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THE GNOSEOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL DUALISM OF LESIA UKRAINKA'S *THE FOREST SONG*

STRESZCZENIE: W artykule przedstawiono analizę gnoseologicznego i ontologicznego dualizmu w dramacie-feeerii Lesi Ukrainki *Pieśń lasu*. Wspomniane ujęcie odzwierciedla charakterystyczny dla pisarki sposób racjonalno-intuicyjnego poznania świata. Dualizm gnoseologiczny wyraża się w połączeniu intuicyjnej i transcendentnej wiedzy o świecie z praktycznym, racjonalnym podejściem do formalnej strony *Pieśni lasu*. Zasygnalizowana perspektywa odzwierciedlała główne nurty ideologiczne i intelektualne tamtych czasów, które wpłynęły na Lesię Ukrainkę. Dualizm ontologiczny wiąże się z dialektyczną wizją świata cywilizowanego (świeckiego) i naturalnego (świętego), harmonijnie powiązanych ze sobą. Konstrukcja świata przedstawionego omawianego utworu świadczy o tym, że pisarka wyżej ceni świat przyrody, którego wartości dominują nad aksjologicznym porządkiem świata cywilizacji. Badacze sugerują, że badany filozoficzno-ideologiczny aspekt tekstu wiąże się z biografią pisarki, a zwłaszcza z jej korespondencją z ówczesnymi intelektualistami i pisarzami.

ABSTRACT: The article examines the gnoseological and ontological dualism of Lesia Ukrainka's drama-fairy tale *The Forest Song* (*Лісова пісня*) as a way of expressing the writer's rational-intuitive cognition of the world. The gnoseological dualism is expressed in the combination of intuitive and transcendent knowledge of the world with a practical, rational approach to the formal side of *The Forest Song*. This vision reflected the main ideological and intellectual movements of the time that influenced Lesya Ukrainka. The ontological dualism is connected with the dialectic of the civilized (profane) and natural (sacred) worlds, which are interconnected with each other on the basis of harmony and order. In the text, Lesya Ukrainka prefers the natural world, which prevails over the material values of civilization. The researchers suggest that such a philosophical and ideological component of the text is connected with the writer's biography, in particular her correspondence with intellectuals and writers of that time.

KEYWORDS: Lesia Ukrainka, gnoseology, ontology, transcendental knowledge, civilization and nature.

Introduction

Lesya Ukrainka's drama-fairy tale *The Forest Song* from the very first days of its publication aroused the considerable interest of intellectuals, researchers, and public figures. In her letter to Ahatanhel Krymsky, Lesya Ukrainka did not hide her surprise at the positive reviews: «Я маю за неї багато компліментів, як ще ні за яку річ не мала»¹. The writer could not understand whether she had managed to create a real masterpiece, or a primitive text for daily reading. Nevertheless, *The Forest Song* still remains one of the most popular and cited works of modern Ukrainian literature, one often considered to be the first Ukrainian fantasy. Oksana Zabuzhko states that «все-загальне аксіоматичне визнання цього твору (ще прижиттєве!) за вершинне досягнення письменниці – аж до такої міри, що в масовій свідомості він перетворився на постійну прикладку до імені автора»². It has been translated into various languages, repeatedly republished, and performed on theater stages. In the Soviet period, two movies based on the novel were created in 1961 and 1980, which tried to convey in their own way both the fantastic and profane components of the drama. Hence, Lesya Ukrainka managed to create a text accessible to the mass reader and viewer, which contains complex philosophical concepts and cultural allusions that organically integrated drama into the general European context. Even today the idea of the need for harmonious the coexistence of man and nature sounds relevant, regarding the civilizational tendency to exhaust and ruin our surrounding ecosystem. Written more than a hundred years ago, the drama constantly provokes the interest of literary critics and numerous, often unexpected interpretations of different disciplines, rethinking the themes of Ukrainian culture, identity, myth, and gender.

Researchers into Lesya Ukrainka's works usually consider her legacy either within a general literary context or analyze the hidden motives and themes of her works. The first line is more typical of the modern critical wing, including the members of the Ukrainian Shot Revival in the 1920s and 1930s, like Mykhailo Drai-Khmara³ and Mykola Zerov⁴. Altogether, Olha Kosach-Kryvyniuk⁵, Lesya Ukrainka's sister, also made a huge contribution to reconstructing the chronology of the writer's life. At that period of time, the well-known literary critic Viktor Petrov analyzed *The Forest Song* in the context of romantic and neo-romantic aesthetics. This author interpreted the drama as an attempt to symbolically reproduce the myth of nature, which, being in a state of separation, overcomes this disorder, returning to the original unity of the human and the elemental. The point is that music plays an important role in this return, being the ontological force that controls the whole process of things. Petrov believed

¹ Леся Українка, *Зібрання творів: у дванадцяти томах*. Том 12, Київ 1979, с. 396.

