

Iryna Taraba

ORCID: 0000-0002-5412-1700

Zhytomyr State University of Ivan Franko (Zhytomyr, Ukraine)

e-mail: irinataraba@mail.ru

DOI: 10.35765/pk.2019.2603.04

The Conceptualization of the Phenomenon of Corporeality in Biblical Discourse

(Based on the drama-parable *Cursed*

by Alexandr Chyrkov and drama-tale *My soul
with a scar on the knee* by Jaroslav Vereshchak)

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the features of the conceptualization of corporeality in literary interpretation as an instrument and a category realized in the figural-emotive paradigm of the dramaturgy of the contemporary Ukrainian authors, A. Chyrkov and J. Vereshchak. It should be noted that in the studied dramatic works the conceptualization of the corporeal code of culture is extremely clear. It appeals to many biblical motifs with appropriate an sphere of concepts. The dramatic works suggest that evangelical projection demonstrates four concepts that itemize the specifics and principles of embodiment of physicality in the biblical discourse: 1) “Five wounds of Jesus Christ,” 2) “The Crucifixion,” 3) “The sinful flesh,” 4) “Body of Christ.” Corporeality in the biblical discourse correlates with world-modeling categories such as “soul” and “thing.”

KEY WORDS: dramatic text, conceptualization, concept, corporality

STRESZCZENIE

Konceptualizacja zjawiska cielesności w dyskursie biblijnym (na podstawie przypowieści scenicznej Przekłęty Aleksandra Czyrkowa i opowieści teatralnej Moja dusza z blizną na kolanie Jaroslawa Wereszczaka)

Artykuł omawia cechy konceptualizacji cielesności w interpretacji literackiej jako instrument i kategorię realizowane w figuralno-emocjonalnym paradygmacie dramaturgii współczesnej ukraińskich autorów A. Czyrkowa i J. Wereszczaka. Należy zauważyć, że w badanych dziełach dramatycznych konceptualizacja cielesnego kodu kultury jest bardzo wyraźna i odwołuje się do wielu motywów biblijnych z odpowiedniej sfery pojęciowej. Z materiału utworów dramatycznych możemy wnioskować, że ewangeliczna projekcja pokazuje cztery koncepcje o specyfice i zasadach motywu jako wyrazu fizyczności w dyskursie biblijnym: 1) „Pięć ran Jezusa Chrystusa”. 2) „Ukrzyżowanie”. 3) „Grzeszne ciało”. 4) „Ciało Chrystusa”. Cielesność w dyskursie biblijnym koreluje z modelującymi świat kategoriami takimi jak „dusza” i „rzecz”.

SŁOWA KLUCZE: tekst dramatyczny, konceptualizacja, pojęcie, cielesność

The abundant research history on the phenomenon of physicality has a number of achievements in the scientific systems of different disciplines. In numerous writings, researchers observed a wide range of research focused on physicality as a category in the Bible discourse. However, the particulars of the conceptualization of corporeality in the context of artistic interpretations of biblical scenes and images have not yet been the subject of scientific research.

The human being, as we know, is the most complex biosocial functional self-regulating system that emerged after prolonged synthesis of various natural and cultural systems that have evolved and developed in the ancestral experiences of previous generations.¹ The human body has been one of the most accessible items for observation and study, a unique database, the primary basis for the conceptualization of the world, and a “starting point,” therefore the words denoting parts of the body, and the human mind itself, produced the *topicality* of our scientific exploration.

1 *Social'na Doktryna Cerky*, in: *Zbirnyk statej*. Instytut Relihiyi ta suspil'stva pry Lvivs'kij Bohoslovs'kij Akademiyi, Lviv 1998, pp. 6-7, 14-16.

The problem analysis of physicality in contemporary philosophical thought has led to the conclusion that the main achievement of its developments is to overcome the idea of the body as a natural (physical) object and identifying it as possessing a trans-objective nature. Definition of the body as a sociocultural construct representing the body as a matrix projected onto the society and a means of the coding and reproduction of cultural values, ideas, norms and guidelines, stands out as dominant.

