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Sacral motifs in Ukrainian contemporary philosophical lyrics

Ukrainian philosophical lyrics represent a system of poetic outlook of the nation. It is reflective lyrical poetry that best reflects traditional notions of a given nation and its beliefs through the system of images-archetypes, of recurrent themes and leading motives. It should be noted that first of all we deal here with the system of sacred values, imprinted in the genetic memory of generations. The phenomenon of the sacred is always connected to something untouchable and the best way to follow its evolution is through the system of eternal values. The study of this phenomenon is very topical as this category clearly demonstrates the spiritual aspect of humanity and the system of poetic beliefs of a nation. A specific quality of analysis of the sacral themes and motifs requires scientific expertise of different disciplines, including history, theology, psychology, ethnography, linguistics, study of literature and philosophy, among others.

I. Nabytovych gives the most versatile definition of this concept: “the category of *sacrum*, or the sacral is one of the universals which includes correlation, interdependencies and relationships, the most characteristic key terms and concepts of various religions, and, speaking more broadly – the concepts of culture in general”¹. An interesting attempt to enter the interdisciplinary level in the field of the abovementioned problems is its concept of the fractal nature of *sacrum*. Thus, the researcher uses a mathematical term to describe the nature of the category of *sacrum*, as he sees in fractals many common features with it. In particular, both categories are dynamic; at the same time they are subjective and objective phenomena, both are structures; both are on the verge of art and science. Thereby, a “fractal

¹ Ігор Йосипович Набитович, *Універсум sacrum у в художній прозі (від модернізму до постмодернізму)*, Посвіт, Дрогобич – Люблін 2008, с. 13. [Igor Josipovič Nabitovič, *Universum sacrum u v hudožnij prozi (vid modernizmu do postmodernizmu)*, Posvit, Drohobich – Lüblin 2008, s. 13]; [Igor Josypovych Nabytovych, *The universe of sacrum in artistic prose (from Modernism to Postmodernism)*, Drohobych-Lublin 2008, p. 13].

dynamic model-matrix of the category of *sacrum*” is formed – “a virtual set of irrational expressions of sacred and religiously marked concepts which in the structural unity create a special discursive picture of the category of *sacrum*”².

It is worth noting that for the scholar of religion “sacral” has a broader meaning than holy, while traditionally the category of *sacrum* is defined in the context of religion, even more narrowly – the Christian realm: “Sacred is a term that describes sacraments of the church, objects of religious adoration, things which belong to worship, everything that according to the teachings of the Church, is endowed with the grace of God”³. A wider perspective on the meaning of the terms we can see in a definition proposed by U. Kovaliv: “Sacral – untouchable, sacred, innate to religious model of the outlook of the world that is present in the texts of the Rig Veda, Scripture and more. The concept also applies to art works which acquire a profound spiritual content”⁴.

That is to say, it is not only about religious concepts, but also about a certain awe, veneration, mystery, virtue sanctification, in fact, it’s about the concepts that are central in shaping the sacred axiological sphere, the sphere of eternal values and moral ideals. The very combination of these concepts clearly points to a philosophical art, which not only has religious roots, but over thousands of years of history closely interacts with a system of myths, symbols, religious truths.

U. Kovaliv rightly observes that art has always had a lot to do with the category of the sacred. This similarity is concerned not only with the validity of eternal questions, but also in the metaphorical language of sacred texts and works of art. Analyzing the specifics of the reception of Holy Scripture in Ukrainian literature, I. Betko emphasizes a special philological value of the Bible: “its artistic language is characterized by narrative forms, monologues and dialogues, lexically rich with synonymy, varied repetitions, synthetic and antithetic parallelisms, anaphora, allegory and many other artistic means of content actualization”⁵. Language of litera-

² Ibidem, p. 48.

³ *Філософський енциклопедичний словник (ФЕС)*, За ред. В.Шинкарука, Абрис, Київ 2002, с. 562. [*Filosofofskij enciklopedičnij slovník (FES)*, Za red. V.Šinkaruka, Abris, Київ 2002, s. 562]; [*The philosophical encyclopedic dictionary*, (editor-in-chief V.Šhynkaruk), Kyiv 2002, p. 562].

⁴ *Літературознавча енциклопедія. У двох томах*, Т. 2, Автор-укладач Юрій Іванович Ковалів, ВЦ „Академія”, Київ 2007, с. 364. [*Literaturoznavča enciklopediâ. U dvoch tomah*, T. 2, Avtor-ukladač Ūrij Ivanovič Kovaliv, VC „Akademiâ”, Київ 2007, s. 364]; [*The encyclopedia of literary studies, in 2 vs. V. 2*, (editor-in-chief prof. Yurij Ivanovych Kovaliv), Kyiv 2007, p. 364].

