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## **THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SYMBOL OF EARTH IN POETRY BY LESYA UKRAINKA AND SARA TEASDALE**

**Malitska A. D.**

*Graduate Student at the Faculty of Philology  
Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University  
Odesa, Ukraine*

Developing the new approaches to the analysis of literature is topical in modern literary studies. The modernistic poetry, for instance, is now analysed in terms of interpretation of the general cultural symbols that function in it. The natural element of earth as a symbol is one of the oldest and most widespread in the world literature. In the Neo-Romanticism, its abilities to be interpreted expand. Earth is one of the crucial symbols in the poetry of Ukrainian poet Lesya Ukrainka and American poet Sara Teasdale. In our

article we will study the functions of the earth element as a symbol in their poetry and analyse them through the comparative approach.

The natural element of earth is a general cultural symbol. These symbols are common for the cultural conscience of the whole nation, several nations or even the majority of mankind and give evidence of its constant development. The literary scholar L. N. Korobko says that «in the artworks the new images are constantly created. The consistency and infinity of this process are provided by the universal system of ideas and representations of the world» [1, p. 88]. General cultural symbols, in our opinion, are not created in the artistic work; they «come» into it from folklore, mythology and pre-historical beliefs. Their interpretation is unitized to a certain extent, and they are less prone to sociocultural changes that occur in the world constantly. That is why the interpretations of these symbols afford a basis to the connections between the genetically unrelated cultures, like Ukrainian and American.

Viewing earth as a general cultural symbol is an integral part of Ukrainian cultural conscience. Upon analysing this symbol in Ukrainian literature, we conclude that the earth is a sacred and crucial symbol in the system of folklore imagery. This tendency proceeds in the early poetic works by Lesya Ukrainka. Tetyana Meyserska, the literary scholar, states that «the earth is Lesya`s roads, her never ending sorrowful paths, her journeys, and the great ways of her imagination» [3, p. 10].

Lesya Ukrainka sees the earth as an ambivalent symbol. The poem «Хотіла б я тебе, мов плющ, обняти» is a bright example of this way of interpretation. The ivy and the ruin are the imagery centre of the poem. They stand for animate and inanimate nature respectively, therefore, the symbol has two opposite meanings simultaneously. Beside the general cultural interpretations of the symbol of earth we are able to observe the individual interpretations as well: «Плющ дає їй життя, він обіймає, / Боронить від негоди стіну голу. / Але й руїна стало так тримає / Товарища, аби не впав додолу» [2, p. 333]. The opposition «life and death» becomes connected with the idea of two creatures who can't live without each other: «А прийде час розсипатись руїні, / – Нехай вона плюща сховає під собою». The dialectics of these images manifests itself in the fact that the ivy (the representation of life) loses its symbolic function without the ruin, that represents death. In the final lines of the poem the opposition of life and death changes its angle – the concept of death is transferred to the image of the ivy: «Чи з розпачу повитись на тополі / І статися для неї гірш могили?» [2, p. 333]. Moreover, it should be pointed out, that through the image of the grave the opposition of life and death reaches its peak. In Ukrainian culture earth at the same time is «a bearing womb» and «a place of burying» [4].

When the author appeals to the similar interpretation of the symbols, it provides their re-actualization. Lesya Ukrainka develops the symbol of earth, connected with the opposition «life and death» in her poem «Ти не хтів мене взять...»: «Довго ждати мені, друже, ще мармур не тесаний твій, / Ще немає на чому повитись плющу жалібному» [2, p. 343]. It continues the previous poem on the level of symbols and develops the opposition of life and death in the image of the ivy-mantled gravestone.

Notwithstanding that for Lesya Ukrainka the symbol of water is more intimate than the symbol of earth, in her poem «Земля! Земля!» the sea, the symbol of life, betrays the lyrical heroine. The earth, even the foreign one, on the contrary, becomes the symbol of the motherland: «Земле чужая, яка ж бо ти рідна для мене! / Мати-землице, рятуй свою бідну дитину! / Зрадило море мене, за любов заплатило знуцанням» [2, p. 450]. We believe that this poem connects the Neo-Romanticism of Lesya Ukrainka with Ukrainian folklore tradition.

To conclude, we should underline that for Lesya Ukrainka the natural element of earth is, first of all, an ambivalent symbol, that functions in her poetry in oppositions of life and death, home and foreign land. In this symbol the folklore world view is combined with the modernistic transformations of the meanings.

