

**Author's Vision of Church and Clergymen in the Early Prose by Iryna Vil'de**

In the article the early works by Iryna Vil'de are studied since these texts were affected the least by the official censorship. We analyze the trilogy *Set Butterflies*, which apart from the story of the same name includes such works as *The Eighth Hits* and *Children of Age*.

In the current research of the early prose by Iryna Vil'de the questions of her characters' spirituality and religiosity still require further studying. In the article we will focus on the dimensions of spiritual life that Iryna Vil'de depicts the most powerfully in her trilogy *Set Butterflies*, in particular on her description of church and clergymen.

We can state that it is characteristic of the author to reflect verbally not the visual image of the hieratic building but rather the impression her characters get when being directly near a church as well as the influence that the view of a church exerts on the characters' thoughts and actions. It seems that in the early stories by Iryna Vil'de it is the church that functions as the unbiased object which makes the main character check the accuracy and righteousness of his decisions and actions.

In the early prose by Iryna Vil'de a church often serves as "God's house" where one can really feel the presence of God. It is the church where Darka goes in her hope to win God's favor during her school exam. In this sense it seems to be deciding that the main character of the trilogy *Set Butterflies* strives for the direct personal relation with God.

A respectful attitude to a church as the place where one deals with something sacral is also revealed in Danko's cursory remark about an unusual silence that reigns amongst the parish during the service.

Besides, Iryna Vil'de displays the image of church as the starting point for any good and worthy deeds her characters are going to undertake.

Going to church in the school life, like any other activity, is part of a schedule which is why church in the trilogy is displayed as a specific organizing

and disciplining entity that simultaneously performs a unifying function. Though this unification is rather relative and ephemeral, there is an evident tendency to unify a certain community through the mediation of church.

It is a significant fact in the early works by Iryna Vil'de that in the village of Verenchanka there is the only possible orthodox church around which the village community unites. However, Chernivtsi is depicted as a polyreligious town, which is why the author reflects a certain variety of hieratic buildings in the urban space. Among those a Unitarian, Rome-Catholic and Orthodox churches are mentioned, each of which has some influence of the characters of the trilogy *Set Butterflies*. Despite the belonging of a certain church to a definite creed the characters perceive each hieratic building with respect that sometimes transforms into an open admiration.

The use of the diminutive name “церковиця” by Darka Popovych as well as a repeated use of the word combination “God’s house” to refer to a hieratic building proves a respectful attitude to church as an attribute of spirituality of human existence.

It is worth mentioning that the image of a priest takes an important place in the early prose by Iryna Vil'de. In particular, the trilogy *Set Butterflies* concerns several clergymen – father Pidhirs'kyi, father Lutsiv and the unitary priest. At the same time church service itself is displayed particularly rarely.

It is characteristic of the author to depict the characters of the cloth not at work but rather in private life, at home with their families or in their interaction with friends. We can state that in this way the author manages to cover the life of clergymen of that time more impartially. At the same time Iryna Vil'de lets the reader into the private world of the sacralized existence of clergymen who are depicted in her early works rather ambiguously. This ambiguity reveals above all the author's impartial and considered position as well as shows all the inconsistency of the everyday life of the clergymen of that time.

The author especially emphasized the significant role of the Christian church and the orthodox clergymen.