⁵ Ірина Павлівна Бетко, *Біблійні сюжети і мотиви в українській поезії XIX – початку XX століття*. (Монографічне дослідження), Wydawnictwo WSP, Wydawnictwo Verbum, Національна Академія наук України, Інститут Літератури ім. Т.Г. Шевченка, Zielona Góra-Kijów 1999, с. 74. [Ірина Павлівна Бетко, *Biblijni sūžeti i motivi v ukraïnskij poezii XIX - počatku XX stolittâ*. (Monografične doslidžennâ), Wydawnictwo WSP, Wydawnictwo Verbum, Nacional'na Akademiâ Nauk Ukraïni. Inst. Literaturi im. T. G Ševčenka, Zielona Góra – Kijów 1999, s. 74]; [Irina Pavlivna

ture, as one of the types of art, as well as language of sacred texts, uses symbols which have a deep ontological meaning. Much attention to analysis of this problem has been given by Mircea Eliade. In his treatise “Mephistopheles and Androgen” he examines in detail the specifics of the functioning of the sacred symbols and stresses their metaphysical essence: “Religious symbolism that concerns a question of structures of the world has the capacity to reveal the deepest aspects of reality not evident on the level of immediate experience. Such expressions reveal magical, inexplicable aspect of reality and at the same time give an idea of the sacred dimension of human existence”⁶. Therefore, to reveal the meaning of the symbol means articulation into a whole, or even integration into a “system”⁷. A similar opinion was expressed by the Canadian critic Northrop Frye; in particular he saw the Bible as meta-language, as the great code of art⁸.

However, it should be noted that, in addition to the global scale, the category of *sacrum* demonstrates its features of implementation on the ethnic level. When studying the problem in this perspective, it is useful to consider specifics of the historical context and mental traits of each nation. Analyzing the ‘*sacrum*’ category in diachronic perspective, T. Bovsunivska notes that the path of its development in Western philosophy had a rationalistic direction, while Ukrainian aesthetic idea has always been fundamentally cardio centric. Hence, in her opinion, the explanation of national features of the *sacrum* category is the following: “Aesthetics becomes a part of the Gnostic knowledge of Logos and literature – not just verbal detection of the human spirit, but the Word of God”⁹.

Betko, *Biblical plots and motives in Ukrainian poetry XIX-XX century*, Zielona Gora-Kijow 1999, p. 74].

⁶ Мирча Элиаде, *Мепистофель и Андрогин*, Перевод с французского Е.В. Баевской, О.В. Давтян, Санкт Петербург 1998, с. 354. [Mirča Eliade, *Mefistofel' i Androgen*, Perevod s francuskogo E.V. Baevskoj, O.V. Davtân, Sankt Peterburg 1998, s. 354]; [Mircea Eliade, *Mephistopheles and Androgen*, Saint Petersburg 1998, p. 354].

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 363.

⁸ Нортроп Фрай, *Великий код. Біблія і література*, З англійської переклала Ірина Старовойт, Літопис, Львів 2010, с. 21. [Northrop Frye, *Velikij kod Bibliâ i literatura*, Z anglijskoï pereklala Iřina Starovijt, Litopis, L'viv 2010, s. 21]; [Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: Bible and literature*, Lviv 2010, p. 21].

⁹ Татьяна Владимировна Бовсуновская, *Становление украинской эстетики в аспекте ценности сакрального [в:] Слов'янські культури в європейській цивілізації. До 60-річчя доктора історичних наук, проф. Алексеєва Ю.М.*, Від. ред. В.І.Наулко, Український слов'янський центр НАНУ та МОНУ, Київський інститут «Слов'янський університет», Київ 2001, с. 45. [Tat'âna Vladimirovna Bovsunovskaâ, *Stanovlennje ukrainskoj èstetiki v aspekte cennosti sakral'nogo [v:] Slov'âns'ki kulturi v єvropejs'kij civilizacii. Do 60-riččâ doktora istoričnih nauk, prof. Aleksèèvaa Ū.M.*, Vid. red. V. Ī. Naulko, Ukraïns'kij slov'âns'kij centr NANU ta MONU, Kiïvs'kij inštitut «slov'âns'kij universitet», Kiïv 2001, s. 45]; [Tatiana Vladimirovna Bovsunivska T., *The establishment of Ukrainian aesthetics in sacral values aspect*, Slavonic cultures in European civilization, V.I. Naulko (editor-in-chief), Kyiv 2001, p. 45].

A research on Ukrainian philosophical lyrics clearly reveals a theological principle underlying this kind of poetry since its most important elements were demonstrated during the period of growth and prosperity of Christianity. Besides, biblical motifs and images dominate in the works of the founders of Ukrainian philosophical and poetic tradition (G. Skovoroda, T. Shevchenko, I. Franko, Lesya Ukrainka, etc.). In Ukrainian literary criticism many works of V. Antofiychuk, I. Betko, T. Bovsunivska, Z. Lanovyk, I. Nabytovych, A. Nyamtsu, V. Sulyma and others are devoted to the research of the sacred image of God. I. Betko distinguishes three concentric circles of *sacrum* in Ukrainian literature: the problem of national self-determination of the Ukrainian nation, the question of moral and personal character and a system of spiritual and philosophical cognition of God¹⁰. The studies to be mentioned here are devoted to the relevance of the concept of sacred history in the Bible (Zoriana Lanovyk) and to mythological and sacred analysis of the philosophy of the ancient texts (Vira Sulyma). V. Antofiychuk analyzes in detail the features of the functioning of biblical images and motifs in Ukrainian literature. According to him, Christianity is a powerful source that native verbal creativity draws material from, it is a treasure trove of ideas, images and motifs, as well as the standard of moral and psychological virtues¹¹.

Modern philosophical lyrics continue a millennial tradition of appeal to biblical texts. It should be noted that in recent years in reflective poetry there has been increasing attention paid to axiological questions, which is typical for unstable moods of the transitional period. Z. Lanovyk rightly observes in this context: "In times of spiritual crisis of the society there was particular interest in the study of Scripture as constants of humanitarian experience"¹².

