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The Philosophical Meaning of the Author's Myth: Evolution of the Archetypal Image of a Religious Visionary in the Dramatic Works of Lesya Ukrainka

Abstract

The article traces and analyses the movement of the author's consciousness of Lesya Ukrainka with regard to the research topic of the evolution of the archetypal image of a religious visionary in the dramatic works of the Ukrainian poetess through the prism of mythopoetic archetypal categories on different "sections" of her dramatic works *Vavylons'kyj polon* (Babylonian Captivity), *Na rujinach* (On the Ruins) and poems "Kassandra" (Cassandra) and "Orhija" (The Orgy). The author explains that, by referring the ancient subjects, Lesya Ukrainka realizes the need to breathe new life into the mythology of the ancients, look at the history of humankind as a tragic process of the struggle between good and evil, and connect the movement of history with manifestations of spiritual stability, with its tendency to the ideals of good. According to her aesthetic views in the artistic perception of antiquity, the poetess does not seek to aestheticize it, but to reveal in the ancient myth the eternal, timeless psychological state of human inner life and in this way explore the "catastrophes" of the modern soul.

Keywords: author's myth, phenomenon of prophetism, religious prophecy, archetypal and mythological structure, dramatic sketches and poems, existential dilemma in national issue

Introduction

The end of the 19th–the beginning of the 20th century was marked with close attention of researchers to art as the most widespread version of irrational experience. Scientists have emphasized that without

taking into account this type of experience, a person cannot be a whole person. This period in Ukrainian literature was marked with an increased interest in the Bible.

The authors of this era, through the prism of the phenomenon of prophetism and religious prophecy, the psychology of spiritual leaders and their communication with the masses / individuals, sought to illuminate contemporary issues in a new way. A special place among these is the problem of vision of the future of Ukraine, as well as the problem of the role of the intelligentsia in the formation of the nation. Therefore, more and more writers appear as prophets who look into the future of their country, trying to warn against mistakes and open ways for further development. Researchers call such a manifestation of creative activity prophetic.

Religion and art have many touch points, in particular in the fact that religion can find its expression in art. Likewise, art, reaching the highest point of its manifestation, can become a religion.

Religiousness as a worldview and poetry as the basis of human nature, as a psychological category – this is our primeval basis, this is the foundation of our spiritual development, this is the continent from which the Ukrainian poetic word begins. The unity of religiousness and poetry is precisely what has shaped and carved our artistic word over the centuries. It is the lyrics and lyricism that carry us through the centuries to the roots of our Christian worldview, although in those days there was no poetry in the classical sense, however lyrics and lyricism are everywhere: in homilies, chronicles, saints' lives or lectionaries (Bodyk 2004: 115).

It should be noted that any human activity has its own specific direction. If we look at prophecy as part of an aesthetic and religious type of experience, then it requires almost superhuman inner strength. However, the prophets did not always foreshadow the future; very often, they revealed eternal truths. Prophecy can be considered as one of the forms of moral estimations, the manifestation of which are warnings, dreams, signs and the discovery of truth.

With the power of words, poets are able to become forerunners and teachers for their nation, which is why writers are compared to prophets. One more thing brings the authors closer to the image of the biblical prophets is a martyrdom fate. Moreover, just like prophets, poets can neither be appointed nor chosen, they can only be born. In this regard, Sverstjuk (1999: 43) aptly put it: “The prophet sees what others do not see. The prophet foresees the future. But above all the prophet speaks to God and pronounces the Lord's truths in front of the people”¹.

Particularly noteworthy is the reception of the artistic world of Lesya Ukrainka, where the image of the people's prophet, the motive of his/her special mission in the life of the enslaved people belongs to the central in the above-mentioned dramatic works of the poetess, whose creative heritage, along with the works of Taras Shevchenko and Ivan Franko, constitutes the ‘centre of the Ukrainian literary canon’ (Levčenko 2013: 6) and has been re-read by several generations of critics – from her contemporaries to today's cohort of scholars.

The formation of literary genius always attracts the attention of researchers, and the stimuli for the emergence of innovative creativity, the primary matter of the concept concentrate an important part of the energy of the work and, in fact, the decoders of its reading. The study of this primary energy and decipherers of perception is a problematic phenomenon, because each work appears as an individual example of art. In this regard, the analysis of a work with a mythological basis turns out to be a multifaceted and promising task, especially if we take into account the phenomenal nature of the literary genius of the

1 Unless otherwise indicated, translations are those by the author – Ostap Bodyk.

writer himself. The creative heritage of Lesya Ukrainka is an example of intellectual literature, in which the appeal to tradition is intertwined with courageous innovation. One of the distinguishing features of the work of the Ukrainian literary artist is the synthesis of opposite concepts in the traditional sense and the development of the author's own images on mythological grounds. The grateful material in this area is the works of Lesya Ukrainka, dedicated to prophetism and religious prophecy, namely the dramatic works *Vavylons'kyj polon* (Babylonian Captivity), *Na rujinach* (On the Ruins), poems *Kassandra* (Cassandra) and *Orhija* (The Orgy).

Objectives

In many philosophical and aesthetic theories, attention is drawn to various manifestations of prophetism (Nikolai Berdyaev, Mircea Eliade, Wassily Kandinsky, Karl Jaspers, Carl Gustav Jung, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Octavio Paz *et al.*).

Ukrainian researchers, in particular Iryna Betko, Dmytro Dontsov, Hryhorii Kloček, Hryhorii Kostjuk, Inna Košova, Tetiana Masliančuk, Denys Mokrencov, Liudmyla Pavlyšyn, Volodymyr Pančenko, Nataliia Plaxotnik, Vira Prosalova, Halyna Syvačenko, Les Tanjuk, Yurii Šerex *et al.*, turned to the review of the literary reception of the prophecy. Thus, Lesya Ukrainka fascinated Dontsov with her integrity, sacrifice, and missionary obsession. In the articles *Lesya Ukrainka* and *Poetka ukrajins'koho Risordžimentu* he repeatedly compared the poetess with biblical images, emphasized her striving for the tragic, the cult of the great in the worldview. In the style of the author, Dontsov emphasized the impressive suggestion, which was achieved with layering emotions, which is characteristic of the borderline state of the lyric hero, and it is these features that marked the prophetic rhetoric. The scholar gave the highest grade to Lesya Ukrainka's 'curses, castigations and appeals'. Dontsov (1953: 17) discerned in the writer 'the typical psyche of the prophets and leaders, who knew that, in order not to be, they had to drink the chalice assigned to them to the end, to fulfil completely the order of Fate'. With Dontsov's characteristic pathos, he convincingly proved that Lesya Ukrainka was the spiritual leader of the Ukrainians, 'whose prophetic spirit on the dark night before the awakening of the people showed him the terrible and majestic path of madness and glory!' (Dontsov 1953: 28).

Today there is a fairly serious experience of studying the discursive structures of the formation and development of the author's myth of Lesya Ukrainka. The most thorough attempts to reconstruct its elements were made in the works of Anhelina Anhelova (2004), Tamara Hundorova (2009), Liudmyla Žvanija (2013), Oksana Zabužko (2018), Halyna Levčenko (2013), Tetiana Mejzers'ka (1997), Yaroslav Poliščuk (2002), Yevhen Sverstjuk (2008), Sylwia Wójtowicz (2008). These developments are based on the understanding of myth as an inherent in the work of art manifestation of authorial consciousness, as an individual version of the mythological or religious picture of the world, which in different periods of literature and in different styles undergo certain modifications, however, the holistic structure of metamyth retains in them the validity of a universal archetypal matrix. Consciously or unconsciously each writer re-actualizes in his / her work a certain repertoire of archetypal-mythological structures that can be transformed, decayed and revived.

