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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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HELLENIC THEMES AND MOTIFS
IN THE DRAMATIC WORKS OF LESIA UKRAÏNKA
AND THEIR PROTOTYPES IN EUROPEAN LITERATURE

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Thesis presented to the School of Graduate Studies
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INTRODUCTION

In this study I will be expounding on the impact of Hellenic themes and motifs on three dramatic works of Lesia Ukraïнка, pseudonym of Laryssa Kosach. Cross-references to ancient Greek, Classical and European literature will be made in order to compare, contrast and evaluate the works of the author in the light of her predecessors. A short synopsis of the classical legacy in Ukrainian literature is useful in order to better understand Lesia Ukraïнка's personal adaptations and innovations of classical themes and motifs.

Throughout the history of Ukrainian literature one can consistently observe the marked influence of Greek mythology, style and literature. The golden era of Greek literature gave us such greats as Homer, Hesiod, Aeschylus, Pindar, Sophocles, Euripides, Sappho and others. They best expressed themselves by creating great masterpieces, utilizing such literary forms as poetry, prose, drama, polemics, rhetoric, etc. It was this era of Greek literature that gave us the heroic epos, uniform five act dramas, stylized poetry -- poetry with inner beauty and structural perfection. It was a vibrant and spirited mythology that was the main source of the literary output of Greek writers. The actions and lives of the Olympians: Zeus, Athena, Apollo, Hermes, the Titans and the many demigods brought intrigue, suspense, love-hate relations, sympathy and joy to both the writer and reader. This Hellenic literary heritage became the model for

future trends in other European literatures. The mythology, style, and writings of Greece were continuously emulated throughout the ages and their themes and motifs are still drawn upon today. The mastery of the Classical Age always did and will intrigue writers.

In Ukraine, the introduction of the classical tradition during the Ukrainian Baroque came from and through the West -- a fusion of basic literary principles of the Middle Ages, the Classical World and the Renaissance. The motifs of Greco-Roman literature and mythology slowly began to penetrate Ukrainian Baroque, influencing such writers as Galia-tovs'kyi, Prokopovych, Radyvylovs'kyi, Skovoroda and others. Many of these writers did not emulate the themes, motifs or genre models of the Greeks; they opted to parallel many of their own spiritual notions through mythological and historical figures and through deeds of antiquity.

The year 1798 laid two cornerstones in Ukrainian literature: the appearance of Kotliarevs'kyi's Eneida and with it the official birth of Ukrainian Classicism. Kotliarevs'kyi did not focus on translating the Classics; his Eneida was a travesty of Virgil's original version: an Aeneid thematically Roman, but Ukrainian in spirit, depth and feeling. Ukrainian classical writers limited themselves to the lower style of Classical artistry, namely the travesty and the parody.

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With the arrival of Romanticism the fields of translation and adaptation of the Classical traditions became more pronounced and were handled with great skill. Such writers as A. Metlyns'kyi, L. Borovykovs'kyi, M. Kostomarov and T. Shevchenko excelled in their adaptations of these Classical themes, and then O. Navrots'kyi, P. Nishchyns'kyi, S. Rudans'kyi, and O. Dukhnovych became well known for their translating abilities.

There was still only one person in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who excelled in the art of translating and adapting Greco-Roman works. This was Ivan Franko.

Ivan Franko left us the greatest amount of translations from Greek literature; he chose to translate those works which had not yet been translated into the Ukrainian language.¹

Some of Franko's translations were published during his lifetime, namely Sophocles' Oedipus Rex (1894), Menander's The Right of a Child (1908), Plato's Symposium (1912), Alcacus and Sappho (1913), and some scattered fragments from Pindar and Herodotus. The bulk of Franko's translations written in his latter years can be found in the second volume of² Literaturna spadshchyna entitled Ivan Franko, translations

¹ Sonevyts'kyi, M., Istoriia Hrets'koi Literatury, translated by the author of the thesis, Rome, Universitatis Catholicae Ucrainorum S. Clementis Papae, 1970, p. 31

² Franko, Ivan, Literaturna spadshchyna, Kyiv, Akademiia Nauk U.S.S.R., 1962, vol. 2

and paraphrasings of ancient Greek poets. This was first published in 1962. Besides translating many of Homer's hymns, epigrams and his Batramiomachia, plus works by Hesiod, Franko translated over 295 various works by over 65 different writers.

Of the two avenues available to her, translation or adaptation of Classical themes, Lesia Ukraïнка chose the latter. Therefore, one could say that she followed in the footsteps of A. Metlyns'kyi, M. Kostomarov and T. Shevchenko. She also modelled her works on European ones which she had read in the original. In her epistulary works she often pointed out her inability and lack of patience in simply literally translating pieces. Adaptation of Classical themes and motifs gave Lesia Ukraïнка the opportunity to utilize antiquity and at the same time to be innovative. She added or subtracted from the originals and stressed different areas to best express herself and to give way to her creativity.

We have chosen three of the poetess' works, namely Ifigeniia v Tavrydi, Kassandra, and Orgiia in order to portray the depth of Lesia Ukraïнка's knowledge of both Classical and European literature. These were her models and in this way we would like to parallel her to many of the great masters of drama. All three pieces have been translated into English. The quotes were drawn from the respective translations, but the original Ukrainian texts were also utilized in our research

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to better extract finer nuances of the author's work.

Literary criticism and research into the topic of Hellenic themes and motifs in Lesia Ukraïнка's works has been compiled by numerous literary scholars both in Soviet Ukraine and the Western World. One also cannot disregard the opinions and critiques of her contemporaries, who often scorned Lesia Ukraïнка for dealing with non-Ukrainian topics. While researching the above-mentioned topic we found much of the work done by Soviet and Western critics useful. Of the three works, Ifigeniia v Tavrydi has been researched the least. It happens to be the shortest of the three works, and the existing analyses of character, style, and form done by Zerov, Fylypovych, Yakubs'kyi, Zhuravs'ka, Manning and Bida did help us reach conclusions concerning the author's own interpretation of the Classical myth. Lesia Ukraïнка's Kassandra has been studied and analyzed in greater depth. Bilets'kyi not only analyzed her Kassandra in depth, but he also studied the literary heritage of the Cassandra myth and the author's adaptation of the original plus her unique innovations. Babyshkin, Stavyts'kyi, Zhuravs'ka and others closely followed the interpretation expounded by Bilets'kyi. Unfortunately, the writer of this thesis was not able to obtain and read a copy of L. Kochubei's doctoral dissertation about the poetess' Kassandra and its place in the ideologico-aesthetic turmoil of Ukrainian literature at the beginning

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of the twentieth century. Literary critiques by C. Bida and C. Manning gave us a deeper insight into the Classical environment and the motivation behind the author's unique adaptation. We found the interpretations of Orgia the most interesting. Most of the literary critics dealt more with the ideological and philosophical connotations of the work rather than with its Classical elements. This, however, does not detract from the value of their critiques; it only leaves more areas for study.

By introducing the original works and a few European adaptations we intend to parallel, compare and contrast Lesia Ukraïнка's adaptations with well-known pieces of world literature. This will allow us to utilize the literary criticism quite generously compiled by many European and North American critics. We believe that this type of comparative study will further deepen the analysis of Lesia Ukraïнка's works.

Throughout the thesis we have used the Library of Congress system of transliteration. Unless specified otherwise by an author himself, the Library of Congress system of transliteration will be adhered to throughout. Because many of the works were not available in the English language, specifically works by Zerov, Sonevyts'kyi, Bilets'kyi, Zhuravs'ka and others, we had to do a number of our own translations. We found the translations by V. Rich and P. Cundy extremely useful. An extensive collection of books

On Lesia Ukraïka, the Classical and European writers that we will be referring to is available at the Morisset Library at the University of Ottawa and the Robart's Library at the University of Toronto. Appendices have also been included to shed light on the original Greek mythological figures, Lesia Ukraïka's own interpretation and those of other European authors.

UKRAINIAN TRANSLITERATION

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А а	а	М м	m
Б б	b	Н н	n
В в	v	О о	o
Г г	h	П п	p
Ґ ґ	g	Р р	r
Д д	d	С с	s
Е е	e	Т т	t
Є є	ie	У у	u
Ж ж	zh	Ф ф	f
З з	z	Х х	kh
И и	y	Ц ц	ts
І і	i	Ч ч	ch
Ї ї	i	Ш ш	sh
Й й	y	Щ щ	shch
К к	k	Ю ю	iu
Л л	l	Я я	ia

ь

Library of Congress Transliteration

This transliteration takes account of only the accepted Ukrainian alphabet and orthography, disregarding the older ones, like the "Iaryzhka", the "Drahomanivka", and the so-called etymological orthography of Maksymovych.

I

IFIGENIJA V TAVRYDI

Throughout the ages the story and fate of Iphigenia has been told and interpreted in many ways. A cross-section of these interpretations, namely Lesia Ukraïнка's Ifigeniia v Tavrydi, Euripides' Iphigenia among the Taurians, and Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris, will be investigated. Interest in the story-myth of Iphigenia is evoked because of:

- 1) the psychological and moral overtones of the story;
- 2) the problem of mankind's tragedy;
- 3) the relation of mankind to his/her fate; and
- 4) the great availability of material on issues of contradiction, the pros and cons of man's actions.

... there is the thrill of danger, the romance of far places and strange ways, the sentimentality of old memories and mixed loyalties and nostalgic yearning.³

Lesia Ukraïнка's interest in the Classical tradition stemmed as far back in her life as her childhood. It was basically her mother, Olena Pchilka, who instilled this desire to read and study something more than simple 'children's books'. Shtol's The Myths of Classical Antiquity was a revered book of Lesia and her brother Mykhailo.

³ Euripides, The Plays of Euripides, translated by M. Hadas and J.H. McLean, New York, Dial Press, 1936, p. 341

As children, the two would improvise and stage many of these Classical myths, thereby consistently enriching their knowledge of the literature, themes and motifs of the Classical era. In 1884 Lesia Ukraïнка wrote the poem Sappho. It dealt with the Greek songstress and lyricist, who was said to have committed suicide when Phaon did not respond to her romantic advances. Later on, the poetess wrote a short dramatic etude entitled Sappho that dealt with this same problem of unrequited love. In addition to this, in 1897 and 1898, while resting in Crimea, inspired and filled with emotion from the mysterious surrounding she again remembered themes, feelings and moments of Classical literature. It was as if she was inspired by that great Muse that she so fondly spoke of. Definite use of Classical themes appear throughout her Ifigeniia v Tavrydi. The merits of this work and its close alliance to the Classical tradition is in the use of a chorus; dialogue; dramatisation; and the unities of time, place, and action. In this way she paid literary homage to the ancient Greeks and their forms of tragedy and drama.

Lesia Ukraïнка created an interesting play both in terms of its length and her adaptation of the myth. The work is a single dramatic scene. She utilized the Classical format of choral lyric, and she maintained a chorus and a single actor. This creates the effect of both monologue and dialogue. What the poetess stressed was nostalgia and the

problem of one's fate: In this way her dramatic étude harkens back to the opening monologue of Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris and the first part of Euripides' Iphigenia among the Taurians. What is more important is Lesia Ukraïнка's portrayal of the woman Iphigenia as a Promethean figure, as a true descendant of the great Titan. She herself was convinced of the need to nurture the qualities that best exemplified Prometheus. If it was the fate of many people to live out a life such as Iphigenia's, far away from her homeland, then let it be so; the principle and cause of the 'greater part' was more important than that of an individual. This, however, would only be possible if men modelled themselves after the Titan Prometheus.

Euripides' Iphigenia among the Taurians, a romantic melodrama, as H.D.F. Kitto calls it, was considered in Euripides' time as an avantgarde adaptation of the original story-myth. In his works, Euripides began to treat Greek mythology differently from his predecessors Aeschylus and Sophocles. Mythology was not as sublime a creation for Euripides as it was for the latter two, Euripides lived in the era of Greek Enlightenment, the era of the Sophists; the old traditions, religion and morality could no longer withstand the direct attacks and inquisitive nature of contemporary criticism.⁴ At the centre of Euripides' play stood

⁴ Euripides, The Plays of Euripides, op.cit., p. 341

Iphigenia; however, it was the philosophy of man in his many trials and tribulations which was actually on the judicial stand. For this reason much time and effort was spent on developing the famous recognition scene between Iphigenia and Orestes. Euripides believed that people behaved and suffered as they did because of their own inherent natures. Euripides felt that the human and divine spheres did not overlap or intersect but that the two were ever-present as separate essences. Iphigenia's sad fate and situation and Orestes' predicament, that of being chased by the Furies, were both due to human actions. Euripides' greatest attribute would be that he, as a writer, secularized the theatre, made it more realistic.

Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris, on the other hand, was written in the era of German Idealism, and was therefore a product of similar circumstances. Great stress was placed on the overwhelming power of logic; the essence of pure rationality; purity; and mankind's ability to resolve complex problems, not by treachery, but through honesty, truth, and open-heartedness. Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris contained all of the above qualities. For these same reasons the play has lost the adventurous nature of Euripides' adaptation. Goethe wanted to show people that there was an inherent goodness in mankind that could conquer all of the great problems of mankind. Goethe sought a pure soul and he found her in

Iphigenia. Her honesty did not go unrewarded; King Thaos recognized the justification of Iphigenia's logic and action and allowed her to depart. Iphigenia, and all that she stood for, became the central figure and the catalyst in the play.

Throughout the ages authors reworked the original story-myth of Iphigenia to best express their philosophical, ideological, and literary needs. They revamped the storyline, stressed specific areas more than others, developed and depicted the characteristics of the heroes as they felt was necessary. This was true of Euripides, Goethe, and Lesia Ukraïнка. Comparatively speaking, we have three new Iphigenias, each set up against complex situations in life.

It will be necessary in the forthcoming comparative analysis to limit the disussion to the introductory monologue in Goethe's Iphigenia auf Tauris and to approximately the first 850 lines of Euripides' Iphigenia among the Taurians. References to the other parts of the plays would be made when necessary.

* * * * *

By way of storyline, the basic similarities among all three versions is that the action was taking place in Tauric lands and that Iphigenia was a priestess of the Tauric Artemis. However, the storyline is different in each.

Lesia Ukraïнка's version of the Iphigenia story-myth differs from her predecessors' renditions. In Ifigeniia v Tavrydi Iphigenia sacrificed herself for a cause, but she questioned the ways of Fate (Moirai) and even questioned her own destiny.

And maybe ... maybe, in their songs recall
The fame of Iphigenia who gave
Herself to save her native land ...
.....

I went
Courageously to die a sacrifice
In honour of my own Hellenic land. 5

But in the end Lesia Ukraïнка's Iphigenia submitted to the ways of Fate and Destiny, because it was "beneath Promethean descent" to commit suicide. Iphigenia's last words before leaving the stage sum up the dramatic étude: "A bitter legacy, Prometheus".

In Euripides' version, Iphigenia was tricked into going to Aulis:

My father slaughtered me, for Helen's sake,
A sacrifice of blood to Artemis.
.....

They stole me from my mother, giving out
That I was destined as Achilles' bride. 6

⁵ Ukraïнка, Lesia, Spirit of Flame, translated by P. Cundy, introduction by C. Manning, Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press, 1971, p. 62-3

⁶ Euripides, Alcestis, Hippolytus, Iphigenia in Tauris, translated by P. Vellacott, Penguin Books, Whitefriars Press, 1953, p. 73-4, ll. 10-11, ll. 26-7

IFIGENIĀ V TAVRYDI

For this she bore grave resentment in her heart against her father Agamemnon.

Goethe's Iphigenia was also meant for sacrifice, but the trickery has disappeared. Fate was a more important factor; it overrode all things.

Yes, Daughter of Zeus, if that illustrious man
Whose heart you froze by asking him his daughter
If god-like Agamemnon ...

Was led by you from Troy's beleaguered wall
Back to his fatherland, victorious;
Then give me back again to those I love! ⁷

Goethe's Iphigenia was devoid of any resentment; all she wished for was to return home.