Analyzing the biblical reception in Ukrainian poetry, I. Betko distinguishes two tendencies of depiction of sacred images. The researcher observes: "To the reception of biblical scenes and motifs Ukrainian poets resorted mainly in the genres of lyric-epic, philosophical poem and meditative lyrics. Figurative style that fits these genres follows two opposing trends: stylization, aimed to simulate various features of the original, as well as the author's individual way of writing, which is

¹⁰ Ірина Павлівна Бетко, *Бібліїні...*, op. cit., ibidem, с. 21. [Ірина Pavlivna Betko, *Biblijni ...*, op. cit., ibidem, s. 21]; [Ірина Pavlivna Betko, *Biblical...*, op. cit., ibidem, p. 21].

¹¹ Володимир Іванович Антофійчук, *Євангельські образи в українській літературі ХХ століття. Монографія*, Рута, Чернівці, 2001, с. 8. [Vlodimir Ivanovich Antofijčuk, *Ėvangel'ski obrazi v ukraїn'skij literaturij XX stolittā*, Ruta, Černivci, 2001, s. 8]; [Vlodimir Ivanovich Antofiychuk, *Evangelical images in Ukrainian literature of XX century*, Ruta, Chernivtsi 2001, p. 8].

¹² Зоряна Богданівна Лановик, *Hermeneutica sacra*, Редакційно-видавничий відділ ТНПУ, Тернопіль 2006, с. 542. [Zorāna Bogdanivna Lanovyk, *Hermeneutica sacra*, Redakcijno-vidavničij viddil TNPU, Ternopil' 2006, s. 542]; [Zoryana Bogdanivna Lanovyk, *Hermeneutica sacra*, The editorial center of Ternopilian National Pedagogical University, Ternopil, 2006, p. 542].

related to the emergence of new artistic qualities not only in terms of form, but content”¹³.

Modern reflective lyrics are mostly represented by the second trend. For young poets sacred images from the pages of the Bible are not only symbols of the long history, but also the standard of spirituality, faith and purity; through its worlds they are trying to comprehend their own. Thus, for Marianna Kiyanowska Scripture is often her own, quite profound existential experiences, in many poems we can observe the motif of the presence of the speaker, that is the lyrical “I” at the site of biblical events, as she aims to go through them. It is this “Bringing through itself” that gives her a real sacred catharsis, a sense of sacred connection with ancient events:

“Месія шукав посланців. Місце зустрічі втрачене. / А скло, як і перше, – то пестить, то різє пальці. / Ми стрілися вгрьох. І Месія сказав: “Побачимо. / Котрий із нас ким – хто месією, хто зухвальцем”. // І навіть диявол стояв, як душа, притишено. / Його лабіринт починався лише надвечір. / Він був присягнув, та Месія сказав: “Залиш мене, / А я тобі лишу уламки твоєї втечі”. // А я – як сурмач. Я не вміла сказати: “Вірую”, / Я навіть не знала, що мука – не мати болю. / Месія мене доторкнувся своєю вірою, / Месія сказав: “Заридай – і ходи зі мною”¹⁴.

In my loose translation:

[“The Messiah was looking for messengers. Venue is lost. / A glass first cherishes then cuts fingers. / Three of us met. And the Messiah said: “We’ll see. / Which of us who – who is the Messiah and who is impertinent. // And even the Devil stood as the soul quietly. / His maze was beginning only in the evening. / He swore, and the Messiah said: “Leave me, / And I’ll leave you the wreckage of your escape.” // And I – as a trumpet player, I couldn’t say, “I believe”, / I didn’t even know that it is torture – not to have pain. / Messiah touched me with his faith, / The Messiah said, “Cry and walk with me”].

The sacral world of this poetry reveals not only a set of biblical allusions to the motif of Judas’s betrayal of Jesus Christ in Gethsemane, but also personal experience of the lyrical character that most clearly is read in the last verse. For her, preoccupation with famous Gospel events is the way to deep symbolic revelation (Messiah touched me with his faith) when the story actually becomes her own. The first stanza of the poem is a clear reference to the events that occurred on the eve of the prayer bowl. The motif of betrayal is often present in the works of the poet, for example in the verse “Після того, як втрачено все і нема що втрачати...” (“Once

¹³ Ірина Павлівна Бетко, *Біблійні...*, op. cit., ibidem, с. 74. [Irina Pavlivna Betko, *Biblijni ...*, op. cit., ibidem, s. 74]. [Irina Pavlivna Betko, *Biblical...*, op. cit., ibidem, p. 74].

¹⁴ Маріанна Ярославівна Кіановська, *Міфотворення*, «Смолоскип», Київ 2000, с. 36. [Marianna Yaroslavivna Kiyanovska, *Myth Creation*, Kyiv 2000, p. 36]. The translation of all the texts from Ukrainian into English in this paper (here and below) is my own (the author - Marina Vitalievna Babenko-Zhymova).

everything is lost and there is nothing left to lose...”) we can see allusion to the image of St. Peter, who denied Christ three times:

“...Мій Господи, вірую тричі. / Той, хто тричі зрікався, боявся. А я не боюсь. / Я вже бачила Вічну Сльозу на Твоєму обличчі. / Ту, що більша, ніж світ. Ту, що тяжча, ніж небо, чомусь”¹⁵.

In my loose translation:

[“...My Lord, I believe three times. / He who thrice denied was scared. And I'm not scared. / I've seen Eternal Tear on Your face. / The one that is greater than the world. The one that is heavier than the sky, for some reason”].

