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PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS OF THE DRAMATICAL WORKS BY ERIC-EMMANUEL SCHMITT

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Abstract

The article studies the drama of the modern French-speaking author Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt. It analyses of the problems of the French artist's plays, the role of his work in the context of the literary process of the XX-XXI century and traces the development of his philosophical thought. The article used comparative-typological, comparative-historical and structural methods to study the stated issues, which made it possible to compare the dramatic works of Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt with other literary phenomena, to single out his creative achievements in the literary field of the postmodern period, especially in their systems in the works of this author: the play "Guest" is taken for a more detailed analysis. It is noted that the determining factor in the formation of philosophical worldviews of Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt was the writing of a thesis on Denis Diderot and acquaintance with other famous artists of the Enlightenment. While working on his research, the writer could not miss the study of contemporary trends in philosophy and literature, including drama. The ideas and beliefs of artists of the Enlightenment had a great influence on the formation of Schmitt's philosophical thought: he was inspired by their belief in the possibility of human knowledge, considered man not only as a sensitive but also as an intelligent being; like the Enlightenment, the French writer turned to a variety of religious themes and metaphysical ways of thinking. The author is convinced that philosophy is around everyone: it should not be hidden behind pathetic phrases and complex texts; it should live in the form of fairy tales, plays, and dialogues. The philosopher must be able to mix the humour with the serious things, so Schmitt took on the responsibility of talking to people about important things in a simple way and he treats this task as a mission. Tracing the

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author's own style, it is concluded that in general, Schmitt's spiritual development took place mainly under the influence of Enlightenment thinkers, so his work used the principles and techniques inherent in the work of educators.

Key words: contemporary French-language drama, Diderot, the play "Guest", philosophy, Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt, the Enlightenment.

Contemporary French author Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt is one of the brightest figures in the literary process of the edge of XX-XXI century, where he took a special place due to the creation of his theatre plays, in which, based mainly on religious and historical motifs (for example in such plays as "Night in Wallonia", "The Gospel of Pilate", "Ibrahim and the flowers of the Koran") he describes his general reflections on moral and ethical values. His success is due to the desire to combine two types of writing: mass and elitist, a skillful combination of humor and metaphysical concepts, thus Schmitt tries to engage the reader in dialogue, as did the famous philosopher Denis Diderot, whose work inspired the writer to create his greatest works.

Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt has more than forty different works (about twenty of them are dramatic works), for which he has won a number of awards and prizes, including the Moliere Prize in the Best Author category (1994 for the play "Guest"), the Moliere Prize in the category "Best Production", the Theater Prize of the French Academy (2001 for all his creative work), the German Book Prize and the Quadriga Prize with the wording "Wisdom of Laughter", the Rotary Literary Prize (2005). Five films have been made based on his works, his works have been translated into more than forty languages, and plays have been staged in theaters around the world. Ukraine's acquaintance with Schmitt began in 1999 with the production of the Lviv National Theater by M. Zankovetskaya's play "Mysterious Variations". To this day, this acquaintance continues with numerous theatrical theater productions and translations of his prose works.

Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt is in a constant search for new genre forms that could easily and clearly reflect his philosophical views, which is the impetus for many domestic scholars to study his creative path, among them: Logvinenko M., Bovsunovskaya T., Sorokina A., Lenkova O., Vasiliev E. and other. The success of the works of E.-E. Schmitt cannot be compared with the theoretical and historical-literary study of his work. Attempts to comprehend

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it, both in Europe and in Ukraine, are based primarily on the analysis of the philosophical and existential discourse of the writer's novels, childhood issues and more.

But even today, the dramatic legacy of Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt has not yet received a proper literary reading, so the relevance of our work is explained by the need for a more thorough study of the dramatic heritage of the writer.

The aim of our study is to analyze the problems and poetics of the dramatic works of Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt.

The purpose and tasks determined the application of the following methods: comparative-typological, in order to compare the dramatic works of Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt with other literary phenomena; comparative-historical, which will highlight the dramatic legacy of the writer in the literary field of the XX-early XXI century; structural method that allows a detailed study of the peculiarities of the organization of plots, artistic images and their systems in the works of Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt.

Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt is a writer who promotes the approach to philosophy as to a special literary genre, expressed in the process of integration of philosophy and fiction; the purpose of this approach is to give their philosophical ideas and reasoning the correct literary form.

Optimism is the main component of the writer's worldview, which in his works finds forms of certain aesthetic principles. It is at their level that the writer opens a controversy with the modern general cultural trend known as postmodernism. Its content is the rehabilitation of universal values and the restoration of the inner moral and ethical core of the individual, shaken by the aesthetics of postmodernism. This program feeds on the ideals of the Enlightenment and the ideas of religious existentialism. The first enabled the writer's faith in man, the second identified a range of problems common to all mankind, and the way to solve them – faith in God. This features we can see in the play “Guest”, where the main character Freud communicates with God (or not) and tries to find answers to his philosophical questions: his faith in God for a moment helps him to realize a lot of things and to reconsider some of his opinions.

The nature of the connection between Schmitt's work and the modern philosophical and aesthetic direction of postmodernism can be defined as problematic. Schmitt tries to oppose himself to postmodernism, rejecting, in particular, postmodern sensitivity, ironic discourse, pessimism. However, Schmitt still could not avoid his influence. The writer's creative style is distinguished by pluralism and democracy of views (although the basis for them is an educational compromise, not postmodern aestheticization of another, alternative reality), dialogism (to which the writer returns the classical rather than postmodern game meaning), synthesis of philosophy and fiction to the ideas of the Enlightenment), intertextuality, increased interest in the problem of man and moral choice.

The peak of development of postmodern ideas is considered to be the 1980s. In the same years, Eric-Emmanuel Schmidt received his philosophical education at an elite high school, where he studied with one of the founders of postmodernism, Jacques Derrida. Tracing the tendencies of postmodernism in all of Schmitt's work, we can identify both common positions and differences in them on the poststructuralist ideas of Derrida. For example, Schmitt agrees with Derrida's approach to philosophy as a "special literary genre", which is expressed in the integration of philosophy and fiction (Kirieeva, 2004). This common feature unites them with the educators, who at one time mastered the skill of giving their philosophical ideas and reasoning the correct literary form.

In general, Schmitt's spiritual development took place mainly under the influence of Enlightenment thinkers. In writing his thesis on Diderot, who was a prominent representative of the philosophical thought of the era, the writer could not miss the study of contemporary trends in philosophy and literature, including drama. Diderot's views had a great influence on the formation of Schmitt's philosophical thought: he was inspired by the educator's belief in the possibility of human cognition, considered man not only as a sensitive but also as an intelligent being, recognizing that he is both a musician and an instrument. For Schmitt, Diderot is an example of what a writer should be: in his opinion, he should be able to express in an understandable accessible way reflections on complex and sometimes unresolved issues, to embody philosophical ideas in fairy tales, plays, and dialogues. What is close to Diderot's work for Schmitt is that the philosopher

of the Enlightenment did not claim the ultimate truth from the very beginning. That is, he can bring up a variety of questions, then hesitate to answer them and ultimately so the answers to these scriptures and not find. There are often similar techniques in Schmitt's work – after reading the play, the reader cannot clearly form a single idea, because the main character or the hero himself has not found a true explanation for the events or his own thoughts.

Another distinctive feature of Schmitt's work is the appeal to various religious themes. The theological basis of his dramatic works is sometimes a prominent role in the analysis of their philosophical basis. If we draw a parallel with Diderot's thinking on this subject, it is known that the philosopher opposed the church, was critical of Christian doctrine. He questioned the Bible, believing that all the books of the Bible were written by the clergy at different times. He wrote that in all religions people spoke on behalf of God. He sharply criticized the miracles reported in the Bible. He pointed out that miracles are nonsense, which is proved by an unnatural phenomenon. Believers, because of their religiosity, take what is expected for granted, miracles happen where they believe in them. He called miracles myths, which are similar to the myths of pagan religions. He sharply criticized the Christian doctrine of hell and torment, believing that religious dogmas only intimidate people, terrorize them. Diderot believed that religion is not a pillar of morality, although he was convinced that atheism in itself does not create morality. Purposeful dissemination of moral principles is needed. He did not think that man was born with evil and vices, and was convinced that a just society based on just laws is a prerequisite for the establishment of morality (Blinnikov, 1999). As for Schmitt, in his last interview with the newspaper "Culture" he expressed his attitude to religion: "I am a believing agnostic. When asked if there is a God, I answer, "I don't know, but I think so." Its existence cannot be proved scientifically or rationally, but it is comprehended by faith”.