According to the prophetism of Lesya Ukrainka, in recent decades there have been studies devoted to the comparison of the images of the prophets in the works of Ukrainian / Polish writers and the dramatic

poems of Lesya Ukrainka (Hryhorčuk (2016), Kobec (2013), Chorob (2002)). As the researchers noted, the prophets in these works appeared not as concrete figures, but as representatives of the author's ideas. Therefore, their images were devoid of evaluative characteristics, and were revealed through words and deeds. Written in the context of various chronotopes of the analysed works, the seers appeared as those who, with the word of truth, had to free the people from spiritual and physical slavery. In interpreting this mission of the characters, it is important to superimpose national issues on the biblical context.

Researchers pay most attention to the evolution of Cassandra's image in this regard (Vira Ahejeva (2001), Iryna Bezrukova, Viktoriia Marceniško (2012), Svitlana Kočerha (2011), Volodymyr Lesyk (2004), Yaroslav Poliščuk (2000), Irina Taranhul (2009), Olha Turhan (1998)). Thus, scientists regard the author's projection of the ancient myth of death as a symbolic parallel to the threat to civilization in late Hellenic culture and Europe at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, drawn by Lesya Ukrainka with great skill, which allows us to perceive her work organically in the context of other notable projections of the myth of death. The Ukrainian poetess places the leading accents of mythological projection on the tragedy of prophecy, the fate of existence (Cassandra). The evolution of the image of Cassandra generally corresponds to the monomyth scheme, including the sequentially defined separative, liminal and reintegrative stages. The return of the prophetess also has a mythological meaning of the hero's transfiguration.

It is worth noting that, given the significant amount of researchers' work in the field of reconstruction of Lesya Ukrainka's author's myth, analysis of the symbolic nature of the poetess' images, nevertheless, we consider it possible to supplement it with an analysis of the reception of prophecy at the figurative level of the artist's dramatic works, where intuition, as a psychic force, represents the type of a lyrical hero – visionary-mystic – an intuitive medium (sorcerer, oracle, prophet), to whom the religious space of sacred and the need for personal sacrifice were opened for the renewal of the world, the restoration of its sacred integrity, which is the relevance of our study.

The purpose of this paper is to trace and analyse the movement of the author's consciousness of Ukrainian poetess in solving this research issue through the prism of mythopoetic archetypal categories on different "sections" of her dramatic works.

Methods

The use of the mytho-archetypal method in this study will help to understand the essence of Lesya Ukrainka's metatext, to emphasize new meanings and its important aspects: the interpretation of the problem of mythologism as a way of author's poetic realization of myth, the reception of the magical and religious sociocultural system in author's myth and the features of the worldview attitudes of the Ukrainian classical writer. With the help of structural-semiotic method it will be possible to interpret the phenomenon of prophetism and religious prophecy at the level of intuition, rationalism and intellectuality as sources of Lesya Ukrainka's creative intentionality, whose lyric dramas actor-subject (according to Levčenko: 2013) is transformed into a hero-visionary of a religious type, to explain the features of the mythological structuring of the artistic world of Lesya Ukrainka.

Materials

New literature willingly used the techniques of the prophetic books, their syntactic system, high pathos. And the capacious images, far-sighted projections and belief in their special mission brought the writers closer to the prophets. Sometimes they appeared as such in their own eyes, sometimes in the eyes of the recipients.

In Ukraine, the prophetic theme in world literature began to be covered within the framework of utopian literature. Lesya Ukrainka's article *Utopija v beletrystyci* (Utopia in fiction) is highly revealing. It is in it that we find the foundations for the study of literary prophetism, therefore we will try to outline the main positions of the poetess. The Ukrainian writer completely shared the opinion that no idea had such an impact on the history of mankind as the visions of the Jewish prophets about the coming kingdom of love. Prophetic myths were replaced by the idea of progress, humanity saw the meaning of its existence. Lesya Ukrainka emphasized that already in the most ancient monuments there were images of the desired future, and sometimes even the fantastic past, which were united into one phantasmagoria. The immortality of these visions, which, of course, were constantly "modernized" is evidenced, in the view of Lesya Ukrainka, by the expression "socialist paradise", which united the ancient legend and the new theory of socialism at that time.

Literary ways of depicting a public goal, in her opinion, were quite the same type, usually an epic, objective style was used, "without decorations". From the theological utopia, Lesya Ukrainka noted, 'the prophetic utopia was subsequently born', which, in turn, became the ultimate foundation of various political utopias in the literary text. Already in Jewish authors, the religious ideal of the earthly paradise was superimposed on the political ideal of independence, and this tradition is preserved in most works with prophetic plots, which the researcher reasonably called "poetic journalism". Lesya Ukrainka also drawn attention to the poetics of prophetic poetry, in which, instead of an epic-calm tone, simplicity of legendary style, there were 'prophet's fervour and perseverance, a complete lack of objectivity, the accumulation of images, comparisons, reproaches, threats, vows, prophecies, regret, hope, anger – all feelings, all passions of the human heart were vividly reflected in that fiery lyrics' (Ukrainka 1977, VIII: 160).

Lesya Ukrainka left a lot of sensible remarks on the poetics of prophetism of a later time. Firstly, to make these books more convincing, there are numerous callings to the authority of God; secondly, the intrigue and drama in such works is ensured by bitter polemics with representatives of other religious teachings, who are called "false prophets"; thirdly, the addressee is intimidated by "heavenly punishments for improbability"; fourthly, prophetic communication is characterized by mastery of the technique of suggestion, which is enhanced by the technique of repetition. The anthropological factor of works with a prophetic plot is marked with the emphasized controversy of two types of people: "the righteous and the wicked", while within one type there are no gradations, psychological nuances, and moral differentiation.

Lesya Ukrainka also emphasized that the poetry of biblical prophecies should not be considered a unique work of the Jewish people. Some of the utopias of ancient religions should be attributed to the most prominent prophetic literature, in particular, this direction was widespread among the Babylonians. However, "old testament" Jewish literature is more systematized, accessible to the modern reader, and it explains the intensity of the development of prophecies in it by the lack of a state policy through the long Babylonian captivities.

The pessimistic interpretations of the future available in the prophetic books were picked up with medieval literature. This tradition is not rooted in ancient Greek literature, which avoided visions of catastrophism and the ideal of domination “over all the peoples of the earth”. In the article Lesya Ukrainka analysed in detail individual works of religious-dogmatic and fictional utopia, which took their origins from prophetic literature. A new era of fiction utopia was started by Sir Thomas More, who gave prophetic views an artistic setting in his *Utopia*. Besides More’s imitations, Lesya Ukrainka considered only Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* to be an original example of fine writing. The writer’s critique of the modern system was not really supplemented by the traditional vision of prospects for society. In this sense, Swift ‘surpassed all the pessimists of the prophetic era with his gloomy genius’ (Ukrainka 1977, VIII: 171).

Fiction writers actively used the form of sleep or hallucination, which was ‘beloved by the ancient prophets’, and the former “vision” in their works of literature was transformed into a fantastic “lethargy”, “hypnosis”. The authors mostly predicted cardinal and multidimensional changes in the future through their heroes, but the tendency of doctrinaire led to the loss of artistic truth: the writers-“prophets” depicted the future mechanically and not very attractively. Lesya Ukrainka considered utopian works by Edward Bulwer-Lytton *The Coming Race*, Edward Bellamy *Looking Backward*, William Morris *News from Nowhere*, Anatole France *Sur la pierre blanche* (The White Stone) to be an attempt to displace social tendencies with the actually scientific accents. She reckoned Maurice Maeterlinck among the “comforters of humanity”, in particular his work *Olive Branches*, written in the highly artistic language of the prophet Ecclesiastes, if he were ‘reborn in an optimist’.

