

The Initiation of the Dramatist: Lesya Ukrainka's "The Possessed" from the perspective of the phenomenology of creativity

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Abstract. This article offers a phenomenological interpretation of Lesya Ukrainka's dramatic poem *Oderzhyma* (*The Possessed*, 1901), the first major manifestation of her dramatic talent, based on the biblical narrative of Christ's betrayal. The poem is examined as an autonomous aesthetic object whose meaning arises from within the text itself, with external biographical and historical facts already absorbed into internal intentional structures. The methodological framework draws on Roman Ingarden's phenomenological aesthetics. The analysis focuses on the state of possession, the bipolarity of love and hatred, and the dynamic nature of the "cry" as an initiatory moment opening the "time of creativity" – the space for the emergence of a new Subject, the author herself. The protagonist's dual onomastic identity (Miriam/ The Possessed) is interpreted as marking the transition from a historical figure to an eidetic mode of existence. The study argues that the poem constitutes an aesthetic gesture of existential freedom in which Lesya Ukrainka's mythopoetic imagination converges with the energy of dramatic form, allowing the text to function as a "poetry of being" – a self-sufficient act of creation in which language becomes the medium of ecstatic experience.

Keywords: phenomenology; intentionality; onomastic energy; mythopoetics; Lesya Ukrainka.

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Introduction

Lesya Ukrainka (born Larysa Kosach, 1871–1913) is a Ukrainian writer whose literary legacy encompasses poetry, drama, prose, translation, criticism, and scholarly research. The pinnacle of her artistic achievement is her poetic drama, and the first major work in this genre was the dramatic poem *Oderzhyma* (*The Possessed*, 1901)¹. The history of its composition, early critical reception, references to contemporary theatrical productions, and a detailed commentary on the text are presented in the latest multi-volume edition of Lesya Ukrainka's collected works (Ukrainka, 2021, pp. 428–448). In recent decades, *The Possessed* has been examined within the broader framework of Lesya Ukrainka's dramatic oeuvre through the perspectives of textual criticism, psychoanalysis, existentialism, axiology, gender theory, postcolonial studies, and semiotics, among other critical approaches. A phenomenological reading, however, has received comparatively little sustained attention within Lesya Ukrainka studies to date. This gap defines both the relevance and the scholarly novelty of the present research.

Phenomenology entered literary studies primarily through Roman Ingarden's research, which remains the most methodologically consistent philosophical framework for analysing literary texts as autonomous aesthetic objects. Whereas early phenomenology focused on phenomena of the "life-world" as reflected in consciousness, Ingarden directed his attention to purely intentional objects, foremost among them works of art. In the preface to *On the Literary Work*, he emphasised the necessity of examining objects whose intentional mode of existence is unquestionable. He identified the literary work as particularly suitable for this purpose (Ingarden, 1960, p. 8).

In the light of this theory, a work of literature is understood as an intentional object – an entity of consciousness that exists beyond empirical relations. According to Ingarden, the subject of analysis is the ontology of the work itself, its "pure being", manifested through a polyphonic harmony of stratified elements: verbal sound, semantic units, schematized aspects, and represented objects (Ingarden, 2024, p. 57). In addition to these structural layers, literary works possess metaphysical qualities (such as the tragic or the demonic) that convey both the artist's identity and the human condition.

Ingarden's theory of the four strata of the literary work presupposes both a textual and a perceptual level of its presentation and perception. Phenomenological analysis permits the combination of these dimensions when the researcher examines not biography, history, or mythology per se, but rather how they manifest themselves as phenomena within the literary text.

¹ As of today, the authors of this article are not aware of any existing English translation of Lesya Ukrainka's dramatic poem *Oderzhyma*. In particular, the poem is not included in the following publications: (1) *Spirit of Flame: A Collection of the Works of Lesya Ukrainka* (New York, 1950); and (2) *Lesya Ukrainka: Life and Work by Constantine Bida and Selected Works* (Toronto, 1968).

It is worth noting that in the foreword to the first publication, the poem *Oderzhyma* is referred to as *The Possessed*, while in the second it appears as *The Obsessed*. In this study, we favour the title *The Possessed*, as it more closely reflects the religious and mystical connotations of the Ukrainian word "oderzhyma".