As shown in the analytical review of the literature in modern scientific thought, corporeality is explicit as a dialectical unity that justifies the sensual nature of the human being as an integral ontological sign and captures human presence in the world through perception, spatiality, mobility, and temporality.² The existence of five major cultural meanings of physicality has been proven: as a manifestation of cultural reality and its visual manifestations; as the physical prerequisite and condition for various cultural practices; as a means of communication and symbolization; as a determining factor of the organization of cultural reality of human existence; as an object of cultural articulation and evaluation (cultural semiotics of the body). Our research accumulates all the presented cultural meanings of physicality and subjects the phenomenon of physicality in modern Ukrainian drama to analysis.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the peculiarities of the conceptualization of physicality in artistic interpretation as a tool and category, which is realized in the figurative-motive paradigm of the dramaturgy of modern Ukrainian authors, Alexander Chyrkov and Jaroslav Vereshchak.

In our study, the focus is on singling out the main biblical concepts, images and motifs of bodily semantics, establishing their world-shaping and anthropological features, specificities and principles of motive-image manifestations of corporeality in biblical discourse on the basis of the dramas: *My soul with a scar on the knee* and *Cursed*.

It is known that in the structure of a dramatic work the body is subject of the “refinement,” by receiving a figurative interpretation, in which the specificity of the world view inherent in the corresponding historical period is reflected in the originality of artistic images. Therefore, “refinement” (artistic physicality) serves as an interesting object of analysis as a background for studying the HUMAN BODY as a concept in a variety of its aspects.

It is worth noting that in the dramatic works under consideration the conceptualization of the bodily code of culture refers to numerous biblical motifs with the relevant discourse-conceptual sphere in a very clear

2 Ibidem, p. 5.

way. The dramatic works suggest that evangelical projection demonstrates four concepts that itemize the specifics and principles of embodiment of physicality in the biblical discourse:

1. "The five wounds of Jesus Christ;"
2. "The Crucifixion;"
3. "The sinful flesh;"
4. "Body of Christ."

The concept of "the five wounds of Jesus Christ," shall be separated on the basis of the fairy tale drama, *My soul with a scar on the knee* by J. Vereshchak. The symbolic "five stab wounds" of the protagonist who stands for the playwright himself, manifest the concept of "five wounds of Jesus Christ." As we know, Jesus Christ received five wounds during crucifixion: two on His arms, two on the legs and one on the side in between the ribs.

The protagonist: I appear among flowers in my fabulously original jacket and trendy jeans, pausing, carefully touching my chest, examining the clothes. I say to myself. Strange, five stab wounds and no trace ... (removes the jacket, inspects it meticulously). No blood, no holes – it's probably those dumb American movies ...³

Thus, the body of Jaroslav Vereshchak's protagonist did not bear any marks indicating that the so-called conditional corporeality or physicality of the soul, which the author seeks to portray as an object of self-recognition:

Now know the price of my soul: 25,000 USD minus taxes. And my colleague director Devik, a wise Jewish man, says slowly: "Kostya Kostyovych, for God's sake! How can you have become such a prominent figure in the theatrical world and maintain a soul?" ... So, I have kept my soul, eh? Because my body is over there, at the gate, you cannot see it, and here ...⁴

The main characteristic of the playwright's soul's corporeality is the reference is a scar on his knee: "Here ... I don't want to brag that my soul is great and noble, but I'll tell you it has a scar on his knee – see?"⁵ These discursive fragments demonstrate his theory of man's "fall" which involves the eternal struggle between the temptations of the modern world and God's main commandments: "It turns out my soul with the scar on his knee cannot just babble-babble, but may it also still do something

3 J. Slav. Ko-Ko. Vereshhak, *Dusha moya zi shramom na kolini: Suchasna kazka*, Kyiv 2004, p. 99.

4 Ibidem, p. 100.

5 Ibidem.

good?”⁶ The motif-code of flagellation in the dramatic work correlates with the subsequent singled out concept of “Crucifixion.”

