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Psychoanalytic and Existentialist Versions of Don Juanism: Lesia Ukrainka's *The Stone Host*

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Abstract

The article substantiates the necessity of psychoanalytical and existential methodology in interpreting Lesia Ukrainka's drama *Kaminnyi hospodar* (1912; *The Stone Host*), including the works of José Ortega y Gasset and Miguel de Unamuno on Don Quixote, Albert Camus on absurd characters (*The Myth of Sisyphus. Essay on the Absurd*), and Jacques Lacan's *The Mirror Stage*. Biographical data testify to the critical attitude of the writer to world treatments of the legend. Her challenge to tradition was bold and conscious. It is regarded that the main point of Lesia Ukrainka's polemics with tradition concerns Don Juan apologetics, introduced by romantics and developed by modernists. Exploring Don Juan's psychological makeup provides the opportunity to show that all participants of the legend have become victims of Don Juan apologetics (that distinguish the tragic finale of the story). The Don Juan myth has played an integral role in the image of the Person (social mask) being accepted by characters as a trustful image of the Self. Interpretation of the Mirror Image in *The Stone Host* and its crucial role in the final scene allows for justifying that the mirror serves the narcissistic characters' admiration of themselves and shows them not only an attractive appearance but an ideal version of the Self, created by myth.

Key Words: Lesia Ukrainka, Don Juan, Don Quixote, psychological analysis, existentialism, myth.



Lesia Ukrainka is the author of over twenty dramas, most of which are devoted to world themes: biblical stories, apocrypha of early Christianity, ancient Egypt, the East of the Mohammed era, and English Puritans in America. *The Stone Host* is an example of the unsurpassed ability to interpret each traditional theme uniquely, often paradoxically.

Lesia Ukrainka began her work on the drama at the end of 1911 in Hon, and finished, as noted in the draft and final manuscript, on April 29, 1912 in Kutaisi. The writer attached great importance to the *The Stone Host*, as is evidenced by numerous comments in her letters. Lesia Ukrainka's thoughts in letters to Ahatanhel Krymskyi and Olha Kobylanska deserve particular attention.

The following is an excerpt from a letter to Krymskyi, dated May 24 (June 6), 1912:

...the day before yesterday I finished a new work that I began writing after Easter, but what a work! God, forgive me and have mercy! – I've written my Don Juan! The same, "global and world-known" Don Juan, without even giving him a

pseudonym. However, the drama (yes, the drama!) is called *The Stone Host*, because its idea is the victory of a stony conservative principle embodied in the Commander, over the divided soul of the proud, selfish Donna Anna, and through her over Don Juan, the knight of will. I don't know, of course, whether the result is good or bad, but I'll tell you that there is something diabolical, mystical in this legend, which has been torturing people for 300 years. I say "torturing," because a lot has been written on it, little of it good, maybe that's why it was invented by an "enemy of humankind," so that the most sincere of inspiration and deepest thought will wreck themselves on it... One way or another, but in our literature we now have a Don Juan "our own, not translated, original because it was written by a woman (this seems to be a first for this theme)."¹

In a note on the name of Don Juan, Lesia Ukrainka adds: "The French pronunciation of the name 'Juan' is used here, because it is consecrated by a centuries-old tradition in world literature. For the same reason, the Italian form of the word 'Donna' is used."² This is clear evidence that Lesia Ukrainka was well acquainted with the topic and why she was quite critical of the traditional motif and specific works on the legend. At the same time, her mystical sense suggests that the topic, despite its apparent exhaustion, touched her personally.

According to Oksana Zabuzhko,

The only firmly established *direct* impulse she had in the winter of 1911–1912 was reading the newly published (and still authoritative) fundamental study of Georges Gendarme de Bévoite³ on the literary history of Don Juan.⁴

Indeed, direct impulses are quite difficult to find. At the same time, researchers cannot help but be interested in the motives for the writing of this drama. Why did Don Juan attract her attention? This is not an easy question. One thing is clear: in order to write a great work deep personal motivation was needed, which could mobilize all the forces of a weak body to do something impossible. The essence of the challenge that Lesia

1 Lesia Ukrainka, *Povne akademichne zibrannia tvoriv u 14 tomakh* [Complete Academic Collection of Works in 14 Volumes], vol. 14, ed. Serhii Romanov et al. (Lutsk: Volynskiy natsionalnyi universytet imeni Lesi Ukrainky, 2021), 314.