This study aims to present Lesya Ukrainka's dramatic poem *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* as an aesthetic object independent of external context, approached through its immanent essence.

The study's objectives, corresponding to the stages of the textual analysis, are as follows: to define the phenomenological framework; to examine the poem's onomastic structures; to analyse the love-hate dichotomy and the cry as its pivotal, transformative moment; and to establish the poem's place within Lesya Ukrainka's creative method.

The methodological framework of the study is grounded in Ingarden's theory of the literary work as a purely intentional object, which enables an examination of the poem as a self-sufficient aesthetic structure rather than as a product of cultural or ideological determinants. Edmund Husserl's concept of eidetic reduction is applied to clarify the transition from empirical representations to essential structures of experience, particularly in relation to obsession, initiation, and spiritual transformation. Gaston Bachelard's notion of the "poetics of fire" and Thomas Merton's understanding of contemplation are employed as complementary interpretive perspectives rather than independent methodological systems. These perspectives illuminate the text's energetic and contemplative dimensions as they emerge within the study's broader phenomenological framework.

1. The poem *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* in the context of the creative method

The evolution of Lesya Ukrainka's artistic method within the broader trajectory of modernist aesthetics – from Neo-Romanticism to Symbolist drama – includes a distinct Expressionist phase, first manifested in *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)*. The generic form of the work synthesises the lyric and the dramatic, the two principal modes of Lesya Ukrainka's creative expression. This drama also marks the point at which biblical subject matter enters the writer's dramatic corpus, remaining, alongside classical themes, an enduring component of her oeuvre thereafter. For the present study, however, particular attention is paid to the Expressionist impulses arising from the text's profound existential tension, which shapes both its artistic structure and its emotional intensity.

Within Lesya Ukrainka's creative system, *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* represents the most concentrated expression of artistic principles that recur throughout her oeuvre. External action yields to the gradual intensification of an inner conflict that reaches the limits of emotional and verbal articulation. This inward orientation reflects one of the defining principles of her poetics: existential truth takes precedence over mimetic representation.

The poem *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* reveals a distinct Expressionist dimension within Lesya Ukrainka's artistic system. This dimension should not be understood as adherence to a fixed modernist programme or stylistic doctrine. Rather, it reflects a mode of consciousness in which the physical world undergoes phenomenological reduction, becoming a space where meaning itself is generated. The figure of Miriam embodies a mode of subjectivity characterised by total commitment and ethical maximalism. Her "possession" is not pathological but axiological: it signifies an absolute investment

of the self in a single value – love understood as unconditional and uncompromising. Such absolutisation of inner experience corresponds to the Expressionist tendency to depict not characters in a realistic sense, but states of being and extreme conditions of consciousness. Creativity is understood here neither as a purely noumenal phenomenon nor as an abstract construct detached from embodied experience. Previous studies have already questioned the exclusion of the poet's bodily condition from analyses of aesthetic choices (Yastrubetska, Levchuk, 2021). The present study adopts a different perspective by examining *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* as an autonomous phenomenological structure while deliberately bracketing historical, psychological, and biographical explanations. The analysis instead foregrounds phenomenological affinity – the correspondence between the energetic configuration of the author's consciousness and that of the reader.

Oderzhyma (The Possessed) is approached as an energetic system characterised by "eruptive" intensity, a feature associated with Romantic, Neo-Romantic, and Expressionist creativity. Within this continuum, Expressionism occupies a distinctive place owing to its exceptionally high degree of "energetic concentration" (Kodak, 2016, p. 81).

From this perspective, *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* is a reality of maximal intensity and utmost tension. It is precisely this mode that the title sets – the mode of possession. The semantics of this word can be interpreted both positively and negatively, but in either case, regardless of the meaning assigned to it, possession is a state of consciousness that subordinates every sphere of its bearer's life for a certain period of time, or forever.