All three authors referred to Fate, a central issue, but each one in his/her own individual way. Lesia Ukraïнка has her Iphigenia continue suffering, working to survive in difficult situations, for this will make Iphigenia stronger, whereas Euripides took fate out of the hands of the gods and placed the responsibility on mankind, and Goethe showed Iphigenia as an ideal image, not withstanding all human trials. In Lesia Ukraïнка's version no plan of escape was needed; in Euripides, driven near to the end of endurance, Iphigenia herself conjured up the plan of escape; whereas in Goethe, that same responsibility fell on Pylades. Lesia Ukraïнка

⁷ Goethe, Iphigenie auf Tauris, translated by J. Prudhoe, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1966, p. 4, ll. 43-5, 47-8, 51

was more concerned with the psychological battle Iphigenia was fighting rather than in an escape.

* * * * *

In the late nineties of the nineteenth century, Lesiā Ukraïнка was in search of new models, genres and dramatic forms. Her dramatic étude Ifigeniĭa v Tavrydi, initially intended to be a two act poetic poem, bears some, resemblance to a Shakespearean soliloquy interwoven with the Classical choral lyric. Unlike Euripides and Goethe, who wrote at length about the myth of Iphigenia in their dramas; Lesiā Ukraïнка has discarded almost all of the storyline except for what she felt was necessary -- the psychological war within a woman doomed to a slow death, a second death. She therefore produced a dramatic étude and not a full drama. It introduces the heroine and recreates a portion of her past life. This was a technique utilized by Greek dramatists, and in this way the poetess paid her literary dues. It is the monologue, however, that is most important. Written in blank verse, like Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris, Lesiā Ukraïнка was able to make her monologue compact, and therefore forceful. The tragedy of a woman is both revealed and felt in the power of words and thoughts spoken by Iphigenia.

Euripides' Iphigenia among the Taurians is formally composed of a prologue, the parados, three episodes, and three

stasimons, plus the exodos. His prologue is formal and non-dramatic and the exodos utilizes Euripides' favourite dramatic technique: the deus ex machina. All of the rest is contained in the parodos and episodes and a great deal of time is spent on the famous recognition scene.

It is one of the most beautiful of the extant plays, not really a tragedy in our sense nor yet merely a romance. It begins in gloom and rises to a sense of peril, to swift and dangerous adventure, to joyful escape. But it is tragic in the sincerity of the character-drawing.⁸

The play is simple in structure but its plot carries it steadily forward. According to Kitto,⁹ the viewer is no longer puzzled or irritated by unnecessary rhetoric or sophistry. The worlds of men and gods are divorced, therefore Euripides was free to devote himself entirely to his 'form'. Euripides' choral odes are also of great importance. He made them poetically and musically pleasant to the ear. Reinhold¹⁰ postulates that Euripides decreased the importance of the chorus in the actual action and gave them the quality of musical interludes. This could only enhance Euripides' play.

⁸ Murray, G., Euripides and his Age, London, Williams and Norgate, London and Norwich Press, 1913, p. 145

⁹ Kitto, H.D.F., Greek Tragedy, London, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1954, p. 312

¹⁰ Reinhold, M., Classical Drama, New York, Woodbury, 1959, p. 136

When Goethe first wrote his Iphigenie auf Tauris, he wrote it in prose, but he later changed it into poetic form. According to Swanwick,¹¹ it was conceived in the spirit of ideality and characterized throughout by moral beauty and dignified repose. In his search for inner peace and self-mastery Goethe modelled his Iphigenia after the Classicists.

In the limitation of the action to a few characters of noble birth, in the simplification of the fable, the close observance of the unities, the high-flown diction, and above all in the conflict of the soul, Iphigenia marks a complete break with the character-tragedy of Shakespeare and a definite return to the tragic ideals of the French grand siècle.¹²

Stahl¹³ points out the symmetrical arrangements of the scenes, the regular alternation of monologue and dialogue, and the predominant use of blank verse. These were qualities quite typical for a classicist.

* * * * *

Just as all three renditions of the myth of Iphigenia were different in terms of storyline and form, in a similar manner the character of each heroine was altered in some way.

¹¹ Goethe, Iphigenie auf Tauris, translated by A. Swanwick, Philadelphia, David McKay, 1933, p. iii

¹² Willoughby, L.A., The Classical Age of German Literature, 1748-1805, London, Oxford University Press, 1926, p. 99

¹³ Stahl, E.L. and W.E. Yuill, German Literature of the 18th and 19th Centuries, London, The Cresset Press, 1970, p. 87

Swanwick¹⁴ points out that Euripides' Iphigenia, although she exhibited some noble traits, tended to offend the viewer by her unscrupulous violation of the truth, and by the cunning artifice which Goethe, with great mastery, has attributed to Pylades. Goethe's Iphigenia was the ideal 'pure soul', whereas Euripides portrayed a vindictive, scheming Greek woman. Lesia Ukraïнка's Iphigenia retained characteristics of the Classical heroine, but she was not a spurned and tortured woman who had fallen at the hands of her father. Neither was Lesia Ukraïнка's Iphigenia the idealistic prima donna of German idealism. Lesia Ukraïнка's Iphigenia was a mild-mannered and devoted woman who loved her homeland. She was, however, also a frail human saturated with fears and uncertainty, continuously tormented by these same fears and uncertainty. By sacrificing herself knowingly for her country she bore elements of martyrdom, heroism and loftiness of purpose. This becomes evident through a comparison of the character of Iphigenia in Euripides, Goethe, and Lesia Ukraïнка.

In Euripides:

God from the first for me fulfilled what he should not.

.....

The hand of Fate lay hard.

My unhappy mother ...

¹⁴ Goethe, Iphigenie, trans. Swanwick, op.cit., p. v-vi

Gave birth to me as first fruit of her marriage,
A doomed victim of my father's villainy,
An offering not of joy but of terror.
.....

Not for me to weave in patterned thread
Athenes's triumph ...
.....

But to perform dark rites unfit for song,
.....

And now, how will it end? Will luck be timely?
What device of mine can help you
Quit the land and cheat the altar,
.....

Think, my despairing brain! 15

In Goethe:

They have laid works of cunning on my lips,
Wrought me the answer I must give the king
If he should send to me importuning
The sacrifice. I see I must be led
Even as a child is led in reins
Deception is an art I've not acquired,
Nor how to cheat another of his due
.....

The unblemished heart alone finds peace of heaven.
.....

Give me your hand! A sign of peace between us
.....

Good actions do not need deliberation.
.....

Good is transformed to evil by our doubts. 16

15 Euripides, Iphigenia, trans. Vellacott, op.cit., p. 79-80,
p. 100, ll. 204-212, ll. 221-24, ll. 872-77

16 Goethe, Iphigenie, trans. Prudhoe, op.cit., p. 45-6, 54,
62, 62, ll. 1400-06, l. 1655, l. 1990, l. 1992, l. 1994

In Lesia Ukraïнка:

O Fate!

Dōth it beseem thee, grave and austere e'er,
To make a mockery of simple folk? ...
Yet stay thy course; O proud and wounded heart!

.....

Why didst thou, goddess great, deliver me,
And bring me hither to a distant land?
Hellenic blood was needed then by thee
To quench thy wrath against my countrymen --
Why didst thou not allow my blood to flow? 17

The heroine was distinctly drawn and characterized by all three authors. In all three versions Iphigenia grew in self-confidence and self-esteem and built up her own Dasein. She was now able to forge on in life: in Euripides' version, Iphigenia melodramatically returned home; in Goethe's version, she overcame indecisiveness and abided by her principles of rationality, truth, and purity; and in Lesia Ukraïнка's version, Iphigenia was able to find the inner strength to stay alive -- the Promethean spirit.

Thematically speaking, all three works to a greater or lesser degree dealt with the problems of loyalties; homesickness; men versus the gods; fate; 'being lonely' versus 'being alone'; and the barbarous nature of reality.

17 Ukraïнка, Lesia, Spirit of Flame, trans. Cundy, op.cit., p. 62-3

The obvious theme in Lesia Ukraïka's work is Iphigenia's yearning for home and the underlying leitmotif is the expression of the Promethean spirit. The nostalgia,

Argos, my own dear land!
I'd rather die a hundred times in thee
Than still live here! 18

as points out Bida,¹⁹ which induced the thought of suicide, only increased the tragedy of a doomed woman. Iphigenia knowingly sacrificed herself for her homeland. However, the dichotomous nature of her Dasein, her feminine frailty, for a moment was positive that her death at the altar would have been more meaningful than a treacherous life abroad. She even willed herself death; death was better than suffering. Somehow, however, Iphigenia realized that her passion for her homeland could not override her purpose in life -- to follow in the footsteps of Prometheus. She did not let the sacrificial knife pierce her heart; instead, what penetrated her soul was a deeper sense of purpose and cause.-- Iphigenia accepted her fate and predicament.

Critics of Euripidean drama agree that Euripides' Iphigenia among the Taurians denounced primitive vendetta and matricide. What man does is done by his own will and

¹⁷ Ukraïka, Lesia, Spirit of Flame, trans. Cundy, op.cit., p. 63

¹⁸ Ukraïka, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïka, Life and Works by C. Bida, translated by V. Rich, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968, p. 65

not that of a god; therefore we seal our own fate. Euripides took the old myths, altered or adapted them to his own liking, and painted a picture of mankind that many of his contemporaries disbelieved. Euripides, with his masterful Euripidean irony, intertwined a study of insanity, abnormal psychology, and man's inhumanity to man with a dramatic intervention of the deus ex machina, but neither plane -- human or divine -- intersected in the drama. Euripides created a psychological drama, a drama portraying the conflict of human emotions within the hero and within various characters in the play. Euripides' Iphigenia among the Taurians was a tragedy of human situations. Kohl Schmidt, however, differs somewhat in his opinion of Euripides.

In Euripides, relations between the gods and mortals remain completely unpsychological by nature, and correspond to the unequivocal aspect of fate.

What ... has Goethe changed ... ? In Euripides, Iphigenia does not set herself the task of bringing a healing influence to bear either on Orestes in his madness or on Thoas in his barbarity. Goethe introduces both aspects ... The theme of barbarity is thus as good as removed. ... Iphigenia ... finds herself in a totally un-Greek moral conflict, a humane post-classical conflict of conscience over Thoas, who now himself becomes the benefactor. ... With the confession of the plan for escape ... integrity is in fact preserved.¹⁹

¹⁹ Kohl Schmidt, W., A History of German Literature 1780-1805, translated by I. Hilton, London, MacMillan Press, 1975, p. 276-7

The main theme in the first scene of Act I of Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris was Iphigenia's longing for life. Her sacrifice, states Miller²⁰ was a symbolic death, wherein she became a shadow of herself as the Tauric priestess. She served her goddess with 'unvoiced reluctance', but still pleaded with Artemis to rescue her from a second death. Iphigenia was to have been sacrificed at Aulis and now in Tauria, her soul was slowly being put to death.

The issue of homesickness, 'being lonely' and/or 'being alone' was an important theme in all three versions of the Iphigenia story-myth. In each case Iphigenia yearned for that which was so dear to her -- her homeland and family. Iphigenia's concern in Euripides' work was to return home to Argos and to be once again united with her brother Orestes. Because of the treachery forced upon her in her youth by Agamemnon, Iphigenia felt greater love for her mother. Iphigenia's hatred slowly mellowed. She only desired to leave a barbarous land with barbarous religions and return to her beautiful Argos. In Euripides' work Iphigenia was able to return home after coming into possession of the image of Artemis. Goethe solved this same problem via a sequence of noble actions. Lesia Ukraïнка's Iphigenia, however, was

²⁰ Miller, R.D., The Drama of Goethe, Harrogate, The Duchy Press, 1966, p. 154

destined to live a life as tormented as was the life of Prometheus. Bates points out that:

Goethe's play has been much admired for its beautiful poetry, but there could hardly be a greater contrast between his play and the Iphigenia among the Taurians of Euripides. The latter is full of action; the former has almost no action and its spirit is German rather than Greek.²¹

"Goethe, while elevating the play to the highest level of humanity also reduced its tragic impact."²² Lesia Ukraïнка's adaptation of the myth is still different in that "this is a short study in the power of the Promethean spirit."²³

* * * * *

Up to this point there have been frequent referrals to the Promethean spirit and the Promethean imagery apparent in Lesia Ukraïнка's Ifigeniia v Tavrydi. In order to study and analyze this specificity of Lesia Ukraïнка's work it is necessary to provide a short résumé on the Promethean myth itself and some of the interpretations and renditions of this same myth.

²¹ Bates, W.N., Euripides: A Student of Human Nature, Philadelphia, University of Philadelphia Press, 1930, p. 146

²² Melchinger, S., Euripides, translated by S.R. Rosenbaum, New York, Frederick Ungar Publ., 1973, p. 176

²³ Ukraïнка, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïнка, Life and Works by C. Bida, op.cit., p. 65

The Promethean myth is both interesting and captivating, and intrigues both the young reader and the adult. The adventurous nature of the myth fills a child's mind with many fantasies, whereas the adult sees in this same myth something deeper and more thought-provoking -- the struggle and conflict of egos, the battle of principles.

According to O. Bilets'kyi,²⁴ the Promethean myth has been dealt with by many. Hesiod in his Theogony showed Prometheus' cunning; Aeschylus' Promethean Bound underlined Prometheus' love of mankind; the myth was tackled by Plato in his Protagoras; by Apollonius of Rhodes; by Ovid in his Metamorphoses; and by Horace and Catullus; but none with such finesse as Aeschylus. The more important European writers who adapted and interpreted the myth with success were Voltaire, Herold, Gide; Herder and Goethe; Byron and Shelley; Monti and Leopardi; Konopnicki; Lomonosov and Benedictov; and in Ukrainian literature Shevchenko and foremost Lesia Ukraïнка. Each of the adaptations of the Promethean myth differed in their own right, some making the story and myth more sublime, more human, more ideal. Aristophanes, in his comedy The Birds, went as far as portraying Prometheus

²⁴ Bilets'kyi, O., Zibrannia Brats' v piaty tomakh, Kyiv, Vyd-vo Naukova Dumka, 1966, vol. v, "Prometei" Eskhila i ioho potomky v svitovii literaturi", p. 151.-162-3, 165-77

as a comical hero, a living farce. But the core of the many adaptations and interpretations of the Promethean myth highly respected the Titan for his deeds, audacity, and loving nature. What comes out of these works is the image of a Titan who is daring, cunning, humane and steadfast in his principles.

Lesiā Ukraïнка did not devote any one specific work to the Promethean myth, but Promethean imagery is visible in all her works, specifically her dramatic ones. Feelings of strength, power, self-esteem, and self-denial, which are only some of the characteristic qualities of the Titan Prometheus, constantly catch the reader's attention. In his article on the Promethean problem, O. Bilets'kyi underlines emphatically that "the main thing Prometheus endowed mankind with was knowledge, the desire for a better life."²⁵ Lesiā Ukraïнка picked up this theme but she also expounded on it and made her Promethean figures (Iphigenia, Cassandra, Antheus, etc.) strong and courageous people "capable not only of dying, but also of living for their country".²⁶ Often it is more difficult to "live for your country" during hard and trying times. The Promethean ideal, according to Lesiā Ukraïнка, would

²⁵ Bilets'kyi, Zibrannia prats', vol. v, "'Prometei' Eshkila i ioho potomky v evropeis'kyi literaturi", op.cit., p. 157

²⁶ Zhuravs'ka, I.I., Lesiā Ukraïнка ta zarubizhni literatury, Kyiv, Akademiia Nauk U.S.S.R., 1963, translated by the author of the thesis, p. 133

endow people with additional strength and loftiness of principle and a reason to survive those times.

In Lesiā Ukraïнка's overall literary career, this is the one theme that found expression not only in her works on Classical themes, but even in religious, early Babylonian, Spanish, and contemporary works. Some of her heroes who followed in the footsteps of the great Titan were: Iphigenia, Miriam, Richard, Anteus, Cassandra, the neophyte, and many more.