Evaluating the achievements of utopian writers, Lesya Ukrainka came to the conclusion that, unlike Thomas More, ‘who was the voice crying in the wilderness’, the writer of that time had a mass reader, a ‘greedy for the prophetic word’. The advantage of literature is that, unlike dry science, it gives vivid pictures, “visions” of the future. Of course, “false prophets” appear among writers who are ready to offer the reader a new cult. However, Lesya Ukrainka noted that an ideal, capable of life and probable for implementation, magnetically attracts false prophets, which, in particular, is clearly manifested in literature. That is why she claimed: ‘... writers, prone to prophetic plots, will always be interesting for the reader, because ‘whoever reveals the future to our feelings, then extends the boundaries of the eternity to our soul’ (Ukrainka 1977, VIII: 198).

Observations (and self-observations) of the psychology of the creative process, a common topos of “prophecy” and “visionary” in the works of researchers of Lesya Ukrainka’s creativity and the structural-semiotic features of the product of this spontaneous and inspired creativity provoke to consider the integral metatext of her lyrics as a text of a mythological type. The semiotic space of the individual author’s text of the mythological type appears the transfer to the universal picture of the world – the “cosmic universe” – of individual psychology. This is the ontological function of the myth. The metalanguage of the author’s myth as a secondary semiotic system is a set of original names that unfold the basic personal myth – stable plot-role-playing discursive structures that set the logic and nature of the functioning of human consciousness, create value orientations of the personality. As the modern Russian psycholinguist I. Nastin argues, each ‘personality is its own text, the metric of which was formed as a result of the semiotic unfolding of the original words-symbols. Moreover, each of us has a certain set of words that are meaningful for him / her – connotative nodes (aggregation nodes) of his / her discursive metric, which constitute a personal metalanguage (“an anchor personal-mythological text” (in the words of I. Cherepanova). This text, as a

stable in time plot-role-playing, apperceptive-discursive structure, is the basic personal myth of the subject, which sets the logic and nature of the functioning of his consciousness and determines the development of his identity (if we understand it as a self-concept or personal history)' (Nastin 2007: 48). The basic personal myth is realized in figurative speech at the level of metaphor, symbol, parable, fairy tale. Its main functions: explanation, instruction (method of organization) and action – these functions also act at the level of the literary text, motivating the deeds, thoughts and moods of its actants and actors. When the personality enters the myth, its splitting is removed, existential alienation is overcome. The basic personal myth as the axiological core, an actant scheme and central plot, adsorbs literary and cultural influences, referring to traditional plots and images without changing its structure.

The lyrical metatext created by Lesya Ukrainka indicates the production of mythological analogies, and, consequently, the cyclical nature of the myth in the modelling of artistic time, space, actants and events. Already in the early works of Lesya Ukrainka a tendency to modelling a typical for myth and religion dualistic picture of the world, which manifests itself, is clearly visible, in the opposition of light and darkness and other contrasting images. The mission of lyrical heroes and characters of this world is also typical of the myth – to fight the forces of evil, darkness and chaos, to protect the bright cosmic space.

In Lesya Ukrainka's lyrical metatext, as in any other text of the mythological type, the structural laws of homeomorphism are also highlighted, and equivalence relations are established. This contributes to the creation of an elementary-semiotic situation: each message must be interpreted, displaced during the transformation into signs of another level. Contrasting images with the subsequent removal of the opposite are a vivid example of the dialectical technique of thinking, to which researchers (Dmytro Dontsov, Mykola Zerov) also paid attention. This technique is contemplative and purely logical.

In addition to the mythological integrity and homeomorphism of semantic space, Lesya Ukrainka's lyrical metatext is characterized by "high symbolism". In a semantic text there is a relationship of similarity between content and expression – the sign is built according to the iconic principle; the expression is like a reflection of the content. Since man as an image of God is iconic, therefore any artist appears as a mediator – through him, as Lotman claimed:

[...] it turns out that the expression inherent in the itself becomes visible. It follows from this that judgments about the worth of works of art cannot use the criterion of originality, and the possibility of creating new and at the same time true texts is denied in principle. New text is always open old. The artist does not create something new, but reveals what was before him and eternal. His / her function in creating text resembles the role of the developer in creating photographic images. However, this role is not passive: the artist is a person who, by his / her moral activity, proves the right to arise in the role of a mediator, a "developer" from whom eternal and predetermined meanings should appear to the world. (Lotman 2000: 407)

Researchers have repeatedly noted the imitative nature of Lesya Ukrainka's early work, reminiscent of the early reproductive and compilation period of medieval literature. The mature period – throwing "into the wilds of world themes", working-out primarily traditional images and plots, rather than creating her own individual-author ones – is another argument in favour of identifying her artistic metatext as symbolic or semantic like the medieval one.

An essential feature of a semantic text is the hierarchical construction of meaning in a sign of this type. One and the same sign can be read differently at different levels. Therefore, the movement to the truth is not a transition from one sign to another, but a deepening into a sign. The same image,

depending on the context, can be either a symbol illuminated by higher knowledge, or a conventional sign. Thus, the image of the prophet in the dramatic works of Lesya Ukrainka can be a formal participant in a conventional social ritual (for example, the image of Eleazar in the sketch *Babylonian Captivity* or be a symbolic embodiment of the carrier of nuclear values of the semiosphere of creativity (for example, the images of Cassandra in the poem *Cassandra* and Antaeus in the poem *The Orgy*). The movement between these levels takes place along the moral and ethical axis (Eleazar–Tirzah–Cassandra). The symbolism of the hero deepens with his elevation-approach to moral and ethical truths, but “flattens” with the descent to the level of the performer of “significant” actions.

The myth world of Lesya Ukrainka is the evolution of a universal metamyth from the stage of the emergence of a cultural hero to the attempt to form a sacralised community and restore the lost fullness of the world through redemption and self-sacrifice.

Intuitiveness as a source of creative intentionality Lesya Ukrainka demonstrates high intelligence and, at the figurative level, appears the type of a lyrical hero – visionary-mystic – an intuitive medium (prophet), who has opened up the religious space of the sacred and the need for personal sacrifice for the sake of renewing the world, renewing its sacred integrity.

The type of religious visionary is born in the magical-mythological bosom of ancient beliefs. His mission is to preserve the world intact, to eliminate shortages and acquire values, but he does this symbolically – through a system of magical actions and through ritual sacrifices. His functions and values belong to another socio-cultural level: he is familiar with the sense of the sacred in the world, and his actions and “prophecies” are directed to the transcendent dimension.

The type of religious visionary in some of Lesya Ukrainka’s works is read feministically: women appear as the protagonists, taking over the role of subjects of action (Tirzah from *On the Ruins*, Cassandra – *Cassandra*). Such “feminization” of characters in the work of Lesya Ukrainka can be misinterpreted solely as a tribute to modern emancipation. Its roots are best found in comparative mythology, the history of religions and ancient civilizations, which she knew in detail, in the images of witches and godlike queens of the theocratic era, ancient priestesses and prophetesses of agricultural cults, and later Christian “possessed”. These archetypal images make a mystery of the mythological roots of the type of prophetess and religious visionary. Here it is worth mentioning the ancient Greek prophetess from the temple of Apollo *Pythia*, the Germanic *Velleda* and other prophetesses, obsessed, Christian saints.

It is difficult to single out a religious visionary from the magical-mythological continuum, but religiosity is his essential feature. It seems that the archaic oracles were the first to foresee the paradox of enthusiastic self-denial, which consists in the fact that ‘in this return a person simultaneously and every time becomes “a lonely person”’ (Rudnyc’ky 2009: 119).