The Enlightenment, to which Schmitt was so drawn, was not only an epoch of philosophy, but also an epoch of theater. Like the artists of the Enlightenment, the French writer was fascinated by drama. In addition, the modern writer of postmodernism, the French philosopher Guy Ernest Deboryak marked as the "century of performance", so the theater was close to the spirit of two eras – the Enlightenment and Postmodernity. Following

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Diderot, Schmitt recognizes that the art of theater has specific features that make works unique and have no analogues in other genres and arts. Life goes towards the theater, suggesting interesting plots and collisions, filling the old forms with new meaning. For educators, exposing the existing order and tearing off masks are the main tasks of drama. Schmitt's goal is to find answers to his questions. He frees himself from the acute social problems inherent in the playwrights of the Enlightenment, and focuses on the inner world of man. The dialogic nature of modern art replaces in Schmitt's work the categoricalness of the social critique of the Enlightenment. For the author, dialogue is a step on the path to truth. For this reason, he mentions people who knew how to talk, and to some extent changed the world: Socrates, Jesus, Freud.

The Enlightenment is close to Schmitt in his main principle: to guide people to Goodness and Justice. Of course, as a representative of a completely different, modern era, Schmitt does not follow all the philosophical canons of the Enlightenment, but the features of his works are far from identical and postmodern.

For modern man, who has lost himself in "possible worlds" and "played" in their interpretation, the writer proposes to return to simple truths, as well as to restore the rights of humanism, i.e. to give priority to his personality as a unique holistic system prone to self-actualization, to the free realization of their creative potential, to strengthen self-belief and achieve their ideal "Me" (Kovaliv, 2007).

In addition, the focus on the ideals of the Enlightenment allows Schmitt to return to being structure and harmonious organization, as this era brings out of nowhere a metaphysical way of thinking. The writer not only returns the metaphysics debunked by postmodernism (in particular, J. Derrida criticized the "metaphysical way of thinking"), but also asserts the hierarchical structure of the universe with the idea of a higher principle.

As a result, Schmitt contrasts the postmodernist conception of the world as chaos, which arose from the crisis in the field of scientific and natural knowledge in the early twentieth century, with the world-space, a harmonious universe. With his works, he abolishes postmodern sensitivity, which is understood as "the feeling of peace as chaos." Postmodern philosophy

excludes such concepts as God, truth, reason, the meaning of life. By rejecting the universal Truth, postmodernism thus proclaims the existence of independently valuable thoughts that do not claim to be absolute, but have equal rights to exist, which leads to the destruction of the holistic picture of the world. In his works, Schmitt does not abolish the postmodern principle of diversity and pluralism, but puts above them the idea of God, who combines all this diversity and is an indisputable source of Justice and Truth, that is, unlike postmodernism, the writer recognizes the existence of universal Truth, the basis, which is love and respect for Man (Mankovska, 1998).

Schmitt turns to the search for "ultimate truths" (which he often does not find). He uses so-called metaphysical stories. They take the form of myth, religion, literary and artistic tradition, psychology. Based on these systems, E.-E. Schmitt returns man to the path of seeking truths, while postmodern philosophy denied him this.

Another factor that distinguishes Schmitt's authorial style from the traditional postmodern style is related to the philosophy of language. The specificity of the philosophy of language of Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt, on the one hand, is based on dialogic discourse, and on the other – is manifested in the comic – in humor.

It should be noted that the innovation of the Enlightenment in the style of dramatic works was their desire to overcome the declamatory nature of classicism and get closer to the natural manner of language. Often dialogues in educational dramas were based on the art of improvisation with the introduction of elements of humor. It is this subtle humor of Schmitt's characters that unites him with the educators.