2 Lesia Ukrainka, *Povne akademichne zibrannia tvoriv u 14 tomakh* [Complete Academic Collection of Works in 14 Volumes], vol. 4, ed. Svitlana Kocherha et al. (Lutsk: Volynskiy natsionalnyi universytet imeni Lesi Ukrainky, 2021), 67.

3 Georges Gendarme de Bévoite, *La légende Don Juan* (Paris, 1911).

4 Oksana Zabuzhko, *Notre Dame d'Ukraine: Ukrainka v konflikti mifolohii* [Notre Dame d'Ukraine: Ukrainka in a Conflict of Mythologies] (Kyiv: Fakt, 2007), 399.

Ukrainka posed to world literary tradition and, ultimately, to the Cultural Canon, is a question that needs new approaches.

In search of deeper motivation, a psychoanalytic approach is inevitable. Of all the variety of methodologies and techniques of psychoanalysis, the “provocation” of the text itself is important for selection. In this case, the obvious psychoanalytic marker of the drama attracts attention: the image of the mirror in the finale. This presupposes an appeal to the concept of Jacques Lacan.

According to Ihor Kachurovskyi, a poet, literary critic, and writer, Lesia Ukrainka was “the first existentialist in Ukrainian literature.”⁵ Researchers of the period of Ukrainian Independence have willingly taken up the idea. It prevails in the works of Oksana Kuzma, Nataliia Maliutina, Tetiana Meizerska, and other scholars. If we place Lesia Ukrainka in the existentialism domain as a phenomenon of the 20th century, she should be positioned among her predecessors, as, with for example, Fyodor Dostoevsky, a writer of the 19th century, who occupies a prominent place in the existentialist movement of the 20th century. But if we use existentialism as an approach and a method of analysis of artistic works, then the time in which the writer lived does not matter because the artistic knowledge of reality is existential by its nature (reflection on existentialism). Many existentialists are referred to in literary studies as fundamental for research methodology. The works of Jose Ortega y Gasset⁶ and Miguel de Unamuno⁷ on Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* reveal a traditional world theme and its author’s interpretation. In his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus. Essay on the Absurd*, Albert Camus devotes a long paragraph to Don Juanism and interprets this character as being absurd, that is, someone who has come to the realization of the absurdity of life but still accepts it and recognizes life as worth living. The core trinity of absurd characters for the philosopher are Sisyphus, Don Quixote, and Don Juan.

Lesia Ukrainka was well acquainted with the Don Juan legend. This is attested to by the authors of numerous works on the *The Stone Host*, from neoclassicists to modern scholars, who continue with comparative studies of *The Stone Host* in the context of the legend in world literature.⁸ Basing themselves on the author’s own

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- 5 Ihor Kachurovskyi, “Pokirna pravdi i krasni (Lesia Ukrainka ta yii tvorchist) [Devoted to Truth and Beauty (Lesia Ukrainka and Her Creative Work)],” in Ihor Kachurovskyi, *Promenytyi sylvety* (Kyiv: Vydavnychi dim “Kyievo-Mohylianska akademiia,” 2008), 33–58.
 - 6 Jose Ortega y Gasset, *Rozdumy pro Dona Kikhota* [*Reflections on Don Quixote*], trans. Halyna Verba (Kyiv: Dukh i Litera, 2012).
 - 7 Miguel de Unamuno, *Zhyttia Don Kikhota i Sancho* [*The Life of Don Quixote and Sancho*], trans. Viktor Shovkun (Lviv: Astroliabiiia, 2017).
 - 8 Yevhen Nenadkevych, “Ukrainska versiia svitovoi temy pro Don Zhuana v istorychno-literaturnii perspektyvi [Ukrainian Version of Don Juan World Theme in Literary-Historical Perspective],” in Lesia Ukrainka, *Povne zibrannia tvoriv*, vol. 11 (Kharkiv; Kyiv: Knyhospilka, 1930), 7–42; Abram Hozenpud, *Poetychnyi teatr (Dramatychni tvory Lesi Ukrainky)* [*Poetical Theater (Lesia Ukrainka’s Draatic Works)*] (Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1947), 218–43; Roman Veretelnyk, “Kozachka v teremi [A Noblewoman in the Attic],” *Slovo i chas* 6 (1992): 46–50; Yaroslav Rozumnyi, “Ukrainskist Don Zhuana

comment (“it is original because it was written by a woman”), both Ukrainian and foreign researchers⁹ emphasize the “feminine” aspect of traditional character perception. Modern researchers, in particular, Vira Aheieva,¹⁰ Oksan Zabuzhko,¹¹ Svitlana Kocherha,¹² in placing Lesia Ukrainka in the context of European modernism, emphasize the feminist discourse of *The Stone Host*.