So, Sir James George Frazer describing the religious type of “incarnation”, noted that:

[...] a being of a higher order infuses man for a more or less long time and manifests his supernatural power and wisdom through the performance of miracles and the making prophecies. The name of the inspired and embodied fits this type of man-god: the human body here is only a fragile modest vessel filled with an immortal divine spirit. (Frazer 2006: 84)

In turn, contrasting magic and religion, Ernst Cassirer in his work *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* argues that the most convincing marker of religious worldview is the concept of sacrifice (Kassirer 2001: 168–169).

In this sense, we will focus on prophetism and religious prophecy in the above-mentioned dramatic works of Ukrainian writer in accordance with their status in the field of genre, as well as trace and analyse the movement of the author's consciousness of Lesya Ukrainka in depicting the psychology of spiritual leaders and their communication with the masses / individual.

Thus, according to the research of Levčuk, the works *Babylonian Captivity* and *On the Ruins* by formal (dynamic development of events (plot), vivid aphorism in the thoughts of the characters, one story line, a small amount of dramatic work, a small number of characters) and content (concise, concentrated plot; intense collisions, which often lead to a tragic outcome; at the core is one problem: *Babylonian Captivity* – the problem of national loyalty and betrayal, *On the Ruins* – the problem of national revival; sharp conflicts, which are also expressed at the level of the hero's inner world; the character of the personage is a fiction and is directed to the sphere of metaphysical ideas) signs can be called dramatic sketches (Levčuk 2015: 85–97).

In these two works, Ukrainian national issues are masterfully inscribed in the well-known biblical context: the depiction of Jews in crisis moments of the absence of statehood – in the period of loss of national landmarks. The time of action in the sketches is '4th century BC, when the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II enslaved Jerusalem for 60 years and took thousands and thousands of Jews captive, ravaging the city itself and destroying Solomon's temple [586 BC] (Haleta 2011: 106).

The protagonists are the images of the prophets – the prophet-artist Eleazar and the prophetess Tirzah, unheard by the people. It is interesting that in the Holy Scriptures there are no prophets with the mentioned names (the names themselves occur, however, as the name of the priest (Eleazar – son of Aaron and the second Kohen Gadol (High Priest) of Israel [Exodus 28:1]) and the chosen family (Tirzah – one of the five daughters of Zelophehad [Numbers 26:33]). All this testifies to the fact that the artistic images of the seers are a figment of the imagination of Lesya Ukrainka. With the help of these characters, the writer 'continued the theme of a man, well developed in the world drama, who undertakes the mission to abolish or replace (through logos – a word) the world, to destroy the old model of life and create a new one' (Tanjuk 1992: 130). It is this understanding of the mission of the prophets as priests and bearers of God's word ("the spark of Prometheus") that is organically written in the works of the writer. Dedication to the word for their heroes is inseparable from the consciousness of the national order. After all, the Lesya Ukrainka's prophet is the one who not only foretells the future, but also vigilantly sees the historical present and, being in an atmosphere of deep sincerity with himself and God, sees the truth in the present and seeks to convey it to others. Enlightened by the Spirit of God, he addresses his word to the people and encourages them to act of liberation.

The protagonist of *Babylonian Captivity* is the singer Eleazar. The key motive of the artist's special mission in the life of the people, which has lost its national freedom, in Lesya Ukrainka's work is connected with his image. Most of the drama is occupied by the scene of the collective trial of Eleazar, which is arranged for the singer by the spiritual mentors of Israel and Judah – Levites and prophets. Eleazar is accused of national treason, because he earns his bread by singing songs in Babylon.

When Eleazar asked why they only wanted to stone him for serving the conqueror, while all the enslaved were working for Babylon, one of the prophets answered: "Because the sledge, the mattock, and the spade / In human hands are slaves of men – the word / On prophet's lips by God bestowed must serve / Our God alone and no one else //" (Ukrainka 1950: 99).

The word of the poet is the spiritual basis of national life; therefore, the poet's betrayal cannot have a moral justification.

In this sketch, Lesya Ukrainka posed and comprehended in artistic and philosophical terms one of the most painful problems of Ukraine of her time – the problem of losing its language.

The purpose of the singer is to compose and sing songs about the history of his people, about its glory, and among his people his songs have found response, understanding, compassion. This is emphasized, in particular, by the remark, which indicates the reaction of compatriots to Eleazar's song: "[...] a quiet weeping is heard amongst the crowd" (Ukrainka 1950: 108). Eleazar's songs about the glory of his ancestors, about the strength of his people, did not say anything to strangers. In them, they caused only scepticism ("Can that be true?") and indifference ("Is there no light but in Jerusalem?"). Such a native song, which used to please people's hearts, became humiliated after the enslavement of the land. Not finding a response to songs about his land, Eleazar transferred to a foreign language and began to sing songs about foreign countries in Babylon: "So then I sang them songs of Edom's past, / Of Egypt's, and of all those Gentile tribes, / In their own tongue" (Ukrainka 1950: 105).

In the dialogue between Eleazar and Greybeard, which is especially important to reflect the main idea of the work, the writer revealed the mechanism of denationalization of the people, the loss of historical memory caused by the transition to another language. The feeling of attachment to one's own homeland can be formed only in one's own linguistic and cultural environment. A story told in a foreign language will not awaken love for one's land. The generation brought up by it will lose natural connection with its land, a foreign language will grow up strangers in its own country.

In the final monologue of Eleazar, all the semantic lines of the work converge, here the main ideological content of the drama is condensed. The next words are the leitmotif of the monologue: "To suffer chains is shame unspeakable, / But to forget them is far worse disgrace" (Ukrainka 1950: 110).

Having received justification and forgiveness from his fellow countrymen, the singer strictly judged himself. He took upon himself both the collective guilt of the enslaved, on each of whom now beard the "our fathers' blood, in vain for freedom shed", and the personal guilt for betraying his moral duty to be the keeper of the spiritual treasures of his people, the custodian of the native language as a source of spiritual identity of the nation and the pledge of its future liberation.

Until the feeling of anger and shame for their slavery, for the forced labour for the conquerors died, the desire for freedom did not die. As long as the people of the enslaved country are capable of resisting, there remains hope for future liberation. With these words Eleazar concludes his final monologue:

O Babylon, thou dost rejoice too soon! / Our harps, though on the willows, still give sound; / Tears still flow down the streams of Babylon, / And Zion's daughter still doth burn with shame; / The lion of Judah still doth roar with rage. / O Thou, the Living God, my soul yet lives! / Still Israel lives, although in Babylon! /. (Ukrainka 1950: 110)

As in the previous work, the central image in the sketch *On the Ruins* is the prophet, the spiritual leader of the nation. In the image of the prophetess Tirzah, the image of Eleazar is continued and developed. Tirzah is Eleazar after the final epiphany. This is a prophetess who rejected all doubts and hesitations, understood the futility of her efforts to communicate with the conquerors, attempts to speak to them in their language, hoping to arouse sympathy in them for the misfortunes and humiliations of her people. She finally realized that in that tragic time, her word should belong only to her people. Now that the

soldiers have been killed or taken prisoner, the prophetic word remains the only force, the only spiritual weapon of the captives. Only it can support the unfortunate and desperate, give them strength and hope.

It is this mission that the prophetess Tirzah fulfils. Wandering over the Jordan Plain near the ruins of Jerusalem among her unfortunate homeless folk, she sought to support desperate people with her word. Deeply desperate women, whose husbands were killed or taken away for slave labour, she taught not to fold hands, but to work: "None are forsaken who still have themselves" (Ukrainka 1950: 76).

Not in every soul the prophetic word awoke hope and will to fight for a worthy life. There were among the overcome who were indifferent to her words. Old Man, who slept "the stonelike sleep of apathetic slave", cursed Tirzah "Let him be cursed who wakes the vanquished ones!" and "A curse on him who steals the sleep from slaves!" (Ukrainka 1950: 80). This episodic image of a volunteer slave was developed in subsequent dramas.