For the American poet Sara Teasdale the symbol of earth is more of the romantic origin. She tends to combine the symbol of the earth with other natural elements. We observe this feature in her poem «Blue Squills»: «And many a dancing April / When life is done with me, / Will lift the blue flame of the flower / And the white flame of the tree. / Oh burn me with your beauty, then, / Oh hurt me, tree and flower, / Lest in the end death try to take / Even this glistening hour» [5]. The main idea of the poem, the realization of the fragility of life, is implied in the semantics of the intertwined symbols of fire and earth. They both can be interpreted as the purifying of human soul, the reborn and the interminable flow of life, and therefore, these symbols complement and deepen each other.

The aforementioned symbolism of earth proceeds to another poem «Alchemy» on the level of interpretations: «For I shall learn from flower and leaf / That color every drop they hold, / To change the lifeless wine of grief / To living gold» [6]. Thus, we confirm the idea that the returning to the similar symbols ensures their re-actualization that leads to their consistency and new possibilities of interpretation.

The poem «Open Windows» by Sara Teasdale is related on the level of symbols to the poem «Давня весна» by Lesya Ukrainka. The groundings of this comparison lie in the similar images and symbols that are developed in

both poems. The trees and the ground symbolize life and are in the opposition to the physical weakness of the lyrical heroine: «Out of the window a sea of green trees / Lift their soft boughs like the arms of a dancer, / They beckon and call me, «Come out in the sun!»/ But I cannot answer» [6]. She sees the coming of the spring through the window, but feels that she does not belong to the outside world. Although it is proved that Sara Teasdale was not familiar with the works of Lesya Ukrainka, we are allowed to speak of the intertext here, because of the close interpretations of the general cultural symbol of earth. However, we tend to classify it not as an intertext here, but as a general cultural context that exist independently from individual views of the authors. Comparing the poems, we point out the similarity of images, that create the world of nature: «Була весна весела, щедра, мила, / Промінням грала, сипала квітки, / Вона летіла хутко, мов стокрила, / За нею вслід співучії пташки! / Все ожило, усе загомонило – / Зелений шум, веселя луна! / Співало все, сміялось і бриніло, / А я лежала хвора й самотна» [2, p. 164]. In both poems the system of imagery, connected with the earth symbolics (the trees, the flowers, the semantics of green colour) implies the motif of the reborn of nature as opposed to the weakness of an ill human body.

Combined with the other natural elements, the symbol of earth can stand for the concepts of inanimate nature. In the poem «Spring Torrents» Sara Teasdale develops the opposition between the constantly moving world and the lyrical heroine, rooted in the symbols of water and earth: «Oh, I am like a rock in the rising river / Where the flooded water breaks with a low call – / Like a rock that knows the cry of the waters / And cannot answer at all» [5]. The stone, which the lyrical character compares herself to, bears the meaning of inactiveness. The lyrical heroine has the artistic nature, and it is very important for her to be in a constant dialogue with the world, yet she can't «answer» it.

The symbolic meaning of earth is unusual in the Sara Teasdale's poem «The Broken Field»: «My soul is a dark ploughed field / In the cold rain; / My soul is a broken field / Ploughed by pain» [6]. Here the symbolics of earth is connected with the general cultural ritual of cultivation of soil. On the one hand, it is a hurting process for the ground, on the other, the sowing follows it, and it symbolizes the eternal continuity of life, the energy of nature. In this way Sara Teasdale implies the idea that the soul of her lyrical heroine would be restored and be fertile again.

To conclude it all, we should specify that the general cultural symbol of earth remains one of the most important in the poetry of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is still connected with folklore and pre-historical beliefs, but its interpretations are expanding due to the individual neo-romantic world view of

the aforementioned authors. Upon analysing it, we are able to prove the fact that the general cultural symbols connect different cultures, as it was stated in the comparative analysis of the poems «Open Windows» by Sara Teasdale and «Давня весна» by Lesya Ukrainka.

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## ГУЦУЛЬЩИНА КАСТАНА АБГАРОВИЧА ТА ЮРІЯ ФЕДЬКОВИЧА: ГЕНДЕРНИЙ АСПЕКТ

**Микитин І. Я.**

*кандидат філологічних наук,  
доцент кафедри мовознавства*

*Івано-Франківського національного медичного університету  
м. Івано-Франківськ, Україна*

Питання гендерного співіснування у площині культурного пограниччя – проблема маловивчена та актуальна в сучасному літературознавчому дискурсі, оскільки репрезентує подвійний вияв периферійності – буття на межі і водночас в ситуації патріархальної гендерної опозиції фемінного до маскулінного. Простором культурного пограниччя виступає й Гуцульщина Кастана Абгаровича та Юрія Федьковича, представлена у прозовій творчості польського та українського письменників обширним топосом, багатим на конотації та приховані смисли,