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Respectus Philologicus, vol. 38, núm. 43, 2020

Vilniaus Universitetas, Lituania

Disponible en: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=694474400011>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15388/RESPECTUS.2020.38.43.64>



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“Apple Blossoms” and “The Apple Tree”: Two Perspectives Typological and Ideological Similarities in Short Stories by Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky and John Galsworthy

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Respectus Philologicus, vol. 38, núm. 43, 2020

Vilniaus Universitetas, Lithuania

Recepción: 29 Abril 2020

Aprobación: 31 Agosto 2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15388/RESPECTUS.2020.38.43.64>

Redalyc: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=694474400011>

Abstract: The article provides comparative analysis of *Apple Blossoms* by Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky and *The Apple Tree* by John Galsworthy. Both authors explore human morality in a crisis of confrontation between sensuality and death, the beauty of life and the beauty of art. At the structural level, the works share an element of paratext, novelistic nature, polysemic images-landscapes, and methods of psychologization. Galsworthy engages the antinomy of the *city – province*, resorts to irony, and combines elements of impressionist writing with the traditions of realistic socio-psychological prose. In contrast, Kotsiubynsky systematically implements the impressionist fragmentary nature of the composition, symbolism of visual and auditory images, in-depth psychoanalysis, and the conventionality of the chronotope.

The issues of short stories are diversified and aesthetic – as is distinct for modernist literature – implicitly in Kotsiubynsky’s work, and most explicitly through the connections with the Antiquity and English intertext in Galsworthy’s prose.

Keywords: Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky, John Galsworthy, comparative analysis, Modernism, intertext.

Introduction

Texts illustrating the dialogical nature of literature are bound to intrigue, especially, when it comes to similarities in works of authors who are not personally acquainted, or related to a shared geographical area, history or traditions. Ukrainian novelist Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky (1864–1913) and English writer John Galsworthy (1867–1933) both have an *Apple* short story in their portfolio, which are arguably the best works of each author. We shall use *Apple Blossoms* (1902) and *The Apple Tree* (1918) to analyze the different types of intertextual links in the literature of late Modernism as well as to identify and compare the characteristics of the idiostyle of both authors as representatives of different national literary canons.

The study aims to identify the ‘common’ and the ‘opposite’ in the issues and poetics of the abovementioned works and to see how the representatives of two different landscapes of literature embody similar aesthetic ideas of the modernist era in their idiostyle.

In order to achieve the aim, we shall outline the following objectives: to identify the features of depicting the characters' crisis states in search of personal identity and creativity by Kotsiubynsky and Galsworthy; to analyze and find out the ways of realization of the themed trio of *feelings – death – beauty* as a key aspect for both short stories; to outline the range of the authors' interpretations of the *Apple Blossoms* image; to characterize the stylistic features of the works through the poetics of impressionism; to distinguish the intertextual codes and their functions.

In addition to comparative, typological, receptive-interpretive, intertextual, and psychoanalytic methods of research we shall also use the method of close reading, as introduced by American and English representatives of *New Criticism* to interpret the text as "*both intricate and complex and efficient and unified*" (Leitch, 2010, p. 30).

The proposed study is an attempt to fill the gap in the comparative interpretation of the short stories by Kotsiubynsky and Galsworthy. Ukrainian literary criticism formed an opinion that Kotsiubynsky, firstly, welcomed the novelty of European aesthetics at the turn of the 20th century and effectively employed "a new style of writing, using the experience of impressionism and psychologism" (Polishchuk, 2013, p. 144). Secondly, his works are a potential object of comparative studies. They are based either within the framework of Ukrainian modernist or postmodernist short stories or in the paradigm of Western European artistic phenomena. In particular, this is relevant to the contexts of Norwegian writers Knut Hamsun and Henrik Ibsen (works by Yaroslav Polishchuk, Yuriy Mudreskul), French authors Émile Zola and Guy de Maupassant (Polishchuk and Natalia Lutsyk), and Austrian dramatist Arthur Schnitzler (Mykola Zymomria, Olha Brodska). Thus one more relevant aspect of the following research is in further advocating the 'Europeanness' of Ukrainian literature. Another purpose is to invigorate the critical reception of the works by Galsworthy. John Galsworthy, although being a popular author during his lifetime and a Noble Prize winner, rarely gets into the focus of interest of the comparative discourse. His works are analyzed alongside those of his English contemporaries by, most notably, Virginia Woolf (*Modern Fiction*, 1919), D.H. Lawrence (*Selected Literary Criticism*, 1928) Michael Schmidt (*The Novel: A Biography*, 2014). However, the increased interest in *The Forsyte Saga* (1906–1921) and Galsworthy's well-known fascination with the Russian fiction of the 19th century determined the main comparative vector of the research of Galsworthy's works (Angus Wrenn, Olga Soboleva and Gulnora Isayeva, Dilbar Isayeva). Galsworthy's short prose, on the other hand, has not been the subject of a separate comparative study before, nor has it been investigated in the context of Ukrainian literary criticism. The Ukrainian tradition usually studies his works in the context of English literary history and linguistics (Leonid Mosendz, Olha Zabolotska).