Lesia Ukrainka carefully studied the literature of European countries, her thorough research being devoted to Italian, French, Polish, German, English, and the literature of the Scandinavian countries. There is no doubt that she knew the names of many authors writing on the legend (Tirso de Molina, Jean-Baptiste Moliere, Carlo Goldoni, Ernst Theodor Hoffmann, George Byron, Aleksandr Pushkin, Alfred de Musset, Alexandre Dumas, Charles Baudelaire, Bernard Shaw, Guillaume Apollinaire, Aleksandr Blok), and that their works were read and considered.

World treatments of the legend at that time included scores of more or less well-known works, including musical compositions. Christoph Willibald Gluck's ballet *Don Juan* (1761), Mozart's opera *Don Juan* (1787), and Richard Strauss's symphonic poem *Don Juan* (1888) added and popularized the image of Don Juan. The satirical accents of the image, characteristic of the works of the 17th and 18th centuries, virtually disappeared in the 19th century. Don Juan was no less positively marked in the works of the early 20th century.

It can be determined that the main motif of tradition challenge were the romantic apologetics of Don Juanism. Like most authors of modernist literature, Lesia Ukrainka was interested neither in the exposure of the legend nor in its apologetics, but rather

v ‘Kaminnomu hospodari’ [Ukrainianness of Don Juan in *The Stone Host*],” *Dyvoslovo* 2 (1995): 22–24; Maryna Shevchuk, “Modyfikatsiia ‘vichnoho’ siuzhetu pro Don Zhuana u ‘Kaminnomu hospodari’ Lesi Ukrainky [Modification of the ‘Eternal’ Plot of Don Juan in Lesia Ukrainka's *The Stone Host*],” in *Ukrainska literatura v konteksti svitovoi: teoretychnyi, istorychnyi i metodychnyi aspekty* (Cherkasy: Vidlunnia, 1998), 52–55; Yaroslav Polishchuk, ed., ‘Kamynnyi hospodar’ Lesi Ukrainky ta fenomen serednovichchia [Lesia Ukrainka's *The Stone Host* and the Phenomenon of Middle Ages] (Rivne: Perspektyva, 1998), 104; Oleksandr Rysak, “U dzerkali Don Zhuana (Mandrivnyi siuzhet u potraktuvanni D.-G. Bairona, O. S. Pushkina ta Lesi Ukrainky) [In the Mirror of Don Juan (Travelling Plot Interpreted by George Byron, Aleksandr Pushkin and Lesia Ukrainka)],” *Ukrainska mova i literatura v serednikh shkolakh, himnaziakh, litseiakh ta kolehiumakh* 2 (2000): 57–61; Vira Aheieva, ed., *Don Zhuan u svitovomu konteksti* [*Don Juan in the World Context*] (Kyiv: Fakt, 2002), 448; and others.

- 9 Robert Karpiak, “Don Juan: A Universal Theme in Ukrainian Drama,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers. Revue Canadienne des Slavistes* 24.1 (1982): 25–31; Clarence A. Manning, “Lesya Ukrainka and Don Juan,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 16 (1955): 42–48.
- 10 Vira Aheieva, *Poetesa zlamu stolit: Tvorchist Lesi Ukrainky v postmodernii interpretatsii* [A Poetess at the Turn of Centuries: Lesia Ukrainka's Writings in Postmodern Interpretation] (Kyiv: Lybid, 1999), 264.
- 11 Zabuzhko, *Notre Dame d'Ukraine*, 395–496.
- 12 Svitlana Kocherha, *Kulturosofiia Lesi Ukrainky. Semiotychnyi analiz tekstiv* [Lesia Ukrainka's Culturosofpy. A Semiotic Analysis of the Texts] (Lutsk: Tverdynia, 2010), 299–403.

in human psychology. What is Don Juan like inside? Suppose this version is the best of all Don Juans – bold, freedom-loving, intelligent, and witty. What does he think, and how does he feel in his moving from one woman to another? The immersion into the psychology of Don Juan, performed by the modernists (Shaw, Apollinaire), significantly expanded the understanding of the complexity of this character, deepened the process of understanding it up to the point that Don Juan was not an individual, but a component of the psyche of a great number of both men and women, who allegedly distanced themselves from Don Juanism. The justification, ultimately given to Don Juanism in the 20th century, surpassed all previous justifications. It no longer consists of sublime apologetics, but represents a portrait from within: such people cannot be found! The apogee of justification in the eyes of those who would still demand punishment for the imaginary Don Juan lies in its existentialistic nature.