The deformation of spatial and temporal coordinates in *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* is a direct consequence of the creative method underlying the poem. Space is reduced to stark oppositions (open/deserted expanses versus enclosed, rigid structures such as rocks, walls, and crosses), while time is compressed into a sequence of nights that acquire symbolic and existential density. These features do not function as decorative elements but as structural correlates of the protagonist's inner state. Language, in turn, is marked by heightened expressivity, sharp contrasts, and rhythmic intensity. This linguistic strategy corresponds to the principle of semantic de-substantivisation, whereby concrete objects and narrative details lose their autonomous significance and function as carriers of existential tension and spiritual intensity. Language in *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)*, therefore, functions less as a descriptive medium than as a dynamic field of affective and energetic force.

2. The energetic potential of the name and the mythologem of obsession

This section examines *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* through the concept of onomastic energy, focusing on the semantic and phenomenological functions of the protagonist's dual onomastic identity. The capitalisation of *The Possessed* is deliberate: it denotes not merely a psychological condition but an existential identity that expresses Miriam's self-awareness, mode of existence, and principle of self-constitution. The duality of these names marks the transition from a historical figure (Miriam) to an eidetic mode of being (*The Possessed*).

In the stage directions that open the poem, Lesya Ukrainka indicates that Miriam is "possessed" by a spirit. The protagonist's second name becomes fully actualised only in

the fourth part, in Miriam's dialogue with the old Galilean, who is struck by the woman's uncompromising position and her fervent statements about Christ's sacrifice: "*All of you allowed the Messiah to pay a bloody ransom for your souls*". In response to the old man's cautious question, "*Who are you?*", Miriam defiantly replies: *Me? "Possessed by the spirit!"*² (Ukrainka, 2021, p. 141).

The title of the dramatic poem presents the name *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* as an extended magical name whose energy field encompasses Miriam's name. A brief historical reference reveals that Miriam was the daughter of Amram and Jochebed and the older sister of Aaron and Moses (Biblica, 2011, Exodus 15:20, p. 66). The biblical account of Miriam is marked by disobedience and rebellion (along with Aaron, she doubted Moses' sole right to communicate with God, for which she was punished with leprosy). Miriam's prophetic gift was considered less powerful than Moses's. It was the fortieth year after the Exodus from Egypt; the prophetess died in Kadesh, and with her death, the water there disappeared, threatening the Israelites with death by thirst.

Although the poem is predominantly monologic, its structure follows four biblical episodes: the spiritual testing of Jesus Christ in the wilderness (Biblica, 2011, Matt. 4:1–10, p.p. 809–810), the prayer in Gethsemane and the testing of the disciples (Biblica, 2011, Matt. 26:36–46, p. 832), the crucifixion at Golgotha (Biblica, 2011, Matt. 27:55–56, p. 834), and the announcement of the Messiah's resurrection (Biblica, 2011, Mark 16:1–8, p. 854). Accordingly, the poem is structured into four parts (acts), each of which reveals a particular facet of the protagonist Miriam's character and inner nature.

In the first part of the poem, the only fully developed dialogue is between Miriam and the Messiah. The second part is constructed through alternating self-addressed monologues by Miriam and the Messiah, creating the impression of dialogue. The third part consists exclusively of Miriam's monologue, addressed both to herself and to the world. The fourth and final part is the most "eventful": after the Messiah's resurrection, Miriam encounters a crowd in a square in Jerusalem, and then a praetorian. She delivers a series of accusations and strikes a servant of the Sanhedrin on the head with a stone. After her curses, the crowd stones Miriam.

Miriam's monologues constitute the ideological and emotional centre of the poem. Whether addressed to the Messiah, to herself, or to the crowd, they shape the work's intentional structure and establish Miriam as its true protagonist. Her name and the plot together reflect the convergence of all sensory and cognitive layers of conscious, lived experience.

Miriam's name signals an energy of rebellion and prophetic vision. The nature and degree of this rebellion are determined by an obsessive mode of being, pointing toward an initiation narrative – a transition into an altered state of consciousness. In this way, *The Possessed* as a generalised concept acquires the status of a proper name, confirmed by the very title of the dramatic poem. This transformative energy correlates with an energy of disobedience and freedom, generating an element of irrationality and excess. Gaston Bachelard argues:

² The translation here and hereafter is ours – H. Y., T. L.