Apple Blossoms and *The Apple Tree*: two confessions to the Death

The plot of both short stories can be summarized as a confession of the main character at the moment of realization of death. The death in *Apple Blossoms* is a fact of *now* and *here*, whilst Galsworthy portrays the event 26 years past. Despite the different chronotopes, the motif of death performs similar functions. Firstly, it anchors two other leitmotifs of feelings and nature. Secondly, it determines the background but characteristically modernist motif of the duality of personality and the search for one's creative identity. Thirdly, as it evolves, the motif of death enriches the texts with expressive lyricism and the subtle psychological imagery of the internal plot. Therefore, we consider both works to be a result of the authors' intention to harness the potential of psychological impressionism and go beyond the stylistic limitations of Realism. With regards to *Apple Blossoms*, this opinion is supported by Polishchuk who pronounces the work to be "a manifesto of the new Ukrainian prose" (2010, p. 193), and Danylo Struk (1992) and Oleksandra Chernenko (1997) who promote Kotsiubynsky as a modernist writer. Galsworthy, on the other hand, is seen by Leon Schalit to be "relentless realistic in almost all his plays, as in his novels, and short stories" (1929, p. 219). However, we believe the author's short stories demonstrate the openness of his idiosyncrasy to modernist poetics, in particular to artistic language and the issues of Impressionism.

Apple Blossoms and *The Apple Tree* share the narrative of confession that reveals the characters' crisis: father's experience of the death of his only child for Kotsiubynsky and the protagonist's realization of his fatal contribution to the death of his former lover for Galsworthy. Thus both authors explore the intersection of the two realms – sensual (parental love and romantic love/Eros) and existential (death/Thanatos). They put a particular emphasis on how the characters analyze their feelings in response to the experienced trauma and not only overcome the loss but also find for themselves new valuable guidelines which foremost lie in the plane of individual and/or creative identity.

At the same time, the authors employ different strategies for the plot development. Galsworthy offers a traditionally structured story about the feelings of the naive countrywoman Megan and university graduate Frank Ashurst. The young man sacrifices these feelings in the name of his misinterpreted views of social standing. The girl commits suicide, yet Ashurst only discovers the fact 26 years later, and the story ends with his belated repentance. Galsworthy applies the technique of retrospection to allow the protagonist to remember and analyze (i.e., to confess).

Alternatively, Kotsiubynsky does not build the storyline work in a conventional way. His *Apple Blossoms* is a continuous stream of the protagonist's self-reflection, an in-depth analysis of his experiences (Kuznietsov, 2018). Here lies the difference in the narration of both works. Galsworthy writes his short story in the third-person narration, combines the internal plot (the protagonist's soul-searching and

thoughts) with external details (action, landscape, appearance, household minutiae). Kotsiubynsky implements the first-person narration, the protagonist's internal monologue is astonishingly frank and does not require a 'scenery', specific time or space.

Correlation of chronotope and types of character initiation in short stories by Kotsiubynsky and Galsworthy

The culmination of grief for the narrator in *Apple Blossoms* is the moment of his daughter's, Olena, death, "за темними вікнами лежить світ, затоплений ніччю" ¹ (Kotsiubynsky, 1988, p. 395).