In his estimation and opinion of the Promethean imagery apparent in Lesiā Ukraïнка's works, P. Fylypovych pointed out the necessity of:

... perceiving the image of Prometheus as a constant symbol or even perpetual attribute of freedom-loving, revolutionary desires. Lesiā Ukraïнка limits herself to a fragmentary depiction of the image or a simple mention of it. It does not acquire an independent meaning; it is designed to serve -- to reinforce social sensitivity. 27

... the image of Prometheus ... is abstract, ... it is only a symbol of the competitive spirit of mankind. 28

But this Prometheus was engulfed by that same fire (that

27 Fylypovych, P.P., Literatura, translated by the author of the thesis, New York, Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.A., 1971, p. 313

28 ibid., translated by the author of the thesis, p. 315

passion) that he so cunningly stole from the heavens and gave to mankind.

Such are her favourite heroes and heroines. They are all destined to the same unfortunate fate as their forefather -- to procure from heaven "the resplendent spark", and then to endure "exile, torture and indissoluble shackles" (Fiat Nox). ²⁹

With time Lesiā Ukraïнка's poetry became 'poetry of thought', as Kysel'ov ³⁰ called it, and in similar fashion her portraiture of Promethean figures became more and more thought-provoking, her figures more complex and intriguing, more daring -- more defiant of brute force and extremely dependant on one's own principles, the principles of justice. Lesiā Ukraïнка's major achievement here as an innovator of the Classical tradition was her creation of new facets, new horizons, and new characteristics in the Classical heroes.

Two of Lesiā Ukraïнка's predecessors, T.H. Shevchenko and I. Franko, also believed in the power and the value of the Promethean spirit. In Shevchenko's "Kavkaz" the Promethean myth and its imagery reflected a tortured and persistent 'people' (nation). Franko, on the other hand, paralleled his Promethean fire with true poetry, poetry at the service

²⁹ Bilets'kyi, Zibrannia prats', vol. v, translated by the author of the thesis, "Prometel" Eskhila i ioho potomky v evropeis'kyi literaturi", p. 179

³⁰ Tarnavs'ka, O., Tuha za mitom, New York, Kliuchi, 1966, p. 103

of its people, poetry and thoughts that are apparent throughout poems such as "Vichnyi revoliutsioner" and "Kamieniari".

According to Zhuravs'ka:

The image of Prometheus is a prevalent feature in Lesia Ukrainka's works. All of her heroes are inspired by the Promethean fire, be they uncompromising seekers of truth, creative people, artists, slaves who have revolted or people who sacrificed themselves and their work for their nation.
.....

Her images of devoted and tragic revolutionaries, fighters and uncompromising people possess the characteristics of the legendary hero. Prometheanism denotes her social and aesthetic credo, and is the main theme of all of Lesia Ukrainka's work. ³¹

In the greater majority of her dramatic works Lesia Ukrainka portrayed a woman as the descendant of the Titan Prometheus. Male figures, when depicted by Lesia Ukrainka, also followed in the same footsteps as their female counterparts. One need just mention Iphigenia, Cassandra, Miriam, Donna Anna and automatically their male counterparts, Antheus, Richard, the slave-neophyte, and the poet in Davnia kazka come to mind. But once again, according to Zhuravs'ka, ³² Lesia Ukrainka, most often incorporated her philosophy of Prometheanism in the image of the writer, the creative person. This type of person, constantly in search of new channels of

³¹ Zhuravs'ka, op.cit., translated by the author of the thesis, p. 134-5

³² ibid., p. 137

expression, always in the eye of the public, was continuously forced to stand by his or her beliefs and defend these principles, often misunderstood and mistrusted by state, peers, and family.

Lesiâ Ukraïнка's usage and adaptation of Promethean imagery throughout her literary career enhanced many of the topics which the poetess treated. Her incorporation of this imagery in such works as Ifigeniĭa v Tavrydi and Kassandra made it possible for the author to build on Hellenic topics, character, and themes. Old Classical traditions were retained, but new qualities were incorporated.

II

KASSANDRA

In 1907 Lesia Ukraïнка published her Kassandra, a work in which "she fully developed a Classical theme ... an independant and original work".³³ However, it becomes quite obvious that she has combined two themes, namely the story-myth of Cassandra and the Promethean problem. When carefully reading Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound, the dilemma between law (Zeus) and justice (Prometheus) is apparent. Prometheus did not simply want to be a slave of Fate (Moirā), as was Zeus. The former sought the truth and justice. Lesia Ukraïнка's Cassandra is also this Promethean figure in search of truth and justice. The author's adaptation of the myth of Cassandra is fascinating in that her heroine was pitted against the whole house of Priam: mother, sisters, and specifically her brother Helenus, just as Prometheus was opposed by Zeus. Cassandra, however, is no longer the traditionally frenzied prophetess in Lesia Ukraïнка's interpretation. Cassandra possessed the power to foresee the future, but she was still a frail woman who could not change events. Given the opportunity to prove herself as a real prophetess, an active participant in her prophecies, Cassandra fell short of her mark. She had to kill a Greek spy, but she could not do

³³ Ukraïнка, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïнка, Life and Works by C. Bida, op.cit., p. 65

it. The duality and dichotomy of mankind's situation was truly embodied in the poetess' image of Cassandra. Her adaptation of the Classical myth was a credit to the Classical tradition; it was a fresh approach both philosophically and ideologically. Lesia Ukraïнка did more than simply recreate the traditional Classical heroine; she painted the picture of a woman who either encouraged or condemned actions, but most of all, an adamant pursuer and spokesman of truth.

In comparison to the majority of her predecessors, Lesia Ukraïнка definitely produced a more in-depth study of a tortured woman. A new Cassandra was born. She was both strong and weak, still a doomed woman, but in Lesia Ukraïнка's work she became the central figure in the plot of a dramatic poem. The author's meticulous work can be easily noticed judging by the refinement of her delineation of characters, so important a feature in Kassandra.

* * * * *

In European, and particularly ancient Greek, literature the story-myth of Cassandra and her fate has met with only sporadic mention. Cassandra the character was dealt with in greater detail by Aeschylus in his Agamemnon, the first part of his extant dramatic trilogy the Oresteia. Aeschylus himself was quite a religious man and unlike Euripides, he believed in divine intervention. He dealt with deep moral and religious problems and showed the:

stark grandeur of characters, who undergo little or no development. Their tragic suffering is due to forces beyond their control as well as to character defects.³⁴

In the Agamemnon Cassandra was endowed with prophetic powers, which were often revealed in riddles, but her warnings were not heeded. Aeschylus' Cassandra was a quiet and passive character, but when she was 'taken over' or inspired to prophesize, she turned into a frantic and frenzied woman. At one moment she looked transfixed, the next moment she was doomed. Aeschylus' chief method of portraying and expounding on the character of Cassandra was done in a thesis-antithesis fashion. By talking to and with the chorus, the pros and cons of her situation are unravelled, but her 'fate' was nonetheless sealed and out of her control.

Euripides dealt with the myth of Cassandra in his play The Trojan Women. Although this play portrayed a tormented and prophetic girl, it placed less stress on the importance of the personage. A distinctive picture of Cassandra was painted, dealing with the actions that took place after the Trojan War -- the distribution of spoils, both human and material. Throughout the play Euripides showed the great torment that was brought about by war; he condemned its barbarity, futility, and even its occasional folly: "the

³⁴ Reinhold, op.cit., p. 41

face that launched a thousand ships". On the background of this play full of weeping, which was similar to a funeral dirge, appeared a frenzied Cassandra. One moment she was singing a nuptial song, the next she was enthralled in divine ecstasies "marching to her bed of death". Euripides' Cassandra was more a pathological case according to Reinhold, a product of the many evils of her family and the Royal House of Troy.

Homer's adaptation of the myth of Cassandra in The Iliad and The Odyssey was of less importance. These episodic mentionings only spoke of Cassandra as being "the fairest daughter of King Priam". He only mentioned Cassandra in The Iliad (bk. 13, 361-382) and The Odyssey (bk. 11, 421-423), and he did not endow her with prophetic powers. By E. Tripp's calculations Cassandra "appears" or was only mentioned in Apollodorus 3.12.5, in Pausanias 2.16.6-7, 3.19.6, 3.26.5, 10.27.1; and in such works as Epitome 5.17, 5.22-3, Cypria and The Sack of Ilium.³⁵

Shakespeare's adaptation of the myth of Cassandra in his Troilus and Cressida was dealt with in a traditional manner wherein Cassandra possessed the qualities of her Classical counterparts. She appeared but twice in Act II, scene ii and Act V, scene iii, both times possessing prophetic powers.

³⁵ Tripp, E., Crowell's Handbook of Classical Mythology, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1970, p. 152

The myth of Cassandra was dealt with again in some detail in 1802 by Friedrich Schiller. Schiller's Kassandra was a melancholic poem, as Witte calls it. His sources for the poem were Aeschylus, Euripides, and Homer. Like Goethe, Schiller was in many ways a product of the era of German idealism. Schiller believed in such ideals as truth, wisdom, and knowledge, but the artist who is supposed to possess these qualities of genius always stands alone. And so did his Cassandra. The deeper insight that Cassandra possessed only placed her in a position to be constantly aware of death, to be alone and ignored. Schiller's Cassandra can be quoted as a good example of the "Romantic Genius", who is and will be alone, and his inner battles, both psychological and emotional, will necessarily be fought alone on a higher intellectual plane..

* * * * *

In Hellenic Classical literature the myth of Cassandra has been dealt with in less detail than the myth of Iphigenia. In addition to the story of the heroine, Cassandra, Classical tradition depicted her in different place settings throughout the history of the Trojan War. For example, Homer's dealings with Cassandra came out in his Iliad and The Odyssey. In both cases only a narrator spoke of Cassandra. She was simply mentioned by name. In one instance it was as Priam's daughter:

Idomenius belied his grizzled head
 and, calling on Danaans, with a bound
 scattered the Trojans, for he killed Othryoneus
 of Kavesos, a quest of Troy. This man
 had come, on hearing lately of the war,
 and bid for Cassandra, the most beautiful
 of Priam's daughters. 36

and in the other she was mentioned as Agamemnon's concubine
 and partner in death:

In my extremity I heard Cassandra
 Priam's daughter, piteously crying
 as the traitrous Klytáimnestra made to kill her
 along with me. 37

When Aeschylus dealt with the myth of Cassandra in his Agamemnon, the action took place after Agamemnon's return to his native land. Euripides, on the other hand, in his Troades, put Cassandra in a historical setting just after the sack of Ilium, when the women were about to be distributed as slaves and booty.

Later on in European literature Shakespeare dealt with the myth of Cassandra in an episodic manner. Cassandra appeared on the scene when

the war is at a stalemate, and this is viewed from different angles in the opposing camps. 38

36 Homer, The Iliad, translated by R. Fitzgerald, New York, Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1974, p. 310, ll. 368-74

37 Homer, The Odyssey, translated by R. Fitzgerald, New York, Doubleday, 1961, p. 210, ll. 421-24

38 Shakespeare, W., The Complete Plays and Poems of W. Shakespeare, ed. W.A. Neilson, Cambridge, Riverside Press, 1942, p. 312

The myth was entangled with a love story. In 1802 Schiller dealt with Cassandra, the action taking place shortly before the close of the Trojan War. Finally, in Lesia Ukraïnká's Kassandra the action took place just before the fall of Troy, on the eve of its final destruction. Such a variety of situations allowed the many authors to portray Cassandra from numerous angles.

In Aeschylus' Agamemnon, according to V. Stanford, the prophetess Cassandra appeared on the scene on the 767th line. She was silent and almost hidden, an ominous figure lurking in the background.

... in a Greek tragedy the audience would expect to hear the death-cry ringing out, but Aeschylus will delay it for more than three hundred lines, building its suspense and its significance through Cassandra. 39

It was not until line 1073 that Cassandra talked. However, she did not talk — she screamed, exploding at Apollo and invoking her pain and suffering to this same god. This was the moment of truth, the fourth episode in the Agamemnon. Cassandra spoke in riddles. Possessed she foretold a dim future and a hard fate:

God of the long road,
Apollo, Apollo my destroyer —
you destroy me once, destroy me twice —
.....

39. Aeschylus, The Oresteia, translated by R. Fagles, introduction by V. Stanford, New York, Viking Press, 1975, p. 25

where, where have you led me now? what house -
 No ... the house that hates god
 an echoing womb of guilt ... ⁴⁰

In the following 300 lines Cassandra talked voraciously in an entranced state. Stanford was of the opinion that by talking to and with the chorus Cassandra made herself known -- her plight in life and her end. The chorus of men, however, did not believe her until she had spoken of the crimes of Atreus' house. From her mouth poured a lavina of truth and pain, suffering and struggle. Even though the house was filled with the scent of Syrian myrrh Cassandra smelled death. The internal torture and pain brought about a spiritual blindness in the trampled girl -- a madness, a touch of insanity, a quality of vision. Cassandra, however, calmed down, for she knew that her death would be avenged; Orestes indirectly would avenge her death. She ripped off her regalia, stamping it into the ground, and faltered for a moment. She had been stripped of her prophetic powers, but it seemed as if the Furies had taken over her soul and let her speak some more:

Friends -- I cried out,
 not from fear like a bird fresh caught,
 but that you will testify to how I died.
 When the queen, woman for woman, dies for me
 and a man falls for a man who married grief
 That's all I ask my friends. A stranger's gift
 for one about to die.

⁴⁰ Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*, trans. Fagles, *op.cit.*, p. 137-8, 11. 1079-1090

I'd like a few words more, a kind of dirge
 it is my own. I pray to the sun,
 the last light I'll see,
 that when the avengers cut the assassins down
 they will avenge me too, a slave who died,
 an easy conquest.⁴¹

She bravely went into the next room facing death coldly,
 but knowing what the future held for those who put her to
 death -- "an easy conquest".

The conclusion of Aeschylus' play, the exodos,
 brought forth Clytemnestra, the scorned woman and the rea-
 son for the double-murder, but in the air the words of a
 possessed, frantic and finally calm prophetess lingered
 high over the heads of the characters below. Moira,
 destiny and justice were all together in one room.

Everyone will agree that to Aeschylus, in The Agamemnon, the killing of Cassandra was of importance; at least, for one-fifth of the play he makes her dominate the stage, and there-
 after not leave it off-stage, as Sophocles does Antigone's. He also makes it clear to us, the audience, that although Clytemnestra does the physical killing, Cassandra is being destroyed by Apollo too.⁴²

Kitto⁴³ also stated that Aeschylus, although he took on a difficult task, that of recounting the story of the House.

⁴¹ Aeschylus, The Oresteia, trans. Fagles, op.cit., p. 152-3, ll. 1337-49

⁴² Kitto, H.D.F., Poesis: Structure and Thought, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1966, p. 5

⁴³ Kitto, Greek Tragedy, op.cit., p. 65

of Atreus, Iphigenia, the Trojan War, the story of Cassandra and the double murder, he achieved his goal with extreme mastery. Verrall⁴⁴ on the other hand, stated that Cassandra's fate being of great importance "is to the mere machinery of the story insignificant".

The Euripidean version of the story of Cassandra is included in his play The Troades (The Trojan Women). Cassandra, the virgin priestess, was destined to be Agamemnon's concubine. Her mother Hecuba, and the other Trojan women, were taken aback by such a destiny, but strangely enough, Cassandra was happy about it. Cassandra's entry in the first episode of the play was a vivacious and almost flamboyant one. It would only be heightened later on in the play with news of the death of the child Astyanax. Running from her tent, she carried a flaming torch:

Lift up, heave up; carry the flame;
I bring the fire of worship,
torches to the temple.
To, Hymen, my lord. Hymenaeus.
Blessed am I indeed to lie at a king's side,
blessed the bride of Argos.
Yours were the tears, my mother,
yours was the lamentation for my father fallen,
for your city so dear beloved,
but mine this marriage, my marriage,
and I shake out the torch flare,
brightness, dazzle,

⁴⁴ Aeschylus, The Agamemnon, translated by A. Verrall, New York, Macmillan & Co., 1889, p. xiv

light for you, Hymenaeus,
Hecate, light for you,
for the bed of virginity as man's custom ordains. ⁴⁵

The atmosphere was gloomy and sad and Cassandra's
bridal dance shocked those present. "She is mad," they said.
Not only had she, a priestess, been violated, but she was
destined to go with Agamemnon.

