

Olha Poliukhovych, **Female Portraits of the *Fin de Siècle* Age in Lesia Ukrainka's Short Stories**

Abstract

Short stories by the female writers at the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries represented alternative female identities and roles in contrast to the tradition of the novel of the second half of the 19th century. Opposing the Victorian novel ending in heroine's death or marriage (necessarily "true marriage"), short stories of the *fin de siècle* period revised this paradigm in revealing the richness of the plots connected to women. Lesia Ukrainka as an early modernist writer reflected the epoch changes in her short stories. In my paper I analyze Lesia Ukrainka's short stories and concentrate the attention around the female figures, analyzing the mode of their representation. Their rich and intense inner life and the break with canonical patriarchic models of the female roles are analyzed in this paper. As a result of the extension of the female psychological sensitivity, in her stories Lesia Ukrainka problematizes the gender roles and the female behavior. In Lesia Ukrainka's prose the dominant themes are the intellectual challenges of the *fin de siècle*: feminist and gender issues, the artist's sophistication and misunderstanding with the environment, the problems of hysteria, madness, and physical norm. All these issue are to be the scope of this paper.

Key words: Lesia Ukrainka, *fin de siècle*, short stories, feminism, gender.

Olha Poliukhovych, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Department of Literature