Kotsiubynsky, we believe, chose this particular time marker on purpose. The image of nighttime is commonly used for the personification of death and, in the tradition of Gothic and Romantic literature, it is the sacred time of revealing the essence of a human and thus allows a confessional narrative. Similarly, for Galsworthy night is the time for his characters to perceive the truth. Thus, upon receiving Megan's promise to come on a night date under the apple tree, Ashurst concludes, "Yes! He had done it now! Accepted her love, declared his own!" (Galsworthy, 1916).

For Ashurst, the night becomes the time of emotional struggles and painful reflections where he shifts from the pangs of conscience to attempts to justify himself: "And he fell asleep, thinking: 'What was it – a few kisses – all forgotten in a month!'" (Galsworthy, 1916).

Both Kotsiubynsky and Galsworthy use the impressionistic tool of 'listening' to the silence of the night:

And the voice of Nature said: "This is a new world for you! [...] There was no wind, but the stream's burbling whispering chuckle had gained twice its daytime strength. One bird, he could not tell what, cried "Pippip," "Pip-pip," with perfect monotony – hears Frank Ashurst (Galsworthy, 1916).

The narrator of *Apple Blossoms* also acutely perceives the sounds of the night silence: "Я рішуче не можу чути того здушеного, з присвистом віддиху, що, здається, сповняє собою весь дім"; "[...] А свист не вгаває. Я його чую й крізь зачинені двері"; "Найменший шелест або стук – і моє серце падає і завмирає" ² (Kotsiubynsky, 1988, p. 395).

The clock, as a symbol of unstoppable time, also becomes part of the sound images to reinforce the feeling of psychological crisis:

Годинник у столовій пробив другу. Голосно, різко. Сі два дзвінки впали мені на голову, як грім із неба, як ніж гільйотини. Вони мене мало не забили. ³ (Kotsiubynsky, 1988, p. 395).

Therefore, for both authors nighttime literary sets a chronology of events and metaphorically acts as the optimal time to highlight the protagonist's feelings, maximize his emotions, to encourage philosophical reflections on the transitory nature of life, and to create a background for expressive aural and visual imagery.

Simultaneously, Kotsiubynsky balances enclosed and compressed time and space (as the narrator does step beyond the door of his house) of

the story with the character's extensive reflections, with life and death as its frontiers. Thus the chronotope becomes nominal. Galsworthy, instead, sets the parameters of the chronotope immediately and clearly. The narrative of *The Apple Tree* is, to apply Gerard Genette's (1982, p. 60) terminology, a 'frame narrative', where the 'primary narrative' is an episode of the Ashurst couple's relationships, as they travel to the place of their first meeting. Frank Ashurst's memories of his feelings to a girl, Megan, which he experienced on the eve of that meeting become the 'embodied' or 'secondary narrative'. Thus, the starting point of the plot development is an indication of time (silver wedding, celebrated by Frank and Stella Ashurst) and the definition of a situation which anticipates retrospections, and, therefore, inevitably leads to memories and reflection. What happened 26 years before becomes the first act in Ashurst's life drama when, in his admission, he

[...] had failed to arrest, whose wings had fluttered away into the unknown; he had stumbled on a buried memory, a wild sweet time, swiftly choked and ended (Galsworthy, 1916).

Hence, for Galsworthy, time is not only concretized but also, by involving retrospectives, discrete.

In addition to the family life milestone, in *The Apple Tree*, Galsworthy also accurately indicates spatial coordinates. The story begins in Devonshire, on a farm near Torquay, where Megan lived, and in the town, where Ashurst first met his future wife Stella. The Galsworthy family came from Devonshire, and the author repeatedly uses this topos as a scene for his works (e.g., in the collections of short stories *The Man of Devon* (1901), *A Motley* (1910), *The Inn of Tranquility* (1912)). Galsworthy turns Devonshire into a symbol of provincial life as suggested by the central conflict of the works: a collision of conservative morality with free human feelings in the bosom of the nature of Devonshire. The provincial topos helps the author convey the wildness of Megan's character and the wild feelings of the couple. Curiously enough, in *Apple Blossoms* by Kotsiubynsky, the protagonist, thinking back to the times his sick daughter was still healthy, also calls her wild: "Оте мале, звичайно таке дике, тепер обіймає пухкими рученятами шию лікаря..."⁴ (Kotsiubynsky, 1988, p. 395).