The poetic manner of M. Kiyanowska is generally exposed to the atmosphere of sacralization, her lyrical world is a world of symbols, shrouded in a mist of mystery, filled with sacred signs. Not by chance, the collection of her poetic book “Міфотворення” (“Myth Creation”) has an interesting structure: it consists of seven thematic cycles: “The first word. Garden”; “The second word. Angel”; “The third word. Water”; “The forth word. City”; “The fifth word. Body”; “The sixth word. Word”; “The seventh word. Mimesis”. In the subtext we can see an analogy to the biblical story of creation of the world, which lasted seven days, but the very title of the collection suggests its own sacred story, which is written by the author. In these poems biblical images and motifs occur very often.

Characteristic features of the individual style of the author are a combination of the Old and New Testament themes, motifs that in poetry can be combined in an indissoluble unity. Thus, there is certain image diversity, blurring of the traditional linear historicity of biblical events:

“Пустеля з голодними головами піску. / З голодними головами, які котяться за Мойсеєм / так довго, / що аж народжуються діти, / і діти дітей, / і риби черствіють, / покладені між сухими хлібами. ... / Бо та Божа пустеля / не відпускає / опускається... / Пустеля з голодними головами / голодних і голих / обітована”¹⁶.

In my loose translation:

[“Desert with hungry heads of sand. / Hungry heads that roll after Moses / so long / that even children are being born, / and children of the children, / and fish gets stale, / that are put between dry bread. ...

¹⁵ Маріанна Ярославівна Кіановська, *Дещо щоденне*, Факт, Київ 2008, с. 18. [Marianna Yaroslavivna Kiyanovska, *Dešo šodenne*, Fakt, Київ 2008, s. 18]; [Marianna Yaroslavivna Kiyanovska, *Something daily*, Kyiv 2008, p. 18].

¹⁶ Маріанна Ярославівна Кіановська, *Звичайна мова*, Факт, Київ 2005, с. 18. [Marianna Yaroslavivna Kiyanovska, *Zvychajna mova*, Fakt, Київ 2005, s. 18]; [Marianna Yaroslavivna Kiyanovska M., *Simple Speech*, Kyiv 2005, p. 18].

/The desert of God / doesn't let go / sinks ... / The desert with hungry heads / hungry and naked / Promised Land'].

The combination of the Old Testament allusions (the Pentateuch of Moses, Exodus) with the New Testament (one of the parables of Jesus Christ of the five loaves and two fish which fed thousands of people that came to hear the sermon) focuses on the continuity of all sacred events. In addition, such connection hides a plurality of symbols, including the symbol of the food received from God when Moses and his people wandered in the desert, God sent them manna, which was a miracle. In the same way it was a miracle when Jesus fed large numbers of people with several bread loaves and fish. Apparently, this makes associations unexpected and the combinations of events different, when they are perceived against sacred history.

In general, such a unity of the Old Testament and New Testament images is an interesting way of expressing a vision of biblical events in the poetry of M. Kiyanowska. In the poem “Спокуснику, сад Гетсиманський – румовища матриця...” (“The tempter, the Garden of Gethsemane – ruins matrix...”) the image of the Garden of Gethsemane is combined with the history of the fall from grace of the first woman Eve. Her seducer lives here too¹⁷. As in the previous example, this compatibility occurs at the level of leitmotif – betrayal and temptation.

Another important example of the unity of the two Testaments appears in the poem “Не страхом єдиним живе чоловік – навмання...” (“Not only with fear a man lives – at a venture...”) ¹⁸. The author gives her own interpretation by stylizing the well-known biblical expression “not by bread alone will man live” – Jesus Christ’s answer to the temptations of the devil in the desert. This phrase is in the fifth book of Moses “Deuteronomy”¹⁹. Again we see the synthesis of the Old and New Testament truths as the leitmotif of biblical intertextuality. Moreover, the synthesis here is completed by a third component: the author's individual vision of a human being: not only with fear does a man live. Numerous examples of merged events of the Old and New Testaments in the work of M. Kiyanowska are not accidental: the speaker emphasizes the continuity of sacred history, philosophy of biblical truths. The most frequent images found in the poetry of M. Kiyanowska are those of Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary, St. Peter, Cain, Moses, Gethsemane, Adam and Eve, serpent-tempter, Mary Magdalene. The author pays particular attention to Old

¹⁷ Eadem, *Міфотфорення*, op. cit., с. 61. [Eadem, *Mifotforennâ*, op. cit., s. 61]; [Eadem, *Myth Creation*, op. cit., p. 61].

¹⁸ Eadem, *Дещо...*, op. cit., с. 6. [Eadem, *Dešo...*, op. cit., s. 6]; [Eadem, *Something...*, op. cit., p. 6].

¹⁹ Алла Петрівна Коваль, *Спочатку було Слово: Крилаті вислови біблійного походження в українській мові*, Либідь, Київ 2001, с. 167. [Alla Petrivna Koval', *Spočatku bulo Slovo. Krilatî vislovi biblijnogo pohodžennâ v ukraïns'kij movi*, Libid', Kiïv 2001, s. 167]; [Alla Petrivna Koval', *In the beginning was the Word. Idioms from biblical origin in Ukrainian language*, Kyiv 2001, p. 167].

