

**THE RELIGIOUS MOTIVES OF COLLECTION
“THE GREAT HARMONY”
BY BOHDAN-IHOR ANTONYCH**

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INTRODUCTION

The creativity of Bohdan-Ihor Antonych is one of the most significant pages of our literature, it is inherent in genuine originality in the comprehension of artistic reality and the exceptional depth of reproduction the specifics of religious world perception. Due to this, Bohdan-Ihor Antonych is one of the most researched artists in contemporary literary criticism, as Maria Zubrytska rightly notes, “due to figurative and linguistic richness the poet’s texts are organically open for the appearance of new readings and thoughts that do not deny previous reading experience, but on the contrary, complement it with new shades and other angles of vision”¹.

The religious works by Antonych became a completely new phenomenon in the Ukrainian literature of the interwar period of the twentieth century. Sviatoslav Hordynskiy believed that there were almost no purely religious poets in Galicia, and the only poet worthy of attention in this perspective was Vasyl Melnyk (Limnychenko). Works on religious subjects, which were printed in various religious editions, were written “on a very unpretentious artistic level”, because their “standard” form was completely disproportionate to the high content. “And appeared the poet, who spoke in a new way, in a different way, in a voice in which not only the famous prayer tones sounded, but also something new – Christian mysticism and philosophy, the problem of the relation of man to God, the search of God in all things in the world as the very beginning of life and the last goal of human existence”². And this particular poet, to whom such a short time of earthly life was measured, became one of the most researched authors in contemporary

¹Зубрицька М. Топос молитви у творчості Б. І. Антонича та його рецепційне навантаження. *“Мистецтво творять шал і розум”*. Творчість Богдана Ігоря Антонича: рецепції та інтерпретації: Збірник наукових праць. Львів, 2011. Ст. 134.

²Гординський С. “Пісні, що їх диктує Бог” (Релігійні поезії Б.-І. Антонича). *Народній Календар на звичайний 1949 рік*. Мюнхен, 1948. Ст. 119.

Ukrainian literary criticism. First of all, literary critics tried to find out the ideological concept of the author, his religiousness, the philosophical basis of creativity. M. Ilnytskiy, V. Sulyma, YarSlavutych, S. Hordinskiy, I. Rusnak, H. Tokman and others have dedicated their researches to the questions of religious outlook and philosophical concept of creativity.

The collection “The Great Harmony“ by B.-I. Antonych, which has never seen the world during the life of the author, requires new and deep comprehension. The collection is important for understanding the inner world of its author, because “[...] leads us through the thirsty God’s quest, fulfills the happiness of finding God, enlightenment and pacification of the soul”³.

From the point of view of the unusual at least three semantic spheres can be identified in reflection of the poetry universe of Antonych: the first constructed around the category of magic as «pagan», the second, the center of which is the apocryphal vision of the sacred and, finally, the third, which forms the sacred in the canonically-Christian sense of this word. However, it is easy to notice that they are all modifications of poetic mysticism, or, more precisely, poetic semiotics and hermeneutics⁴.

E. Ronki, developing Aristotle’s idea that “every poet is a theologian”, emphasizes that “everyone has a guard and expert of divine things. Everyone is the door of the gods. Everyone has the ability to “see the heart”, to see with the kindness and power; to talk about God from within”⁵. We believe that the creativity of B.-I. Antonych describes this thesis best of all.

1. The Holy Trinity as a Mega-Image of Religious Lyrics of Bohdan-Ihor Antonych

The Holy Trinity acquired deep artistic comprehension in the works of B.-I. Antonych. All three Persons of God (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit) are present on the pages of “The Great Harmony”. St. Gregory of Nyssa says that “every work that proceeds

³ Дунай П. Поетичний космос Б.-І. Антонича. *Українська мова та література*. 1999. ч. 40. Ст. 2.

⁴ Голик Р. Поезія чуда: семіотика незвичайного в українській літературі та культурі (Середньовічні мотиви у творчості Богдана-Ігоря Антонича). *Україна: культурна спадщина, національна свідомість, державність*. Вип. 12: Ювілейний збірник на пошану члена-кореспондента НАН України Миколи Ільницького / НАН України, Інститут українознавства ім. І. Крип’якевича. Львів, 2004. Ст. 468.