But her mind is clear. Her mother must join her
in her dance. ... Defiant in the marriage chant
she intones for herself, for the man whose bed she
is delegated to share will not live long enough
to enjoy his prize. ⁴⁶

Talthybius, the herald, who had come for Cassandra
could not believe his eyes or ears and wonders why it was
that Agamemnon had chosen such a whirlwind. Cassandra ter-
minated her dance. She mellowed, but in frenzied tone con-
demned the Greeks and spoke of their fate: few would have
anything to be pleased with, even Agamemnon; their future
lay difficult and short. Cassandra was defiant even to Apollo
and strew her priestly adornments onto the ground. They
had meant nothing but sorrow to her and incredulity to friend
and foe. She parted with her land with head held high,
calling herself one of the three Furies in human form, one
who would avenge the violated women. Her fate and that of
the Royal House of Troy was not as painful as the fate that

⁴⁵ Euripides, Euripides III: Four Tragedies, ed. D. Grene &
R. Lattimore, translated by R. Lattimore, Chicago, Univer-
sity of Chicago Press, 1958, p. 624, ll. 309-24

⁴⁶ Melchinger, op.cit., p. 119

that plagued the house of Atreus and the treachery that awaited it.

William Shakespeare picked up the image of the frantic and frenzied Euripidean priestess/prophetess and portrayed Cassandra as such in his Troilus and Cressida. The story-line of Cassandra in Shakespeare is shorter and more sporadic than in Euripides or Aeschylus. Shakespeare's Cassandra was limited to approximately thirty lines in only two sections of the play. However, the portrayal of Cassandra was once again an ominous feature, creating a tone of forthcoming death and despair.

Cry, Trojans, cry! Lend me ten thousand eyes,
And I will fill them with prophetic tears.⁴⁷

Notwithstanding all of her foreboding, Cassandra's pleas were not heeded. Whatever she said was derided and in Act V, scene iii she was powerless to coax Hector not to fight, even though Priam was at her side:

O, farewell, dear Hector!
Look how thou diest! look how thy eye turns pale!
Look, how thy wounds doth bleed at many vents!
.....

Farewell, (yet) soft! Hector I take my leave
Thou dost thyself and all our Troy deceive!⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Shakespeare, op.cit., p. 325, Act II, scene ii, ll. 101-2

⁴⁸ ibid., p. 349-50, Act V, scene iii, ll. 80-2, ll. 89-90

Schiller continued the tradition which had evolved around the story of Cassandra when he wrote the poem entitled *Kassandra* in 1802. As was mentioned previously, the action took place just before the end of the Trojan War when Achilles came to claim Polyxena. As in the previous renditions of the story Cassandra alone foresaw the ghosts that lingered in the shadows of a falling Ilium and the grave pain that this would bring. Once again, no one heeded her warnings. She was all alone in her temple while the others rejoiced and made merry.

Mirth the halls of Troy was filling
Ere its lofty ramparts fell;
From the golden lute so thrilling
Hymns of joy were heard to swell.
From the sad and tearful slaughter
All had laid their arms aside,
For Pelides Priam's daughter
Claimed them as his own fair bride. ⁴⁹

Cassandra was alone -- she was lonely; but there is more to the storyline than this. Schiller's rendition of the Cassandra myth was unique in terms of his portrayal of the priestess. She was not a frantic and possessed prophetess. Her life was plagued by her knowledge of the truth, her insight into the more sublime. She could not, therefore, communicate with the others or live the life of the 'plebian' mentality. The story and the heroine were unique in their restraint and

⁴⁹ Schiller, F., The Works of Frederick Schiller Vol. IV - Poems and Essays, New York, John D. Williams, 1961, p. 159

mellowness. It was as if both were impervious to the madness. The madness was substituted by a piercing array of conscious intellectual thoughts and emotional feelings. Cassandra wanted to wish away her gift of prophecy because she was not able to live in the present; she could not savour the joys of a moment's pleasure. This was not all. Cassandra would never be a bride -- a wound that never healed because her heart was torn with pain. Cassandra then left the stage, but not before foretelling the sad and unfortunate future of Troy.

It was very probable that Lesia Ukraïнка utilized some or all of the aforementioned works, be it directly or indirectly, to portray her own heroine in the dramatic poem Kassandra. The poetess' major contribution to the Classical tradition and the myth of Cassandra is that she made Cassandra the central figure in the work. She created a new and a fresh adaptation of the story.

The basic storyline of Lesia Ukraïнка's play is as follows. The action took place on the eve of the destruction of Troy. In the eight acts (not including the epilogue, which was discarded by request of the author herself), Cassandra was involved in intellectual, ideological and philosophical debate concerning the fate of Troy, truth, knowledge, love, the power of persuasion by way of words, etc. In Act I Cassandra confronted Helen pointing out her folly, her

opportunistic and destructive nature. She was and would be the cause of all the sorrow in Troy. The action in Act II was more serene. Here Cassandra spoke with Polyxena, her younger and favourite sister, about her sister's love for Achilles. Cassandra also spoke about her unfulfilled love for Dolon. At the end of the act, however, Andromache ran into the room telling of Hector's victory over Patroclus, Achilles' best friend. With this the poem introduced more action, since it prepared the heroine for Acts III through VIII, where Cassandra would be pitted against family and friends. Her 'seeing eye' became a burden and an omen of bad tidings to the whole house of Troy.

It is not words, my sisters, I can see
All that I tell you. I see: Troy is falling. ⁵⁰

The poem picks up momentum, and Cassandra's prophecies came true one by one. She could not be quiet; no force could stop her because she did not wish to be a slave of slaves. For her the gods and mankind were slaves of Moira and this she could not tolerate. Cassandra's emotional struggle -- to reject a preordained marriage with Onomaus; to avert Dolon's death and the death of more, to save Troy -- was a battle against 'Moira' - Fate. Cassandra 'saw' the future but was unable to mold it or the thoughts and desires of her

⁵⁰ Ukraïinka, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïinka, trans. V. Rich, op.cit., p. 191

family into a better future. Cassandra did not want to be a simple slave of fate, but given the opportunity to kill a Greek spy, she faltered when he softened her heart with the mention of Dolon, her loved one. The Promethean spirit to forge on, to search for truth, found beautiful expression in Cassandra's words, but her human weakness caused her to lose control.

The most important act in the play is Act VI. Here Cassandra was pitted against her brother Helenus, who was also a 'seer'. The battle was not so much between brother and sister, as between 'truth/principle' and 'pragmatism'.

Helenus:

My sister,
Tell me who ever looked on naked truth?

Cassandra:

Myself I've looked on her, and often, too!

Helenus:

And are you quite sure that truth has not put
The evil eye upon you?

Cassandra:

You, Helenus,
Have touched upon a burning score, ...
.....

Helenus:

I fight against the truth, in hope that I
can conquer it, and guide it on its way,
Just as the helmsman guides a mighty ship.

Cassandra:

And Moira, brother, implacable Moira?
.....

Helenus:

... Moira has decreed
That there should be the world and sea and steersman,
And ship and storm and time of quiet weather,
Struggles and hope and victory and truth
And also ... untruth.
.....

Cassandra:

But if one says what he does not believe,
Then that is a clear lie.

Helenus:

But if one says
It in good faith, but makes a small mistake
As to the facts, then is it now the truth?
.....

Cassandra:

How do you prophecy?

What do you tell the people?

Helenus:

What is needful

Sister, and useful, what is honourable. 51

The contrast between Cassandra and Helenus is seen plainly in the above-mentioned quotes. Truth and principle are fighting pragmatism and untruth.

In Classical Hellenic literature the Cassandra myth was dealt with in the context of a larger work, thereby studied as a topic not strictly related to the problem of Cassandra herself. O. Bilets'kyi⁵² pointed out that the role of Cassandra in the Classical tradition was a passive one. She was not a central tragic figure. Modern literature cast Cassandra as a central dramatic figure and this it only started to do in the nineteenth century. There was Schiller's

⁵¹ Ukraïнка, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïнка, trans. V. Rich, op.cit., p. 214-15, p. 216, p. 217, p. 217

⁵² Bilets'kyi, O., Vid davnyiny do suchasnosti, vol II, "Antych-na drama Lesi Ukraïny (Kassandra)", Kyïv, Vyd-vo Khudozhnoi literatury, 1960, p. 365

Kassandra 1802, Hessler's Kassandra 1877, Kastroppe's Agamemnon 1890, Elenberg's Kassandra 1903, Pischinhen's Kassandra 1913 and there were also others. Therefore, in her attempt to create a new Cassandra, or 'build on an established figure', Lesia Ukraïнка was not alone. The basic difference between the Classical Cassandra and a nineteenth or twentieth century Cassandra as portrayed by Schiller, Lesia Ukraïнка and others is exactly that which was pointed out by O. Bilets'kyi⁵³. Therefore, what is the mainstay of the respective interpretations?

According to H.D.F. Kitto, Aeschylus introduced Cassandra in the fourth episode of the Agamemnon for certain reasons.

It is abundantly clear that throughout this whole passage the weight is thrown not on the justice or otherwise of Apollo's revenge, or punishment, not on culpability or otherwise of Cassandra, but on this; on the manner in which Apollo is punishing her, on the place, on the agent -- namely both Clytemnestra and the presiding Erinyes -- on the conception that the killing of Cassandra is one more link in the whole chain?⁵⁴

Euripides' interpretation of the Cassandra myth, as was pointed out earlier, differed from Aeschylus' and this is

⁵³ Bilets'kyi, Vid davnyyny, "Antychna drama Lesi Ukraïinky (Kassandra)", op.cit., p. 365

⁵⁴ Kitto, Poiesis, op.cit., p. 23-4

only logical; they belonged to different schools of thought.
Gone were the primitive religion and customs.

Written in the midst of the Peloponnesian War, after the brutal destruction of the Island of Melos by the Athenians, this episodic play seeks to arouse pathos for suffering brought about by war, and condemns the barbarity, folly, and futility of war, which ruins victor and vanquished alike. ⁵⁵

Schiller extrapolated even more out of the Cassandra myth. The poet's interpretation of the virgin priestess stimulated him in portraying her as a new symbol. Cassandra's being represented the antithesis between knowledge and ignorance. ⁵⁶

Nur der Irrtum ist das Leben
Und das Leben ist der Tod -- ⁵⁷

Life we have alone in error,
Knowledge with it death must bring. ⁵⁸

Cassandra stands alone, stated Kaufman ⁵⁹ because the other Trojans have haplessly committed themselves to the 'blind pleasure of the moment'.

⁵⁵ Reinhold, op.cit., p. 108-9

⁵⁶ Bilets'kyi, Vid davnyny, op.cit., "Antychna drama Lesi Ukraïny (Kassandra)", p. 366

⁵⁷ Schiller, Selected Poems, ed. F. Fowler, London, MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1969, p. 46, ll. 59-60

⁵⁸ Schiller, Works, op.cit., p. 161, ll. 59-60

⁵⁹ Kaufman, F.W., Schiller, Poet of Philosophical Idealism, Oberlin, Ohio, The Academy Press, 1942, p. 94

Lesia Ukraïнка's most important contribution to the Cassandra-myth was in making the priestess the central tragic figure. The poetess' other contribution was her portrayal of Cassandra as an honourable descendant and follower of the Titan Prometheus and his philosophy. Lesia Ukraïнка's Cassandra rose above the rest of her friends and family, and for good reasons:

... among the people Lesia Ukraïнка differentiates between the descendants of Prometheus whose lives are devoted to others, and their antipodes -- the self-satisfied ones, people always satiated, who live for themselves. 60

Lesia Ukraïнка had created a slightly different tragic heroine, a new breed of person with altruism and justice at the core of her being.

* * * * *

When comparing the technical aspect of these dramatic works, namely their form, differences will be more apparent than similarities. The basic reason for this is that the authors utilized different genres.

A.W. Verrall ⁶¹ pointed out that old Greek drama was in its essence and general notion still rigidly set when Aeschylus began to innovate. Aeschylus stressed a very

⁶⁰ Zhuravs'ka, op.cit., translated by the author of the thesis, p. 130

⁶¹ Aeschylus, The Agamemnon, op.cit., translation and introduction by A.W. Verrall, p. xlvii

viable technique for the exposition of thought, namely dialogue.

It is a familiar fact, that dialogue, the substance of a play as we conceive it, was first introduced into drama by Aeschylus himself. We know also that the other literary element in the drama, the songs of the chorus, received from Aeschylus a great extension and development.⁶²

In his work The Agamemnon, half of which is in lyrics, Aeschylus' Cassandra is the third actor, the tritagonist. When she finally does speak Cassandra talks with and to the chorus. Lesia Ukraïнка disposed of this choral element and stressed the elements of dialogue between key characters.

H.D.F. Kitto⁶³ pointed out how Aeschylus was able to connect many legends in one story in a very "imaginative and purposeful way". This was a difficult task considering the number of legends and their expansive nature. This is one notable reason why Aeschylus' drama has such a "spacious texture": "it is not closely-knit and carefully articulated, like the drama of Sophocles".⁶⁴ But how is it that Cassandra fits into this drama? How can her entrance and spirited speeches with the chorus in the fourth episode, where Cassandra's tragedy unfolds (ll. 1019-1410), be explained?

⁶² Aeschylus, The Agamemnon, op.cit., translation and introduction by A.W. Verrall, p. xlvii

⁶³ Kitto, Greek Tragedy, op.cit., p. 69

⁶⁴ ibid., p. 108

Once the nature of Aeschylean drama has been established, with the dramatic conventions that it implies; once it has been seen that he is neither dramatizing a story nor making a drama about individuals of a certain kind in a certain situation, but about man and the gods, and certain verities of the human universe, then the major fact stares one in the face: Aeschylus was, above all things, a superb man of the theatre.⁶⁵

Aeschylus' treatment of the Cassandra myth leads into Euripides' adaptation of the same. Like his Iphigenia among the Taurians, Euripides' Trojan Women consists of three episodes, three stasimons, a prologue, and an exodos, the only difference being that the Trojan Women is a more episodic drama. The Trojan Women therefore lacks the flow and unfolding of plot of Euripides' melodramas.

It has often been maintained that The Trojan Women is one long lamentation and is static drama. ... It is episodic rather than static. But its episodes are held together by the theme and mount in pathos and intensity.⁶⁶

Euripides created picture-like images, episodes, or "a day in the life of ..." his characters. Norwood⁶⁷ pointed out that there was little unfolding of plot: "the poet takes the whole picture of misery and stupid tyranny, and puts it into sinister perspective ...". Euripides' Cassandra was such an episodic figure. Her frenzied, quasi-pathological dance frightened

⁶⁵ Kitto, Greek Tragedy, op.cit., p. 110

⁶⁶ Gassner, John, A Treasury of the Theatre: World Drama from Aeschylus to Ostrovsky, New York, Simon & Shuster, 1967, p. 53b

⁶⁷ Norwood, Greek Tragedy, London, Methuen & Co., 1953, p. 244

the audience with its foreboding nature, Euripides intended to imprint on his audience the results of 'tyrannical' deeds and actions of so-called 'heroes' and 'great men'. This Euripides succeeded in doing. The predicament of each character in The Trojan Women is but an episode in the play. Each episode, each character, each just as important as the other, tells us something else about the same story -- the fate of the Royal House of Troy.

Considered superficially the play lacks both unity and a tragic idea. As for the unity, little is gained by pointing to a continuous presence of Hecuba; what happens to one person is not necessarily a unity, and in fact the centre of interest is successively Hecuba, Cassandra and Helen. Certainly the presence of Hecuba helps; without her the play would seem more episodic. We may fairly call her a symbol; but if she is that, and if the unity of the piece is seen in her, it must really lie in that which she symbolizes, the sufferings of the defeated. 68

Lesia Ukraïнка's use of acts somehow resembles the Euripidean episodes, but in her version there is no chorus, only one main figure -- Cassandra.