The sacrificial crucifixion of Jesus Christ manifests the transformed concept of “Crucifixion” in the context of a fatal temptation and lost soul of the hero of Jaroslav Vereshchak. The sacrifice on the Cross is contextually modified in the form of a clownish prophet who was willing to lose his life and break the first commandment of God for the sake of money, fame and numerous physical temptations: “I am a poor actor, spawn of the devil: I cheated all my life, I blew my soul, I fought his way into prestigious circles, until I became a pathetic court clown. So, my soul is black as coal!”⁷ The absolute extrapolation of the modified investigated concept is found in the drama-parable *Cursed* by the contemporary Ukrainian playwright, A. Chyrkov. In a dramatic text, the author refers to the true meaning of crucified Jesus – sacrifice, redemption for all mankind. Jesus Christ himself speaks to his Disciple:

Oh God, what a life. A teacher! A father! ... Salvation by blood ... And I, an incarnation of evil? To save people, that is my mission. A savior or destroyer? Who am I? ... Sacrificing one, I will bring happiness to many.⁸

Thus the singled out concept of “Crucifixion” demonstrates the absolute polarization of content from the Christian sacred human-God vertical dimension (the drama-parable *Cursed*) to horizontal, sinful-human dimension of the modern world.

The concept of “the sinful flesh” refers to the realization of the qualitative difference between the soul and the human body, which are known to explicate themselves as polar entities. However, it should be noted that in Christianity the term “body” refers to the biological substance up until it will remain just flesh, and “flesh” is biology. Yet, the body can be incorporeal, which the playwright Jaroslav Vereshchak depicts. In the case of incorporeality, spiritual reincarnation and resurrection await the body. The difference between the body and the flesh is seen as an anthropological basis for the dogma of the Incarnation, redemption and resurrection God-man, Jesus Christ. He Himself took away the sin of man and was forced to accept the result of sin, which was death. The Lord resurrected Himself in a glorified, eternal body. Christ caused the death of sinful flesh, and rose again as Lord of all mankind. The Gospel projection presented is also

6 Ibidem.

7 Ibidem, p. 112.

8 A. Chyrkov, *Proklyatyj. Drama-ptycha*, Zhytomyr 2014, p. 33.

found in the drama of A. Chyrkov, *Cursed*. The author presents it as unchanged, without further modifications: The disciple of Christ:

He told me: Walk in my shoes and only then judge me ... I am not worthy to judge my Master. I want to live life with the Temple in my heart! I risk. But there is simply no indifference in the world. Love to others burns me. I love him – the spiritual father! I love her. She is my wife! And this is a different kind of love. The one towards him – disturbs my mind and soul, the one to her – my heart, my flesh, and blood.⁹

The analysis of the “body-flesh-sinfulness” triad takes into account, first and foremost, the psychological-volitional aspect. Physiological processes (childbearing because of love, food) are considered as a traditional-neutral or even positive acts of life. However, responsibility for sin is correlated with conscious mental activity with an act of human will. Therefore, it is not the body that defiles the person, but the person itself. Appealing to the Christian anthropological notion of “tunics of skin” (*kozhanyye rizy* – transl.) as the three attributes of human life on earth (passion, corruption, mortality), the author expresses an understanding of the fact that it is human flesh that is their carrier. A direct reference to the concept of “the sinful flesh” is found in Jaroslav Vereshchak’s *My soul with a scar on the knee*. The fleshy cover emancipated from the soul of the murdered playwright, the black essence of the treacherous protagonist and Jaroslav’s inner voice or conscience, are torn by a bitter struggle:

God created man and I hoped that my earthly life would be ... And I, such a wimp, failed to win over my bodily desires. Now I don’t have a body. That, perhaps, it will help me, well, to become more reasonable. Kulaj’s voice: “Good intentions paved the road to hell”¹⁰

The body appears as a prerequisite for human development, as a mediator between the two worlds, and physicality as a path to these worlds, leading the main character to reveal the greatest secrets of life:

and it was not you, not you, who uncovered my highest secret of life, which I now think I can, I will try to formulate ... Make this world and all life on it from love and sunshine. And death is a lie, hypnosis for fools that live just for the sake of their bodies ...¹¹