We thus may assume for both authors, wild is not associated with barbaric or backwardly, but rather with natural and genuine. Nature also helps to reveal the authenticity of the characters' feelings. Hence, the landscape plays an important role in the works of both writers. It is not only a static background for the plot but also impressionistic descriptions of mental dynamics both for Escherst: "The cuckoos by day, and now the owls – how wonderfully they voiced this troubled ecstasy within him!" (Galsworthy, 1916), and for the narrator of *Apple Blossoms*: "І чого не змогла зробити картина горя, те викликала радість природи. Я плачу. Сльози полегкості капують услід за платочками..."⁵ (Kotsiubynsky, 1988, p. 395).

For the characters, Nature becomes a measure and source to analyze their feelings, an embodiment of the Absolute. In this way, the landscape forms the lyrical and philosophical content of both works.

Kotsiubynsky transitions the narration from a description of genuine feelings to an attempt to comprehend the laws of life and death and reflections on the artistic process of nature. Therefore, we can observe the reflections of the protagonist at the ideological and existential crossroads, which was a recurring issue at the turn of the 20th century (Polishchuk, 2014, p. 275). Meanwhile, Galsworthy concentrates on the collision of two morals generated by different societies. From Classical Realism, the English writer derives the traditional meticulous view of the province and as its conflict with the big city. Consequently, spatial concretization becomes an essential aspect of the critical portrayal of the life and customs of his contemporary society.

It is of interest to compare the statics and dynamics of the characters of the two works. Galsworthy's protagonist is on the constant move: he and his companion Robert Garton travel from London to the countryside farm, then go to Torquay to buy clothes for Megan and take her with him, from where he together with the family of his friend Phil go for a walk and he saves Phil's life in the cave. After getting acquainted with Phil's sister Stella, Ashurst reconsiders his feelings for Megan and ultimately decides to return to London without explaining his actions to Megan. The external movement of the character corresponds with his internal changes; he experiences a whole range of feelings – sympathy, love, passion, doubt, purification (as Ashurst once thought) – as he rejects the temptation. Thus, his physical and mental movement is akin to initiation. Similarly, the protagonist of Kotsiubynsky's short story, although being physically static (as he does not go beyond the house walls), dives into the depths of his consciousness, and also makes a 'journey'. This happens due to the controversy of his opposing reactions to the death of a child as a parent and as an artist. He "mercilessly captures the 'aesthetic' aspect of the child's agony and, more importantly, his complex reaction" (Rubchak, 1981, p. 108). The experience of suffering becomes an act of self-discovery (a "lesson in joyful fatalism", according to Rubchak), which elevates the hero to a new level, and, therefore, leads to initiation.

For both characters the initiation is accompanied with the motif of loss: the loss of a child in *Apple Blossoms*, and the passing of a girl in love with Ashurst in *The Apple Tree* literally along with the loss of illusion symbolically. Galsworthy's protagonist feels despondent about the 'quality' of his life and the morality of his actions, when, over the years, he realizes that his escape from Megan, previously seen as a noble act, pushed the girl to suicide. It creates a longing in him, for the lost youth and potential happiness:

And an ache for lost youth, a hankering, a sense of wasted love and sweetness, gripped Ashurst by the throat. Surely, on this earth of such wild beauty, one was meant to hold rapture to one's heart, as this earth and sky held it! And yet, one could not! (Galsworthy, 1916).

In contrast to these pessimistic sentiments, Kotsiubynsky's protagonist experiences ambivalent feelings – the loss for him is a source of boundless sorrow followed by the discovery of two 'Selves', a father who has lost a child, and an artist who has found a meaning to live on. The consciousness of both characters strives to comprehend the connection between Thanatos and Eros. Ashurst in *The Apple Tree* seeks an answer to the question "Am I a moral man", while the narrator in *Apple Blossoms* speculates "Am I a man or an artist?".