Schiller's interpretation of the Cassandra myth was transmitted in ballad form.. There is no chorus, no dialogue, no second or third actor. The poem is a simple poetic monologue. Fowler ⁶⁹ described it as a Rollengedicht. He further pointed out the use of four narrative stanzas serving as introduction and conclusion., The beauty of Schiller's piece is

⁶⁸ Kitto, Greek Tragedy, op.cit., p. 212

⁶⁹ Schiller, Selected Poems, ed. Fowler, op.cit., p. 121

his ability to unfold a tragedy, to create action not on stage but in the spirit and soul of a lonely woman. Each stanza of Cassandra's poetic monologue flows into the other to continue a thought, to build it up and to arrive at a climax. The mastery of Schiller's techne is apparent throughout the piece: no unnecessary words, no befuddled thought, only crisp and clear poetry where a "melancholic mood is exorcised".⁷⁰

Lesia Ukraïнка was probably well aware of the attempts of her predecessors to portray the Cassandra myth. Furthermore, it has already been pointed out how she altered the storyline in her own work. When composing her work Lesia Ukraïнка also altered much of the research material available to her. She also built around the character and theme of the Cassandra myth, creating a 'new' Cassandra.

In terms of form, there are more dissimilarities between Lesia Ukraïнка and her predecessors than there are similarities: First and foremost, the poetess made Cassandra her central figure. In order to achieve this she had to create situations for Cassandra to act upon, because ancient mythology and the Classical tradition gave her little to work with. Therefore, much of the action in her dramatic poem is unique. The work Kassandra consists of eight acts. There was an epilogue, wherein Cassandra tore off her regalia denouncing

⁷⁰ Witte, William, Schiller, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1949, p. 73

Apollo, etc. but Lesia Ukraïнка realized that the epilogue decreased the impact of her ending -- the burning Troy. She therefore omitted the epilogue in her final version of the dramatic poem. O. Bilets'kyi,⁷¹ further pointed out that the piece lacks that chain of cause and effect relations, so important a device in dramatic works. This, however, does not hamper the development of the subject and the characters.

Lesia Ukraïнка's piece is almost as episodic as was Euripides' work. The most prolific element in Euripides' work according to R. Lattimore⁷² are the rhetorical debates between Cassandra, Hecuba, Helen and Andromache. The unifying elements of the piece are Cassandra, her fate, and the ideological and philosophical content of the poem. Just as in Euripides, where the Trojan women appeared one by one, so Lesia Ukraïнка devoted almost one act apiece to Cassandra's debates with her rivals. Lesia Ukraïнка discarded the use of the chorus, unlike her piece Ifigeniia v Tavrydi, because she stressed Cassandra's rhetorical disputes. The chorus was a necessary vehicle; she did not need to create lyrical stanzas of hundreds of lines as did Aeschylus or Euripides. What the piece is, is one long dialogue.

⁷¹ Bilets'kyi, Vid davnyiny, op.cit., "Antychna drama Lesi Ukraïnky (Kassandra)", p. 369

⁷² Euripides, Euripides III, op.cit., p. 124

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.... Before us we have a poem in dialogue form with one major and central figure -- Cassandra, for whom the action -- the Trojan War, and all dramatis personae -- sisters, brothers, Trojans and Greeks are but a live stage (background). ⁷³

Written in iambic pentameter and blank verse, the piece reads well and is melodious to the ear when heard on stage. Lesia Ukraïнка did not overburden her piece with regional or historical memorabilia, and furthermore, a lot of the action takes place behind the scenes, e.g. the deaths of Hector and Dolon, the defeat of the Lydian army, the crying voice of Hecuba, etc. Pompous decorations, name-dropping of mythological and historical figures, and extensive movement on stage were not important to Lesia Ukraïнка; her interest lay in cerebral dialogues created to portray different types of people. It is a psychological and philosophical play, and the composition is antithetical. By way of comparison, the poetess retained more Aeschylean and Euripidean forms than the balladic elements of Schiller.

* * * * *

For Aeschylus, Euripides, Homer, Virgil and others, Cassandra was a secondary or tertiary dramatic figure. She was usually the deuteraganist or tritagonist in the group of dramatis personae. Her character was therefore treated

⁷³ Bilets'kyi, Vid davnyny, op.cit., "Antychna drama Lesi Ukraïinky (Kassandra)", translated by the author of the thesis, p. 370

accordingly, but not partly or poorly. Stanford ⁷⁴ saw Cassandra as being "impervious to outside events, in the grips of a higher power and entranced, like a medium on the verge of vision ... she is the agony of vision ... the tragic muse." She was almost blinded to everything around her and would not be able to see through it until she had ripped off her regalia and was ready to meet her death at Agamemnon's side. As Mr. Sidgwick observes:

Cassandra is not truly a study of character at all, the interest lies in her situation. She is the victim of events which she clearly foresees, but which, by the condition of her estate, she is powerless to influence. Such a figure, having something improbable in it, requires more than ordinary power for its successful handling; but if successful, none can be more deeply impressive. ... From the first moment she opens her mouth, curiosity is superseded by sympathy and awe. ⁷⁵

Cassandra was an interesting, well-rounded 'Greek' figure.

To the Greek audience and to Aeschylus Cassandra possessed an honourable characteristic -- tlemosyne.

Aeschylus intended Cassandra to be thought sick but, unlike Agamemnon or Prometheus, admirable nonetheless. Cassandra was admirable in the eyes of the Greeks because, as we have said, she endured her fate, as the Greeks would have it, accepted it and approached her bloody death 'serene' (l. 1297). ⁷⁶ And for that tlemosyne the Chorus saluted Cassandra.

⁷⁴ Aeschylus, The Oresteia, introduction Stanford, op.cit., p. 25 & 29

⁷⁵ Aeschylus, The Agamemnon, translated by W. Headlam, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1925, p. 36

⁷⁶ Beck, R.H., Aeschylus: Playwright and Educator, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1975, p. 97

When comparing and contrasting the two more prominent interpretations and delineation of character by Aeschylus and Euripides, the latter adaptation was less striking than the former. Norwood⁷⁷ specified that even though "her pathos is less deep and wide than that of her namesake in The Agamemnon", Euripides' Cassandra is, however, still valuable. Her character enhanced the episodic nature of the play and brought out even more the suffering nature of Hecuba -- a pagan mater dolorosa.-- Kitto⁷⁸ regarded the treatment of character in Euripides as schematic rather than naturalistic, but Gassner went further and stated about Cassandra and the others that:

... the victims are already trapped; their fate has been decided; they are acted upon. Their role is only to react, which they do magnificently. There is little stasis in their situation, which moves from one outrage to another, and none whatsoever in their hearts, which beat fiercely, while the heart of the poet rages with them at the spectacle of bedevilled humanity.⁷⁹

Schiller's Cassandra, on the other hand, stands alone in terms of character development. The virgin priestess was a woman constantly involved in cerebral meditation, always pondering the reality surrounding her, weighing the 'pros and cons' of her predicament. In some respects Schiller's

⁷⁷ Norwood, op.cit., p. 245

⁷⁸ Kitto, Greek Tragedy, op.cit., p. 213

⁷⁹ Gassner, op.cit., p. 53b

Cassandra resembles the 'altruistic' Promethean nature of Lesia Ukraïнка's heroine.

Cassandra symbolizes the inner loneliness of those who cannot participate in the shallow pleasures of everyday life, because in their constant awareness of death, they feel the irrisistable obligation to live a life entirely devoted to the service of others. The average man, naively unconcerned about the future, can ignore the transitoriness of human existence. But the thinking man needs a belief in something that out-lives individual existence, he must create values that will enrich the life of future generations. If man realizes this challenge of death, then death may lose its horror and utter senselessness.⁸⁰

Schiller's Cassandra, however, was a passive actress; she had been acted upon -- given the power of foreseeing -- a power which she could not rid herself of. Lesia Ukraïнка's Cassandra wanted to be an actress, a creator of events, but she faltered at the crucial moment. She was unable to see clearly at times. Schiller's Cassandra was helpless; she was a victim of the gods and her "prophetic gift reveals to her no grounds for faith and hope".⁸¹ Still she sang to Apollo to take this 'false gift' away, but all was for naught.

Lesia Ukraïнка made this 'tragedy of truth' more elaborate. Her life was dedicated to the poetic word. Therefore, her poetic word, like Cassandra's prophetic power, were

⁸⁰ Kaufman, op.cit., p. 95

⁸¹ Witte, op.cit., p. 72

both tools.

Lesia Ukraïнка's Cassandra is not a slave of Moira, whom the gods punished and who in prophetic ecstasy foretells the future, herself not desiring this; she is not Schiller's Cassandra, who grieves for the unattainable pleasures of life and humbly carries her cross. This is a strong and stern woman who understands her calling and duty well. Lesia Ukraïнка's Cassandra is a tragic image. Because knowledge is not yet action, she cannot change anything in the development of events. She just rules over the spoken word, and it becomes the tool in her fight for truth. 82

The poetess' Cassandra did not mask her feelings or thoughts, but very often she lost control over what, where, and when to voice her thoughts. Her tragedy lay in her just seeing and not really knowing.

Lesia Ukraïнка's choice of heroines, Cassandra, and her motivation in depicting Cassandra in such a manner is best described by the author herself in a letter she wrote to O. Kobylians'ka dated the 14th of March, 1903, in which she discussed her interest in 'restless and passionate elements'.

... this tragic priestess, whose revelations no one believed, endowed with a fruitless prophetic power, is exactly that restless and passionate character: she recognizes evil and prophesizes about it, but no one believes her, because although she speaks the truth, her revelations are not of the kind people wish to hear; she knows that speaking thus no one will believe her, but she does not know how to speak otherwise; she knows that no one will heed her words, but she cannot remain silent, because her soul and words cannot be placed under a yoke; she herself fears her own prophecies and, what is the most tragic, she

82 Zhuravs'ka, op.cit., translated by the author of the thesis, p. 128

often doubts them, because she does not know if it is always that her words depend on the actions, or vice-versa, that the actions depend on her words, and for this reason she is often silent when she should talk; ... she foresees everything, she knows everything, not with the cold reasoning of a philosopher, but through human intuition, which perceives everything unconsciously and directly, not via reason, but feelings, -- that is why she never says: "I know", just: "I see", because she truly sees that which will come to be, but she cannot explain through arguments why it must be one way and not another. ⁸³

Lesia Ukraïнка's Cassandra was like her Iphigenia -- a descendant of Prometheus. Neither one wanted to be a slave of Meira, 'a slave of slaves'. Cassandra was alive and vibrant; she constantly protested:

But to change the development of events it is not enough to know the truth: one needs the desire to act, the possibility to act. Cassandra has neither. No wonder Helenus' deep insight sees this and tells her:

The gods are guilty he who granted you
To know the truth, but did not add the power
For you to guide the truth. Indeed you see it
Clasping your hands, or wringing them in grief
Powerless you stand before the doomful vision
Of the dread truth ⁸⁴

Throughout the poem Cassandra's character stands out with its dichotomous nature. Here is a person with insight into and a need to foretell the truth, but at the same time

⁸³ Kosach-Kryvnyiuk, Lesia Ukraïнка: Khronolohiia zhyttia i tvorchosty, New York, Ukrainian Academy of Arts & Sciences in the U.S.A., 1970, translated by the author of the thesis, p. 674

⁸⁴ Bilets'kyi, Vid davnyiny, op.cit., "Antychna drama Lesi Ukraïinky (Kassandra)", translated by the author of the thesis and V. Rich (Lesya Ukraïнка, op.cit.), p. 377

she is plagued with human frailties and the inability to stand behind her prophetic words with concrete actions. Each act, each line, helps the reader discern this problem step by step and shows how deeply distant Cassandra is from family, peers and fellow countrymen. This tragedy is heightened only with the very last line spoken by Cassandra.

Cassandra:

... Ha ha ha!

.....

Cassandra never told the truth at all!
There is no ruin! It is life! All life! 85

The reader becomes dumbfounded by these words. Cassandra could not have fallen into the hands of unprecedented pragmatism as had her brother Helenus. The only answer for such action by Cassandra is the fact, that she in fine fell prey to her own uncertainty and her inability to see through to her inner self.

* * * * *

The backbone or skeleton of any piece of literature is its theme. At times it is obvious to the reader or a listening audience; often it takes time to decipher the theme. The theme is something that binds together storyline, Leitmotiv, characters and their roles. It is like an unseen managing director who makes a play more than a conglomerate

⁸⁵ Ukrainka, Lesia, Lesya Ukrainka, translated by V. Rich, op. cit., p. 239

of words and sentences.

For Aeschylus, who was a religious man, The Agamemnon spoke of the moral and religious overtones of his day.

In The Agamemnon there is a like attempt, on the one hand to uphold the just principle that guilt must be paid for, and on the other, to mitigate the conclusion by which alone this principle could be shown to have a sure basis of fact.⁸⁶

Beck⁸⁷ underlined this same fact by pointing out that the play dealt with transgression and retributive justice.

Cassandra's role in this whole thematic transaction was a secondary one. She was an innocent victim, but it must be pointed out that she was yet another person who was submitted to the treachery of the House of Atreus. Therefore her role in the play, although not primordial, was important. Aeschylus would not have brought Cassandra into his play for sheer artistry or tragic effect. He was aware of the myth and the problem of divine rule over mankind. Man had to pay for his sins and Agamemnon did just that; unfortunately he took Cassandra to his grave along with him. The play is ominous and dark, and it "represents a static, claustrophobic world", "a huddling together of fierce extremes", such as in Hazlitt's description of MacBeth.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Aeschylus, The Agamemnon, introduction by Haedlam, op.cit., p. 239

⁸⁷ Beck, op.cit. p. 66

⁸⁸ Aeschylus, The Oresteia, introduction by Stanford, op.cit., p. 38

Euripides' interpretation of this same Cassandra myth reads quite differently. A man with a keen eye for people and their actions, Euripides was influenced by his own time period and the specific events that affected him. Appalled and abhorred by man's crudeness and bestiality, Euripides wanted to show man as the 'naked ape'. Richard Lattimore,⁸⁹ however, did not believe that Euripides' work made such a blanket statement. If anything, Euripides wanted to show that suffering and pain created by man is a sine qua non of any war. According to Kitto, there is, however, one similarity between Aeschylus' and Euripides' pieces:

The spectacle of the strong trampling on the impotent, though it may be salutary propaganda, is not tragedy; but we remember the general course of the trilogy, and there is the illuminating prologue. The Greeks are under sentence of death for ubris, but before retribution descends on them, they make it clear, by their further outrages, how much they deserve it. There is a moral structure not unlike that of The Agamemnon.⁹⁰

In both cases, in Aeschylus and Euripides, Cassandra became a victim of war: in the former case being killed by Clytemnestra, in the latter falling prisoner to the great Agamemnon.

Shakespeare's adaptation of the Cassandra myth followed along the lines of the Classical tradition, but Schiller gave the Cassandra myth and Cassandra herself a deeper mystique.

⁸⁹ Euripides, Euripides III, introduction by Lattimore, op. cit., p. 124

⁹⁰ Kitto, Greek Tragedy, op. cit., p. 212

Schiller's Cassandra was both prophetess and philosopher and this was the thematic background for his poem. Johnson ⁹¹ called it the hopeless misery in which the heroine struggled, all of which resulted from her knowledge of the future. The ballad elaborated on the problem of truth and the obvious unsettling life led by those who trek towards truth. "Truth is by no means an unfailing guarantee of happiness." ⁹² The knowledge of truth only leads one to a slow psychological death and to rejection by family and peers. Schiller was able to connect these feelings with his own, those of an artist at a moment of rebellious despair.

... the lonely artist, rebelling against his lot, feels that he would unwillingly barter his tortured genius for a share of the easy-going, self-satisfied cheerfulness which so many of his fellow-men display. ⁹³

A mature Schiller, like Diogenes, who roamed Greece in search of 'a man', searched for truth but was startled when he found it. So, was his Cassandra startled.

For truth embraces the highest and the lowest, the sublime and the horrible, creation and decay. Nobody can endure the whole truth who is not prepared to face the despair of destruction along with the intensified experience of the sublime. ⁹⁴

⁹¹ Schiller, Schiller's Ballads, edited and introduction by H. Johnson, Boston, D.C. Heath & Co., 1908, p. 150

⁹² Schiller, Selected Poems, ed. Fowler, op.cit., p. 122

⁹³ Witte, op.cit., p. 71

⁹⁴ Kaufman, op.cit., p. 94

By combining the research of interrelated works on Cassandra, it slowly becomes obvious where Lesia Ukraïнка most probably found the theme for her 'tragedy of truth'. Hers, however, is not strictly a Schillerian definition of truth. Schiller's and Lesia Ukraïнка's Cassandras are quite different. The main difference between the two Cassandras is that Schiller's Cassandra cried because she could not live with illusion, whereas Lesia Ukraïнка's Cassandra would always allow the struggle for life to take precedence over personal pleasures and peace of mind.⁹⁵ The main theme of Lesia Ukraïнка's Cassandra can be so rendered:

Two closely allied themes are interwoven in the play:
the development of the philosophical problem of truth,
the problem of the power of the word.