9 Ibidem, p. 32.

10 J. Slav. Ko-Ko. Vereshhak, *Dusha moyá zi shramom na kólíni*, op. cit., p. 112.

11 Ibidem, p. 134.

The fourth singled out concept of “the body of Christ” shows, in my opinion, the author’s key intentions in the dramatic texts. The author’s concept of harmonious human existence in the world of nature takes place primarily in the pages of the fairy tale drama *My soul with a scar on the knee* by Jaroslav Vereshchak. Once the concept of spiritual crucifixion, the resurrected main character is convinced that the entire classification into people, birds, plants and animals is conditional:

This is the smile of God, a gentle whim. In fact, there is one and only infinite soul, and we are all part of it, and Mother Earth is and the greatest of its parts ... And now pay attention. If we all – Flowers, Trees, Birds, Animals, people – are one body ...¹²

The material world is flesh fused together with the world of the spiritual, the divine. The endless soul appears in the bodily form which manifests the Unified Body of God. Merging with the body God is possible only through love:

It is dawning! Dew on the grass is glistening. A bug has run by. A worm has crawled by. And roosters are crowing glory to the world! Oh, morning light! I have promised to forgive all those who hate me. I pray for those, frightened by my existence, who needs to capture, to execute me. Whoever does not believe me will later understand my truth. And faith will lead them to the temple. After all, there it the eternal human question: To live with love or to not be without love?¹³

The corporeality category in the dramaturgy of the analyzed Ukrainian authors is one of the semantic dominants and semantic universals, in connection with which corporeality becomes a kind of a universal code, which makes it possible to understand the world in its unity and integrity. Physicality of evangelical projection is associated with the overall spatial view of the world and correlated with specific related images (Body-as-God and body-as-human being). Thus, the formation of stable semantic paradigms of images and motives takes place. Physicality in the focus of biblical discourse correlates with such world-modeling categories as “soul” and “things.” The key correlation for the dramatic picture of the world is the correlation between the corporeality category with that of the poetic word.

12 Ibidem, p. 137.

13 A. Chyrkov, *Proklyatyj. Drama-prytcha*, op. cit., p. 25.

To sum up, it is worth noting that, by referring to the somatic vocabulary, the authors extend the usual meanings, contributing to increasing the informative capacity of the figurative context, deepening the associative potential of the word. The primary meaning of the conceptualization of physicality in O. Chyrkov's and J. Vereshchak's work is to try to find "pure reality" as real and free from any political, social or aesthetic and stylistic layers, and the eternal meaning or purpose of human existence. The analysis revealed the specificity of the refined representation of corporeality in the literature on the basis of the dramatic texts by the discussed authors, as well as the figurative conceptualization of corporeality that occurs through the prism of a number of biblical images, among which the actualizing specificity of the semiotic nature occupies a dominant position. The results of research show that further detailed analysis of the conceptualization of the material physicality dramas focused on biblical discourse can be a fertile ground for the development of the research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Chyrkov A., *Proklyatyj. Drama-prytcha*, Vyd-vo FOP Yevenok O. O., Zhytomyr 2014.
- Materyns'ka O.V., *Semantyka najmenuvan' chastyn tyla v anhlijs'kij, nimec'kij, ukrayins'kij ta rosij's'kij movax* (autoreferat), 10.02.17 *Porivnyal'no-istorychne ta typolohichne movoznavstvo*, Donec'k, 2005.
- Medvedeva N.S., *Problema sootnosheniya telesnosti i sotsial'nosti v cheloveke i obshchestve*, (Ph.D. dissertation), 09.00.03, Luhansk 2005.
- Podoroga V.A., *Fenomenologiya tela*, Nauka, Moskva 1995.
- Selivanova O.O., *Suchasna linhvistyka: terminolohichna encyklopediya*, Dovkilya-K, Poltava 2006.
- Tematicheskij filosofskij slovar'*, Nauka, Moskva 2008.
- Vereshchak J. Slav. Ko-Ko., *Dusha moya zi shramom na kolini: Suchasna kazka*, Vydavnytstvo Solomiyi Pavlychko "Osnovy," Kyiv 2004.



Iryna Taraba – Ph.D. candidate, lecturer at the Department of German Philology and Foreign Literature at the Institute of Foreign Philology of the Zhytomyr State University of Ivan Franko. Scientific interests: somatic phraseology in German language, conceptualization of corporeality in dramatic texts.