² О. Забужко, *Notre dame d'Ukraine. Українка в конфлікті міфологій*, Київ 2007, с. 257.

³ М. Драй-Хмара, *Леся Українка. Життя й творчість*, [В:] *Літературно-наукова спадщина*, Київ 2002, с. 35-151.

⁴ See: М. Зеров, *Леся Українка. Критично-біографічний нарис*, [В:] *Українське письменство*, Київ 2002, с. 383-416.

⁵ See: О. Косач-Кривинюк, *Хронологія життя і творчості*, Луцьк 2006.

that Lesya Ukrainka portrayed Lukash as a magician and likened him to Orpheus. That is, these characters are able to overcome the motionless and dead hostility of nature, thus bringing the order and rhythm of life into the wild chaos of the universe.⁶ Such ideas referred to the Romantic ideas of Richard Wagner, Novalis, and Friedrich Nietzsche, who argued that music is the fullest manifestation of the natural basis of existence. This “pure form” reveals itself in art, namely in music, as a spontaneous and unpredictable force, where a person fully expresses themselves. For some Ukrainian authors, Petrov’s arguments were acceptable and attractive and were implemented in literary texts⁷.

Another important point in these studies is the use of folklore sources and, consequently, the reflection of ancient Slavic beliefs. Specifically, Lukash Skupeiko in his book *Міфопоетика «Лісової пісні»* tries to structure and systemize the mythological basis of this text, carrying out a detailed analysis of each element, but also referring to the external contexts that influenced the writer. Considering the world of demonic creatures, Skupeiko interpreted them as part of the mythopoetic worldview. Interestingly, the researcher also highlights the ancient, wild foundations of the myth, reflecting or continuing the previous critical deductions according to the connection of Lesya Ukrainka’s worldview with the European Romantic tradition.⁸ Yaroslav Polishchuk also follows this idea, interpreting *The Forest Song* as an embodiment of the pagan world model. According to Polishchuk, Lesya Ukrainka’s idea was to create a parareligious intellectual and spiritual space, which would organically combine archetypes and ritual forms, elements of the cultural experience of a later, already structured human society and an ideal notion of high spirituality⁹. Sylwia Wójtowicz also points out the special spiritual and axiological tendency in Lesya Ukrainka’s novels, which can be interpreted as a cult of spiritual values that combine goodness, truth, and beauty¹⁰. The synthesis of European and national (folk) motifs created a special syncretism in her works, where the interest in Western culture still prevails.¹¹ According to Stefan Kozak, Lesya Ukrainka was a person who integrally absorbed the best of the older and younger generations¹². All in all, all these studies represent Lesya Ukrainka as a completely European writer who not only knew the classical

⁶ See: В. Петров, «Лісова пісня», [в:] *Їм промовляти душа моя буде: «Лісова пісня» Лесі Українки та її інтерпретації*, Київ 2002, с. 149-170.

⁷ See: Т. Возняк, «Народження трагедії з духу музики» та «Лісова пісня»: Слово-музика-мовчання, «Сучасність» 1992, № 2, с. 107-112.

⁸ See: Л. Скупейко, *Міфопоетика «Лісової пісні» Лесі Українки*, Київ 2016.

⁹ See: Я. Поліщук, *Міфологічний горизонт українського модернізму*, Івано-Франківськ 2002.

¹⁰ S. Wójtowicz, *Dramatopisarstwo Lesi Ukrainki. Horyzont aksjologiczny refleksji kulturowych*, Wrocław 2008, s. 29.

¹¹ See: E. Papla, *Poetka i pieśń. Muzyka w życiu i twórczości Lesi Ukrainki*, [w:] Eadem, *Poeci wobec Muzyki. Fiodor Tiuczew – Lesia Ukrainka – Anna Achmatowa – Marina Cwietajewa – Bohdan Ihor Antonycz*, Kraków 2014, s. 65-96.

¹² S. Kozak, *Lesia Ukrainka na tle epoki*, [w:] *Z dziejów Ukrainy. Religia. Kultura. Myśl społeczna. Studia i szkice*, Warszawa 2006, с. 246.

tradition, including languages, but also understood the most important cultural and literary processes of *fin de siècle*.

