

**Parareligional Discourse in the Epistolary and Scientific-Publicist Works  
by Lesya Ukrainka: Gnosticism or Atheology?**

At the time of the Soviet Union the question of Lesya Ukrainka's attitude towards problems of faith and religion was settled quite unambiguously and explicitly as scientific atheism. The aspiration of modern scientists to propose new perusals leads to a reappraisal of explicitness and to search arguments which support author's religious outlook. In the course of new interpretations there emerge different determinations; scientists use them carefully, instinctively, sometimes situationally – by talking about something which is worth detailed analyses. The work of O. Zabuzhko "Notre Dame d'Ukraine: Ukrainka v konflikti mifolohii" (*Notre Dame d'Ukraine: Ukrainka in the conflict of mythologies*), where Lesya Ukrainka's opinion of Gnosticism became a radical position in searching determinations of the writer's religiousness.

The author demonstrated her position on religious questions mostly expressively in the correspondence with M. Dragomanov, where there are traces of atheological and rationalistic position, with clear comprehension of "killing force" for any kind of religion by comparative studies and construction of analogies with other cult texts and ceremonies. The conclusions of scientists concerning "antipathy" in Lesya Ukrainka's outlook appeared because at first glance, openly atheistic evidences in letters and articles on the one hand and religious, heretical and apocryphal concepts in the literary works on the other hand, are quite hard to combine. But this difference between the writer's literary and epistolare or scientific discourse also confirms Lesya Ukrainka's manipulative-mythpoetic purpose to deliberate consciously with suggestive methods and mythological structures of religious discourse.

In her article "Utopiya v beletrystytsi" (*Utopia in belles lettres*) Lesya Ukrainka quite unambiguously expresses hope that modernism can lead humanity to the other

epoch – the epoch of science and morality renovated by a scientific outlook, when all religions in terms of idolatry and imperious manipulations will be repressed.

The author interpreted religious and mystical feelings as insufficiently studied evinces of human mentality, however acknowledged a power of their influence and manipulative activity towards uneducated people. Lesya Ukrainka saw a typological commonness between nervous disorders and different manifestations of mysticism entirely in the manner of modern philosophy of irrationalism which she accepted (Z. Freud, C. Lombroso, F. Nietzsche and others).

The author was absolutely against different church rites ceremonies in her life. In the letter to M. Kryvynyuk she writes about the conflict with her mother concerning the wedding ceremony in church, which Olena Pchilka proposed Lesya and K. Kvitka. Although finally she took marriage with Klymentiy Kvitka in church.

Taking over literary methods and concepts of medieval literature, assuring by lips of her lyric character in the poem “Mrii” (*Dreams*) about love to “age of chivalry”, the author keeps intellectual distance towards this age in the article “utopia in belles-lettres”, and appreciates it quite critically, naming the Middle Ages as the age of “obscurantism” and “barbarism”. It seems we do not have any circumstances to doubt in sincerity of such definition. In the Kosach-Dragomanov family the spirit of modern freethinking dominated, and that is why the attitude towards legends and tales of old times as well as towards different kinds of “holy stories” was humorous and ironic as towards amusements which are infantile for mature consciousness.

The differentiation that Lesya Ukrainka holds between Eastern mystic and religious (Persian, Babylonian, Judaic) and western-historic (Greek-Roman) types of the earliest Utopias is important. If the first types revealed an attraction to mysticism and “the Kingdom of Heaven” transference to the afterword from the beginning, the other ones always found their place on earth (*Odyssey* by Homer, *Politeia* by Plato). In this differentiation an important axiological aspect of article author’s outlook is expressed. Benevolence to realistic, which is not shaded by mystic-religious «mist» and

transcendent visions of world perception, is shown in rating the earliest Utopia works of ancient Greeks.

Instead of that in Jewish prophet Utopia with its mysticism and threats Lesya Ukrainka represents irrational and unbridled will of this nation to authority. Lesya Ukrainka acknowledged the great force of influence and stylistic convincingness of prophet Bible books. This stylistic hardly was not the most interesting for her as the professional literary woman, and probably as the convinced social-democratic woman who aspired thoroughly to master word as the way of ideological influence.

In the axiology of Lesya Ukrainka freedom should be measured by concrete deeds, and ideals had secular humanistic character. Lesya Ukrainka joined the first “wave” of Christianity criticism (by M. Onfray) – Christian atheism (next two are postmodern atheism and atheology). Her alternative “religion” is nothing else than her private variant of Christian atheism, where instead of God the radiant ideals rise over, the image of “spiritual community” of their followers is modeled, and science and philosophy replace morals. Thus, searching for religiousness in the poetess’s outlook is the ungrateful and inadequate work towards its object. Involved in religious discourse images and concepts of creative work should be taken as a tribute to the author’s literary convention that was formed by European literature traditions.