⁵ Ронкі Е. Закоханий і здивований Бог / Пер. з італ. К. Зінченко. Львів: Свічадо, 2015. Ст. 35–36.

from God, [...] proceeds from the Father, passes through the Son, and is completed in the Holy Spirit”⁶.

Through image-symbol of «The Great Harmony» is the First Person of the Holy Trinity – God the Father, the Almighty, the Creator of the visible and invisible world, the Being. “At the burning bush, God appeared in his deep secret with the words: “I am the One who is”. Christian philosophers say: “The essence of God is existence”. He is the One who truly exists forever, He is the only being that is the very existence, and all other beings only exist. God has eternal “now”. Jesus, as the only and true Savior, attributes to Himself the definition of God that Moses heard from the inside of the burning bush: “I am”: “Truly, truly, I say to you: “Before Abraham, I am” (Jn 8:58). This name of God is mysteriously, just as God is a mystery that a person can’t understand. He is concealed, but, by the way, is close to people”⁷. This truth was perfectly expressed by Bohdan-Ihor Antonych in the poem “Deus Magnificus”:

On the highest crests of mountains – is He,
on the deepest bottom of the sea – is He,
in the sky, in the chambers of mountains – is He,
in every night, in every day – is He.

[...]

When you call in the night – He is there,
when you call for help – He is there,
when you search – He is there,
you already have Him for He is within⁸.

B.-I. Antonych artistically worked out the motives of the creation of the world, biblical narrations from Genesis formed the basis of many of his works. For example, in the poem “Veni Creator!”, an allusion to the biblical narration is traced: “And God said, Let there be lights in the arch of heaven, for a division between the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for marking the changes of the year, and for days and for years” (Gen 1:14).

The frequent appeal of B.-I. Antonych to God-the Creator and to the very act of creation is explained not only by the admiration of the poet by the Old Testament stories. Through the act of creation of the universe

⁶ Цит. за: Соловій М., о. Божественна Літургія: Історія – розвиток – пояснення. Львів: Свічадо, 1999. Ст. 362.

⁷ Падевський С. Символи Христа. Львів: Добра книжка, 2001. Ст. 86–87.

⁸ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 92–93.

B.-I. Antonych tries to understand the purpose of the artist, who, similar to God, also becomes the creator of a new reality. The problem of creativity in the system of poems by B.-I. Antonych on biblical subjects occupies one of the leading places, in particular in the context of the spiritual and social purpose of art. So, we can confirm that the creativity of Antonych has a mystical, ecstatic meaning.

Poet's creativity and God, song and God's creation are cross-cutting themes of poems «Ars poetica II, part 2» and «Ars poetica II, part 3». Creativity unites the Creator and the poet. Is there a difference between their creations? P. Tillich believes: "God creates primary and essential, man creates secondary and existential"⁹. Toma Shpidlick, interpreting the problem of the heart in Eastern spirituality, says that man has got accustomed to listen only what others say without paying attention to the inspiration that comes from heart and generates by the Holy Spirit. Only to artists – and it is not always – we allow to feel some inspiration. In spiritual life, everyone must be an "artist" and trace his life path under the leadership of the Highest "Artist"¹⁰. So, creativity is revelation, life with the heart, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and this concerns not only to art, but to human life in general, which needs to be perfected, to be accomplished with God.

God the Father in "The Great Harmony" is present not only at the level of the artistic image, but also there are allusions in which this image is only "preset", and it can be read through symbolic actions, features, projections.

In "The Great Harmony" by B.-I. Antonych the Second Person of God – Jesus Christ – is very clearly depicted. "Being the Savior of the human race, who, through his sinfulness, lost his ability to communicate directly with the highest levels of spiritual consciousness, the Messiah, like the Old Testament prophets, for the main purpose of his vocation had the preaching of God's will among people – at first, a separate community, then all of humanity. If in the Old Testament God's will was spoken directly, through numerous prophecies, and allegorically, through the events of the sacred history of God-chosen people, then in the New Testament, Christ is the universal embodiment of the God's Logos, which is called to "sowing the Word of God" among those "who

⁹Тиллих П. Систематическое богословие. СПб.: Алетейя, 1998. Ст. 271.