In fact, the very dynamism of emotional words is manifested in poetic images born in the crucible of speech; through their movement, their explosion, they answer back to the champions of settled speech. If we could then make the reader feel that the excess of life, the excess of words, is burning within the poetic image, we would prove, step by step, that it makes sense to speak of 'ardent language', a huge fire of unruly words in which existence melts in its almost frantic desire to become a super-existence (Bachelard, 1990, p. 32).

Within the semantic field of possession, psychological experience becomes the primary mode of reality. In Lesya Ukrainka's interpretation, possession transcends its lexical meaning and acquires the status of a mythologeme. The title itself transforms *The Possessed* into a proper name whose mythological and symbolic energy organises the entire work. Through this central image, the poem reveals the characteristic mode of the author's consciousness, particularly in texts structured by eruptive emotional intensity.

The high efficiency and energy of Lesya Ukrainka's genres, both lyrical and lyrical-dramatic, are felt by readers and critics alike, and can be scientifically explained by the fact that the textual density of her works is 'compressed' to an exceptional degree of monolithicity. Thanks to this, – in full agreement with Einstein's physical formula – they reach their destination, the recipient's consciousness, faster (Kodak, 2016, p. 82).

Consciousness, constituted through obsessive love, reaches its highest degree of emotional, intellectual, and spiritual concentration. Possession becomes the condition for contemplation and self-confrontation, expanding the boundaries of the self. This raises an essential phenomenological question concerning the relationship between *contemplation* and possession.

In his phenomenological conception, Husserl differentiated between two types of intuition: "empirical" (or individual) intuition, which is the contemplation of objects of sensory experience, and "eidetic" intuition, whose subject is the pure essence, or *eidos* (Husserl, 1982, pp. 7–8). The characterisation of the second type of intuition is, indirectly, a task of our research.

Thomas Merton, the American theologian and poet, writes about this phenomenon:

Contemplation is the highest expression of man's intellectual and spiritual life... It is spiritual wonder... It is a more profound depth of faith, a knowledge too deep to be grasped in images, in words, or even in clear concepts... For in contemplation we know by 'unknowing'. Or, better, we know beyond all knowing or 'unknowing' (Merton, 2007, p. 1).

Against this background, the poem's compositional logic becomes especially significant. Historical detail, psychological motivation, and everyday reality are deliberately reduced. The poem is concerned neither with reconstructing the historical Jesus nor with expounding Christian doctrine. Its intentional centre is the transformation of Miriam into *The Possessed*.

3. Antagonism of Christian postulates in the characterisation of the protagonists

Because the poem is rooted in the biblical tradition, comparisons with Old and New Testament narratives are inevitable. Yet Lesya Ukrainka departs from Christian doctrine at one of its central ethical principles – the commandment to love one's neighbour.

The dialogue from the first part of the dramatic poem vividly illustrates this:

Мессія.	Messiah.
Та що тобі спалило душу, жінко?	What has burned your soul, woman?
Міріам.	Miriam.
Не знаю: чи ненависть, чи любов.	I do not know: hatred or love.
Мессія.	Messiah.
Ненавидиш кого ж ти?	Whom, then, do you hate?
Міріам.	Miriam.
Ворогів.	Enemies.
Мессія.	Messiah.
Своїх?	Your own?
Міріам.	Miriam.
Твоїх.	Yours.
Мессія.	Messiah.
Я їм казав любити. (Ukrainka, 2021, p. 128)	I told you to love them.

The final line of the cited dialogue refers to a biblical passage: “But to you who are listening I say: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you” (Biblica, 2011, Luke 6:27, p. 862).

Miriam's response expresses more than emotional ambivalence. The syntax itself stages a consciousness unable to stabilise its intentional object within a single affective category. Love and hatred are not presented as separate emotions but as two poles of one intensified intentional movement. Language, therefore, becomes not a description of experience but the medium through which experience constitutes itself.