The second part of the work unfolded the conflict between Tirzah and two crowds of prophets – Samaritan and Jewish. It began with a scene of a dispute between the prophetess and a Jewish singer who manifestly patched together a small harp, tried to play it and sing *Jeremiah's Lamentation*, but could not remember the words. Tirzah took the harp out of the singer's hands and hurled it far into the Jordan.

At the singer's loud lamentations, two crowds of prophets came running together and began to find out the reasons for the conflict. But, absorbed in their own strife and enmity, they could not come to an agreement. The Levites believed that Tirzah should be drowned for an attempt on the "relic of God's Zion", while the Samaritans saved her because they did not recognize "a holy relic", and therefore did not consider the act of Tirzah's a sacrilege. The Samaritan prophet hoped to move the shrine from Jerusalem to Samaria and invited Tirzah to become their prophetess. However, Tirzah did not accept the offer. The prophetess called on Jews and Samaritans, as two branches of the same people, to "forget feud" and unite. But both sides disregarded Tirzah's appeal and continue to argue. Tirzah rightly accused the pretenders of spiritual shepherds of self-destruction and placed all hopes for future liberation from slavery on the common people, to whom she addressed a word of consolation in the opening scenes of the sketch. The prophetess condemned and accused the hostile chief men:

But ye / Are not the ones to forge the iron yoke / Into the scythe and reaping hook. 'Tis they, / The common folk, who by their fires, in huts, / Are toiling sleeplessly ere yet 'tis dawn – / 'Tis they prepare the harvest of the Lord, / While ye, like venomous serpents, in your wrath / Shoot forth at one another your fell stings / And poison each the other, like those asps / Which God once sent upon us for our sins. (Ukrainka 1950: 89)

In his convictions, Tirzah opposed both the Samaritan prophets and Levites. Tirzah and the chief men took different positions in their views on the path to national salvation. If the prophets of both camps professed strict observance of old laws and traditions, arguing only about the location of the old temple (the Samaritans want to move it to their territory), then Tirzah believed that the pledge of future liberation was not to preserve the ruins, but to build a new temple. The stones from the ruins of the old shrine, she believed, should be laid in the foundation of the new temple. The old had not to remain unchanged, it should become the foundation of the new.

Tirzah's belief in the need to build a new temple, and not in the worship of old shrines, was not shared by either the Samaritan prophets or Levites. Outraged by the words of Tirzah, they drove her into the desert. In this finale of the sketch, the motif of the unheard prophet, whose true prediction no one had faith in arose – a motif that would become the key in the dramatic poem *Cassandra*.

It is symbolic that the images of seers were shown in the analysed works against the background of the dark time of day. Thus, the action of the dramatic sketch *Babylonian Captivity* unfolded in the evening (“The crimson of the setting sun” [Ukrainka 1950: 92]), and in the sketch *On the Ruins* a “silvery moonlight” was depicted (Ukrainka 1950: 75). In all two contexts, the semantics of the night was not accidental. It allegorically pointed to the night of consciousness, the night of the spirit of the folk, what was in a lethargy of slavery or indifference. Only prophets were spiritually sighted, but their mission was to awaken the whole people from that sleep. This is how the conflicts of works are defined – the confrontation between the prophet and the crowd, individuality and society, freedom and slavery.

It is noteworthy that the images of the heroes-prophets in the works of Lesya Ukrainka were not concretized, but were written only with separate strokes-hints. The only means of individualization of characters were names and their semantics. In particular, in the sketches *Babylonian Captivity* and *On the Ruins* only Eleazar and Tirzah were named prophets who sacrificially served the truth, while neither the enslaved people, with whom the singers were in dialogue, nor their disoriented spiritual leaders (Levites, Samaritans and Jews, prophets) were named. This small detail emphasized the idea that only the conscious and voluntary fulfilment of one’s vocation distinguished the individual from the masses, made him / her a person, a person with a name.

It’s important that Lesya Ukrainka endowed her characters symbolic, iconic names. They not only corresponded to a specific territorial-historical context, but also accumulated a wide range of interpretive potential. For example, the name Eleazar is translated from Hebrew as “El has helped”. In the context of the work, it was the deep sincerity and complete trust in God that saved the life of the seer and made his words active in the hearts of the people. “O Thou, the Living God, my soul yet lives! / Still Israel lives, although in Babylon! /” (final monologue of Eleazar [Ukrainka 1950: 110]). The prophetess Tirzah’s appeal to the people began with consonant words: “God lives and we still live” (Ukrainka 1950: 76). The name of the heroine is translated from Hebrew as “my delight”, allegorically indicating the aspiration and expectations of the people of the prophetic word.

An important factor that distinguished seers from other characters was also their speech. Clear, concise, deep, it vividly expressed the writer’s worldviews, cast in aphoristic maxims: “Eleazar: [...] To suffer chains is shame unspeakable, / But to forget them is far worse disgrace /” (Ukrainka 1950: 110), or “Tirzah: [...] He hath no native land, who lies supine. / To him who sows and reaps – to him the land /” (Ukrainka 1950: 79).

Thus, in Lesya Ukrainka’s dramatic sketches the images of prophets have appeared as ideal carriers of the author’s idea, as far as they allow us to comprehend a certain problem “out of time”, in a three-dimensional perspective of the past, present and future – this is mainly a national problematics, focused on existential dilemmas of freedom and slavery, sacrifice and indifference. The singer’s mission in this situation is to show the people the right choice, to direct them on the path of state and spiritual progress (even at the cost of their own lives).

We agree with the opinion of Yuliia Levčuk that the dramatic poem is undoubtedly the central genre in the work of Lesya Ukrainka. The problem of the concept of this genre remains open to this day. In addition, a dramatic poem always evokes an association with Lesya Ukrainka, therefore this genre as a top, typical, demonstrative phenomenon in the genre system of the writer will be paid attention.

Researchers (Oleh Babyškin, Liudmyla Demjanivs’ka, Yuliia Desjatova, Mykola Zerov, Tereza Levčuk, Nataliia Maljutina, Bohdan Mel’nyčuk, Yaroslav Poliščuk, Ivan Franko, *et al.*), mainly focusing on

the formal aspect of this issue, determine the peculiarity of Lesya Ukrainka's dramatic poem as a poetic drama, which entails excessive subjectivity as for the dramatic kind. In this regard, Levčuk turned to the concept of "genres littéraires" in the communicative theory of Jean-Marie Schaeffer, according to which [the concept – O.B.] not a genre definition identifies the work of art, but a writer, using a genre or genre element in a work, thus interprets a creative idea or realizes his / her own type of thinking. That is, the genre interpreted by a concrete author is also a type of communication of this author with the world (Levčuk 2015: 98). Continuing her research, Levčuk has deduced an interesting thesis that drama in general and dramatic poem in particular are the result of "reconciliation" of two opposing principles (paternal and maternal, lyrical and epic), the path to which Lesya Ukrainka found herself. A dramatic poem is a way of self-healing in harmony. Thus, the two basic modes of literature in Lesya Ukrainka's dramatic art originated from her subconscious idea of paternal and maternal origins, and the interaction of these basic modes (in the drama) made it possible for the writer to realize her long-standing desire to "reconcile", "combine" the realist and the romantic (Levčuk 2015: 101).