Testament events. In particular, the leitmotif of her work is the rebellion of the first humans, Adam and Eve, fall from grace (in the book called “Книга Адама” – “Adam’s Book”); the entry of Moses and his people into the Promised Land. Central in the poetic world of the artist is the image of prayer. In addition to the appeal to biblical truths on the level of images, motifs, style, the sacral axiological sphere of works of M. Kiyanowska is defined by a personal meditative approach to God through prayer, by a search for his essence in intuitive providence:

“І нічого не треба, крім совісті. Кожної миті. / Це як тиша морська: схаменешся і чуєш, що є. / Я люблю Тебе, Господи, так, як не можна у світі. / Дай мені благодать чути радісне Слово Твоє”²⁰.

In my loose translation:

[“I don’t need anything other than conscience. Every moment. / It’s like a silent sea: when you stop, you hear what is. / I love You, Lord, the way it is impossible in the world. / Give me the grace to hear the word Your joyous Word”].

The motif of deep faith is accentuated by a metaphor: “Я Тебе Всеприйму, Всегосподи мій” (“I will embrace all of You, my Lord”). It should be noted that the philosophical lyric of the poet focuses on language, on a word as a powerful source of energy. In the poem “Вода Йорданська тяжча, аніж води...” (“The water of Jordan is heavier than water...”) the sad modern realities are observed – namely a depreciation of the axiological function of the word:

“То як мені сказати, що настали / Такі часи, мов кола по воді?... / Що Слово Богом бути перестало?... / А як не Бог – нащо воно тоді?”²¹.

In my loose translation:

[“So how can I say that have come / times such as circles on the water? ... / That the Word stopped to be God... / And not a God – why is it then?”].

On the whole, the image of God in her works is closely connected with the motif of duration. God is everywhere; he is omnipresent and all seeing. God is a movement, dynamics, energy: “Є я і ти, і є тривання Бога” (“you and I are, and there is duration of God”)²². He fills the world with special meaning, sacred signs and symbols, gives lyrical character and the happiness of intuitive insights.

²⁰ Маріанна Ярославівна Кіановська, *Дещо...*, op. cit., с. 20. [Marianna Âroslavivna Kîanovs'ka, *Dešo...*, op. cit., s. 20]; [Marianna Yaroslavivna Kiyanovska, *Something...*, op. cit., p. 20].

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

²² *Eadem*, *Міфотфоре́ння*, op. cit., с. 29. [*Eadem*, *Mifotforennâ*, op. cit., s. 29]. [*Eadem*, *Myth Creation*, op. cit., p. 29].

The frequency of use of certain biblical images forms the leading semantic focuses of M. Kiyanowska's philosophical lyrics. Thus, for the speaker the particularly important events are the ones from the Old Testament Book of Exodus, mentioned repeatedly. In particular, the people of Israel crossing the river Jordan, the path to the Promised Land occupies a special place among her poetic themes

“...Він не зізнався, що тільки пустеля – ціна, / Бо кожна ціна, як пустеля, – безводна і люта. / І манна небесна – не благо, а протиотрута / Народу, що виніс з блукання самі імена. / Самі імена – і нічого в собі, крім імен. / І Бог в іменах – безконечний, як шлях ante annum... / Мойсей був Мойсей, і дивився у небо, ажген, / Бо той, що Навин, був Ісусом. Був перед Йорданом”²³.

In my loose translation:

[“...He didn't admit that only the desert is the price / As every price like a desert – anhydrous and fierce. / And the manna from heaven – not a weal, but an antidote / To people that took out from wandering only names. / Only names – and nothing in itself other than the names. / And God is in the names – infinite as the path ante annum ... / Moses was Moses, and looked up into the sky, far away / Because He who is Navyn was also Jesus. Was in Jordan”].

In addition to historiosophical accents (the path to the Promised Land, a message of manna from heaven, Moses gives guidance of the people to Jesus, crossing over the River Jordan), in the poem we see the leading philosophical accents. Wandering in the desert as a motif of search and ordeal is quite eloquent here.

Similar semantic accents are present in the poetry of Mariana Savka “Кожен шукає щастя...” (“Everyone is looking for happiness...”) where we can trace the combination of sacred history with lyrical philosophizing, with the search of truth:

“Кожен шукає щастя, / тільки ж не всі уміють / чути його присутність, / подих його легкий. / Над bastіоном серця / світить сонце надії, / сонце простої суті – / просто тепло руки. // Вітер такий пекучий, / простір такий незаний. / Скільки іти в пустелі, / скільки суворих днів? / На горизонті кручі, / мов кам'яні боввани, / а обабіч не скелі – / тільки стовпи соляні”²⁴.

In my loose translation:

²³ Eadem, *Децо...*, op. cit., c. 7. [Eadem, *Dešo...*, op. cit., s. 20]; [Eadem, *Something...*, op. cit., p. 20].

²³ Ibidem, p. 5. Eadem, *Децо...*, op. cit., c. 7. [Eadem, *Dešo...*, op. cit., s. 7]; [Eadem, *Something...*, op. cit., p. 7].

²⁴ Мар'яна Орестівна Савка, *Пора плодів і квіттів. Книга зібраних віршів*, Видавництво Старого Лева, Львів 2013, с. 139. [Mar'ana Orestivna Savka, *Pora plodiv i kvitiv. Kniga zibranih viršiv*, Vidavnictvo Starogo Leva, L'viv 2013, s. 139]; [Maryana Orestivna Savka M., *Time for fruits and flowers*, Lviv 2013, p. 139].

