

**The Dialectics of Christianity and Neopaganism  
in Yaroslav Vereschak's Drama *The Third Sermon***

The article deals with the dialectics of sacred and profane and their display in the system of sign forms, which are represented in the stratum of artistic synthesis between literature and theatrical performance. The materials of the research are the plays from Yaroslav Vereschak's oeuvre, and the play *The Third Sermon* in particular.

The postmodern literature actively demonstrates an eschatological myth connected with the idea of the life endness. Modern dramatic works also appeal to the biblical texts. Yaroslav Vereschak whose texts contain the motif of the apocalypse (the play *144000*), the receptive comprehension of the sacral time and space unity of the other world (the drama *My soul with the scar on the knee*) is not an exception from this context. But the process of actualization of the rhetorical-religion model is unexpected in playwright's creative works. This model has shown the dialectics not only of Christianity and other religion (the play *David's Star on Philip's Neck*, the prose work *Shruba*), but also has implied the discourse of the Christianity and Neopaganism (the play *The Third Sermon*, the prose work *To Embrace the Camel in Time*), as a situation of communication of a universal religion (Christianity) and a new religion revelation which was postponed by the historical events and later gained its rebirth at a new social stage (Neopaganism).

The genre of Yaroslav Vereschak's play *The Third Sermon* – the monoplay – determines a double consciousness of a main character, Actress, which is relevant to the problem of the reconstruction of the artistic consciousness by the means of the transformation and change of costumes. Plurality of the deposited images shows the annexation of the main character's consciousness, which is considered in the way of generation, gender and religion rhetoric. This rhetoric is implemented by the stage properties: wigs, costumes and Mother of God's icon.

The image of an icon is related to the title of the monoplay, because an icon inspires a dialogue between a human and the God. It is realized in the form of a prayer as the conversation with the God about a particular request. The numerical definition of "third sermon" releases associative images relating to the religious emblems of a numerical code – Trinity, Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, the number three in the text is associated with the third generation that is represented in the character of Andriyko whose prayer is a hope for the nation revival.

The text matrix code also uses definitions with a sacred content. However the consciousness of the Actress creates an Image of an alternative religion, the legitimacy of which is justified by its prehistoric origins. New religious mythology is associated with Chernobyl as an image of a national apocalypse. Chernobyl makes a new countdown and therefore it lets us talk about reanimation of an old spiritual worldview. It is entering nowadays conditions, and so the creation of neopaganism consolidates not only a sacred space of a person, but also it is creating an ethno-national ideology.

Focus on the issue of a national space inspires temporary- spatial discourse represented by a resonating consciousness. In the play the motive of a spiritual crucifixion and pain is represented as a situation of generations gap, and thus as a loss of the national roots. An alternative world construction which is based on neo-pagan cult of the equality of all things (which refers to the idea of the documentary film *Earththings*) determines the formation of a text –utopia. It criticizes a contemporary devaluated ontology. The symbol of such utopian world has become an image of sunflowers. It corresponds to the space of the sun, and therefore to a life Sunflowers heal the world from radiation contamination, so the dead zone is no longer associated with death, but with a promised land for all living souls who are able to feel everything that exists on the earth and to worship to that. So, a new aesthetic is formed in the text - transsentimentalism, it is associated primarily with the attempt to reconstruct an apocalyptic world with the help of creation of utopian alternatives for the "Paradise on Earth" – the Zone.

The play presents three models of religion – Neopaganism (as a spiritual pluralism, which creates a new materiality and metahistory), fetishism (which concentrates on material things) and Christianity (which is universal model of the expression of a religion). So, through a split chronotope Y. Vereshchak shows the stylistic advanced emblematic of the national culture: national utopia, post-apocalyptic aesthetics and transclassical sensibility.

It should be noted that all images in the text that were listed above are conventional because they are just the result of a theatrical skill of one actress who plays all three roles. The performance of the actress creates a text that is a synthesis of literary and theatrical arts, and it lets us talk about a complex structure of an art semantic signs, which are rotating in the sphere of religious, philosophical, cultural, moral and national issues. The image of the mysterious actress is transcendental, because she is the Creator of all other characters and she is representing all protoimages of the performance that is taking place “here and now”.