Such philosophical problems as the question of absolute truth, of principle versus pragmatism, and contingency and the relativity of ideas, the concepts of good and evil and the meaning of the power of the word, are also raised.⁹⁶

Being the central figure in this 'tragedy of truth', Cassandra was pitted against family, peers, but most importantly, against herself. Cassandra could 'see' through the facts of history present and future and she foresaw everything, but her vision was often blurred when she encountered her own being, her Dasein.

⁹⁵ Bilets'kyi, Vid davnyny, op.cit., "Antychna drama Lesi Ukraïinky (Kassandra)", p. 367

⁹⁶ Ukraïнка, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïнка, life and works by C. Bida, op.cit., p. 69

her own words. Often she doubted them, even though she may have known that they were the truth. However, when in the possession of facts she could not find truth, she could not wield it to her advantage. This was Cassandra's personal tragedy, a tragedy that enveloped her and weighed heavier on her shoulders at each step in the poem. Lesia Ukraïнка beautifully portrayed Cassandra's tragedy and heightened it via striking dramatism. Cassandra's personal tragedy was closely knit to the tragedy of her family and her inability to live in peace with them, because she, they said, instilled doubt and fear in their hearts. Cassandra could not agree with Andromache, not with Deiphobus, not with Helen, and specifically not with Helenus, her brother. Cassandra clearly saw through the low and crude nature of Helenus, the opportunistic Deiphobus. The heroine also could not bear to look at the coquettish whims of Helen, whereas Andromache was a simple antipode pitted against the virgin priestess. Cassandra stood for all things sublime, namely truth, but her family used, manipulated and abused friends, allies, and family traditions. These were not people Lesia Ukraïнка was portraying but personified ideologies -- opportunism, untruth, hypocrisy, courage, despair, and others.

Helenus:

... Truly out in the field,
It is not Lydians and the Achaeans

But you and I that fight. Helenus guides
Courage; Cassandra, though, commands despair. 97

This dramatic poem is a fountain of antithetical philosophical debates and the scenes from the Trojan war are but a forum for their exposition. Lesia Ukraïнка paid her literary dues and historical homage to the Greeks and their traditions by utilizing Classical motifs, but she also endowed her heroes and antiheroes with more by way of ideology and philosophy, thereby creating new barriers for them to cross, more hills to climb, more unsolved problems to tackle, more dilemmas to question.

97 Ukraïнка, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïнка, trans. V. Rich, op.cit., p. 218

III

ORGIÎA

Lesia Ukraïнка's play Orgiîa and her hero Anteus (Antei) have no mythological foundation. The only Hellenic play wherein a hero by the name 'Anteus' appeared was a play by Agathon, one of Euripides' successors, entitled Antheus. The coincidental use of the same names by two different authors may be the only correlation and similarity between the plays.

Agathon of Athens (born circa 446 B.C.) often invented purely fictional plots, which were not based on myths. So was the case with his Antheus. According to Rose:

We learn from Aristotle that he (Agathon) used the chorus very loosely, merely to provide a sort of incidental music between the episodes; also, that in one play at least, the Antheus, he invented the whole plot. We know from another source what the plot was; a romantic tale, of the same type as that of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, ending in the death of the young man, Antheus, by the woman's contrivance. 98

According to Quintino Cataudella 99 even the title of Agathon's play was tentative through information forwarded by Aristotle, in which he mentioned that the work was entitled Anthos, meaning "the flower", or Anteus, stemming from Greek mythology, about the giant Anthaeus.

98 Rose, H.J., A Handbook of Greek Literature, London, Methuen & Co., 1964, p. 208

99 Cataudella, Q., Storiia della Letteratura Greca, Torino, Societa Editrice Internazionale Officine Grafiche SEI, 1968, p. 179

From the above-mentioned much uncertainty and confusion arises about any possible mythological exemplar for Lesiâ Ukraïнка. One could be safe in saying that Lesiâ Ukraïнка created her own plot; however, it will become apparent how the poetess utilized many Classical techniques in the composition of her play and how she created a masterpiece by giving the dramatic poem a solid philosophical and ideological meaning.

There are also opinions that Lesiâ Ukraïнка composed Orgiia under the influence of the drama Iridion, which was written by the Polish poet Zygmunt Krasinski. This opinion must be rejected as B. Yakubs'kyi¹⁰⁰ pointed out, for the simple reason that the heroes are two completely different people. Krasinski was a romantic with typical mystical and religious qualities, whereas Lesiâ Ukraïнка was more of a realist, a person with very dominant and strong feelings. For this reason her Anteus was a domineering and almost headstrong figure.

It is true that each of Lesiâ Ukraïнка's works was unique, but many works may be tied together as 'series' or 'cycles' of works; one work continuing the themes and motifs of another. Advokat Martilian and Orgiia bear some resemblance

¹⁰⁰ Ukraïнка, Lesiâ, Tvory, vol 6, edited by B. Yakubs'kyi, New York, G. Tyszczenko & A. Bilous Publ. Co., 1954, p. 115

to each other; both dealt with and discussed men of duty, obligation, and principle. The names, places, and eras had been changed but the people had to tackle many similar situations and resolve similar conflicts. Men of duty were challenged by egotists and opportunists; those who believed in higher principles were attacked by lowly humans. In summary, the dramatic poems present an interesting battle between the positive or good and the negative or evil, man against man, ideals against ideals. The stage where this took place was the stage of human life with all its intricacies and simplicity, confusion and straightforwardness, love and hate, right and wrong. In this way Orgiîa was a follow-up of Kassandra (and to a degree Ifigeniîa v Tavrydi) just as Na ruïnakh was a follow-up of V Katakombakh. What tied most of these works together was that they dealt either with Greco-Roman, old Hebrew, or Babylonian eras, or the days of early Christianity. There was nothing truly Ukrainian about these themes and motifs. The only works that dealt with Ukrainian themes and motifs were Boiaryniâ and Lisova pisniâ. Lesiâ Ukraïнка always searched for turbulent eras, characters and intriguing situations.

* * * * *

Written in the summer of 1912 and completed in the winter of 1912-13, Lesiâ Ukraïнка's Orgiîa was a milestone in her literary career, as was her Lisova pisniâ. Obviously

concerned with the fate of those artistically inclined and the problem of art in general, Lesiâ Ukraïнка produced this work as an expression of her feelings and the mood of the era. Many of her colleagues and many literary figures of those days allowed themselves and their art to be influenced by political and cultural events. Lesiâ Ukraïнка would not allow herself to succumb to this and despised those who let themselves be dragged into the mud of 'simple' trends predicated by politics or by 'pulp culture'. Lesiâ Ukraïнка was urged by her convictions to speak and act the way she did. It was for this reason that the author created the characters and setting of her dramatic poem Orgiîa.

Anteus, an uncompromising man of the arts, was pitted against family and friends, similar to Cassandra in the poem of the same name, faced with the dilemma of communicating with people who were both blind and deaf to his art and purpose in life. Anteus' pupils were more concerned with personal advancement and glories to be bestowed upon them by conquerors, whereas Hermione and Nerissa thrived more on the monetary gains of Anteus than on his principles of purity and artistic insubordination. Nerissa, Anteus' wife, was also a glory-seeker. Anteus' only partner in arms was his sister, Euphrosyne, a hard worker and a person who believed in her brother's vision. The real tragedy of the piece arose only when Anteus first killed his wife and then committed suicide; Anteus took

his fight against opportunism and literary debauchery ultimately to his own final resting grounds, all in the name of honour and principle. This was Anteus' last testament to those around him. However, their eyes, ears, and hearts had grown stone hard even to this, impervious to words of wisdom and knowledge spoken by a person of principle and purpose, insight and foresight.

The storyline of Lesia Ukraïнка's Orgiia is a tragic one. Anteus' tragedy deepened step by step, encounter by encounter, and ended with his suicidal death. Lesia Ukraïнка built her storyline in Orgiia the same way that she built her Kassandra, namely, on the basis of dialogues. C. Bida is of the opinion that:

While she lacked the gift of narrative, she often showed unusual talent in creating the dialogues that are so characteristic of her drama. As Zerov observes, the play of images in Lesia Ukraïнка's writings often resembles a tournament of words, a persistent struggle between two antagonists, each defending his thesis to the end with all the means at his command. ¹⁰¹

Lesia Ukraïнка opened her play at Anteus' home. One of Anteus' students, Chilon, had just arrived to inform his teacher that he was leaving him in order to better his career in different circles. Chilon was embarrassed to tell Anteus

¹⁰¹ Ukraïнка, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïнка, life and works by C. Bida, op.cit., p. 44-5

that he was leaving so that he could enter the Maeenas' school of song, speech and music, because he was aware of Anteus' staunch Greek character and love of pure art. Anteus realized that he had not taught or given talent to anyone, even to his prize student Chilon, because only the god Apollo and his sacred hand alone could give it. However, when Anteus heard where it was that Chilon was going to further his career, he denounced his friendship and did not even accept his fee.

Anteus (jumping up in rage):

You? You're going to enter
The choir of panegyrists? Join that mob
Of traitors, wicked sinners against talent?
O, it were better to be dumb forever
Cut off your hands, grow deaf, than fall so low
And this was once my best, my finest pupil.

(a pause)

Chilon:

Master, then receive my grateful thanks.
(He takes some money from his pouch and
gives it to Anteus)

Anteus (waving him away):

Go! I have taught you nothing! Get away
Out of my sight! 102

Both Hermione, Anteus' mother, and Nerissa, his wife, were shocked that Anteus was so stubborn as to reject his pay. Euphrosyne, Anteus' sister, was the only person who felt no shame for her brother's actions. She did not even hold a grudge against Nerissa who was bought out of slavery with the

102 Ukrainka, Lesia, Lesya Ukrainka, trans. V. Rich, op.cit., p. 146-7

money that was to have gone towards her dowry.

Anteus:

I am ashamed, enjoying happiness
When I remember that you pay for it
By your hard work. We have our happiness
But what, in the house of your birth, have you?

Euphrosyne:

I have a brother. Even if forever
I live in spinsterhood, yet I shall never
Envy any wives or happy mothers
For their love serves only their families
But mine is for all Hellas. For in you
Anteus, is all our hope. 103

Nerissa sought fame, fortune and glory, whereas Euphrosyne was her antagonist, her opposite.

Anteus even shivered at the mention of what Nerissa had done when she was young. Both Nerissa and her mother had danced at orgies. Anteus was revolted by this; the thought of drunken men with perverted minds appalled him. Anteus was confronted by Nerissa with thoughts to dance again, but he was also blinded by his love for her and could not believe that she would now want to dance and attend such orgies. However, a hidden treasure she did not wish to be or to remain for the rest of her life. The tragedy deepened when Phaeton, a friend of Anteus', arrived and informed him that Anteus was invited to the Maecenas' orgy. The real thorn in Anteus' side, however, was that Phaeton had sold to the Maecenas a statue of Terpsichore, the goddess of dance,

¹⁰³ Ukraïka, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïka, trans. V.Rich, op.cit., p. 150

done in the likeness of Nerissa.

Anteus:

Certainly you will not like this insult
For you have sold your best work there, where all
That's holy to us is despised, derided. ¹⁰⁴

Anteus could not forgive Phaeton for what he had done. He had prostituted his talent and art not only to foreigners, but to conquerors. He had become blind, as had Chilon, to the actions of Prometheus, the deeds of Laöcoon, champion of truth, the likes of Antigone and Electra. Anteus then asked Phaeton to leave his house knowing that they would never again meet as friends, only as enemies. Nerissa overheard the conversation between Phaeton and Anteus and this time scorned Anteus for not accepting an invitation to the orgy. She gave her husband an ultimatum. One of them had to go to the orgy. Anteus decided it was better for him to go to 'the house of vipers' rather than Nerissa. However, he left in a hurry so as not to be met by Euphrosyne, for fear of her scorning him. His love for Nerissa was about to kill both heart and soul.

Act II took place at the Maecenas' palace. The rich and opulent decor of the orgy was contrasted by a bored host and guests of honour. They all lay on a triclinium discussing their way of life and conquests. The host claimed to be a

¹⁰⁴ Ukraïka, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïka, trans. V.Rich, op.cit., p. 158

phil-Hellenist, whereas the guests of honour were staunch Roman supporters. They believed simple brute force was the only way to bring people over to their side. The action only livened up when Anteus entered the palace. Confrontation was inevitable. Anteus was ready to leave when Corinth and the Greeks were compared to pearls found in dunghills. The arts and Mount Parnassus were sacred to Anteus, but the Roman Prefect could not even allow for this; he held nothing sacred. In order to stop this bickering Maecenas invited Anteus to sing to them, but Anteus stated that he was not endowed with the spirit to sing at that time. Simultaneously Nerissa arrived at the palace against the will of Anteus. She approached Maecenas and decided to stay without asking Anteus for permission. She even lowered her veil from her face on the request of Maecenas and was recognized as the model for the statue of Terpsichore. In order to distract attention from Nerissa, Anteus agreed to sing a song.

Phaedon:

Sing the epithalamy! That's fitting.

Anteus:

No, it's not fitting. We're not at a wedding.

Maecenas:

Why not? Imagine in this house takes place
The nuptial feast of Hellas and of Rome.

Anteus:

I see an orgy here before my eyes
And so the songs I think of are not bridal
But Bacchic, rather. 105

105 Ukrainka, Lesia, Lesya Ukrainka, trans. V. Rich, op.cit., p.1177

Anteus began to play and slowly became carried away by the sound of the rich strings. The dancing girls and corybantes ran in and began to dance the Bacchic dance.

Unbeknownst to Anteus, Nerissa joined the troupe and danced with such grace and fluidity that Maecenas ordered with a shout that they all stop and let Nerissa dance alone. Anteus, both surprised and shocked at seeing his wife dancing, stopped singing, but Maecenas ordered the musicians to continue.

Nerissa paid no heed to Anteus' warning and completed the dance. At the end of the dance, weary and out of breath, Nerissa approached the triclinium with a coquettish smile on her lips. Both Maecenas and the Procurator made advances to their 'immortal one'. Anteus, engulfed with rage and anger, tore down the lyre from the candelabra it was hung on and hurled it at Nerissa. Falling back, she uttered her final words, but not words of regret for what she has done. Anteus, seeing what he had done, tore one of the strings from the lyre and said:

Anteus:

Stay, let me finish.

(He takes a string from the lyre and turns to Chilon and Phaeton who are standing in the front of the crowd.)

Friends, I am setting you a good example!

(He strangles himself with the string, and falls dead beside Nerissa.) 106

106 Ukrainka, Lesia, Lesya Ukrainka, trans. V. Rich, op.cit., p. 180

Anteus' fate ended abruptly and quickly. The tragedy of the hero developed gradually, but nevertheless, his figure bearing the string in his hand, loomed over the stage, as did the figure of Prometheus on the crest of the Caucasus, imprinting itself both on the characters and on the audience.

* * * * *

Formally, no two dramatic poems of Lesia Ukraïнка were really similar. Some of her pieces have one act, some have two, others three, four, or five acts. What makes her works unique is the masterful use of antithetical dialogue and the depiction of human tragedy. In addition to this, according to L. Kulins'ka,¹⁰⁷ the internal unity of Lesia Ukraïнка's one-act and multi-act dramatic poems, dialogues, or dramas, as she called them, was reinforced by Lesia Ukraïнка's deeply motivated scenes, strength of structure and masterful use of proportion.

