

**The Form of Preaching as a Prototype of the Essay
in Vasyl Barka's Works**

Non-fiction prose of Vasyl Barka is an important link in the history of domestic essays. It represents the religious and philosophical direction of the genre and shows how essay form traditionally associated with ease, openness to other points of view and relativity can freely operate within the dogmatic Christian worldview. The purpose of the given exploration is to study the specifics of the genre forms of religious and philosophical essay of the writer, which made the collection *The Rider of the Sky* (1965).

The collection *The Rider of the Sky* was made mainly of Sunday performances of the writer on the radio "Svoboda". This very communicative focus (focus on the audience – people of all ages, levels of education, taste in order to promote the Word of God) identifies the characteristics of composition and style of the texts. They are concise (most of them – up to three pages), written in the language accessible to the public, are designed in the grand spirit of the Scriptures. Despite the solidity of external content, except in their own preaching character, with the purpose of communicating the meaning of God's Word to people's minds, we can distinguish other thematic- composite formation: comment – explanation of the apocalyptic images of "Revelation" ("Eagle Book"), the interpretation of sacraments' symbolic value ("The Divine Liturgy"), reasoning about the deep sense of the poem by T. Shevchenko ("Truth of "Neophytes"), reflection on the place of baroque culture, in particular architecture (church building) in Ukrainian spiritual space ("Cossack church").

Within two thousand years of Christian history views on the purpose, objectives and features of sermons have hardly changed. As two thousand years ago, modern preachers, including Vasyl Barka have been concerned about eschatological issues and seek to convey to the listener and reader the light of Christ's truth in order

to save human souls from hell. Thematically, the sermon has also remained virtually unchanged, because in all circumstances (historical, social, national) it is designed to promote the Divine truth, which is constant and eternal.

The texts of the collection *The Rider of the Sky* correspond to the content and purpose of the sermon genre. But we should note that the analyzed “sermons” of Vasyl Barka cannot be considered fully successful, due to homiletic guidelines: the author virtually ignores traditionally established requirements for communicative orientation and emotional credibility of this genre, at least it seems so at first sight. We don’t see any appeals to the audience, questions, calls, tips in Barka’s performances, as it should be. For comparison, let us consider the texts of V. Barka’s contemporaries – writers and preachers I. Barchuk and I. Vlasovskiy.

Texts by I. Barchuk have clear, vivid shapes appeal, full of figures of addressing of intimate character (“dear listeners”, “my favorite audience”, “my friends”, “dear brothers and sisters”, “beloved friend”, etc.). The desire to influence the listener, to get to his heart shows frequent use of rhetorical figures of question, exclamation, repetition and graduation. These sermons are full of simple everyday examples, often from personal experience of the author, situations that should concern everyone – and therefore look vital and convincing.

Instead, in V. Barka’s works, maximum that can be seen is the use of the first person plural form, no “we” as a single audience, but “we” to all mankind. The overall goal of preaching for V. Barka is realized not only through communicative and rhetorical skills, but also through appeals to the biblical text and reflection on it. This does not exclude emotional presentation, not at all. However, emotional presentation of V. Barka is different – not invitingly-convincing, but mostly artistic and imaginative.

The book by I. Vlasovskiy *Living Word* represents the Orthodox traditional sermons with the tendency towards literary character: serious citation of the Word of God, reference to the authority of the Church Fathers. His radio-performances are reading the text of the Bible, paraphrasing certain chapters and their interpretation,

explaining obscure words and places.

Basing on the Bible, explaining and emphasizing its certain stories and images, V. Barka in the book *The Rider of the Sky* develops the range of problems personally important to him, in the force field of which constantly rotates his essayistics: belief and disbelief, idealism and materialism, work with a sense of the presence of the Creator and pseudo-creativity, heart, due to it given mystical over-perception, and powerlessness of mind in the knowledge of higher truths. His essays-sermons, marked by simplicity and affordability, are still little communicatively-directed and more focused on the problems central to the author, and appears the distinguishing feature of essay character. Built like traditional sermons, they are, however, not marked with an appeal to the addressee, do not contain elements of direct exhortations, appeals, representations, etc. Instead we have a situation of emotional impact on the recipient through the techniques of artistic imagery – also a step to essaying the manner. In our opinion the main trait, that distinguishes Barka's essays and sermons, is the reference to areas of high creativity and constant emphasis on life-giving power of the Holy Scripture for the artist.