Since the Ideal did not exist, man was left only to wander among the infinite number of real possibilities. Unlike irony and satire, the humorous position does not involve choice, but only observation and statement, so it is not aggressive. Humor is based on deviation from the norm or stereotype, and deviation and norm in humor are a "unity in contrast." Humorous worldview is characterized by the acceptance of reality as it is, without condemnation and rejection. For Schmitt, it is important to show that the Ideal and reality are not in the antagonistic relationship of domination of the first over the second, but in a relationship equally possible and mutually acknowledging

each other, and the means to achieve this goal is humor. Schmitt's dialogue exposes the problems of life, and humor, without denying or ridiculing it, helps to come to terms with it.

The writer preaches humanism, which is based on philosophical issues that affect the foundations of human existence. The formation of a deep philosophical layer in dramatic works is ensured not only by Schmitt's appeal to the fundamental questions of human existence, but also by duplicating the main plot with the plot of parables.

As noted above, one of the main works of both educators and Schmitt is a religious theme. The educators were unanimous in their understanding of the church as a social institution, speaking of it as a citadel of bigotry and ignorance. The question of the existence of God was the subject of sharp controversy between them. Among the philosophers of the Enlightenment were both atheists and deists (deism – the doctrine that God, having created the world, no longer interferes in its affairs and the natural course of events). In Schmitt's work, the clerical theme correlates with the question of the existence of the Almighty, to whom some of the author's famous works are dedicated – "The Gospel of Pilate", "Oscar and the Pink Lady". In "The Guest" ("Le Visiteur"), Schmitt reveals the deist conception of non-interference with the words of God himself: "The moment I made people free, I lost all my power over them."

This work was seen and appreciated by the general public in 1993. The events revolve around the prominent psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud and his family, who were in Vienna during the Second World War. He is deeply saddened by the victory of Nazism, his daughter Anna is taken to the Gestapo and he is left alone. Here the author also introduces the theme of war, in particular the persecution of the Jewish people and the terrible consequences that came with all those events. In some dialogues of Anna, Freud and the officer you can feel the protest, despair, hopelessness, people's fear of the then regime.

After an officer takes Anna, who has been boldly defending justice through a violent dialogue, to the Gestapo, a Stranger suddenly appears in Freud's room and begins an unusual conversation with a psychologist. It is difficult to understand who this man is, because he speaks in riddles, but from his words we can conclude that it is God himself... or, perhaps, a sick and infirm man is

just dreaming. There are many questions and contradictions in their dialogue, which is a manifestation of a special philosophical style of the author's writing – it is not important to find the final truth and answer all questions, and the hero who asks these questions all the time does not hesitate to answer. If this is God, then why did He come to Him, to a man whose beliefs are not religious at all? Why didn't you come to people who call themselves prophets and messengers of God on earth? To this, the Stranger replies that talking to his like-minded people is too boring, and they already know better what to do with them and how to carry them to the masses. Thus, the author in one work collides two concepts – atheism and deism. Later, Freud convinces himself that the stranger is none other than God and, opening his soul to him, begins to ask the questions he would like to ask the Lord himself. When the daughter returns, the Stranger disappears and their dialogue ends. Was the Stranger able to convey his truth to the scientist, or was he heard by him? The open question is the philosophical doubt that the author introduces into the play.

As mentioned above, Schmitt is in a constant search for new genre forms and successfully varies them in his works. In this play, we can also trace a certain influence of the Enlightenment on Schmitt's work, as well as his tendency towards genre diversity. The fact is that one of the genre formations built into the play "The Guest" is Voltaire's philosophical novel, which came from the literature of the Enlightenment. It is about the hero's travels, about gaining experience, about finding answers to eternal questions. In Schmitt, Freud travels in time and space, but thanks to the Stranger, his views change during the conversation. As in Voltaire's philosophical novel, the hero learns other truths and begins to doubt the truth of the truths with which he went through life. We should also mention a fairy tale – a fictional story with the obligatory introduction of the miraculous, the purpose of which is to interest the reader and educate him. This kind of fairy tale, like a philosophical one, is designed to encourage reflection and find answers to complex questions, sometimes allegorical or symbolic. Thus, the emphasis in such a tale is not on the wonderful, but on the philosophical. Freud lives in material reality, at a certain time and marked by a point in space, conditionally being our contemporary with his characteristic manner of speaking, thinking, doubting. The wonderful, it would seem, is absent or even impossible. But the fact of the conversation between Freud and God (?) acquires a mysterious and wonderful character. Another epic genre formation, to which "Guest" is