When analyzing and paralleling Orgiia to Greek drama the task of categorizing it as tragedy or melodrama becomes a difficult one. Speaking about Greek drama M. Hadas pointed out that:

... the Greek play tends to be single-minded, intense, clear in outline; no line is superfluous, all somehow contribute to expounding the theme.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Kulins'ka, L.P., U sviti ideï ta obraziv, Kyïv, Vyd-vo. Khudozhoï Literatury, Dnipro, 1971, p. 79-80

¹⁰⁸ Hadas, M., A History of Greek Literature, New York, Columbia University Press, 1950. p. 74

Lesiâ Ukraïнка utilized this same technique and mastered it well. Her pieces, like Greek dramas, were usually shorter than two or three acts of, for example, Hamlet or any other of Shakespeare's plays. Hadas goes on to say that:

For discussion and reflection there is always room, for Greek tragedy never presents a white hero opposed to a black villain. Where it may seem to do so, as in Sophocles' Antigone, we may be sure we are misreading the play, for the Greeks wrote tragedy, not melodrama. The spectacle of virtue always triumphant could only corroborate smugness; the spectacle of flawless virtue crushed to earth would only be shocking, as Aristotle points out. If in the elemental struggle against destiny man seems doomed to defeat, that is the way life looked to the tragedians. Their gloom is no fatalistic pessimism but an adult confrontation of reality, and their emphasis is not on the grimness of life but on the capacity of great figures to adequate themselves to it. . . . Greek tragedies are not mysteries (unless in the medieval sense). The "recognition" or "change of fortune" is not, as it is likely to be with us, at the end, but nearer the middle of the play. Generally the play ends on a note of calm, all passion purged. 109

A.E. Haigh ¹¹⁰ and T.D. Goodell ¹¹¹ generally agreed with Hadas' findings and explanations. So did a majority of other critics. How does Lesiâ Ukraïнка's Orgiîa compare to a Greek play? First of all, although Lesiâ Ukraïнка may not have presented a white hero opposed to a black villain, she did contrast positive and negative characters. If the terms

109 Hadas, History, op.cit., p. 75

110 Haigh, A.E., The Tragic Drama of the Greeks, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1896, Chapter 5

111 Goodell, T.D., Athenian Tragedy: A Study in Popular Art, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1920, Chapters 1-4

positive and negative characters are simply substituted for black and white heroes, then Lesia Ukraïнка's works are melodramatic, according to Hadas, Haigh, and Goodell. Even more-so, it is people like Helenus in Kassandra and Chilon and Phaeton in Orgiîa that triumph over the respectively virtuous Cassandra and Anteus -- another would-be melodramatic characteristic, if we consider Hadas' reasoning. Lesia Ukraïнка's Cassandra could not really confront reality; Anteus on the other hand could and did, and acted accordingly. Their respective tragedies lay in their predicaments and solitude, be it Iphigenia's, Cassandra's, or Anteus'. These were not an Agamemnon, or an Oedipus, or an Achilles -- the grand and divine figures of Greek mythology; they were real, true-to-life people pitted against themselves and other characters. Another way Lesia Ukraïнка's dramatic poems, dialogues and dramas differed somewhat from Greek drama is that her pieces usually ended in human tragedy, sometimes in death, as in Orgiîa. Anteus was left no other way out of his predicament. In Greek drama the tragedy usually occurred in the middle and ended in serenity either by way of storyline or by divine intervention -- the deus ex machina.

An obvious Classical element in Lesia Ukraïнка's formal presentation of her themes and topics are her dialogues.

... her heated exchanges are often, as in Greek drama, replete with masterful aphorisms, elicited by the dramatic situations and crystallized by the swift 'give and take' of statement and retort.

These "rhetorical duels" remind one of the Greek tragedians -- Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. 112

Ancient Greek tragedy was essentially composed of lyric poetry and dramatic discourse. This was performed by chorus and principle antagonists. Lesia Ukraïнка simplified this technique by disposing of the chorus. Her dialogues, as in Orgiia, are replete with dramatic and rhetorical discourse and lyric poetry is interspersed with the dialogues. Lesia Ukraïнка's Orgiia is also different from ancient Greek tragedy in that she limits herself to one basic metric stanza, the iambic pentametre. The only change in the metre occurs when Anteus and Chilon sing on their lyres -- Lesia Ukraïнка utilized dactylic verse, unlike ancient Greek series of anapestic systems.

The principle which underlies the structure of the best Greek tragedies is the desire for intensity rather than variety of impression. 113

Lesia Ukraïнка was able to follow in the footsteps of the Hellenes by stressing and underlining the gradual tragedy of her hero. All of her dialogues gradually built up until the very end of the work when the final tragedy occurred. Neatly and thoughtfully chosen dialogue built up the plot of the play and ended in a final quick motion.

112 Ukraïнка, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïнка, life and works by C. Bida. op.cit., p. 45

113 Haigh, op.cit., p. 337

The problem of the three unities -- namely time, place and action, and Lesia Ukraïнка's use of them, needs to be studied more closely. The unity of action, according to Haigh "is carried on the Greek stage to the furthest possible limit".¹¹⁴ The Greeks chose to present only the most important facts about the discussed subject and built the bulk of their play around it. Petty and minor detail was a burden to them. In her Orgiia, it is obvious that Lesia Ukraïнка was just as selective in her facts and created her story around facts and figures that best exemplified the problem being discussed. She was just as meticulous in her attempt to create great intensity of impression. Each of Anteus' conflicts led to the next, step by step, starting with his opening dialogue with Chilon and ending with his heated discussion with Maecenas, the Prefect, and the Procurator.

The unity of time, which was not a law of Greek tragedy originally, was adhered to in Orgiia quite rigidly. Very little time, probably a maximum of six hours, elapsed from the beginning to the end of the play. The lack of a chorus, often a burden in Greek tragedy as far as the problem of time was concerned, allowed Lesia Ukraïнка to dispense with many Classical formalities and limit herself to a very short time in the work. A drama is supposed to be but a

¹¹⁴ Haigh, op.cit., p. 338

picture, an excerpt from the life of a hero and heroine.

The unity of place in Lesia Ukraïнка's Orgiîa was not adhered to. The scene changes from Anteus' house to Maecenas' palace. In Greek tragedy, however, this last unity was enforced with great strictness and only a handful of exceptions from the extant plays can be cited.

The discussion concerning the value of the three unities, and their applicability to the modern stage, was at one time the burning question of dramatic criticism. ... All the critics now agree that unity of action is essential to a well-constructed plot, though they interpret the phrase in a far wider sense. ... As for the unities of time and place, they regard them as rules which owed their origin to the exceptional circumstances of the ancient tragedy. 115

All things considered, Lesia Ukraïнка was able to maintain many of the Classical techniques so dear to the Greeks: intensity of action, brilliant use of dialogue, variations on the other unities, etc.

* * * * *

The depiction of character in Greek drama had specific qualities.

In all dramas of the dignified and classical species there is a general similarity in the mode of representing character. The heroes and heroines are drawn in broad and general outline, and not in minute detail; they resemble types of humanity, rather than separate personalities. 116

115 Haigh, op.cit., p. 343

116 ibid., p. 333

Characters such as Agamemnon, Iphigenia, Clytemnestra, Cassandra and others possessed broad and elementary qualities. Greek tragedy stressed the type more, at the expense of the individual.¹¹⁷ Aristotle discussed this extensively in his De Arte Poetica, where he simplified the "do's and don't's" of tragedy, characterisation, etc.

Lesia Ukraïнка's presentation and modernistic depiction of character is quite important. In Orgiîa, characters such as Chilon and Phaeton; Nerissa (and to a degree Hermione); Maecenas, the Prefect, and the Procurator can be grouped together as stereotypes. These people typify to a great extent people with limited elementary qualities of a specific kind. They are either status-seekers, renegades, avaritious people -- basically type-cast, pre-packaged figures.

One figure that stands somewhat alone in Orgiîa is Euphrosyne. In many respects she compliments in Anteus what the hero, unbeknownst to himself, lacks -- absolute confidence and devotion. The minutiae of Euphrosyne's character become obvious in her own spoken words:

Euphrosyne:

But mother dearest! What's the good of ribbons
If one has beauty, what need to adorn it?
If one has not, a ribbon will not help. 118

¹¹⁷ Haigh, op.cit., p. 336

¹¹⁸ Ukraïнка, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïнка, trans. V. Rich, op.cit., p. 148

Anteus:

For you yourself are my Antigone
It seems that I could even forgive Chilon,
If what he did he had done to relieve
A sister such as mine from bitter hardship.

Euphrosyne:

But I would never forgive such a sister. 119

Euphrosyne's appearance on stage was very short, but her impact was most definitely felt. The author was able to expose specific qualities of her heroes as opposed to the Hellenic use of generalities. The Greeks did pay some attention to the individual, but this was not and could not be exaggerated. This was a basic rule of thumb for a long time.

A question arises as to why Euphrosyne felt ill-at-ease when Nerissa entered and saw her crowning Anteus. Was she afraid of Nerissa or was she simply good-natured and kind-hearted and a poor executor of actions. It is necessary to point out now, as the author and many literary critics have, that Euphrosyne was but the embodiment of the spoken word and not yet a true element of action and deeds.

The epicentre and hero of Lesia Ukraïнка's Orgiia is Anteus. Her Anteus is not a traditional Classical hero. She expounded on and presented many of Anteus' peculiarities and eccentricities. He was an individual set apart from his friends and family, but most of all he was a tragic figure.

119 Ukraïнка, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïнка, trans. V. Rich, op.cit., p. 149

The simple reason for this was that he was torn between his love for his wife -- his emotions, and the principles that he stood for. His tragedy lay in the fact that he fell victim to his emotions and in the end the only way he could regain his honour was by killing his wife and then committing suicide.

Nerissa:

What is your will my lord?
Decide it now
Either it's you or I.

Anteus:

O, if I had
The power to tear you clear out of my heart
And cast you, like a venomous reptile under
The Roman's feet.
.....

Anteus:

Yes, I shall go. I shall be better off
Amongst the Romans than home here with you. 120)

Little did Anteus realize that what awaited him was both -- the Romans and his wife. Both factors together toppled the descendant of Prometheus for but a moment, for his power of reasoning, scorn for the petty, and dislike for the banal made him rise again as an example to those who are blind.

Lesia Ukraïнка's Anteus was carefully and meticulously painted. He was a fighter, an insurgent, a rock in the pathway for those who simply wished to vegetate and not live their lives as was fitting of humans. Anteus saw through the status-seekers, renegades and political totalitarians, but

120 Ukraïнка, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïнка, trans. V. Rich., op.cit., p. 55-6

most of all, he felt with his whole body and soul the abuse that 'art' and 'artist of principle' must undergo. What disturbed more than that, however, was the fact that there are those who conquer, destroy both land and art, but in the meantime speak of themselves as 'patrons' of the arts and rulers of a country. The Romans could not see any good in Hellenic things, because to the Roman "might is right" and not art.

To create a higher degree of tragedy Lesia Ukraïнка pitted Anteus both against himself and against all of the other characters. His tragedy unfolded and heightened with every additional encounter with adverse characters. Anteus was forced to challenge and fight those who opposed his principles. He did not and could not alter the way of thinking of his enemies, but he did not simply leave without a battle. In his quest to defend and stand by universal predicates and his own principles, Anteus became more and more aware of what people are made of, what they respect and value most. More important than that, Lesia Ukraïнка was able to portray a tragic figure subconsciously in search of himself. Anteus saw his inner being and realized his fatal mistake, therefore he was forced to depend on his last resort -- that of pride and honour in the Promethean tradition. Anteus had to pay the price for being led in the wrong direction by the wrong principles and directives in life. Like Prometheus, Anteus

had to stay chained to the mountain, in this case buried, together with his pride and principles.

* * * * *

As was mentioned before, unlike some of her previous works, Lesia Ukraïнка's Orgiia has no corresponding work in Clasical literature; it was an original work. It does, however, make use of ancient history and Classical material as a basis for its plot. Although thematically Orgiia does not deal with Hellēnic mythology as did her Ifigeniia v Tavrydi and Kassandra, it still portrays a turbulent era in Greek history and a situation that more than likely occurred more than once at that time. There probably existed many a conscientious Anteus during Roman rule over a newly conquered Greece. By way of theme Lesia Ukraïнка's Orgiia is quite unique. C. Bida pointed out:

There are certain motifs which pervade all of Lesya Ukraïнка's works. The problem of art in the life of an artist and of a nation and its significance for the nation constitute one of the main motifs of her lyrics and especially of her dramatic poems. For its complete realization, however, this motif had to wait till her last play Orgiia.¹²¹

Getting on in age and becoming sicker every day Lesia Ukraïнка's work of her latter years became more outspoken, underlining her dogmas, principles, and ethical beliefs. Orgiia was such a work. We can postulate to a degree that Lesia Ukraïнка

¹²¹ Ukraïнка, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïнка, life and works by C. Bida, op.cit., p. 82

and her last play were both influenced by the social and the political situation in her country. At the same time the problem she discussed was a universal one and not strictly Ukrainian.

Referring back to the plot of Orgiia, it is obvious what perturbed Anteus. Essentially it was the prostitution of art and subjugation of the artist to a political force. A similar plot existed in Lesia Ukraïнка's U pushchi. In Orgiia Anteus stood by his principles even if it meant paying for them with his life. Art and the artist cannot be handled by political or economical prerogatives. Both belong in the sanctum sanctorum of 'art', a production of the innermost self of mankind. It need only be mentioned how Anteus pointed out to Maecenas and his former students that an epithalamium was not fitting for a Bacchanalian festival. Furthermore, art and artist stand over and above any such social and political prerogatives. If not, Anteus says, mankind reduces itself to the level of simple robots; it dehumanises itself. The theme and principles of Orgiia are best expressed by Anteus himself:

Phaedon:

Anteus; this is some strange obstinacy.
It's not the first time Hellenes have received
Foreigners' praise; what is disgraceful in it?

Anteus:

Foreigners! Yes, but never conquerors, 122

¹²² Ukraïнка, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïнка, trans. V. Rich, op.cit., p. 160

Phaedon:

The conqueror, if he wishes,
With his armed foot can quickly trample down
All our pride with our headstrong dreams: ...

Anteus:

What? Better that we trample it ourselves
So as to save the conquerors some work?
Does the high priest of beauty think and speak so?
Only one thing is left, that he should act so.
You have not sold yourself -- still worse! You gave
Yourself, like wet clay into foeman's hands.
And who will breathe in you the living fire
When you're no more creator, but created.
Go and serve your dear Maecenas, then,
Forget the mighty testaments of beauty,
Forget the deathless image of Prometheus. 123

What stands alongside 'artistic expression' is the honour and
pride of the breed of people that create these masterpieces,
be they Hellenes or Ukrainians. This is where a 'national'
pride takes precedence over any form or expression of political
supremacy.

123 Ukraïka, Lesia, Lesya Ukraïka, trans. V. rich, op.cit.,
p. 161



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

From all of the material compiled, researched and studied, it has become obvious, that Lesia Ukraïнка expressed a deep love for many elements of the Hellenic world -- its literature and mythology. Although she did not do direct translations of the originals, as did many of her predecessors and contemporaries, especially Ivan Franko, the poetess nevertheless enriched the myths of Iphigenia and Cassandra and created an interesting setting and situation with her dramatic poem Orgiia.

Firstly, it has been shown that Lesia Ukraïнка had a very rich literary heritage to model herself after in creating her own Iphigenia. The poetess' Ifigeniia v Tavrydi, a dramatic étude, was but an excerpt from the Iphigenia myth. It is comparable to a painting or still life picture, whose beauty is that this one frame is "worth a thousand words". The analysis of her work has shown how Lesia Ukraïнка was able to condense the whole myth into a short étude and not omit any vital elements. In addition to this, the analysis of Ifigeniia v Tavrydi brought out many of the poetess' innovative elements along the lines of storyline, character, form and theme. Her constant search to find the best format -- the dramatic poem -- to best express herself slowly became reality, but it was her rich dialogues, a superb Hellenic trait, that became the heart and soul of her works. It is unfortunate, however, that the amount of critical work done

on Ifigeniia v Tavrydi is sparse. It would be very interesting to further study and analyze the development and growth of dialogue and monologue in Lesia Ukraïнка's works, beginning with this dramatic étude. One other area for study could be the poetess' use and treatment of the chorus and its value in this work.