It should be added that some scholars indicate the theme of culture and sacredness in the text, which is paradoxically connected (or layered as different semantic fields) with Christianity and ancient mythology. Within this context, Tamara Hundorova states the following idea: «Новоромантична теорія переймається ідеалізаційною і навіть трансцендентною місією слова й підставляє на місце традиційної християнської ідеї Спасіння комунікативну словесну утопію».¹³ Similarly, Vira Ageyeva indicates the use of the Romantic faith or parody, which is reflected in the inversion of roles. Here, the researcher connects the sacred elements of culture with ancient mythology.¹⁴ In a sense, this understanding of *The Forest Song* may be related to the postmodern course of interpretation, where the use of poststructuralism and feminism is particularly dominant. Nila Zborovska indicates that «Леся Українка – улюблена письменниця нашої феміністичної школи».¹⁵

Finally, Oksana Zabuzhko offers a controversial approach to *The Forest Song*, interpreting it as the embodiment of Gnosticism and knightly-Qatari mysticism. The researcher believes that Lesya Ukrainka belonged to the Gnostic mystics whose mythology is reflected in such a “purely Ukrainian” thing as *The Forest Song*.¹⁶ Suffice to say, Zabuzhko believes that *The Forest Song* is the Ukrainian version of the Grail legend, and Lukash is the national modification of Persifal,¹⁷ while Mavka is associated with the spirit who seeks an immortal soul in order to free herself from karmic laws.¹⁸ The author claims that Lesya Ukrainka’s «Gnostic thinking» was purely visionary, prophetic, and shamanic, but she was unaware of this mystical talent and could not use it properly. Zabuzhko is convinced that such texts could not grow outside of «столітній стовбур книжкової культури»,¹⁹ which sounds reasonable, given Lesya Ukrainka’s close connection with the European literary (especially medieval) tradition. This is evidenced by the fact that Lesya Ukrainka wrote several literary-critical articles, where she presented an in-depth analysis of the processes that took place in modern literature.²⁰ After all, numerous allusions and references to different periods of European culture are another proof of her indisputable relation to the Western tradition. In general, Oksana Zabuzhko as well as Vira Ageyeva underlines the importance of “transcendent cognition” in the creation of this drama. Mykola Zhulinsky

¹³ Т. Гундорова, *Проявлення Слова. Дискусія раннього українського модернізму. Постмодерна інтерпретація*, Львів 1997, с. 269.

¹⁴ В. Агєєва, *Поетеса зламу століть: Творчість Лєсі Українки в постмодерній інтерпретації*, Київ 2001.

¹⁵ Н. Зборовська, *Пришестя вічності*, Київ 2000, с. 8.

¹⁶ О. Забужко, *Notr dame...*, Київ 2007, с. 232.

¹⁷ Ibidem, с. 254.

¹⁸ Ibidem, с. 244.

¹⁹ Ibidem, с. 257.

²⁰ Леся Українка, *Зібрання творів: у дванадцяти томах. Том 8*, Київ 1977, с. 26-61; 76-99; 76-127; 132-198.

develops this idea, noting that «відбувалася дивна для раціонального осмислення метаморфоза, коли розум виявлявся не здатний збагнути ці перетворення, ці переходи свідомості в стан трансцендентного пізнання».²¹ Svitlana Kocherga further reveals the Gnostic discourse in *The Forest Song*, analyzing the Gnostic code in the «palimpsest» senses of the drama.²²

If one attempts to find the closest inspirational source for her work, then the nearest literary discourse was that of the German fairy-tale dramas, written in the spirit of neo-romanticism.²³ In particular, Lesya Ukrainka liked the works of Gerhart Hauptmann, a representative figure of literary naturalism. However, she was most interested not in his naturalistic works, but in the fairy-tale drama *The Sunken Bell* (*Die versunkene Glocke*, 1896), which was regarded to be the most influential in the formation of German neo-romanticism²⁴. After all, there are similar moments between *The Sunken Bell* and *The Forest Song*, including the parallel between such fairy-tale characters as Vodyanyk and Lisovyk.

Within this context, we believe that the attempts to attribute *The Forest Song* to the tradition of Gnosticism appear unconvincing, as the elements of shamanism and spiritualism could equally have come from the pagan and Christian tradition. The argument that she was unaware of this is also questionable given that Lesya Ukrainka indicated her interests in either letters and notes or coded them within texts. Moreover, it is often ignored that Lesya Ukrainka was a positivist in her views, which will be discussed below. Even if one accepts her “transcendent cognition”, it must include (albeit paradoxically) cognition “from the mind”. The dualism of such knowledge was projected on the description of events in the drama. Hence, the common fact in literary studies is that *The Forest Song* is a paradoxical combination of the world of nature and that of human beings. We also agree with Svitlana Kocherga, who indicates so the dominance of such structural oppositions as «природа і суспільство, природа і культура, культура і цивілізація»²⁵. However, the dualism of existence in the work has not been linked by literary critics with the dualism of the author’s cognition (noesis). Therefore, we state that Lesya Ukrainka formally implemented the positivist ideas of rationalism and practicality in order to give perfection to the work, while at the ideological level she was influenced by Gnosticism with a priority for the spiritual and naturalistic world.