The apple blossom image and the sensory sphere in the short stories: specifics of the image by Kotsiubynsky and Galsworthy

The nature of the connection of the works to the traditions of realism determines the portrayal of the sphere of feelings. Kotsiubynsky gives *Apple Blossoms* the definition of an 'etude', which is inherent for Impressionism. It is a subtle observation of the psychological process, and Rubchak (1981, p. 118) referred to the short story as a model of the flow of consciousness, where consciousness forbids the hero to: "immerse himself in the process of life and thereby accept the natural inevitability of death". As a result, we have an impressionist psychological novella which signalled the author's 'break' from the artistic dictates of the realist predecessors and the formation of the modernist paradigm in Ukrainian literature. Thus, a new sensory sphere in the work is elaborated when the father-artist experiences the death of his child as a moment of enlightenment of his dual nature as a man who loses and an artist who finds.

The Apple Tree, on the other hand, is a synthesis of modernist and realistic fundamentals. Special attention should be paid to the internal conflict of the intellectual protagonist, who realizes his dichotomy between morality and virtue, between the beauty of life and the beauty of the work of art; accents of religious criticism and irony are also observed along with intertextuality – all of which are inherently and distinctly modernist features. The tradition of the socio-psychological prose gives the work a 'predicament' and 'specific semantic incompleteness'. These features are evidence of the mutual influence and enrichment of the 'big' and 'small' genre forms (Burcev, 2010, p. 136) which, typically for the English literature of the early 20th century, are manifested in a linear way as the love story of Megan and Ashurst unfolds in the analysis of the social influence, in the expressive moralism and the pathos of love.

The character's deep introspection in *The Apple Tree* gives the traditional plot scheme of unexpected and intense feelings between young people of different social spheres a new touch. Love has a beneficial effect on Ashurst by awakening something new and previously unknown in his soul:

Some natures are coarsened by love bestowed on them; others, like Ashurst's, are swayed and drawn, warmed and softened, almost exalted, by what they feel to be a sort of miracle (Galsworthy, 1916).

Yet love, at the same time, makes him anxious as he suspects that both his educated friends from town and villagers might condemn his connection with Megan. This raises a storm of indignation in his soul, similar to the feelings of a romantic hero who confronts himself with a crowd of philistines: "For a minute he literally hated this earthy, cynical world to which one belonged, willy-nilly" (Galsworthy, 1916).

The traits of a romantic character are also expressed in Ashurst by his otherness: he is a stranger on the farm, a university graduate, with a keen sense of beauty and one "[...] who saw beauty without wondering how it could advantage him..." (Galsworthy, 1916).

Megan is also an exceptional personality. She resembles a fairytale creature among the farmers. She combines the archetypes of a child and a wise old woman: she knows herbs, cannot look at the blood, believes in ghosts. She has a peculiar physical and moral beauty and the ability to see the truth.

The protagonist of *Apple Blossoms* speaks about a similar quality acquired through the experience of a personal tragedy: "Я роблюся занадто чутким, мої очі помічають те, чого раніше не бачили. Я бачу навіть себе..."⁶ (Kotsiubynsky, 1988: 397).

The leitmotif of *Apple Blossoms* by Kotsiubynsky, the motif of the duality of personality, acquires the love context in *The Apple Tree*. Galsworthy turns Ashurst's sphere of feelings into a field of struggle between morality and virtue as he puts the protagonist in front of the choice of Megan versus Stella. Initially, the voice of reason (Ashurst calls it a 'knightly feeling') loses to the voice of passion: "Only, passion now was so much the stronger..." (Galsworthy, 1916).

Yet, after meeting Stella, Ashurst compares his 'wild, illicit' feelings for Megan with the 'calm and pure' ones for Stella thus losing his emotional and moral integrity again.

And most queer sensations stirred within him, a sort of churning, and twining, and turning of a single emotion on itself, as though spring and love, bewildered and confused, seeking the way, were baffled (Galsworthy, 1916).

To restore his emotional harmony, Ashurst decides to 'knightly' give Megan up.