¹⁰Шпідлік Т. Мистецтво очищувати серце / Пер. з італ. А. Маслюх. Львів: Свічадо, 2005. Ст. 66.

have ears to listen to”¹¹. In “The Great Harmony” the archetype of Christ is experienced quite differently than the archetype of God the Father: a lyrical hero with a psychological probability of mystic witnesses the landmark moments of the Savior’s life as the milestones of his own spiritual life¹².

B.-I. Antonych dedicates to Christ the poem “Agnus Dei”, in which Christ does not appear either as a great miracle worker, nor a powerful prophet, nor a long-awaited Messiah:

You are not wrath, You are not thunder, You are not punishment,
but just a hymn, just a house of goodness and the sound of forgiveness.

You are not a sword, or fire, or a specter,
allow me to read the word of Your hands in the bottom of my heart:
I call to You every day:
LambofGod¹³.

The Holy Scripture speaks of the Lamb of God as a prototype of Jesus Christ. For the first time, this name was used by the prophet Jeremiah when he said, “But I was like a gentle lamb that is led to the slaughter” (Jer 11:19). The prophet Isaiah connects this image with Messiah: “He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter” (Is 53:7). In the Old Testament there was a custom to bring lambs as sacrifice to God, but this sacrifice was only a prototype of the great redemption that Christ accomplished with his death on the cross. So Jesus Christ is the immaculate Lamb of God who takes over the sins of the world to redeem them at the price of His own blood.

The definition of God given by the poet in the poem “Agnus Dei” is mostly apophatic— he states what his personal God is not, creating a series of contradictory comparisons (“You are not wrath, You are not thunder, You are not punishment”). H. Tokman remarks on this: “Punishing, angry God, which horrifies and inflicts pain to a person, is objected, God – love, kindness, forgiveness, God, which pours joy into

¹¹ Бетко І. Біблійні сюжети і мотиви в українській поезії XIX – початку XX століття. ZielonaGóra–Kijów, 1999. Ст. 35.

¹² Бетко І. Осмислення нумінозного досвіду в поезії Богдана-Ігоря Антонича. *Бетко І. Українська релігійно-філософська поезія. Етапи розвитку*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2003. Ст. 194.

¹³ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 110.

the soul and brings fun and cure for all evil, is affirmed”¹⁴. The poet in the collection “The Great Harmony” proclaimed his acceptance of God, which is not punitive, but merciful. A man needs a kind God, because he is sinful and needs forgiveness.

B.-I. Antonych often uses the symbolic names of God, which not only point to one of the Holy Trinity, but also contain a whole layer of biblical history. First of all, the poet perceives Christ as the Light for the world.

The theme of light penetrates all biblical revelation. The separation of light from the darkness was the first action of the Creator (Gen 1:3). At the end of history, the light of the new creation (Rev 21:5) will be God Himself (Rev 21:23). The story that develops between these events is perceived by the reader as a conflict between light and darkness, and analogically between life and death. Like all other creatures, light is a sign that symbolizes the presence of God. It is a reflection of God’s glory. In this aspect, light is a symbolic image associated with theophany. God is dressed “in light, like a chasuble” (Ps 104:2).

Despite the widespread use of the symbols of light in the Old Testament, in particular in the Book of Wisdom, because the Wisdom is a “reflection of eternal light”, symbolism of light is acquired the most spreading in the New Testament, however with the arrival of Christ on earth the eschatological light, which is proclaimed by the prophets, becomes a reality: “The people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up” (Mt 4:16). Theologians point out that Jesus Christ is known as the Light of the World, primarily through his actions and teachings. The healing of the blind has an exceptional significance in this aspect. There is an undeniable connection between light and life, because to be born is to see the light, while the person is blind, the sick person carries a seal of death, which is associated with hell, that is, darkness. Christ is the “Light for the world” (Jn 9:5), which “enlightens every man who comes into the world” (Jn 1:9)¹⁵.