[“Everyone is looking for happiness, / just not everyone knows how / to hear its presence / is light breath. / Over a bastion of heart / sun of hope shines / sun of simple essence – / just warm of your hand. // The wind is so hot, / the space is so unknown. / How long to go in the desert / how many harsh days? / On the horizon are cliffs, / like stone idols, / but on both sides are not cliffs – / only pillar of salt”].

This poetry is a striking example of modern religious and philosophical lyrics, where the events of Scripture are projected with the poet’s own lyrical reflections. If the first part of the verse is concerned with the essence of happiness and makes ample use of aphorisms, the second is biblical and philosophical reflection about the meaning of wandering in the desert, intensified by allusions from two books of Moses: Genesis (the pillar of salt) and Exodus.

In the poetry of M. Savka sacred images are fairly common. Her creative manner is characterized by specific visualization; therefore, sacred images appear in the form of watercolor poetry with bright coloring game, becoming a kind of poetic painting. Evangelical events provide the background of joy and mystery:

“Виходить вечір в крисані теплій, / І сніг іскриться на сивих бровах. / А понад світом – зізда вертепна. / І Бог – предвічний, І радість – нова”²⁵.

In my loose translation:

[“Evening comes out in a warm felt hat, / And snow sparkles on gray eyebrows. / Over the world – The Christmas Star. / And God – Eternal, and new joy”].

The speaker refers to the eternal renewal of sacred feeling in the events of the Nativity, which became not only a good tradition but also a symbol of faith, hope and goodness. The same can be said of the lyrical interpretation of the Resurrection

“Тінь його віща знає моє ім’я. / Символи. Знаки. Дивні танки ритуальні. / Сотні облич змила швидко течія. / З мороку ночі ллються свічки пасхальні. / Знайте, сьогодні месія зійде між нас. / Символи. Знаки. Дивна хода безшелесна. / Юрби у профіль. Лики чіткі анфас. / Шепіт і шелест, і шерех: не вже воскресне...”²⁶.

In my loose translation:

[“His ominous shadow knows my name. / Symbols. Signs. Strange Ritual dances. / Hundreds of faces washed swift current. / From the darkness of the night pouring Easter candles. / Know Today Messiah shall come between us. / Symbols. Signs. A strange quiet pace. / Crowds in profile. Clear full faces. / Whisper and rustle: will He resurrect...”].

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 56.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 106.

For the poet the Resurrection of Christ is a symbol, a sign of justice, good news.

Biblical intertext of the poetry of M. Savka is mostly present in the description of the happy events, but sometimes we can observe sad motifs in the theme of sacred history. The poem “Вечір – як кровотеча” (“Evening – like bleeding...”) has an atmosphere of terror escalation which metaphorically describes the preparations for the assassination of John the Baptist:

“Вечір – як кровотеча. / Вечір – підбитий птах. / Хто там, далеко в снігах? / То Іоан Предтеча...
Боже, зійшли йому втечу. / Стань із ним на межі. / Чути – точать ножі / На Іоана Предтечу”²⁷.

In my loose translation:

[“Evening – like bleeding / Evening – a padded bird. / Who's there, away in the snow? / That John the Baptist ... God help him to escape. / Be with him on edge. / You can hear – knives are being sharpened / To kill John the Baptist”].

The speaker painfully experiences the tragic fate of John the Baptist, feeling the essence of the sacred events.

The interpretation of the life of the first people on earth is presented in the poem “Муж на імення перше...” (“A man of the first name...”) where biblical intertext is in the history of creation of Eve from Adam's rib

“Муж на імення перше / ходить нагий і сильний, / ноги у землю вперши, / голову – в небо синє...
Коле, як дрібка в оці, / його неясна потреба, / і затерпає в боці, / і підтискає ребра”²⁸.

In my loose translation:

[“A man of the first name / walking naked and strong, / feeling his feet on the ground / looking in a blue sky...
stings like a pinch in the eye / his obscure need / and his side grows numb / and presses ribs”].

In particular, most young artists use personal, often quite subjective interpretation of the Bible characters and events. This, in fact, is the feature of the modern versions of traditional stories.

Biblical intertext can be also traced in the works of V. Herasymyuk²⁹. According to the researcher M. Tkachuk, axiological questions are crucial in philosophical lyrics of the poet: “The basic tone of the poems – lyrical confession, deep thoughts of lyrical character about life. Meditation is a favorite lyric genre of He-

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 109.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 159.

²⁹ Микола Платонович Ткачук, *Українська література XX століття. Монографія*, Медобори Тернопіль 2014, с. 468. [Mikola Platonovič Tkačuk, *Ukrain'ska literatura XX stolittâ. Monografiâ*, Medobori, Ternopil' 2014, s. 468]; [Mykola Platonovich Tkachuk, *Ukrainian literature of XX century*, Ternopil 2014, p. 468].

rasymyuk”. The sacred axiological sphere of his poetry is full of personal intuitive comprehension of eternal truths. The speaker projects biblical virtues on his own understanding of the highest values. As it is rightly observed by M. Tkachuk. In my loose translation:

“his thoughts on life and death, eternity of being are associated with ethical and philosophical issues: the man and homeland, past and present generations of parents and children, the essence of life, spirituality and materialism, beauty and ugliness”³⁰.