His choice was heavily influenced by the encounter with death described by Phil, Stella's brother whom Ashurst had rescued. Quite notably, in Galsworthy's story, death appears in a variety of images and symbols typical for its archetype (grave, moon, dream, cry of the owl, night, fog, door, cave, well, bottom, water, etc.), while the death scene itself is not unveiled. *Apple Blossoms*, however, (while featuring similar images of death) focuses on how the narrator/father expects death and lives through the experience at the level of physical sensations as well as at the level of emotional drama:

Оленка вмирає... Ні, се не може бути... Се дико ... се безглуздо... Хто її забирає? Кому потрібне її життя?.. Хто може виточити кров мого серця, коли я ще живий... Мою Оленку, мою радість, мою дитину єдину ... Ні, не може того бути... не може бути...⁷ (Kotsiubynsky, 1988, p. 398).

Kotsiubynsky depicts the image of death in the scene where the narrator observes the body of the deceased child ('stiffened body', 'already blue', 'sealed lips', 'glassy look of half-closed eyes', 'dead already the golden curls'). At this point, the first (parental) 'me' comes to a conclusion which he cannot tolerate: "Се закон природи"⁸, and the second 'me' (artist) experiences a revelation:

Я знаю, що то він дивиться моїми очима, що то він ненажерливою пам'яття письменника всичує в себе всю сю картину смерті на світанні життя [...] Ох, як мені гидко, як мені страшно, як ся свідомість ранить моє батьківське серце...
⁹ (Kotsiubynsky, 1988, p. 398).

Death allows the narrator of *Apple Blossoms* to reconcile his two essences of the father and artist, whereas in *The Apple Tree* it forces the protagonist to re-evaluate his own life and his moral values. For Ashurst, the death is not only "an embodiment of unhappy love; retribution; self-sacrifice; loss; grief; repentance" (Zabolotska, 2018, p. 76), but also "a source of knowledge about life and himself." The presentation of such a metaphorical formula brings the works by Kotsiubynsky and Galsworthy closer. At the same time, the Ukrainian writer comes to a tragic optimism (continuation of life in art), while the English writer delivers a pessimistic conclusion about the fading of vital energy and the symbolic loss of life against art.

The motif of apple blossoms and the question of 'beauty' ('art')

In addition to nature, intertext is what forms the lyrical and philosophical subtext of both short stories, especially that of *The Apple Tree*. If retrospectives, as noted above, create the effect of movement in time, when the character revives his past, the powerful intertext allows the return to the artistic and cultural past of the *world*. Its main function is to supplement the love (Eros) and death (Thanatos) plot component with the aesthetics, expressed in the reflections on *Beauty* and *Art*.

The sources of Galsworthy's intertextuality in *The Apple Tree* are Ancient Greek and English literatures. The trace of Antiquity (mythology, *Hippolytus* by Euripides) is manifested explicitly, in quotations and reminiscences. The English trace is mostly implicit at the level of ideas and microimages as Galsworthy's literary discussion with Oscar Wilde, Thomas Hardy and Somerset Maugham.

Reminiscences and allusions help, firstly, to reveal aesthetic issues of the text and, secondly, to provide magnitude to the ordinary love story of a couple from different social circles, and render it into an *English tragedy*. The epigraph: "The Apple-tree, the singing and the gold", along with the title of the short story are taken from Euripides' *Hippolytus*. They move the psychologism of the short story to the philosophical and aesthetic generalization and make the apple blossom image a polysemic symbol of transience.

Knowledge of the antique heritage is a component of Ashurst's characteristics: his education and worldview determine his reading experiences (he possesses a copy of *Odyssey* by Homer, quotes *Hippolytus*, the grotto reminds him of the idyll of Theocritus). It is also a mirror the protagonist is looking into as he is trying to understand himself and his feelings. Subjectivation in the reading of the traditional text complicates the interpretation of the image of the apple blossom. First of all, it is associated with the motif of physical beauty and youth:

If she had long lost the blue-eyed, flower-like charm, the cool slim purity of face and form, the apple-blossom colouring, which had so swiftly and so oddly affected Ashurst twenty-six years ago [...] she was still at forty-three a comely and faithful companion, whose cheeks were faintly mottled, and whose grey-blue eyes had acquired a certain fullness (Galsworthy, 1916).

It is of interest to note a typically impressionistic line of visual images, picturesque epithets, the motif of love as sudden and odd, and a decadent motif of *fading*. We believe that this sequence is used to play with the reader and create an illusion that disappointment with marriage will be the theme of the text.