In the Gospel of John (Jn 1: 1-17), which is read during the Easter worship, the images, symbols of the Word of the Logos and the Light are dominant. Bohdan-Ihor Antonych, artistically comprehending the

¹⁴Токмань Г. Збірка Б.-І. Антонича “Велика гармонія” у діалозі з екзистенціальним богослов’ям. *Слово і час*. 2002. № 12. Ст. 48.

¹⁵Словник Біблійного Богослов’я / За ред. Ксав’єЛеон-Дюфура та ін.; пер. з 2-го фр. вид., заг. ред. д-ра богослов’я Владика Софрона Мудрого, ЧСВВ. Львів: Видавництво ОО. Василян “Місіонер”, 1996. Ст. 704–706.

theme of the Resurrection, skillfully combines the image of light with the sun, because of this a deep in content and hugely attractive from an artistic look, the image of the “The Sun’s Word”:

Bells peal silkily, brilliantly, baroquely,
bells peal, the entire earth rushes to give greeting,
bells peal silkily, they awaken the Sun’s Word,
bells peal, for my soul is rising¹⁶.

In the poem “Veni Creator” the poet calls God “The Sun’s Truth” and with the help of exquisite antithesis shows the polarity of divine holiness, purity, transparence and human sinfulness, sickliness, feebleness:

Creator of thousands of moons, millions of stars,
Maestro of the radiant music of the ether,
Your peaceful gaze rises in rays of sun
Into the blackest soul and into the blackest of all caves¹⁷.

Analyzing the creative work of Bohdan-Ihor Antonych, we can confirm with confidence that the image-symbol of the sun is cross-cutting in all his poetry collections. The observation of Ivan Ohienko is interesting: “Lemko, Verhovinets, our poet grew up under the mountain sun, and it became his leading book of being – he saw the whole world in the sun”, that’s why, probably, there researcher called him “The Sun’s Poet”¹⁸.

The image-symbol of sun as the fullness of God’s grace is read in the poem “Ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus” (“That in all things God may be Glorified”):

You’ve placed a dreadful burden on my shoulders,
and I must carry it, without fail I must.
Dead things are the happiest – of all Saharan deserts
the fire of Your grace burns most intensely.
You’ve placed the sun on my shoulders¹⁹.

Often in works of B.-I. Antonych the contrast to Christ’s Light is the soul of the poet, but God does not reject it, only “the rays of the sun rise in the darkest soul” to “enlighten the darkness of the night”. In the

¹⁶ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 95.

¹⁷ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 100–101.

¹⁸ Огієнко І. (Митрополит Іларіон). Соняшний поет Б.-І. Антонич. *Наша культура: Науково-літературний місячник*. 1936. Кн. 3 (12). Ст. 216.

¹⁹ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 85.

biblical understanding drama that arose around Jesus is the struggle between light and darkness: “And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not” (Jn 1:5), “I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jn 8:12).

In the creative work of Bohdan-Ihor Antonych, the state of sinful darkness is embodied in the artistic images of the dusty hut, fog, drizzle, dust, dirt:

Salve Regina!

Where you ride through – great change,
Where you ride through – life laughs,
and You will arrive at a meager night lodging,
the dust-covered, accursed
home of my heart²⁰.

The image of the night demands a special attention, because, as already noted, in the biblical tradition night is the time of sin, death, the devil. During the Passion, when Judas left the room to betray Jesus, the Evangelist John noticed: “And it was night” (Jn 13:30), and when Jesus Christ was taken into custody, He said, “But this is your hour, and the power of darkness” (Lk 22: 53). In “The Great Harmony” there are several poems in which the night is a forerunner of the tragic events or the time of their realization:

When all around night is black,
life is hard, like a grinder,
but the heart feels faint from the pain,
you come, hope²¹;

Light up the torch of the pale moon in the sky,
illuminate the darkness of the night with stars,
let hearts that are sick with loneliness take comfort
when they see thousands of Your worlds²².

So, the human balances all life between light and darkness, it is as if there are two ways to the future: the righteous shine like heavenly bodies and wicked will wander in darkness. Christ freed people from the power

²⁰ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 88.

²¹ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 108.

²² Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 86.

of darkness and offered them to be “sons of the Light” (Jn 12:36). In the Epistle to the Ephesians the Apostle Paul writes: “For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light. For the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth” (Eph 5:8-9). When a person enters the path to light, he can count on the wonderful Transfiguration, because the heavenly Jerusalem, where a Christian will enter, will be enlightened by the light of the glory of God. However, even in the earthly life, the person who received the Christ’s science is a small sun on earth, which radiates God.

In the “The Great Harmony” the biblical motive of the road is important. In particular, in the poem “Liber peregrinorum, part 3” (“Book of pilgrims”) by B.-I. Anthonych the road acquires features of image-symbol:

The yellow road beneath my feet,
the blue sky above us.
I walk along unknown paths.
Man is an eternal pilgrim... [...].
And so I wander without stopping,
I push along every day like rosary beads,
and I will rest only when
I reach Jerusalem²³.

The symbol of the road reaches its roots in the Old Testament and finds its continuation in the New Testament, accomplishing in Jesus Christ. Another Old Testament Psalmist begged the Lord: “Teach me, Lord, the ways of your institutions” (Ps 119). The image of the road is constantly present in the journey of the Israeli people to the Promised Land. In the New Testament Christ is the way to the kingdom of heaven: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me”(Jn. 14:6).

In the poem “Duae viae” (“Two Roads”) by B.-I. Anthonych the image-symbol of the road also has a deep symbolic content. The lyrical hero went out on the way to meet God: “I’ve searched for you, Lord, on long roads”. God and man mutually searched each other, but their roads were different, because the lyrical hero asked people about God, searched Him “in the lowlands”, “on mountains”, “on the spires of mountain crests”, “in a peasant’s smoky hut” and “on a lacquered ballroom floor”,

²³ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 102.

“in the dark gloom of dusty libraries”, and God searched man in her heart. The poet does not conceal his disappointment from the fact that “the two roads right next to each other had failed to cross”.

The theme of the struggle with God appears in the poem “Confiteror” (“I confess”):

I have fought with God intently and did not
want to bow my prideful brow...

O abundant squandering of my life!
Haughty pride has led me behind it²⁴.

The motive of the omachy is present in Genesis: “And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was strained, as he wrestled with him. [...] And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there” (Gen. 32:25.29). In the soul of the poet this struggle manifested itself in the doubts that the mind caused them, this advocatus diaboli, which whispers to the human heart the sin of pride and says to fight with God²⁵. That pride is an obstacle to the poet’s unity with God, but the poet calls it “youthful pranks and jousting”, after which comes true life experience, when the lyrical hero “I have made my peace with God and the world, and have found perfect harmony in my heart”²⁶. So, in a spiritual struggle you can get many wounds, but there is always a chance to get out of it with a blessing²⁷.

The idea of eternal struggle between good and evil could not but respond to the creative work of B.-I. Antonych. The poet portrayed the devilish temptation, convincing both from the artistic and from the Christian point of view, in the poem “Apage satanas” (“Be gone, satan!”). The tempter comes to the poet at night and under the window of his soul plays a sweet song that calls him to go with him where luxury is waiting for him. The exile says that he is just as lonely and unhappy as a poet, and asks him to accept him, “a wanderer and eternal journeyman”, “a poet of rebellion”, and for this he promises to “draw a secret sign”—which would be a contract between the devil and the poet. But the lyrical

²⁴ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 103.

²⁵ Гординський С. “Пісні, що їх диктує Бог” (Релігійні поезії Б.-І. Антонича). *Народній Календар на звичайний 1949 рік*. Мюнхен, 1948. Ст. 122.

²⁶ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 103.

²⁷ Пацьборек А. Біблія для кожного і на кожен день: Старий Завіт / Пер. з польськ. Г. Теодорович. Львів: Свічадо, 2004. Ст. 29.

hero positively does not accept such a proposal and even has a means against the temptation of evil: “I step out in front of my house and I sprinkle the threshold of my heart with healing, holy water”²⁸.