In the interpretation of Camus, we deal with the defense of Don Juan, characteristic of the worldview of the 20th century in its Western European version, based on Renaissance humanism and rationalism, and supplemented by freedom-loving movements of the 19th and 20th centuries. Camus is a typical freethinker of the 20th century. His defense of Don Juan is based on the idea of the philosophical suicide of a man who has grasped the absurdity of life.

Camus concludes his essay by saying:

I see Don Juan in a cell of one of those Spanish monasteries lost on a hilltop. And if he contemplates anything at all, it is not the ghosts of past loves, but perhaps, through a narrow slit in the sunbaked wall, some silent Spanish plain, a noble, soulless land in which he recognizes himself. Yes, it is on this melancholy and radiant image that the curtain must be rung down. The ultimate end, awaited but never desired, the ultimate end is negligible.¹³

Thus, Camus had to change the finale of the legendary plot significantly to justify Don Juan “on a large scale.” Even the romantics, the emotional defenders of Don Juan, left the finale as the arrival of a stone guest from the other world. They interpreted this meeting as another challenge for Don Juan, but even they failed to exclude the element of punishment in the finale. In any case, the finale of the story determines the labeling of this particular image and the phenomenon that is viewed behind it. Punishment can be interpreted as both just and unjust. Accordingly, Don Juan moves from one pole of assessment (a brazen immoral womanizer or a cunning comedian) to the opposite (the tragic figure of a freedom-loving man who has challenged society).

It is not his love of freedom, as the romantics thought, that reproduces the core of Don Juan’s character, but rather the acceptance of “the rules of the game” and life as

13 Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus: An Essay on the Absurd*, trans. Justin O’Brien (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 61.

it is. It is Don Juan's nature to seduce, and the kind of person he becomes herewith depends on the extent to which he realizes his nature and on the way he intends "to get reconciled" with it and with society.

The version of Don Juanism offered by Lesia Ukrainka (still unique) can also be called existentialist, since the story of the main character in *The Stone Host* contains all the markers of existentialism: real psychology, tested in a borderline situation, the problem of choice, actualized in the course of action, and the lack of unambiguous markers (Don Juan, like all other characters in the drama, is neither positive nor negative but psychologically plausible). No revelation, and no apologetics.

What is new, as offered by Lesia Ukrainka in the vision of this hero, against the background of the three-hundred-year-old tradition of the legend? The challenge is indicated in its title, *The Stone Host* (in capital letters), not Guest, or Don Juan as was popular in the 19th century. The point of the principal controversy is the presence of two love triangles and four protagonists (Don Juan is third on the list, after the Commander and Anna), each of them with a very complex mindset. And finally, the third point – in the finale, the emergence of the statue of the Commander from a mirror.

A cross-current in Lesia Ukrainka's literary work is her enhanced reflection, which is combined with sudden flashes of an intense creative process, controlled by irrational spheres of the psyche. The writer calls this condition an attack, an illness, a fever. It is this combination that makes Lesia Ukrainka an unsurpassed psychologist, even a psychoanalyst.

The complex psychologism of the drama is especially evident in the finale. We focus on the significant change that Lesia Ukrainka has introduced into a rather traditional (many times reproduced) finale – the arrival/appearance of a stone statue. In *The Stone Host*, the statue emerges from a mirror. We can assert with great confidence that the fundamental psychoanalytic marker in the drama is the *mirror* in the finale.