Thus, the "dramatic poem" contains a certain imbalance between the lyric and the epic, which manifests itself mainly in the concept of "poem", which most likely the author has correlated with the lyrical beginning. The drama of Lesya Ukrainka, which already contains lyrical and epic, is supplemented in most of her dramatic works with optional lyricism (poem), which is a manifestation of the author's natural inclinations. Another important aspect, as Levčuk found out, is the way of synthesizing lyrics and epic. This path is embodied in the poem, where the two opposites just organically interact, latently combine (in contrast to the drama, where they "fight"). Thus, the poem is an adjustable component, that reveals the imbalance between the lyric and the epic. The poem will successfully exist, having in itself an unequal ratio of lyrics and epic (i.e., the dominance of some component is possible, while the drama itself tends to be equally distributed). The definition of "dramatic" indicates that the nature of the interaction between the lyrics and the epic in the poem has ceased to be latent, organic, "peaceful", and has been transformed to the level of aggravated struggle, confrontation, competition (Levčuk 2015: 103).

In the dramatic poem *Cassandra*, the central and main character is one of Prometheus' descendants – the prophetess Cassandra, for whom both all action – the Trojan War, and all the protagonists – sisters, brothers, Trojans, Greeks – are only a living background. Homer's Troy, the gynaeceum of the Palace of Priam, and the squares of the city of Ilion serve the decorative background.

Cassandra is a prophetess who believes in *Moirā*, a dark and terrible goddess, blind, relentless, who knows neither pity nor grace; she does not want to honour the gods when the gods and goddesses are only slaves of fate ("[...] to be the slave of slaves / I have no wish!" [Ukrainka 1968: 200]); she stumbles before Deiphobus and partly before Onomaus for the rights of women as individuals; the spirit of protest against any slavish obedience, against the conservatism and inertia of the domestic system lives in her. Lyrical appeals to Artemis, depictions of the cruel power of Moira, sudden visions of the impending "Troy falls in ruins" – all this does not give the poem a real mystical colour.

Knowing others as Cassandra knows them, it is not difficult to foresee and predict their fate. This Fate is simply a historical inevitability, a logical conclusion from the analysis of persons and events (see, for example, the conversation of Cassandra and Polyxena in Act II [Ukrainka 1968: 187–190]). Helenus, for example, could draw quite the same conclusions as Cassandra, but they are useless to him, he knows that they would be unpleasant to others. On the contrary, remoted from everyday life, so to speak, "declassified",

Cassandra does not want and can no longer even reckon with it. Here is the source of the tragedy that she is experiencing – the tragedy of a far-sighted thinker, the tragedy of faithful competition to truth.

The composition of the poem is almost everywhere antithetical. The antithesis, clearly outlined in the verbal contests of the dramatis personae (“agons” of the ancient drama), in casually tossed maxims, sometimes worthy of the best “gnome” of ancient tragedy or “pointe” of French classical drama, has been revealed with all its fullness and persuasiveness. In addition, the image of the central heroine of the poem rises higher in its hopeless loneliness.

The exposition of Cassandra’s character develops in six acts, but the antitheses extend to the last two.

In the first scene, Cassandra is contrasted with Helen, the living embodiment of a beauty, that is not inspired by any thought – and therefore a murderous beauty, like death, a beauty that is thoughtless, carefree, spontaneously material. Moreover, this beauty represents a great social force, but disorganizing force that carries with it decay, extinguishes the spark of Prometheus’ fire in a living person.

In the second scene, Lesya Ukrainka gives the antithesis of Cassandra in the person of Polyxena, the bride of Achilles: this is a thoughtless, strong in spontaneity and poor in analytical thought youth, essentially irresponsible for its blind attitude to life, for its selfish desire for personal happiness.

In the next scene, the antithesis of Cassandra and Andromache is developed, already outlined in the third. One of the most beloved heroines in Homer’s epoch does not evoke the *Cassandra* author’s sympathy. Andromache is an ordinary woman, “only a woman”, the keeper of the hearth and peace, which is higher for her more than all quests and all truths. It is Andromache who says to Cassandra the words so sharply opposed in spirit to the whole being of the prophetess:

All the same, Cassandra, / Of your truth we have had enough and more, / Evil-presaging, evil-bringing, let us / Live now in hope, even if it is false. / Oh, I am weary with your kind of truth! / O sister, at least grant me dreams and visions! (Ukrainka 1968: 213)

Cassandra can’t and doesn’t want to give that, and the relationship between the sisters turns into a feeling of sharp mutual hatred. Andromache is a representative of the immovable-conservative, domestic, “instinctive” principle: this connects her with people like Deiphobus and Onomaus – natures who are just as alien to analytical thought. They all clearly know what they want; they are not aware of any doubts; Deiphobus is simple and elementary in his patriotism; the dispute tires him, accustomed to command; and just as elementary-simple Onomaus, who, as a merchant, trades with Cassandra and cannot understand the intricacies of her dialectics at all.

The conflict between Cassandra and Helenus is the main one in the drama of Lesya Ukrainka. The children of Priam Helenus and Cassandra, according to myths, not only represented the same caste, but were also twins. Usually, twins feel their integrity, and within their microcosm they can distribute the main functions. Actually, the opposition of self-sufficient prophets lies in the opposition of male / female (the era of Troy was marked by gender parity in the state of priests), often reduced to the incompatibility of the analytical mind and intuition, ignoring gender nuances of existential and ethical content. Hundorova has rightly interpreted the gender essence of Helenus’ image as “the personification of a mind, which is identical to power’. Simply put, ‘he appropriates the truth as a woman and gets power’ (Hundorova 2002: 82).

It is significant that the brother resorted to *ornithomancy* [the practice of reading omens from the actions of birds – O.B.], and Cassandra called herself a “bird-oracle”. *Gamayun*, a prophetic bird of

Slavic folklore, was said to spread divine messages and prophecies of the gods. In antiquity, the raven was considered a prophetic bird, this bird as a companion of Apollo was a symbol of the prophetic power of God. However, at the behest of the last, raven, which was once white, turned black and ominous, and then Apollo brought the swan closer to him. Instead, the crow, closely associated with Athena (later depicted with an owl companion), has completely lost its former authority. As Protopopova notes, “the crow next to the raven is sometimes mentioned as a soothsayer, but [...] once a wise prophetic bird after the ‘curse’ of Athena began to be perceived either as a chatterbox, or as a bearer of stupid omens” (Protopopova 2002).

Cassandra's prophecy was absolutely organic, she visualized to her compatriots her sense of the future, which was inspired by higher powers. Instead, Helenus only imitated the penetration into the mystery of the future, and considered the ritual “a veil for naked truth before the public gaze”. Helenus saw his own power in the “quick and lithe Phrygian understanding”. The main attribute of the supreme Phrygian deity Sabazios is a serpent, only Cassandra considered “to crawl around like snakes” incompatible with the prophetic mission. Helenus, a typical Pharisee, believed that he is under the protection of Apollo and was obliged to point to the light, the prospects of overcoming the forces of chaos. By his behaviour, he vividly illustrated the thesis of Georg Simmel, who argued that man was an extrovert being who was constantly in development and did not have a stable centre. It was difficult for him to realize his vocation, but it was easier to draw logical conclusions. To the prophet Helenus, the sister seemed to be paralyzed by the truth-Medusa (Ukrainka 1968: 215–216): “as you were turned to stone; / As if Medusa cast a glance upon you’, but he preferred to see himself as a “helmsman” who “guided a mighty ship”. In Helenus' reasoning about the confrontation of male and female, a kind of calmly cynical beauty of the intellect sparkled.