Secondly, the image of apple blossoms symbolizes the birth of sensuality and the feeling of beauty in Ashurst's soul. Thirdly, it is connected with the motif of the transience of human existence, but the cyclicity of the natural one and the eternity of art.

Therein lies a parallel with *Apple Blossom*. The blossoms falling outside the office windows are horrendous as they remind of the daughter who wilted too soon; they are beautiful in their promise to repeat because nature is eternal. Rubchak (1981, p. 119) states that "freshly cut branches seem to teach the writer a subtle and difficult lesson about life and death, as well as about art and reality." Yet, contrary to the pessimistic finale in *The Apple Tree*, "blooming apple trees become a catalyst for a spiritually promising future" (1981, p. 119).

Galsworthy turns the image of the apple tree into mythotext. Firstly, the apple tree is a sacred place which all the main plot lines (love, nature, mysticism, death) concentrate around, and, secondly, it is the image-appraisal of the characters' morality, that 'grows' into the metaphor of the paradise garden:

"So you do believe in being good?"

"Yes, and a sort of atmosphere as of some old walled-in English garden [...] all that he had been brought up to feel was clean and good" (Galsworthy, 1916).

It is similar to what Ernst Curtsius (2007, p. 225) identified by describing nature as a place of prosperity, as *locus amoenus* that forms the image of a garden.. Galsworthy, we believe, combines tree traditions in this topos: the biblical image of the Tree of Knowledge and the Paradise Garden, the Antique myth of the Golden Age – "The ancients believed in a golden age, in the garden of the Hesperides!.." (Galsworthy, 1916) – with the Celtic beliefs of the apple tree as a symbol of feminine gentleness, love, kindness and, at the same time, the afterlife. As a result, we perceive the author's myth of *self-exile from the Garden of Eden*, since Ashurst

lacks the courage to recognize true love as a precious gift (the apple fruit). On top of that, the apple blossom serves as a detailed metaphor of good intentions which lead to a tragedy.

Characteristically, there is a theme of the Celtic perception of beauty in the scene of the conversation between Ashurst and Robert Garton. Robert considers himself a descendant of the Celts and therefore believes to be more sensual differently from the Englishman Frank, who cannot fully appreciate the attractiveness of Megan, a Welsh girl. Their debate on beauty is comparable to the one in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Wilde where the protagonists discuss the beauty of the play of actress Sibyl Vane. Garton, just as Lord Henry, considers beauty to be superior to morality, and tries to entice Ashurst into thinking the same: "To attain full growth, one mustn't be squeamish. To starve oneself emotionally's a mistake. All emotion is to the good – enriches life" (Galsworthy, 1916).

Another intertextual connection of the short story is the ghost of an old gipsy, who forebodes death. It refers to the tradition of the Gothic prose and the neo-Victorian novel. This image, on one hand, reveals fatalistic motives and correlates with the poetics of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* by Hardy. On the other hand, it strengthens the triangle *Ashurst – Megan – Stella* which is based not only on love but also on the matters of faith. Influenced by conversations with Stella about duty and piety, Ashurst reflects on his love for the countrywoman in social and Christian terms. The tragic irony of fate, the escape which Ashurst believes to be the salvation for Megan (same as Angel's decision to leave Tess after her confession in Hardy's novel) will push the girl to commit suicide.

To emphasize the dichotomy between Megan and Stella Galsworthy again uses the antique mythemes of *nymph* and *Diana*. Megan here is a *Nymph*:

In such a spot as this, fauns and dryads surely lived; nymphs, white as the crab-apple blossom, retired within those trees; fauns, brown as the dead bracken, with pointed ears, lay in wait for them!.. (Galsworthy, 1916).