Researchers have drawn attention to this image because it is strongly culturological and mythological in its basis. Many researchers have overlooked the fact that the image of a mirror is, first of all, a mythologeme. There are at least two mythical stories related to the mirror in the consciousness discourse of European culture of the early 20th century. These are the stories of Narcissus, who fell in love with his reflection in the lake, and Perseus, who defeated the invincible Gorgon Medusa with the help of the mirror surface of the shield. The first story became extremely popular in the literature of modernism and significantly altered the concept of the artist. Self-admiration in this period was no longer interpreted as an allegory for narcissism or selfishness. More often, researchers identified it as a symbol of self-knowledge. The egocentrism of the artist thus received a positive marker. The fairy-tale plot of the magic mirror, known since Romantic times (*The Tale of Snow White*), competed with the story of Narcissus and was enhanced by Lewis Carroll's renowned literary tale, *Alice in Wonderland*. This plot in the literature of modernism became a metaphor for the germination or multiplicity of worlds and contributed to the realization of the game-based nature of art.

The folkloric origin of the image of the mirror refers us to another important discourse – medieval discourse. According to a historian Jacques le Goff,

All the great “images” of the Middle Ages – the image of man-microcosm, the image of the mirror (miroire), Church as a mystical body, society as an organic body, the dance of death (danse macabre), all symbolic manifestations of the social hierarchy, clothing, fur, heraldry and political organization... – this whole corpus of outer images reflects profound images, more or less complex, depending on the social status and cultural level, mental universals of men and women of the medieval Europe.¹⁴

As can be seen, Jacques le Goff positions the image of the mirror in second place, even before the image of the Church.

In *The Stone Host*, the mirror correlates with all the mythologems of the mirror in the era of modernism. The narcissistic dependence on a mirror is manifested by Don Juan and Donna Anna, who spends a lot of time in front of it, cultivating the status of unsurpassed beauty. At the beginning of Act VI, the mirror doubles the main participants of the drama and alludes to the presence of another reality. Eventually, the mirror becomes a concentrated embodiment of the psychoanalytic narrative, correlating with Lacan’s mirror stage (a psychoanalytic concept that was formulated in the 1930s but widespread in the second half of the 20th century).

The image of the mirror determines the mysticism of the last act in *The Stone Host* – it begins and ends this act. The initial remark to the act emphasizes the place of the candle which is opposite the portrait of the Commander:

At one wall, opposite the end of the table – a large portrait of the Commander with a black haze on the frame; opposite the other end – a long narrow candle, reaching the floor, a chair, standing in the forefront with its back to the candle and its front faces the portrait.¹⁵

The manuscript of the drama demonstrates that at the last moment, the second part of the sentence was supplemented (after “a chair standing...”). The clarifying text manifests the author’s desire to emphasize the role of the mirror for the last act and the finale. Sitting at the table, the portrait of the Commander doubles in the candle light, but the position from which it is viewable is significantly important. Anna is sitting under the portrait and sees both the portrait of the Commander and the reflection of Don Juan’s back in the mirror. Don Juan, who is sitting opposite her, sees only the portrait of the Commander and Anna,

14 Jacques le Goff, *Serednovichna uiava* [*The Medieval Imagination*], trans. Yarema Kravets (Lviv: Litopys, 2007), 9.

15 Ukrainka, *Kaminnyi Hospodar*, 150.

whom he has almost repelled from his rival, sitting under this portrait. These details are troublesome to accentuate onstage. But all the above-mentioned options are necessary because they recreate the mystical atmosphere of the last act. The candle must, one way or another, come to the forefront and play the role of entering the afterlife.

The most important moment with psychoanalytic significance is the unspeakable horror that grips Don Juan at his first glance into the mirror. It is not easy to explain from the standpoint of common sense because the portrait and the mirror are concomitant scenery on the stage throughout the play. Don Juan is not afraid of the dead – he has lived in the crypts of the cemetery and is not a coward at all or a mystically-minded person. His challenge to the statue of the Commander is just bravado based on the belief that the dead do not appear in the world of the living. The Commander's cloak, in dim light, might have looked like the Commander himself in the mirror, but it was unlikely to cause immediate panic, so quickly transformed into a deadly horror. Why did the resemblance to the Commander (and Don Juan consciously sought to take his place, at least in his relationship with Anna) appear to be so deathly scary? It is worth mentioning that earlier, Don Juan exhorted Anna to break and take off the stone clothes, that is, to get rid of hypocritical rationalism and give free rein to feelings. The Commander's white cloak, despite its conspicuously pronounced solemnity, might have acquired a different hue in candle light – apparently, not so much resembling the cloak but the shroud, a symbol of the ghost, prophesying to him inevitable death. The Statue of the Commander is a ritual petrification of two passionate natures. It happened not just because Don Juan agreed to the social role of the Commander, accepting the rules against which he had always protested, but primarily because he betrayed his own love of freedom. Petrification occurred out of the fear of death.