related, is a parable, which in terms of content is characterized by a desire for depth and wisdom of the religious order. The world of things is mentioned in it only when necessary, the protagonists are subjects of ethical choice, not objects of creativity. The play "The Guest" from the parable inherits the deep meaning of the action that unfolds on stage, with the paucity of its external design and minimal spatio-temporal characteristics.

Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt distinguishes among other artists of the postmodern era the desire to stay away from postmodernist tendencies in literature. The writer in his works creates a world full of optimism and hope, which deprived man of the aesthetics of modern times. The main thing for Schmitt is the rehabilitation of universal moral and ethical values. The artistic method of the modern French writer Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt distinguishes the desire to distance himself from postmodernist tendencies in literature. In his works, the writer creates a world full of optimism and hope, which has been deprived of the aesthetics of postmodernism.

In the era when art is not considered more than a serious occupation, and they want to see it only as entertainment, which is not characterized by pathos and deep meaning, Schmitt, using the rules of "good game" in his work, however, believes that art should be functional. He, like the educators, prefers it if the reader says to him not "well done" but "thank you" for the real benefit of his books. The values and philosophical views that Schmitt borrowed from the Enlightenment are manifested in the philosophical content of the play "Guest", the free manipulation of elements of various genre forms, in the concept of the protagonist of the work.

Considering this era as a source of ideological and artistic enrichment, Schmitt does not lose his creative personality.

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ФІЛОСОФСЬКА ПРОБЛЕМАТИКА ДРАМАТИЧНИХ ТВОРІВ ЕРІКА-ЕММАНЮЕЛЯ ШМІТТА

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Анотація

Статтю присвячено вивченню драматургії сучасного франкомовного автора Еріка-Емманюеля Шмітта. Зроблено поглиблений аналіз проблематики п'єс французького митця, розглянуто роль його творчості у контексті літературного процесу ХХ-ХХІ століття та простежено шлях формування його філософської думки. У статті для дослідження заявленої проблематики застосовувалися порівняльно-типологічний, порівняльно-історичний та структурний методи, що дало змогу зіставити драматичні твори Еріка-Емманюеля Шмітта з іншими літературними феноменами, виокремити його творчі надбання на літературній ниві епохи постмодернізму та докладно дослідити особливості організації сюжетів, художніх образів та їх систем у творах цього автора: для більш детального аналізу взято п'єсу «Гість». Відзначено, що визначальним фактором у формуванні філософських світоглядних тенденцій Еріка-Емманюеля Шмітта стало написання дисертації про Дені Дідро та знайомство з іншими відомими митцями епохи Просвітництва. Під час роботи над своїм науковим дослідженням, письменник не міг оминати вивчення тогочасних тенденцій у філософії та літературі, зокрема драматургії. Ідеї та переконання митців доби Просвітництва мали неабиякий вплив на формування філософської думки Шмітта: він надихався їхньою вірою в можливість людського пізнання, розглядав людину не тільки як чутливу, але і як розумну істоту; як і просвітителі, французький письменник звертається до різноманітних релігійних тем та метафізичного способу мислення. Автор переконаний, що філософія - навколо кожної людини: її не треба ховати за пафосними фразами і складними текстами, вона повинна жити в вигляді казок, п'єс, діалогів. Філософ повинен вміти змішувати смішне з серйозним, тому Шмітт взяв на себе відповідальність говорити з людьми просто про складне і відноситься до цього завдання як до місії. Простежуючи власний стиль автора,

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зроблено висновок, що загалом, духовний розвиток Шмітта відбувався переважно під впливом мислителів епохи Просвітництва, тому в його творчості використано принципи та прийоми, притаманні творчості просвітителів.

Ключові слова: сучасна франкомовна драматургія, Дідро, п'єса «Гість», Ерік-Емманюель Шмітт, Просвітництво.

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