²¹ М. Жулинський, *Українська література: творці і твори*, Київ 2011, с. 241.

²² С. Кочерга, *Культурософія Лесі Українки. Семіотичний аналіз текстів*, Луцьк 2010, с. 285.

²³ See: S. Kozak, *Lesia Ukrainka na tle epoki*, [w:] *Z dziejów Ukrainy. Religia. Kultura. Myśl społeczna: Studia i szkice*, Warszawa 2006.

²⁴ Леся Українка, *Зібрання творів: у дванадцяти томах*, т. 8..., с. 132-154.

²⁵ С. Кочерга, *Культурософія...*, Луцьк 2010, с. 285.

Gnoseological Dualism

There is reason to believe that *The Forest Song* belongs to those works by Lesya Ukrainka written in a state of special creative trance. In this state, the ratio becomes not the main driver of creativity, but the author's intuition and "inner voice", a kind of "prophetic revelation". Lesya Ukrainka repeatedly mentioned this trance, namely in a letter to Olha Kosach-Kryvyniuk dated August 11, 1911 (a draft version of *The Forest Song* was signed on July 25, 1911): «...написала драму-поему в 3-х днях днів за 10, з якимсь таким імпетом, що не могла вночі спати, а вдень їсти...»²⁶. In a letter to her mother, Lesya Ukrainka admitted that this work "gave me as many precious minutes of ecstasy as any other"²⁷. Also, the writer mentioned the creative passion in a letter to Lyudmyla Starytska-Chernyakhivska: «Юрба образів не дає мені спати по ночах, мучить, як нова недуга, – отоді вже приходить демон, лютіший над всі недуги, і наказує мені писати, а потім я знову лежу *zusammengeklappt*²⁸, як порожня торбина. Отак я писала «Лісову пісню...»»²⁹. Such a creative process and cognition, despite the fact that it creates a mood of elation or ecstasy for the creator, requires considerable energy and often ends in illness. Hence, in the letter to her sister dated November 9, 1911, she pointed out the consequences of this work: «...не писати ніяк не могла, бо такий уже був непереможний настрій; але після цього я була хвора і досить довго "приходила до пам'яті"...»³⁰. Almost the same thing was written to Ahatanhel Krymsky, talking about the creation of *The Forest Song*: «...вона дала мені багато радощів, хоча я й відхорувала за неї (без сього вже не йде!)»³¹. All this indicates that Lesya Ukrainka wrote her work in a special state, which can really be considered almost as a shamanic altered state of consciousness. From the last letter it can be concluded that this state of consciousness and cognition had become habitual for her, although not without serious consequences for her health.

It is also significant that *The Forest Song* was written in Kutaisi, a Georgian city, far from Volyn Polisia. However, no Georgian impressions or realities in the drama can be found. This work is the result of inner expression, of what has been reflected in the spiritual world of Lesya Ukrainka. What is more, this expression was not always conscious, something mentioned in a letter to her mother, recounting the appearance of *The Forest Song*:

Мені здається, що я просто згадала наші ліси та затужила за ними. А то ще я здавна тую мавку "в умі держала", ще аж із того часу, як ти в Жабокриці мені щось про мавок розказувала, як ми йшли якимсь лісом з маленькими, але дуже

²⁶ Леся Українка, *Зібрання творів: у дванадцяти томах. Том 12. Листи (1903-1913)*, Київ 1979, с. 358.

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ From German – *crushed*.

²⁹ Леся Українка, *Зібрання творів: у дванадцяти томах. Том 12...*, с. 394.

³⁰ Ibidem, с. 374.

³¹ Ibidem, с. 373.

рясними деревами. Потім я в Колодяжному в місячну ніч бігала самотою в ліс (ви того ніхто не знали) і там ждала, щоб мені привиділася мавка. І над Нечічним вона мені мріла, як ми там ночували – пам'ятаєш? – у дядька Лева Скулинського... Видно, вже треба було мені її колись написати, а тепер чомусь прийшов “слухний час” – *я й сама не збагну чому* (our italics). Зачарував мене сей образ на весь вік...³².