The author's reception of biblical imagery is deeply philosophical. The speaker is thinking of aphoristic sacral stories – each is a moral lesson for humanity. For example, the metaphorical message of the image of the prodigal son comes out clear in these lines:

“Він має повернутися. В хатину, / де на порозі – сивий чоловік. / Той сивий старець прошепоче: “Сину...” / Старий і сивий, як двадцятий вік... Яка різниця – пізній ти чи ранній, / дитя любові чи дитя гріха?... / Вернусь навіть блудний. / Йде останній. / Під віями старого колиха”³¹.

In my loose translation:

[“He has to come back. To the hut, / where the gray-haired man is waiting. / That gray-haired old man will whisper “Son...” / Old and gray, as the twentieth century... What's the difference – you are late or early, / a child of love or a child of sin?... / Even prodigal you returned. / The last one is going / In eyes of old man”].

Often in the poetry of V. Herasymyuk in the center is an image of Apostle Paul, also there are allusions from the book of “Psalms”, the author's personal thoughts surround the mystery of “Jezebel” and the symbolic image of the evil queen from Old Testament (2nd Book of Kings). The peculiar quality of the sacredness of Christ's ascension is revealed in the poem “Апостоли” (“The Apostles”):

“Спинився. І мить, може, мить постояв на межі. / Вони не здригнулись, коли зупинився, ні після. / Вони просто поруч ішли, галілейські мужі. / Вони просто близько стояли, коли він вознісся. // А як їхні руки? В ту мить... Обійшлося без рук. / Вони й перед тим не питали, пощо йому свідки. / Він з ними ішов. Йшов востаннє. Ішов після мук. / Йшов тільки що. І не довів їх до тигра із клітки”³².

In my loose translation:

³⁰ Ibidem.

³¹ Василь Дмитрович Герасим'юк, *Була така земля* : [вибране], Факт, Київ 2003, с. 70. [Vasil' Dmytrovič Gerasim'juk, *Bula taka zemlâ* : [vibrane], Fakt, Kyiv 2003, s. 70]; [Vasyl Dmytrovich Herasymyuk, *There was such land. Poetry*, Fakt, Kyiv 2003, p. 70].

³² Ibidem, p. 242.

[“He stopped. And a moment, maybe a moment, he was standing on the edge. / They did not flinch when he stopped or after. / They just were walking near, men of Galilee. / They just were standing close when he ascended. // And their hands? At the moment ... there were no hands. / They did not ask before, why he needs witnesses. / He was walking with them. Was walking for the last time. Was walking after suffering. / Was walking just now. And didn't bring them to a tiger from a cage”].

The motif of equanimity of the apostles shows their closeness to Jesus Christ. Stories about communication and joint actions of Christ and his disciples are one of the central objects of creative attention of the poet. Also the motif of Christ's resurrection as a miracle is often present in Herasymyuk's philosophical lyrics:

“На березі Він вогонь розклав. / Петро в човні не знаходив місця / і кинувся в море, добрався вплав / апостол, що тричі Його зрікся. // На землю ступив, хитку від сльози. / Стрічає, цілує Син Чоловічий. / І мовить: “Ягнята мої паси”. / Говорить тричі. // Та перша Воскреслого бачила ти. / Не зразу впізнала, від сліз незряча. / Встав з гробу і з неба має зійти, / і знов питає: “Чого ти плачеш, / Маріє?”³³.

In my loose translation:

[“On the shore he had set the fire. / Peter in the boat couldn't find a place / and threw himself into the sea, and swam / apostle who denied Him three times. // He set foot on the ground that was shaky from tears. / Meets, kisses the Son of Man. / And says: “Shepherd my lambs.” / Says three times. // But you first saw the Resurrected. / Not immediately recognized him, blind from tears. / Got up from the grave and from heaven should come down, / and asks again, “Why are you crying, / Mary?”].

In another poem the author draws a picture of the crucifixion of Christ through the eyes of a thief who was crucified beside him. A short story of the last appeal of the thief to Christ, asking forgiveness for his sins becomes strong in the dramatic interpretation of V. Herasymyuk:

“Тільки тут і тепер – вперше над твердю – / ти вже не скажеш тим рибалкам: “Ходім”. / Ділимось, мовби черствим крайцем, смертю. / Ти пригадай мене в царстві своїм. // Хто я? Дитя гріха, злого розбою? / Кров невинна кричить. Попіл і дим. / А помираю тут. Поруч з тобою. / Ти пригадай мене в царстві своїм. // Ми на хрестах. Ми не діждали дива. / Між розбійників – Бог – між мною і тим / зліва. Чаша Твоя, Спасителю, зліва. / Ти пригадай мене в царстві своїм”³⁴.

In my loose translation:

[“Only here and now – for the first time above the ground – / you will not say to those fishermen: “Let's go”. / We share, as if a piece of stale loaf, the death. / Remember me in your kingdom. // Who am I? Child of sin and evil robbery? / The blood of the innocent cries. Ashes and smoke. / And I die here. Next to you. / Remember me in your kingdom. // We are on the crosses. We didn't see the miracle. /

³³ Ibidem, p. 248.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 316.

Among thieves – God – between me and the one / on the left. Your chalice, Savior, on the left. / Remember me in your kingdom”].

It should be noted that the author prefers the creative interpretation of New Testament events. Often the epigraph to the poem is a quote from the Bible, sometimes the biblical intertext can be traced through the stylization in names, such as “The first epistle from Dmitry to Galician”³⁵, or “Humbleness Sonnet”; “Forgiveness Sonnet”.