Miriam's existential crisis arises from her inability to forgive humanity for abandoning the Messiah. Her hatred unfolds gradually, culminating in a passionate denunciation of those responsible for his suffering:

Нехай!	So be it!
Я знаю це. Я проклята навіки, бо я люблю не вмію ворогів.	I know that I am cursed forever, for I do not know how to love my enemies.
.....	
так я узброєна в свою ненависть, як вартовий коло царської брами, що радий вихопить на кожного свій меч, хто тільки зле замислить на владаря.	Thus I am armed with my hatred, like a guard at the king's gate, ready to draw his sword against everyone, who so much as plots evil against the sovereign.
(Ukrainka, 2021, p. 130)	

Equally significant is the mode of dialogue between Miriam and Christ. Their encounter is based neither on passive obedience nor on unquestioning faith. Even before the Son of God, Miriam preserves the integrity of her own moral position. Unlike the disciples, she does not seek instruction or certainty; she questions, confronts, and resists.

Miriam is unshakeable in her faith, yet she does not accept unconditional love for one's neighbours, including one's enemies. She rejects the central tenet of Christian teaching, fusing love and hatred within her fervent speeches. These states can also often be read as anger, aggression, and affect, since they occupy the same emotional register.

Miriam harbours an even greater hatred toward the Messiah's friends – particularly his disciples, deaf and indifferent to what surrounds them – than toward his enemies. She is outraged by the scene in Gethsemane, when the disciples fell asleep, leaving the Teacher alone with his heavy thoughts:

Сії люди
твердіші від каменя... Он отам
лежить той ученик, що – люди кажуть –
учителю з усіх їх найдорожчий,
а спить він, як і всі, – твердіше, може,
бо наймолодший... (Ukrainka, 2021, p. 134)

These people
are harder than stone... There, over there,
lies that disciple whom – people say –
the Teacher loved most of all,
and he sleeps, like all the rest – perhaps
even harder, for he is the youngest...

The absence of the figure of Judas in the poem is symptomatic. In this way, the poet depersonalises the archetype of betrayal, asserting that responsibility for the Messiah's tragic fate lies with everyone who surrounded him.

Obsession consolidates a set of recurring expressionist motifs in Lesya Ukrainka's dramatic poem – the cry, maximalism, spiritual crisis, pain, and suffering. Miriam is a tragic, fractured personality; love is one of the semantic components of her obsession, alongside hatred and other moral and emotional impulses. The work's defining opposition is conveyed through every available means, including the linguistic level, illustrated by the metaphorical use of colour. The poem is dominated by a palette of black and crimson, their juxtaposition articulated in Miriam's lines: "*...as if stepping onto burning embers, I shall tread upon your fiery words – and my footprints from them will be bloody*"; "*never will the dark sorrow end, and forever will grief burn the heart*" (Ukrainka, 2021, p. 127). Red and black become contextual antonyms, just as love and hatred do. These feelings also shape the syntactic and rhetorical texture of the text.

The opposition between red and black functions not merely as symbolic colouration but as an affective organisation of perception itself. The alternation of these colours intensifies the rhythm of Miriam's monologue, transforming visual imagery into a dynamic field of emotional tension.

The conceptual-semantic field frames a bipolar cry:

Ви, сонне кодро! Світло опівночі
не будить вас? Вас заграва кривава
Очей лінивих не здола розплющить?
Бодай вам вічний сон наліг на груди
і зморою душив вас без кінця!
Мені сто раз від вас миліші гади,
бо в них таки, либонь, тепліша кров.
(Ukrainka, 2021, p. 134)

Oh, you sleepy brood! Does the midnight light
not wake you? Does the bloody glow
fail to open your lazy eyes?
May eternal sleep weigh upon your chest
and its torpor choke you without end!
The vipers are a hundred times dearer to me than you,
For their blood, at least, runs warmer.

Miriam's monologue constitutes a continuous ecstatic movement detached from historical and social reality. Her cry represents a limit-form of intentional consciousness. This transformation is mirrored in the syntax itself: exclamations, vocatives, repetition, and rhythmic fragmentation recreate consciousness under extreme emotional pressure. Affective pressure shapes the syntax, and suffering manifests directly in the rhythm and volume of the utterance. The cry, therefore, becomes more than an emotional outburst. It marks the transition from ordinary speech to existential revelation.

This episode constitutes one of the symbolic centres of the poem. Phenomenologically, the cry signals the emergence of a new configuration of consciousness and, with it, a transformation of Miriam's subjectivity.