“Transcendent” or inner intuitive cognition, which played, in fact, a leading role in the creation of *The Forest Song*, is not something unusual in many cultures. The results of such cognition are associated with sacred texts in religious systems. For example, this is clearly seen in Islam, where the holy book of the *Qur'an* is interpreted as a mystical reading by Muhammad of information coming from a higher power (Allah). After all, even in the field of science, such mystical reading is widespread. At least some of the great discoveries were made as a result of a kind of “revelation”, as it was in the case of Dmitri Mendeleev. These works that were the result of “transcendent cognition” became iconic in many cultures, influencing people’s worldview. A similar situation applies to *The Forest Song*, which was the result of Lesya Ukrainka’s deep, inner insight, becoming a canonical work for the entire literary canon. However, such cognition was perceived by the writer as something demonic, when some external power forces one to write. Altogether, despite the great exhaustion from such knowledge, it gave Lesya Ukrainka exaltation and creative impulse for further writing. These were “moments of happiness” in her life, when she seemed to leave the everyday world and join the world of the sublime.

The most debated question is whether Lesya Ukrainka perceived the results of “transcendent cognition” as reality. Despite the importance of this type of cognition, she did not perceive it as part of any objective reality, something related to the socio-cultural conditions in which the writer lived. In this case, Stefan Kozak also emphasizes that Lesya Ukrainka’s literary works should be studied in the context of the socio-historical conditions that directly or indirectly influenced her worldview³³. Many Ukrainian intellectuals as well as Lesya Ukrainka followed positivist ideas. Positivism in the second half of the 19th century became a dominant philosophical and ideological movement in European science and culture. Specifically, Mychailo Drahomanov was a supporter of positivism, which influenced many Ukrainian intellectuals and leaders in their ideological positions, including his niece Lesya Ukrainka, who constantly kept in touch with him. Also, Ivan Franko was a follower of positivism, who significantly influenced Lesya Ukrainka in her evolution as a writer³⁴.

The positivists believed that the newly created industrial world needed a new faith, an ideology, as an alternative to the old faith, traditionally Christian, inherent in agrarian society. They opposed the system of “positive” knowledge (more practical

³² Ibidem, c. 378-379.

³³ S. Kozak, *Lesia Ukrainka...*, Warszawa 2006, s. 251.

³⁴ П. Кралюк, *Історія філософії України*, Київ 2015, с. 492-497.

and useful) to the metaphysics of earlier times, based on the ideas of reason and intuition. In this case, any mysticism was denied since it had no practical or factual justification. Lesia Ukrainka generally shared the views of the positivists, referring to them in her works³⁵. She was also sympathetic to the socialist ideas³⁶ that were popular among intellectuals at the time, especially among the aforementioned Mychailo Drahomanov and Ivan Franko. All in all, the ideas of positivism and socialism were partially reflected in the works of Lesya Ukrainka. Another thing is that the writer did not feel comfortable within the “positivist frames” as well as with Ivan Franko in his later works (for instance, in the poem *Моїсеї*). Hence, they cannot be easily included in the literary positivist movement, and many critics have associated them with neo-romanticism.

As for *The Forest Song*, although it can be considered a result of “transcendent cognition”, the work still has a “positivist frame”. Researchers, for the most part, point out that despite the speed in writing *The Forest Song*, the “preparation” took a long time. It proves that after the “creative insight”, Lesya Ukrainka tried to organize her creative writing and give it the most appropriate form. Rewriting the work several times, she looked for the best option for *The Forest Song*, although she was not completely satisfied with the end result.

Defining the genre of the work, the writer characterized it as “Märchendraama”, which can be translated as a fairy-tale drama or drama-tale. However, she believed that this term “cannot be translated in our way”, and the direct translation sounds awkward. Therefore, the writer called *The Forest Song* a drama extravaganza. She noted that it was «те, та не те».³⁷ Drama extravaganza originated in Italy in the 17th century and became widespread in European countries in the 18th-19th centuries. As for Ukrainian literature, such works were not present within its scope. For this genre, a fairy-tale plot is typical, where fantastic creatures act beside people³⁸.

Lesya Ukrainka presented *The Forest Song* as a fairy tale, although it had a realistic basis. Specifically, this basis was mentioned by Olha Kosach-Kryvyniuk, when she comments on Lev Skulinsky being the prototype of Uncle Lev in *The Forest Song*. He had a house near Nechimny Lake, where the main events of the drama take place:

У дядька Лева ми пробули три дні і дві ночі, ходили геть скрізь по лісі, в бір, коло озера. Дядько Лев не палив у хаті, а клав огнище надворі, там і варив страву, там і грівся вночі, ночуючи надворі біля огню та раз у раз наглядаючи свого бидла. Ходячи по лісі та коло озера, надто ж сидячи біля вогнища, почули ми багато,

³⁵ Леся Українка, *Зібрання творів: у дванадцяти томах*. Том 8..., с. 102.

³⁶ Lesia Ukrainka's sympathy for socialist ideas is evidenced, in particular, by the supplement she wrote from the compiler to the Ukrainian translation of the book *Хто з чого живе*. See: Леся Українка, *Зібрання творів: у дванадцяти томах*. Том 7, Київ 1977, с. 128-131.