The second of Lesia Ukraïнка's works on Hellenic themes dealt with in this thesis was Kassandra. It has been pointed out that her dependance on the ancient Greek myth of Cassandra in her Kassandra was less than in Ifigeniia v Tavrydi. One reason for this was that Greek mythology did not place that much importance on the Cassandra myth. This, however, did not detract from their value and importance to the poetess; it only permitted more interesting parallels and comparisons. Lesia Ukraïнка's Kassandra, as was mentioned earlier in Part two of the thesis, was more of a reflection of her own era. By making Cassandra a central figure the whole Greek myth had to be revamped and additional scenes and action had to be introduced. The material compiled here has pointed out the poetess' ability to expand on older topics and her innovation in this field. Placing the older Hellenic works and two European interpretations alongside Lesia Ukraïнка's own adaptation of the Cassandra myth allowed for a balanced evaluation of the mastery, artistry and uniqueness of each author. Considering the fact that the Cassandra myth was only an excerpt

in many of the earlier Hellenic and European works it was helpful to read whole plays or poems in order to better grasp the value of the tortured heroine Cassandra. It is quite probable that Lesia Ukraïнка also did this before creating her own unique setting. The greater availability of literary and critical analyses about the poetess Kassandra shed light on many interesting aspects of the poem -- for example, theme and character, topics which were somewhat neglected in critiques of her Ifigeniia v Tavrydi. By having this work at hand it was easier not only to parallel Lesia Ukraïнка's work with many masterpieces by European writers, but it also allowed one to place her on the same Parnassus in her rightful spot alongside those same masters.

The last of the three dramatic poems by Lesia Ukraïнка, Orgiia, posed some interesting problems. Not having any counterpart in Hellenic or European literature, this left the dramatic poem open to many fields of discussion. After extensive research it became very obvious that most of the literati and critics that analyzed this piece chose to centre around the philosophical and thematic problems, thereby somewhat neglecting the other aspects of the poem, namely form, character, etc. Therefore, the introduction of European literati and critics was necessary to analyze this work. The two have not been unnecessarily incongruent and have only allowed a better understanding of the mechanics and the

personalities in Orgiia. It was shown that not only the setting and theme could have been Hellenic, but once again, that many of the technical aspects of her works stem from the Classical era. The universality of Lesia Ukraïnkā's topics should for this same reason leave her open to analysis by non-Ukrainian literati and critics, thereby spreading knowledge about her works and making her a prominent figure in world literature.

It is known that the ideology, philosophy and Weltanschauung of a writer comes through in his or her works. This was also the case with Lesia Ukraïnkā. Ifigeniia v Tavrydi, Kassandra, and Orgiia are three good examples of her thoughts and belief in the "Promethean spirit". With every day, month and year, Lesia Ukraïnkā's search for truth and justice intensified geometrically. All of her feelings were best expressed by her prolific heroes and heroines, who came to many crossroads in their lives. All of them were in search of truth and justice; some, like Anteus, even sought to defend the purity and beauty of artistry. Therefore, the plight of each and every one of her heroes and heroines was as complex and demanding as was Lesia Ukraïnkā's own life and fate. There could be no other way to express oneself. There was no turning back or rearing away from just principles. One had to forge ahead at all costs. Any other way was beneath human dignity, and such dignity was and will remain the

focal point of Lesia Ukraïнка's philosophy. The Romans had an appropriate saying that compliments the Promethean spirit: per aspera - ad astra. Man must live, work, and often die for his own beliefs and Dasein -- his is the world who believes in just principles.

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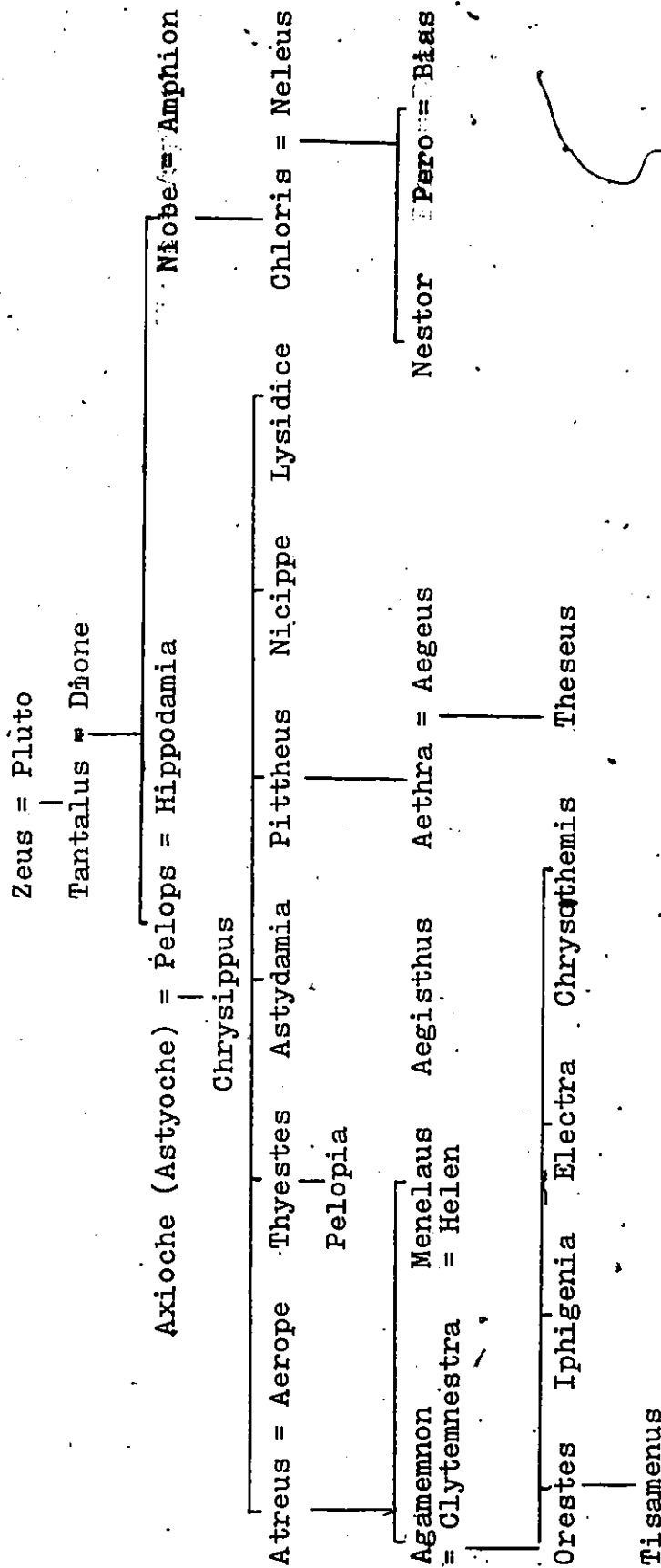
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Appendix I

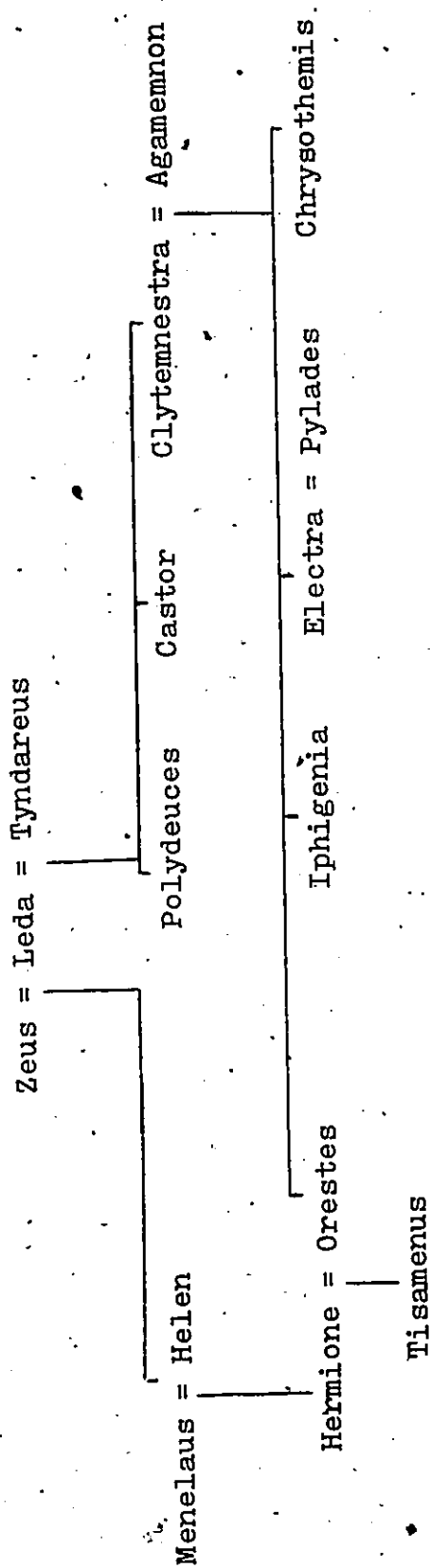
The Descendants of Tantalus



Grant, M. & J. Hazel, Who's Who in Classical Mythology, London, Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, 1973, edited by the author of the thesis

Appendix II

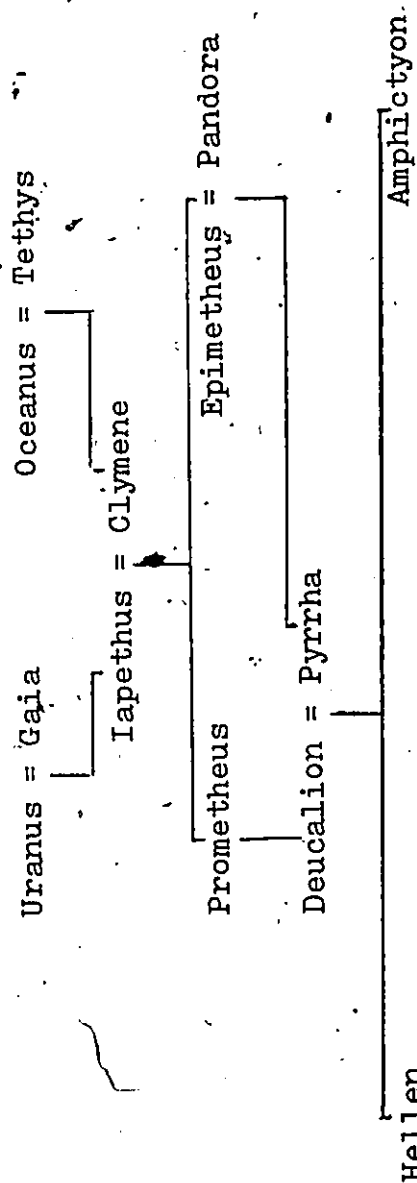
The House of Leda



Grant & Hazel, op.cit.

Appendix III

The Descendants of Prometheus

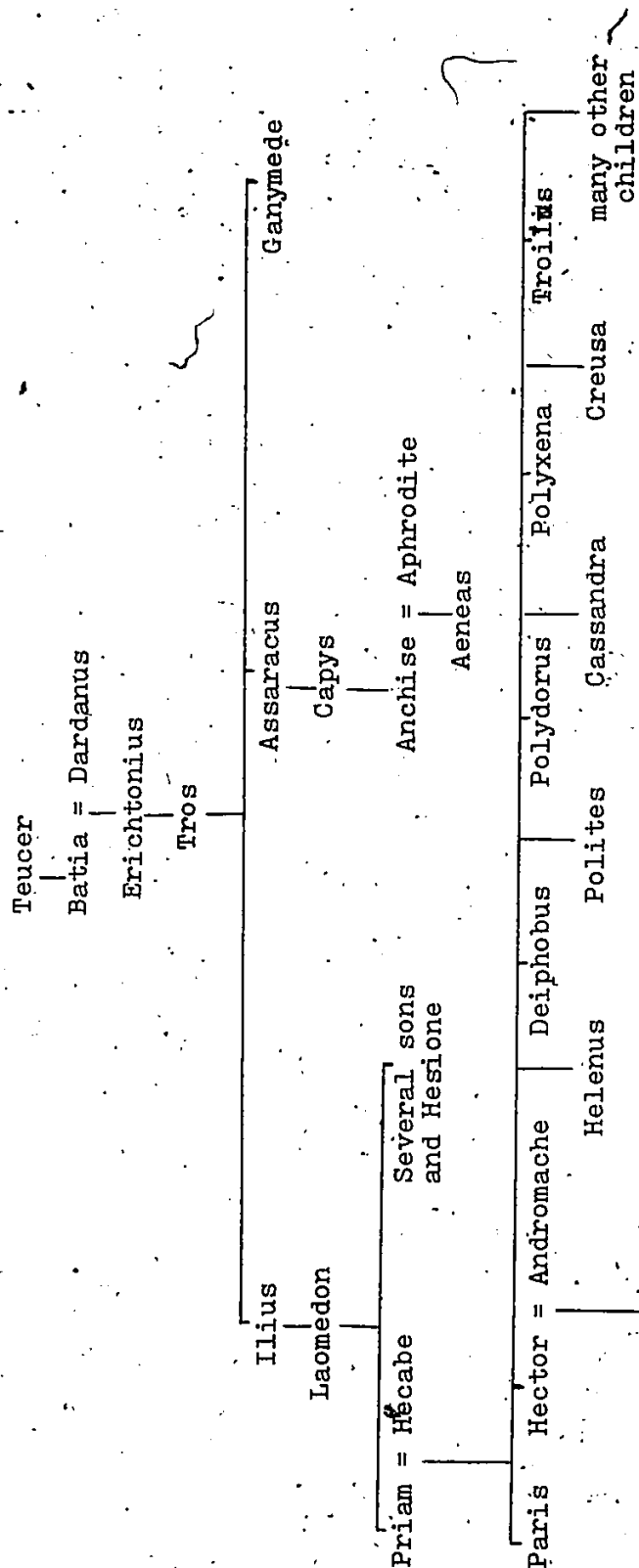


3 generation later, Tyndareos, son of Perieres, married into the House of Leda (Appendix II)

1 generation later, Clytemnestra, wife of Agamemnon, was born, she later bore a daughter -- Iphigenia

Appendix IV

The Royal House of Troy



ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT OF

Hellenic Themes and Motifs in the Dramatic Works of Lesia Ukraïнка and their prototypes in European Literature ¹

The preceding was a study of various Hellenic Classical elements in three of Lesia Ukraïнка's dramatic works, namely, Ifigeniia v Tavrydi, Kassandra and Orgiia. Lesia Ukraïнка became acquainted with the myths and legends of the Hellenic world either in their original form, direct translations or various adaptations and interpretations by her predecessors. A rich literary heritage in European literature on the above-mentioned Hellenic themes also interested the author in her exploration of the mystique of the Classical era.

The format of comparative analysis as opposed to any theory of influentology allowed for the weighing of different variables of the many Hellenic elements apparent in works by European authors and by Lesia Ukraïнка. By treating the respective works by different authors in basically chronological order (e.g. Euripides' Iphigenia among the Taurians, Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris and Lesia Ukraïнка's Ifigeniia v Tavrydi) similarities and differences among the works became more apparent. This type of analysis did not detract from the

¹ Bohdan Prus, masters thesis presented to the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Ottawa, Ontario, November 1978, viii - 103 pp.

the importance of Lesia Ukraïнка's works. Conversely, it allowed her to be placed in the realm of great literary masters and illustrated her considerable contribution to the development and modernization of Hellenic themes and motifs. This appeared in the three major aspects of each of her works, i.e. form, ideology and theme. Variations of nuance in each of these elements became apparent through the comparison of the many texts. However, the one thematic and ideological innovation that remained constant in Lesia Ukraïнка's works and which was not visible in her predecessors works was the theme and philosophy of Prometheanism. The desire to portray the spirit of the great Titan and the value of human dignity became the unifying thread of Lesia Ukraïнка's works.

Many European and North American critiques were implemented to fill in any gaps that arose throughout the process of analyzing and comparing Lesia Ukraïнка's works to those of her predecessors. Therefore the depth of the study on Hellenic themes grew arithmetically and gave way to parallel comparison. However, the need for further analysis became more obvious as the study progressed, and such further analysis would be intriguing to the inquisitive intellect.