Another example of the singular qualities of the sacred axiological sphere is found in the poetry of B. Matiyash. For the lyrical speaker God is a personal wise teacher, so close to her that He talks about everyday things like drinking a cup of coffee. However, such “closeness” of sacred image is not a game, shock or profanity, but rather the belief that God hears everyone, he can talk to anyone. The speaker from the poetic volume “Розмови з Богом” (“Conversations with God”) lives in a world of sacred values, which is full of meditative, sacred essence. The main hope, which she refers to God in her conversations and prayers, is to be given the wisdom to understand the most important, the most significant thing in life:

“знаєш Боже ці останні дні в мене ніяк не минає це неприємне / відчуття неправильності
неправильності світопорядку й плину речей... / розкажи мені Господи чому насправді найтяжче
любити тих хто поруч / чому мені не вдається приходити до них так ось просто як скажімо / до
тебе чому Боже переважно я або роблю для них замало добрих речей / або роблю їх невчасно
або запізно або взагалі нічого не встигаю”³⁶.

In my loose translation:

[“You know God, in these last days I have this uncomfortable / feeling of wrong world order and flow of things... / Tell me Lord, why it is the hardest to love those who are close / why I cannot come to them, the way I come / to You, why God, usually I do to little for them / or do them too late, or nothing at all”].

Her poems are full of lyrical reflections in which the author talks about herself:

“так багато думками тобі казала такі потекли б водоспади якби обернути мої всі слова до тебе
на потоки води”³⁷.

³⁵ Василь Дмитрович Герасим'юк, *Панопоть [поезії]*, ВЦ «Просвіта», Київ 2006, с. 199. [Vasil' Dmytrovich Gerasim'uk, *Paporot' [poezii]*, VC «Prosvita», Київ 2006, s. 199]; [Vasyl Dmytrovich Herasymyuk V, *The fern. Poetry*, Kyiv 2006, p. 199].

³⁶ Богдана Валентинівна Магіяш, *Розмови з Богом*, Видавництво Старого Лева, Львів 2007, с. 18. [Bogdana Valentynivna Matiiash], *Rozmovi z Bogom*, Vidavnicтво Starogo Leva, L'viv 2007, s. 18]; [Bogdana Valentynivna Matiyash, *Conversations with God*, Lviv 2007, p. 18].

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

In my loose translation:

[“so many I told you in my thoughts waterfalls would flow if make all my words into water flows”].

Her works represent the current trend of lyrical and philosophical confession, which I. Betko characterizes in the following way (in my loose translation):

“In the genre of lyric confession philosophical and meditative principle acquires a new psychological quality, the object of meditation from the outside world in a variety of its forms is essentially transferred to the intimate inner life of the lyric subject”³⁸.

The extent of biblical images and motifs in modern Ukrainian philosophical lyrics is incredibly wide; it varies from the traditional sanctification of the Christian virtues to individual authors’ interpretations, sometimes even provocative, erotic or rebellious philosophy of resistance (e.g. poetry of I. Shuvalova). However, a variety of personal intuitive existential experiences and approaches to the eternal truths demonstrates innovative search of the young artists. The sacred axiological sphere of their poetry is versatile; it has considerable relevance in the contemporary situation of spiritual instability.

Abstract / Summary:

Context and style modifications of contemporary philosophical lyrics are centered on axiological issues. Young artists’ poetry is represented by a harmonious combination of topical themes with aesthetic form. The phenomenon of "spiritual hunger" of the transitional period leads to a search for guidance; therefore, appeal to the sacred truths is permanent in modern reflective lyrics. As Christianity has been the standard of moral virtues for the Ukrainians for a long time, the work of young artists is full of allusions to the Scriptures. Aside from the historical function, biblical images and motifs are the methods of presentation of the poets’ personal, intuitive and existential experiences. Therefore, their works are full of innovative explorations and experiments in description of sustainable images. In particular, the style of M. Kiyanowska’s poems is characterized by a combination of truths from the Old and New Testaments, sometimes at the level of quite unexpected associations. For the lyrical heroine of M. Savka’s poetry the biblical truths provide examples for a life of wisdom which is sanctified by kindness and love to one’s neighbor, and for B. Matiyash the whole world has sacred meaning.

The purpose of the paper is to identify the features of the functioning of sacred images in modern Ukrainian poetry, and in particular in philosophical lyrics.

³⁸ Ірина Павлівна Бетко, *Біблійні...*, op. cit., ibidem, с. 128. [Ірина Pavlivna, Betko, *Biblijni ...*, op. cit., ibidem, s. 128]; [Ірина Pavlivna Betko, *Biblical...*, op. cit., ibidem, p. 128].

This article uses general scientific (analysis, synthesis, induction) and literary methods (drawn from philological, comparative, typological, hermeneutic and psychological studies). Innovative qualities of the writings of the poets of the late 20th and early 21st century are analyzed involving basic approaches of receptive aesthetics and intertextual analysis of the text.

The novelty of the research lies in the fact that for the first time in Ukrainian literary studies the work of the young poets provides the basis for a modern interpretation of biblical images and motifs.

The results of this research are important for further study of the specific qualities of biblical reception in modern Ukrainian poetry. Practical importance of the results achieved is the ability to use them in teaching the courses on literary theory, modern Ukrainian literature, Ukrainian philosophical lyric, and courses entitled “Literature as a synthesis of religion, philosophy and art” and “The practice of poetry”.

Key words:

philosophical lyrics, sacral motifs, axiological sphere, leitmotif, biblical images

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