³⁷ Леся Українка, *Зібрання творів: у дванадцяти томах*. Том 12..., с. 379.

³⁸ Ю. Ковалів, *Літературознавча енциклопедія у 2 т.*, т. 2, Київ 2007, с. 527.

багато оповідань про той ліс, про озеро, про всяку “силу” лісову, водяну, польову та про її звичаї і відносини між собою і людьми³⁹.

This episode from Olha Kosach-Kryvyniuk’s letter indicates that for Lev Skulinsky, as for many locals, all these forces and customs were not fiction, but part of a reality with which people attempt to live in harmony. Pointing to the realism of *The Forest Song*, she also states that «нема ні одного персонажа, ні одного повір’я, ні одної мелодії, щоб були мені незнайомі, – все то мої давні знайомі поліські, все те я чула і знала ще в Колодяжному».⁴⁰ The drama reflected the Polisia folklore stories, beliefs, and realities, which were directly related to Lesya Ukrainka. However, the drama was not limited by the sources from Volyn Polisia, also incorporating the melodies and singing of Eastern Volyn, Zvyagel, where she spent her childhood⁴¹.

Therefore, *The Forest Song* is associated with Lesya Ukrainka’s gnoseological dualism, where “transcendent cognition” with intuition and inner feeling dominate over the ratio. However, the writer redrafted *The Forest Song* many times in order to achieve a perfect form. At least it took more time to rewrite than to write. Accordingly, the work was presented as a game of fantasy. That is, the writer used the approach defined by a positivist vision with her irrational, intuitive sense of reality, which equally absorbed the creative experience and Polisia folklore.

Ontological Dualism

Lesya Ukrainka’s gnoseological dualism was to see its continuation in ontological dualism. Specifically, *The Forest Song* presents two interconnected worlds: one can be interpreted as “the world of nature”, while the other is related to “the world of civilization”. The first is a fantastic (sacred) world where the laws of spirits (Mavka, Lisovyk, Vodyanyk, Rusalka) dominate over human laws. As for the second world, it is a more realistic, pragmatic world where people are concerned with routine (profane) and material issues. It is clear that such an ontological division reflects the epistemological dualism between intuitive and rational cognition, linked in accordance with metaphysics and positivism.

These two worlds both conflict and coexist with each other in the drama, which is often reflected in the transgressive states of transition from one being to another. The usual coexistence of the world of nature and the world of civilization is observed in the actions of Uncle Leo. He is a representative of the human world, but tries to live in

³⁹ О. Косач-Кривинюк, *Ознайомлення Лесі Українки з народною творчістю. Піснею народною натхнені (творча співпраця Лесі Українки та Климента Квітки)*, [в:] *Матеріали. Статті. Дослідження*, Луцьк 2006, с. 35.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, с. 34.

⁴¹ І. Денисюк, Л. Міщенко, *Джерела «Лісової пісні»*, [in:] *Піснею народною натхнені (творча співпраця Лесі Українки та Климента Квітки). Матеріали. Статті. Дослідження*, Луцьк 2006, с. 100.

peace with the spirits of nature. He knows what and whom not to touch, how to “please” the spirits and which to beware of. For instance, Kuts, one of the spirits, says that Uncle Leo knew how to agree with the spirits⁴², thus there was an unwritten condition between him and the transcendental world. Moreover, other characters try to move from one world to another, linking them in this way. First, it concerns Mavka, who is ready to become a human being. Unconsciously, the transition from one world to another is carried out by Lukash, who with his flute “jumps” from the world of people into the world of nature. However, for both Mavka and Lukash, such transitions end tragically since it is almost impossible to move from one world to another without consequences. As a rule, this applies to a certain symbolic retribution for the transition, as in Ukrainian traditions this transition is often accompanied by sacrifice. One can only achieve peace, understanding between these worlds, as Uncle Leo does.

However, people from the world of civilization as a rule, do not live in harmony with the world of nature. The same Kuts says that Lukash, Kylyna, and their mother do not know how to live with them because they broke the agreement.⁴³ In this case, the spirits of nature take revenge on them. Kuts drives horses, a witch spoils cows, Vodyanyk floods the path, Poterchata grains fertilize, Zlydni roams the house. Hence, the world of nature is hostile to most people in the world of civilization. As people say, the world of spirits is an “evil force” or a “witch’s nest”. The writer’s vision of nature was based on the folklore of Volynians and Polishchuks, with whom Lesya Ukrainka was well acquainted. This folklore had a deep Indo-European religious basis and, despite the millennial tradition of Christianity, had managed to survive, though often in hidden forms. One can find some similarities between the pre-Christian religious beliefs of the Polishchuks and ancient Indian and Greek religious beliefs.