In some places the prophet resorted to theatrical and heroic pathos. His word was always aimed at efficiency, equilibristic relativism. Idealistically absolutizing the “fruitfulness” of the word (“The word is fruitful / And gives birth more than Proto-Mother Earth” [Ukrainka 1968: 217]), Helenus confessed to Cassandra that in fact he was forced to “play the Prophet”. Nevertheless, this pretence brought him pleasure, he flaunted his “prophet's diadem and silvered staff” (“the signs of power and domination above kings” [Ukrainka 1968: 219]), rhetorical skill, triumph over the crowd. Helenus' artistic character was evidenced by his “solemn, hieratic step”, that is, emphatically majestically modest, obviously semi-dance, characteristic of the processions of the sacred holy women – “hierodules”. Helenus willingly gave “the sword and spear” for self-realization to such as Onomaus, Dolon and even Hector, and he himself revelled in the position of the real ruler of history and human destinies: “I have no equal like unto myself / Among all rulers and above all heroes” (Ukrainka 1968: 219). The false prophet assumed the likelihood of deceiving the Moira herself, offering his sister to hide her “in a secret way beneath the alta” during “the wedding sacrifices” to the gods. After all, he himself represented the type of man with a “secret way”, above which the altar was just a decoration, because there were no shrines for him.

Helenus fully corresponded to the masculine type of Apollonian man, who, according to the classification of J. Bolen, “feels quite comfortable in the heavenly realm of intellect, will and reason. And although this god is known as the embodiment of light and form, Apollo has his own hidden dark side” (Bolen 2005). As a man with the demiurge's intelligence, Helenus considered himself incomparable “in deeds”. However, by the power of thought, he put Cassandra on the same level with himself (“No, we are not alike, yet we are equal, / If not in deeds, at least so in our thoughts” [Ukrainka 1968: 219]). Moreover, the potential of a woman-competitor, endowed with the true gift of divination, he needed to localize.

The false prophet was the first to do honour to the Achaeans, in particular, his advice to place a donated wooden horse near the Palladion was an encroachment on his sister's space. Cassandra ridiculed the shortsightedness of Helenus, who tried to persuade the people to respect "a sign of peace", which caused the final split between the twins. Pragmatic Helenus found it possible to overcome his rival: in the situation with the captured Greek Sinon, he flaunted to the Trojans the indecision of Cassandra. In general, Helen preferred populist decisions, he tended to seek public approval and be as careful as possible in advice (for example, "neither useful nor honourable"). Quite motivated, he joined Deiphobus, because power was always a reliable protection of a cult guard with a swindling vein. Helenus was more often "in conversation" with his older brother than with the gods. These traits allowed him, according to Cassandra's prophecy ("you'll gain the victory over victors") to be needed by enemies after the war, gaining the authority of the Prophet in the famous Temple of Apollo.

Helen Apollo's "raven", the archetype of the eternal interpreter, who satisfied men's ambitions by developing the world in his own way. Personal status for him was higher than the knowledge of the truth and the interests of the state. He managed to artistically defeat the prophetess-woman in the eyes of the crowd, but in fact "helmsman" Helenus guided his ship blindly and never recognized the "eyesore" artificially hidden from admirers. Helenus' potential strength lay in his search for the integrity of male and female worldviews and talents at the elite level. However, the idea of synthesizing men and women asymmetrically represented in culture was doomed to endless conflict. A warning from Cassandra (Ukrainka 1968: 220) "[...] do not overestimate yourself, Helenus!" [which has a deep gender connotation – O.B.] – he never heard.

Cassandra was lonely. The very knowledge of the truth was not enough to change the course of events: it required the will to action, the possibility of action. And Cassandra didn't have that. Thus, it is not enough for a political fighter to know the truth – they need the will to fight; it is not enough for him to "speak", but it is necessary to "prove with an armed hand". The one who does not have such a will, the one who does not have an armed hand, inevitably suffers the catastrophe of Cassandra. And life is not worth it, no matter what disasters and troubles befall people; it goes on continuously and incessantly ("There is no ruin! It is life! All life!" [Ukrainka 1968: 239]): and an infinitely bitter-minded person is only a witness and a passive victim of this course of events.

As has been shown in the paper, the concept of the Greek "moira", rock or "fate" clearly dominates under various forms in the dramatic works of Lesya Ukrainka, such as *Babylonian Captivity*, *On the Ruins*, *Cassandra*. The fate of the enslaved people cannot be improved by even the most inspired prophet in *Babylonian Captivity* and *On the Ruins*. Even such a clairvoyant as Cassandra failed to avert the tragic fate that befell the glorious folk in *Cassandra*.

However, in the dramatic poem *The Orgy* the element of a definite volitional act is striking, which, like a leitmotif, passes through the whole action, sounds like a call to battle and ends not so much with defeat as with its indecision. The act of "will" as a principled dramatic concept, and not just as the desire of the characters, which has been repeatedly noted by some researchers of Lesya Ukrainka's work (Kozij 1984: 156–163; Stavyckyj 1970), expressed in *The Orgy*. In this work, Lesya Ukrainka continued and deepened the theme of national treason. At the heart of the dramatic poem was the problem of moral choice. The artistic time of *The Orgy* belonged to the era (national-political and cultural-spiritual oppression of Greece by the militaristic Rome), when the struggle for national existence passed from the battlefield to the field of culture (according to Anteus' sister Euphrosyne, "Only Apollo has not ceased

to love / Hellas, and in her there's still hope of life" [Ukrainka 1968: 150]), when the fate of the nation depended on whether it succeeded in preserving its language and culture, when the conqueror changed tactics and his hand held out not a sword, but money, he sought not to kill, but to buy. The main guardian of the nation was an artist – Anteus, a Greek poet-singer, who could not accept the profanation of Greek art at that time, with its humiliating role, which was limited to subservience the Roman conquerors. Therefore, the central conflict between national loyalty and opportunism was transferred to the realm of art.

One of the keys in the ideological and semantic solution of the drama was the dialogue between Anteus and the sculptor Phaedon. The dialogue impressed with the power of concentrated thought, conciseness and aphorism of expression. Through Anteus' lips, Lesya Ukrainka expressed here her intense reflections on the bitter fate of the Ukrainian artist, faithful to his people (Ukrainka 1968: 161): "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 /".

This is a kind of result of her own creative path, her life credo, her "testament to freedom fighters" (Masenko 2002: 73). The American researcher of Lesya Ukrainka's creativity Percival Cundi (1950: 35) put it this way: "The writer manifestly intended her readers to substitute Russia for Rome and Ukraine for Corinth and so to perceive their own situation in the present in which they were living". Borys Jakubsky meant the same when he concluded that the defeated Hellas in Lesya Ukrainka's dramatic poem *The Orgy* was in fact Ukraine, and its oppressor and enemy was Moscow: Anteus was a nationalist of the same grade as the poetess; he hated the victorious Romans and never, under any circumstances (even the most favourable for him), would not give them his creativity: he hated them not only for destroying the political will of his native land, but also for depriving the liberty-freedom of his native art (Jakubsky 1954: 112–114).

The scene of the orgy, to which the Maecenas invited Anteus and his wife, was the culmination of the play. Here, Nerissa's betrayal brought Anteus' conflict with those around him to a tragic edge, and the dramatic action quickly approached catastrophe.

Roman orgy (an ancient orgy, in most cases, was a carefully thought-out and staged collective action, which temporarily gave the community the opportunity to express their erotic desires without restrictions in a certain period of time, as a rule, under the patronage of a particular god or goddess – Saturnalia, Lupercalia and Bacchanalia – O.B.), but Anteus would sing on it according to his own Greek custom. The song performed by Anteus was full of the spirit of Dionysian holidays. It was a hymn to the spring renewal of the earth, to the life-giving forces of nature, awakening after hibernation. As during the Greek orgies, Anteus sang in a state of divine inspiration close to an ecstatic one, in a state of maximum tension of the creative energy of the spirit, "holy frenzy", "drunk with trans-human force".