4. Miriam's gnosticism and unconditional love

Miriam, in *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)*, emerges as a Gnostic figure whose understanding of good and evil is grounded not in doctrine but in lived experience. Her knowledge derives from an absolute love for the Messiah, making this love the ultimate measure of personality and spiritual identity. In this respect, Søren Kierkegaard's reflections on Christian love provide an illuminating point of reference. For Kierkegaard, authentic selfhood is inseparable from love for the Other, while the capacity to love presupposes genuine inner freedom.

This is why love for one's neighbor is a measure: to the extent that a person has love within himself, to that extent he has independence (self), and vice versa – to the extent that he has independence, to that extent he has love (Kierkegaard, 1995, p. 218).

Miriam's love is distinguished by its absolute and uncompromising character. Purified of earthly attachment, it elevates her above the ordinary moral consciousness of those surrounding her. Faith gradually gives way to self-awareness, while evil is located not in disobedience but in passivity, fear, spiritual inertia, and the refusal to assume responsibility. In this sense, Miriam's personality is measured by what Zabuzhko describes as "the spark of transcendent love, which, in the form of Hegel's 'individual spirit', paves its way through the darkness of the anaesthetised material world... and ultimately gives meaning to earthly history" (Zabuzhko, 2007, p. 224).

Viewed from the perspective of the phenomenology of creativity, *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* becomes an indirect form of self-expression – a reflection on an obsessive destiny. The poem gives artistic form to experiences of love and anger whose scope is simultaneously mythological and existential. Structurally, it is less a conventional drama than an extended poetic monologue in which consciousness continuously unfolds through language. At the same time, the work marks a decisive stage in Lesya Ukrainka's artistic development, revealing a clear movement beyond Romantic psychologism toward a mythopoetic mode of thinking grounded in existential intensity.

The greatness of Miriam's personality may be interpreted through Gaston Bachelard's concept of the "mastery of fire." Fire is not merely an image in the poem but the fundamental principle that organises its emotional and spiritual energy. Like Bachelard's figures of Empedocles and the volcano Etna, Miriam embodies a consciousness that willingly approaches the limits of human experience, where the distinction between the possible and the impossible begins to dissolve. Her obsession is therefore not simply psychological; it becomes an existential force that transforms suffering into creative energy.

From this perspective, *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* may be understood as an Expressionist variation on the Empedoclean myth. The movement toward fire, obsession, and death transcends individual biography and private suffering, allowing the poem to rise above psychological realism. What appears to be personal experience is transformed into a universal structure of consciousness. Bachelard's observation that "Poetics and the Experienced interact. The psyche behaves according to the rules of Poetics. Where, this time, happiness comes from" acquires particular significance in this context.

The poem is governed not by the laws of history or biography but by the internal dynamics of what Bachelard calls the "Poetics of Fire" (Bachelard, 1990, p. 127). Historical, religious, and even philosophical dimensions remain present, yet they are subordinated to the dominant image of "fire-obsession-loneliness," which functions as the poem's central organising principle. "One has to be a flame to live in hell, one has to become a flame to rush into the bowels of Etna. Empedocles belonged to the volcano even before he rushed there" (Bachelard, 1990, p. 127).

At the noetic level, *Oderzhyma* also constitutes an act of contemplation in the sense described by Thomas Merton:

This torment is a kind of trial by fire in which we are compelled, by the very light of invisible truth which has reached us in the dark ray of contemplation, to examine, to doubt, and finally reject all the prejudices and conventions that we have hitherto accepted as if they were dogmas... Contemplation is no pain-killer. What a holocaust takes place in this steady burning of ashes of old, worn-out words, clichés, slogans, rationalizations. It is a terrible breaking and burning of idols, a purification of the sanctuary, so that no graven thing may occupy the place that God has commanded to be left empty: the center, the existential altar which simply 'is' (Merton, 2007, p. 13).

Within this phenomenological perspective, Lesya Ukrainka's mythopoetic mode of thinking reveals itself as fundamentally eidetic. The poem transforms biblical material into an intentional structure whose significance lies not in historical reconstruction but in the disclosure of essential modes of human existence. The duality of the names *Miriam* and *The Possessed*, discussed above, reflects this movement from empirical individuality to an eidetic mode of being. Rather than denoting a historical figure alone, *The Possessed* becomes an existential name that expresses a particular form of consciousness and spiritual identity.