The ontology of nature is characterized by a cyclical, but not linear and progressive development, reflected in the gradual change of seasons. In parallel with the changes of seasons, the relationship between Lukash and Mavka develops: in spring (the first act) they fall in love with each other, in summer (the second act) there is a breakup and culmination, and in autumn (the third act) their love dies with nature. In the last act, Mavka turns into a willow that dies in a fire. In the same act, Lukash also dies, covered with snow, and symbolizes the arrival of winter. Importantly, almost nothing happens in winter since it is a dead period. Here, Mavka says that she slept all winter and, in that time, «спить озеро, спить ліс і очерег»⁴⁴. With the beginning of winter, the action of *The Forest Song* ends.

As for the world of civilization, people from this state of being are essentially materialistic. In that reality, most of them are (at least formally) Christians, thus they follow some Christian rites and visit temples. However, the theme of Christianity in *The Forest Song* is completely ignored. Uncle Leo, one of the most positive characters in the work, appears more pagan than Christian. There are no Christian features in such

⁴² Lesya Ukrainka, *Зібрання творів: у дванадцяти томах*. Том 5, Київ 1976, с. 273.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, с. 274.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, с. 218.

characters from the world of civilization such as Lukash, his mother, Kylyna, and her children. Lesya Ukrainka is not emphasising the elements of Christianity in the drama world presented, considering the fact that she was a supporter of positivism. She generally had a negative attitude towards Christianity, as was shown in her dramatic poem *In the Catacombs* (*В катакомбах*, 1905), other plays written on ancient subjects as well as some literary criticism and journalistic articles.

The life of “the civilized people” is mainly reduced to their satisfaction of material needs. This vital materialism is represented by Lukash and Kylyna’s mother. For them, material goods are the most crucial values and goals in life. Accordingly, interpersonal relationships are also reduced to material gain. For instance, Lukash’s mother arranges her son’s marriage to Kylyna, as the latter seems to know how to take care of the farm and has a good cow. However, such vital materialism often has negative consequences for people. The pursuit of material values leads to the destruction of the natural environment. In fact, such destruction is carried out by Lukash and Kylyna’s mother. They decide to cut down an old oak and generally revolt against nature, and thus assert a civilized, profane world through destructive activities. However, materialism turns against Lukash and Kylyna, thus the marriage is gradually destroyed by quarrels and conflicts. Such “karmic justice” is connected with the fact that they violated the boundary between the profane and the sacred, reduced the spiritual to the material. The natural world in turn has reacted to this improper behaviour in the form of retribution for recklessness.

Following this, the natural world punishes the violation of the ontological balance that their ancestors had tried to achieve for centuries. This violation can be considered as an expression of the ecological worldview of Lesya Ukrainka, who warned that unreasonable human interference in the natural environment will turn itself against people. Such a warning could have been ignored at that time, as this intervention had not yet become as global as today. Nevertheless, ecological themes also fit into ontological dualism, which can be themed to the interaction between materialism and spirituality. The “spiritual” world of nature is considered to be alive, filled with good and bad spirits. Interestingly, the ethical concepts “good” and “bad” in Lesya Ukrainka’s ontology of the natural world do not work, because they came from the outer human world. Each spirit has its own role and function, which is organically inscribed in a given metaphysical system (or ecosystem, as scientists would say today). That is, all conflicts and confrontations are inscribed in the hierarchy of the natural world. In a sense, they even maintain a state of order and chaos, although for some people some actions may seem incomprehensible. Instead, human intervention is already perceived as hostile or devoid of the ontological logic of nature, so sooner or later it will be punished.

Within this context, the world of civilization is portrayed as disharmonious since there is no will. Lisovyk warns Мавка to cross human paths, because «там не ходить воля» and «жура тягар свій носить»⁴⁵. The world of civilization is characterized by the “unnatural” regulation of relations, which restricts human freedom. In this

⁴⁵ Ibidem, c. 215.

approach we can see Mykhailo Drahomanov's influence on Lesya Ukrainka. The latter defended the idea of so-called "community socialism", the essence of which was that people achieve freedom through the establishment of self-government⁴⁶. It should be added that "community socialism" was close to the idea of anarchism. The world of civilization appears as the realm of captivity and regulation, which can be interpreted as a form of anarchism.

Although the world of nature does not include souls, Lesya Ukrainka still predicts the opposite. In particular, Mavka as the representative of natural beings acquires a soul after going through suffering. The idea of the soul in *The Forest Song* is far from Christian, due to the fact that it is based on the ancient Indo-European view of the transmigration of souls.