Stella for Ashurst, however, is Diana, a *deity* in accordance with her social status. The contrast of *Nymph – Diana* resembles on the symbolic level the antinomy *nature – civilization*, i.e., *Dionysian – Apollonian*. Thus, Galsworthy delves into the plane of aesthetics. He raises the question of the balance between the beauty of nature and the beauty of art. In his opinion, a modern man prefers the created beauty (art) because:

there could be no garden of his choosing, of 'the Apple-tree, the singing, and the gold', in the words of that lovely Greek chorus, no achievable elysium in life, or lasting haven of happiness for any man with a sense of beauty – nothing which could compare with the captured loveliness in a work of art, set down for ever, so that to look on it or read was always to have the same precious sense

Life (the real) Galsworthy counters with art (the artificial) as a *territory of escape* from the chaos of reality. Perhaps this is a dialogue with the aesthetic discourse developed by Maugham (*Theater* and *The Moon and Sixpence*).

Intertext as paratext (from the epigraph to the final line: "The apple tree, the singing, and the gold!") and the text's *double code* establish the present . past axis and help to reveal the hidden meaning of the work. Mosendz (1933, p. 221) notes that Galsworthy "has managed to [...] build a lasting and majestic bridge of tradition between the nation's past with its present."

Kotsiubynsky, by contrast, manifests the connection of the present . future which later develops into intertext in Ukrainian literature. Researchers consider the intertextual connections of the work to be of particular value: "The principle of internal dialogue is embedded in the composition of the text that is based on the dichotomies of meanings, resembling the effect of a mirror or echo" (Polishchuk, 2010, p. 92). Therefore, the writer's successors perceived him primarily as the greatest ethical and aesthetic authority and saw *Apple Blossoms* as a work raising the issue of duality of the human soul which is highly relevant in the times of social and moral trials.

Conclusions

Apple Blossoms and *The Apple Tree* demonstrate the genesis and development of modernist tendencies – a polemic against the traditions of realism in Ukrainian literature, and an attempt to enrich the socio-psychological principles with impressionist elements in English literature.

The polysemy of the image of the apple blossom as a key metaphor is optimal for the development of deep psychological analysis of the crisis in the life of the protagonist when the death of a loved one brings him to reflect on the change of reality, philosophical and moral issues, re-evaluate himself and his actions. Both Kotsiubynsky and Galsworthy reveal the symbolic connotation of the apple blossom as the beauty of a work of art which helps the protagonist overcome the crisis.

Both works represent the idiostyles of the authors. Despite the common narrative, *Apple Blossoms* lacks a defined plot, the conditional space-time gives a symbolic meaning to visual and auditory images. In comparison, *The Apple Tree* has a distinct plot pattern, concretization of space and time, retrospectives, expressive moralizing, features ironic remarks of the author; archetypal situations and images create symbolism.

Intertextual codes help to deepen the understanding of the motif of the apple blossom. Galsworthy uses quotations and reminiscences of Antiquity and English literature, while Kotsiubynsky applies the principle of internal dialogue based on the dichotomies of meanings.

Galsworthy strives to express the complexity and depth of his understanding of the *apple blossom* through the prism of the synthesis of Realism and Modernism. In contrast, Kotsiubynsky begins the development of aesthetic issues with the new artistic language as a modern alternative to the realistic way of Ukrainian prose development and creates a precedent of the European tradition in Ukrainian literature.

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Notes

- 1 "[...] behind the dark windows lies a world drowned in the night"
- 2 "I definitely can't bear to hear that suffocated, wheezing breath that seems to fill the whole house"; "[...] And the whistle does not stop. I can hear it through the closed door"; "The slightest rustle or knock – and my heart falls and freezes."
- 3 "The clock in the dining room struck twice. Loud, sharp. These two calls fell on my head like thunder from the sky, like guillotine knives. They almost killed me."
- 4 "That little one, usually so wild, now hugs the doctor with pudgy arms..."
- 5 "And what the picture of grief could not do, the joy of nature managed. I cry. Tears of relief fall alongside the blossoms..."
- 6 "I become too sensitive, my eyes notice what I have not seen before. I even see myself..."
- 7 "Olenka is dying... No, this can't be... This is ridiculous... this is nonsense... Who is taking her away? Who needs her life? ... Who can crave the blood from my heart when I am still alive... My Olenka, my joy, my only child... No, it can't be... it can't be..."
- 8 "This is the law of nature"
- 9 "I know that is he who is looking through my eyes, that he is the one with the voracious memory of the writer absorbs the whole picture of death at the dawn of life [...] Oh, how disgusted I am, how frightened, how my consciousness hurts my father's heart..."