

Yuliya V. Ladygina, **Lesia Ukrainka as Cultural Critic: Ol'ha Kobylains'ka's Case**

**Abstract:** Ever since Solomiia Pavlychko brought the intimate nature of Lesia Ukrainka's and Ol'ha Kobylains'ka's friendship to public attention, scholars, critics, and cultural commentators have generated an impressive mass of words dedicated to the subject. More often than not, these words dwell on the writers' private lives and homoerotic motives in their works and correspondence and pay barely any attention to the crucial role Ukrainka played in promoting Kobylains'ka's works in Eastern Ukraine and establishing her reputation as Ukraine's pioneering modernist writer. Showcasing the latter is the main objective of the proposed paper. By cross-referencing Ukrainka's published reviews with her private correspondence with Kobylains'ka and several other close relatives and friends, this paper brings to the fore Ukrainka's important cultural work that not only represents one of the first insightful assessments of Kobylains'ka's innovative writing style and the utterly modern subject matter of her work, but also constitutes one of the most important voices in shaping the first critical discussions of modernism in Ukrainian literature and culture. The paper pays particular attention to the resonance of Ukrainka's 1903 open letter to *Kievskaiia starina* written in responses to Sehi Iefremov's critical attacks on Kobylains'ka in his 1902 article "In Search of a New Beauty."

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