Not the mind with its devotion to rules was petrified – it was emotion that got out of control that was petrified. And it is this moment that brings us to the story of Medusa – an impressive allegory of fear of the death mystery. Petrification is a metaphor commonly used in many languages, depicting a condition of the body in the face of a sudden death threat. Surprisingly, the petrified world did not arise from a menacing social environment (both characters neglected it), but from somewhere else, through the mirror, caused by the strongest emotion – the fear of death. Fearless Don Juan, who easily deprived his rivals of life, appears unready to face his own death. He has ignored Sganarelle's warning: "The dead are scarier than the living." He lived as if he were immortal. The Commander comes out of the mirror just at the moment that Don Juan exclaims: "It's him, the stone man!" The fear of death flares up as a paralyzing horror because the appearance of the deceased Commander in the mirror testifies to the existence of the afterlife, and hence, infernal punishment.

According to Lacan,¹⁶ the Mirror stage is the period in the formation of a child from six to eighteen months, when he identifies himself with his reflection in a mirror.

16 Jacques Lacan, "Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je telle qu'elle nous est révélée dans l'expérience psychanalytique," in *Ecrits* by Jacques Lacan (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1966), 89–97.

A small child, like an animal, perceives his reflection as an image of someone else. Meeting yourself in a mirror is an important stage on the way to self-perception, the starting point of the image development of one's self, which is at the core of a balanced psyche of an adult. The image of the fabulous beauty-stepmother with her incomparable beauty, assured by the mirror every day, is a vivid illustration of the psyche stopped at the stage of the mirror in its development. In other words, it is a form of infantilism, built on narcissism, when the image of ME is limited to appearance and lacks appropriate content. The reason for the delay in self-development may be excessive concentration on appearance, which the environment considers perfect and irresistibly attractive to the opposite sex. Both Don Juan, who always bathes in a sea of women's admiration, and Anna, who walks through life being accompanied by crowds of despised admirers, perceive the image of the Person (social mask) as a real image of themselves. Therefore, they are not able to control themselves in an extreme situation. They depend too much on the irrationality of their own desires to live rationally. However, the irrational also absorbs Dolores and Gonzago, who seems to be quite different. An emotional wave destroys rational stone clothing. The mirror, which obediently serves narcissistic admiration, is able at some point to show a terrible monster – the greatest unconscious human fear.

The petrification of the two characters can be interpreted metaphorically as the final betrayal of the Shadow for the sake of an advantageous Person. The scene of the Commander's leaving the mirror can also be interpreted as a kind of punishment of the heroes for their betrayal of themselves, carried out via an exit from the shadowy sphere of the Stony, through violence (method of invasion) and perception of the unconscious.

The finale of *The Stone Host* shows that death is a core theme of Lesia Ukrainka's work, but not in the Promethean sense, as generations of researchers and educators tried to interpret it, but in the philosophical and psychological senses. We can argue that it is so in the existentialist sense too, but only if we clearly distinguish the psychological content of existentialism. 20th century existentialism is a multi-branched and heterogeneous phenomenon in which opponents coexist under the same definition (take for example German, highly-religious, and French, with its accentuated atheistic approach existencialisms; Spanish and Russian versions are no less divergent).

Being very close to existentialism in terms of worldview, Lesia Ukrainka would rather accept its Spanish or German branches than the French one. Her drama clearly substantiates that the apologetics of Don Juanism (as well as of anything else) is a way of comprehending the true nature of a human being. To some extent, all four protagonists of the drama are victims of the myth, by which they supersede the nature of their own *selves*. The apologetics of Don Juanism creates a myth that perplexes many people (even causes tragedies), who, instead of searching for knowledge of their *selves*, look in the mirror and see there not so much their appearance (it can always be "corrected/improved" according to the model) as their perfect *me*.

Thus, Lesia Ukrainka's opponents were not romantics, modernists, or existentialists, although her version differs significantly, but apologists of Don Juanism.

In fact, she offered a meticulous analysis of the apologetic process, showed how myths are born, how the consciousness of a believer under the pressure of passions creates these myths, and how a human falls under their strong destructive impact. Even Camus, with his prominent and scrupulous mind, accepts the apologetics of the character as he feels like a defender of an unjustly punished hero. But even such a “high-minded inclination” does not secure a person from apologetics.

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