In this context, Husserl's concept of eidetic reduction provides an illuminating interpretive framework. By suspending empirical contingencies, phenomenological analysis makes it possible to distinguish accidental features from essential structures. As Husserl explains:

We can vary the empirical representations in imagination, we can alter them arbitrarily, until we reach that which cannot be altered without the object ceasing to be an object of this kind. What remains invariant is the essence (Husserl, 1982, p. 158).

Applied to *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)*, this perspective shifts attention from historical and biographical circumstances to the structures of consciousness embodied in the protagonist. Obsession, therefore, ceases to denote merely a psychological condition and acquires the status of a mythologeme that organises the poem's semantic and emotional structure. Love and hatred function not as mutually exclusive emotions but as complementary manifestations of the same existential intensity, generating the poem's distinctive "Poetics of Fire" (Bachelard). *Obsession* likewise becomes the condition for contemplation and self-contemplation, allowing consciousness to transcend empirical experience and enter the sphere of artistic creation.

Viewed as a whole, *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* is neither a psychological confession nor a philosophical allegory. Rather, it is an aesthetic act in which language becomes the medium of ecstatic experience and existential revelation. The poem transforms obsession into creative freedom, suffering into artistic form, and the individual voice into an expression of primordial being.

Conclusions

An analysis of Lesya Ukrainka's dramatic poem *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* from a phenomenological perspective has demonstrated the work's intentional qualities as an aesthetic phenomenon, whose essence is motivated by the text's own internal logic.

In accordance with Ingarden's concept of the literary work as a multilayered structure, the poem's verbal and emotional embodiment of the protagonist's suffering, doubt, and rebellion has been traced across these layers. The sound stratum, though the most material, is nonetheless critical: through rhythm and melody, it recreates the ecstatic pulse of Miriam's monologues, generating an initial emotional field even before the reader grasps the sense of her words. The next stratum is formed by the meanings of individual words, phrases, and periods, which together yield the text's overall semantics; at this level, the poem's mythological, historical, and biographical contexts are encoded within the language itself. The imagistic stratum represents the objects of the human and natural worlds, and it is here that intentionality reaches its fullest realisation. Miriam is the true centre of the poem's aesthetic world. The protagonist is not a reflection of the real-life author or of the historical-biblical figure; rather, she is an autonomous image of the literary work, one that simultaneously embodies the physical and moral suffering the writer experienced while

composing the text and serves as a mythological archetype. A reader need not know the precise biographical or biblical background to grasp the emotional depth of this image; however, at the level of schematized details, such knowledge helps fill in the poem's points of indeterminacy. The poem's Expressionist poetics minimises the depiction of external reality, offering instead vivid imagistic details that function as emotional markers.

A central conclusion of this study is that obsession functions as a phenomenological and mythopoetic category rather than merely a psychological condition. It is the generative factor behind the sensory, spiritual, and bodily manifestation of the divine principle. Obsession is ambivalent: into the very mechanism of the universe's order, Lesya Ukrainka inscribed the freedom of love and hatred at the highest amplitude of their energetic expression – the moment of initiation/cry – which transcends into its causeless essence and releases the "time of creativity": the time of the dramatist's own birth.

Ultimately, *Oderzhyma (The Possessed)* emerges as an autonomous aesthetic act in which language becomes the medium of existential revelation. By transforming suffering into artistic creation, the poem marks the initiation of Lesya Ukrainka's dramatic consciousness and reveals creativity itself as the highest form of spiritual freedom.

Oderzhyma (The Possessed) is an energetic and figurative formula for a breakthrough to a word whose meaning is not outside it but within it; it is an aesthetic form of the ecstatic expression of a subjectless primordial state of freedom, and of the tragic triumph of its realisation. The dramatic poem, as a text, is a verbalised experience of movement toward the transcendent.

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Author contributions

Halyna Yastrubetska: conceptualisation, methodology, writing – original draft.

Tereza Levchuk: literature review, material structuring, writing – original version, editing, formatting.