In this aspect, in author's opinion, it is interesting to analyse the action-orgy as a spectacular phenomenon in the work of Lesya Ukrainka through the prism of circus imagery and its semantics, because the concept of "world-theatre" has another invariant: the world is a circus, a bizarre circus, where all human sensations are turned on to the maximum. The author agrees with the opinion of Kočerha that the circus is always a struggle, an experience of the embodiment of fantasy, the materialization of a fairy tale or myth. Circus is the art of authenticity, not imitation (Kočerha 2017: 230). Analysing the history, semiotics, as well as various interdisciplinary contexts of the cultural topos of the circus in the works of researchers, Kočerha has highlighted those aspects that attract writers in the circus spectacle: the invariable attribute of

the holiday, its masters are able to create a special atmosphere of elation, relaxed, optimistic; demonologism, eroticism, etc. (Kočerha 2017: 231).

Thus, at the banquet of the far-sighted and insidious Maecenas-statesman, among the numerous invited artists there was a place for circus performers. In the program of the Impreza, their performance was the initial one, which was intended to witness the fireworks of talents from different countries, which in the subtext strengthened the idea of the power of the Roman Empire. Maecenas kept the directing of the festive evening in his field of influence, and it was he who gave instructions to the slave major-domo about the circus intermezzo. The performance itself in the play is written in the remark: “[...] there start to appear on the stage mimes who perform short farces in dumb show, Egyptian tumbler girls, with swords, jugglers and juggler girls with bright balls, etc.” (Ukrainka 1968: 167). In fact, in the house of Maecenas, the “magicians” were seen as accidental delusions, the remark of the Maecenas is permeated with superiority, who, to be honest, knew how to appreciate true talent, was an admirer of “the worth of art” and considered it necessary to dose the mass one: “[...] Only be sure it doesn’t last too long! / Each must perform only for a few minutes / And nobody must come on more than once. /” (Ukrainka 1968: 167).

The grassroots place of the circus in artistic craft is also indicated by the marking of them with “*monkeys*”, tasty to fame. However, they made a great impression on the audience, since they were sincerely applauded, and that gave reason for the circus performers to popularize their art form.

It’s worth paying attention to the sign “monkey”. It is clear that the lexeme “monkey” was accepted by the Maecenas with an expressive discriminatory connotation, to which exotic associations were still attached. It’s interesting, that in *The Orgy* in childhood, one of the main characters was called as a “monkey” – Nerissa, Anteus’ wife. In a discussion with Anteus, she said: “No, no, it is my duty to remember / That you have made into a human being / “The little monkey from Tanagra”. /” (Ukrainka 1968: 155).

However, Nerissa realized that in the gender aspect, she remained a “monkey” for her beloved husband, since her right to freedom of choice was virtually eliminated, and her appointment was limited to the delight of the family and guests of the house. At the same time, in Anteus’ eyes, she still remained with a “monkey” consciousness, that she was not capable of high sacrifice, and therefore the sentence for her was not as a beloved wife, but as an animal that rebelled in the circus arena.

The orgy in the Maecenas’ house transformed the previous ideological disputes of the drama into a situational plan and emphasized the rightness of Anteus. In this house he was betrayed not only by his pupil and friend-sculptor (accordingly Chilon and Phaedon – O.B.), here the central character was waiting for the most insidious betrayal – the betrayal of a woman with whom he was bound by marriage, who was obliged to remain faithful to him. For the recognition and glory received from the conqueror, the artist of the enslaved nation had to pay for the loss of dignity and honour. Nerissa’s betrayal (which emphasized the motive of humiliation and shame, presented in the artist’s position, and also violated human dignity and national honour) emphasized and brought to the extreme the confrontation of Anteus, who was faithful to the moral obligation to protect his native culture from corruption and decay, with compatriots who abandoned their vocation for money and fame. The hellish circle closed around him. Surrounded by enemies and traitors, he remained not only lonely but also disgraced. The Maecenas achieved his goal. By seducing Anteus’ wife, he dishonoured the artist whom he could not buy.

The character of the volitional act of the protagonist from the beginning to the end of the drama was almost demonstrative. In this infernal circle, the sacrifices made by Anteus, giving up fame and

money, were not enough. They did not save his honour. In the house of a stranger who came to his land as a conqueror, betrayed by his closest people, Anteus was able to preserve his dignity only at the cost of his life. His conflict with entourage led to a catastrophe – he took the life of Nerissa and he himself also preferred the mortal self-destruction from such an unworthy life.

Conclusions

Summing up, the author notes that the basis for the reception of prophecy at the figurative level of the dramaturgic works of Lesya Ukrainka is the understanding of the myth as the manifestation of the author's consciousness immanently inherent in a work of art, as an individual version of the mythological picture of the world, in which the holistic structure of the metamyth retains the force of the universal archetypal matrix.

In author's opinion, in the study of the stated problem it is necessary to distinguish two aspects. The first one is writing one's own works on a religious-historiosophical or ancient mythological basis, which required from the writer not only a fundamental knowledge of mythology and the Bible, but also a special talent, tuning fork sensitivity to the energy of mythological realities and Christian culture. To move the stable, monumental image formed thousands of years ago, to give one more life, to transform and present in its evolution – already in literature of a completely different kind – this is the task that Lesya Ukrainka performed in dramatic sketches and poems. The talent of the writer is more often seen in the depth to which the codes of his work can mean. It is important to find decoders by any means that would maximally reveal the semantic load of the work of art, in this case – the dramatic works of the Ukrainian writer. Lesya Ukrainka used the well-known biblical contexts and mythological realities not as decorations, but primarily first of all as a holistic natural work developed on an equally natural plot. She installed the myth not according to a given scheme, but organically placing it in an individual artistic picture of her own artistic imagination.

The second aspect is actually the reception by Lesya Ukrainka of prophetism and religious prophecy as a providential direction of creativity, which provides examples of the events that should occur, as well as themes of the prophet and pseudoprophet, clarifying the nature of the prophetic spirit, its influence on human communities and their history. Considering the dramatic works of the writer *Babylonian Captivity*, *On the Ruins*, *Cassandra* and *The Orgy*, proceeding from the thesis that "great poets create their own myth", consciously or unconsciously the poetess re-actualized in her work a certain repertoire of archetypal and mythological structures. Thus, the paradigm of the author's myth of Lesya Ukrainka is a type of religious visionary born in the magical-mythological bosom of ancient beliefs, and his / her functions and values belong to another socio-cultural level: he / she is familiar with the sense of the sacred in the world, and his / her actions and "prophecies" directed to the transcendental dimension. The religious visionary shows attention to the irrational phenomena of his / her psyche, to his / her own intuitive insights, and is inclined to enthusiastic self-denial and self-sacrificing service. This archetypal image is a kind of mythological matrix, on the basis of which the images of the lyrical heroes of Lesya Ukrainka are modelled. Therefore, the appearance in literary criticism of the myth-making definition of the poetess as a "prophetess" or "woman-heresiarch" (the female type of mystic visionary), which is based on the images she modelled (Tirzah and Cassandra), was not accidental, but they do not take into account the fact that this archetypal

matrix is important for the myth-thinking of the poetess. The images of prophets in the works of Lesya Ukrainka appear as ideal carriers of the author's ideas, since they allow one to comprehend a certain problem in the volumetric perspective of the past, present and future. In dramatic sketches and poems, these are mainly a national issue, focused on the existential dilemmas of freedom and slavery, sacrifice and indifference, freedom and sacrifice. The principle of hierarchical openness can be recognized in the characterization of the poetess' characters: some have already redeemed themselves as a victim, others have not overcome the contradiction between the earthly and the ideal, but are on the path of spiritual identification.

Creativity of Lesya Ukrainka is thoroughly imbued with prophetic visions concerning the future of Ukraine. This issue, as well as further detailed analysis of the implementation of prophecy on a broad basis, is a promising direction in the development of the problem posed in the paper.

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