Mavka's last monologue is close to the idea of reincarnation, which is common in Hinduism. The character says that her body turned to ashes, but a willow will grow from these ashes. And here Mavka's soul will speak to people in the following manner: «Шелестом тихим вербової гілки, / голосом ніжним тонкої сопілки».⁴⁷ It should be mentioned that the idea of the reincarnation of souls is present in Ukrainian literature, namely in Taras Shevchenko's romantic poems *Причинна*⁴⁸, *Лілея*⁴⁹, and especially in the mystery *Великий льох*⁵⁰. Obviously, this idea is presented as a fantasy, but this fantasy can be seen as a manifestation of a deep folk memory dating back to pre-Christian times.

Despite the differences between the world of nature and the world of civilization, they coexist with each other in the drama-fairy tale. Although people of the world of civilization are forced to live in accordance with the natural cycle, they often ignore its rule, which leads to a certain ontological rift and dramatic collision. The most illustrative example of the "civilization" is the life of Lukash and Kylyna's mother, who affirms the earthly world at the expense of nature. Her children prefer material wealth, shielding themselves from the elements. In contrast, Uncle Lev's life and views are an example of the opposite strategy. He tries to build a bridge between the two worlds in order to maintain a complex dialectical balance between them. However, the most expressive means of maintaining harmony and the transition between civilization and nature is music, which plays an ontological role in the work. Music, due to its universality, is able to combine these two worlds:

У контексті ритуалізованих зразків поведінки музика (разом із словоспівом, обрядовим танком, іграми та ін.) виступає формою освоєння («окультурення»)

⁴⁶ М.П. Драгоманов, *Вибране. ...мій задум зложити очерк історії цивілізації на Україні*, Київ 1991, с. 295-326.

⁴⁷ Леся Українка, *Зібрання творів: у дванадцяти томах. Том 5...*, с. 292.

⁴⁸ Т.Г. Шевченко, *Поезія 1837-1847*, [ін:] *Повне зібрання творів. У 12 томах*, т. 1, Київ 2001, с. 73-78.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, с. 373-375.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, с. 314-328.

довкілля (природи), тобто одним із способів існування культури (духовності) загалом. Це світ музики творчої, яка одухотворює, надає сенсу (реальності) й самоцінності усьому, що відбувається навкруги⁵¹.

Also, Lukash Skupeiko points out the connection between music and ritual songs, in particular spring songs. Hence, Lukash's playing on the flute awakes Mavka from hibernation (which is associated with the awakening and resurrection of spring), and allows the transition from the natural world to the profane. Notably, although such a transgressive step awakens Mavka in the form of a ghost or an image, but immediately returns her to the spiritual world, maintaining the given order between the worlds. The main thing is that Lukash's music affirms harmony and goodness, without destroying the world's complex organization.

Conclusions

To sum up, *The Forest Song* reflects Lesia Ukrainka's gnoseological and ontological dualism, which is expressed in a combination of rational and transcendental knowledge as well as the natural and human worlds. Formally, transcendental knowledge prevails in the text, which guided the writer to present this work as a drama extravaganza. In particular, Lesya Ukrainka attempted to give the drama an ideal form and structure, so she rewrote it several times according to a consciously adopted concept.

This is an example of a rational and pragmatic organization of reality, which was taken from the philosophy of positivism. However, in reality, Lesia Ukrainka's transcendental cognition was the crucial one in the creation of *The Forest Song*, which absorbed a special sense of reality on the basis of Polisia folklore. The work was written in a state of trance, when the rational powers of the mind receded into the background, and unconscious, hidden information was awakened in creative writing.

Lesya Ukrainka's ontological dualism continues the logic of gnoseological dualism, because it involves the dialectic of two ontological worlds – civilization and nature. The first presupposes the superiority of material goods and interests, a kind of rationality that has its origins in the epistemology of positivism. Instead, the second world concerns the spiritual, transcendent world, which is ruled over by its own order, one often inaccessible to man. Nevertheless, there is an interaction between these worlds, one initiated by people. It is associated with the transgressive overcoming of the agreed conditions and rules, the violation of which has tragic consequences. There is also a transition from the world of nature, but it also does not end in success because each creature should live in its ontological world. For Lesya Ukrainka, music is an ontolo-

⁵¹ Л. Скупейко, *Міфосемантика мелійного мотиву в «Лісовій пісні» Лесі Українки*, [in:] *Пісню народною натхнені (творча співпраця Лесі Українки та Климента Квітки). Матеріали. Статті. Дослідження*, Луцьк 2006, с. 116.

gical means of maintaining harmony and order between these worlds, which can be represented in songs, dances, and games. Whatever the writer's interest in rationalism and positivism, she still preferred nature and transcendentalism, which is reflected in the plot, symbolic, and semantic basis of the work.

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