of his countrymen, having separated from his origin and changed his surname, his daughter sinned and they both cheat against Fedorovskyj. His family life, having started with adultery, hasn't become a happy one.

The comparison of these works shows the changes in the priests' status and in the attitude to them and their families, caused by social changes. Simultaneously one can trace the development of realistic writing in Ukraine. The chronotope saves its main features even within hundred years: a colonized space before the world end. In comparison we have great changes in the representation of a person. The passivity in the depicting of characters gives way to the active social position and psychic life. A. Svidnytskyj's characters are mainly characterized through their actions and speech, while the depicting of psychological processes remains passive. The writer only rarely shows some inner monologues of his characters, remaining a mediator between the reader and the characters, but the mediator who is able to influence a reader with his position and his comments. For B. Antonenko-Davydovych's model of a narrative character the consciousness and self-consciousness are more vital.