Hanna Tokman, analyzing the poem “Apage satanas” in the context of existential theology, states the tension of the horizontal time in which the existence of man runs, portrayed through the temptation of the hero by the power of evil. The angel and the devil under the pen of Antonych have the same and the opposite: they come to a man, communicate, saying something important to her, they are both angels, only the last one is an exile²⁹. P. Tillich characterizes these images as follows: “Angels and demons are mythological names of constructive and destructive forces of being, which are incomparably interlaced and fighting with each other in one and the same person, in one and the same social group and in one and the same historical situation”³⁰.

It is worth noting that the space in which the “banished angel” plays his “sweet song” is outlined existentially: “beneath the window of my soul”. The lyrical hero becomes before a choice: to let the devil into his own house-soul or not? What the banished angel tempts the poet, what attractive has? The devil plays “on a crystal barrel-organ a sweet song”, his “a bright green parrot screams” about luxury, “wild and hot”, however, as H. Tokman remarks, “the other is the most tempting for the poet – the similarity of fate and temper with the exile. Antonych’s demon expresses anguish, pain and fright, he is a lonely and unlucky traveler, an eternal rover, a poet of rebellion, luxury and desperation. Did not one poet ever feel like this to himself? Antonych tells not about the stranger who came to him, but about the part of his own “I”³¹.

In “The Great Harmony” the Third Person of God – the Holy Spirit, which Bohdan-Ihor Antonych calls “Holy Dove”, “Dove-Spirit”, “Great Reaper of Souls”, occupies a significant place. The biblical tradition portrays the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, fire, water and storm. Everything that he touches on and what he will rest on will revive to life with inexpressible energy. The poem “Veni Sancte Spiritus!” by

²⁸ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 111.

²⁹ Токмань Г. Збірка Б.-І. Антонича “Велика гармонія” у діалозі з екзистенціальним богослов’ям. *Слово і час*. 2002. № 12. Ст. 50.

³⁰ Тилліх П. Систематическое богословие. СПб.: Алетея, 1998. Ст. 347.

³¹ Токмань Г. Збірка Б.-І. Антонича “Велика гармонія” у діалозі з екзистенціальним богослов’ям. *Слово і час*. 2002. № 12. Ст. 50.

B.-I. Antonych calls to one another with the anthem of Grabanus Maurus “Veni Creator Spiritus!”, which was written in 809:

Come, Holy Spirit, who is making life,
fill us with your power!³²

In the works of both poets, the Holy Spirit is the source of a new life, fire, light, love and fragrant myrrh³³. When the Holy Spirit came to the apostles, they “began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). For the poet the image of “another language” is extremely capacious – it is a gift of a word that tears from the depths marked by the seal of the Spirit. It is not enough to speak for B.-I. Antonych, he needs to combine the art of the word with music to sing to the Lord a “mighty song”:

Sing, my soul, a mighty song to the Lord,
descend to me, Dove-Spirit, and cover me with your wings,
pour the inspired contents into me into my wretched form,
let the holy fire of ecstasy burn in my eyes³⁴.

In the context of teaching about the Holy Spirit the “holy fire”, which “came down to the apostles in the form of fiery tongues, made them men of faith and ardor, sowers of the Word of God”³⁵, is mentioned. Anselm Grun notes that in many cultures fire is considered as saint. Water beats from under the ground, and the fire goes down from the sky. Fire is something divine. Fire cleans, renews, burns everything imperfect. Acts of the Apostles say that “and there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them” (Acts 2:3). In the form of a flame, which is divided, each one specifically is filled with the Holy Spirit, He lights everyone personally³⁶. This divine burning is mentioned in the poem of B.-I. Antonych quoted above, in which the cleared and humble soul of the lyrical hero (“poor form”) waits for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, which will give sense to the poet’s life. The presence of the Divine Spirit necessarily manifests itself, because “the holy fire of ecstasy burn in my eyes”. He who has the Spirit of God, radiates Him on His neighbors, lights them with a divine spark, warms by the warmth of

³² Цит. за: Грюн А. Пасхальна радість / Пер. з нім. Н. Лозинської. Львів: Місіонер, 2007. Ст. 135.

³³ Грюн А. Пасхальна радість / Пер. з нім. Н. Лозинської. Львів: Місіонер, 2007. Ст. 136.

³⁴ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 113.

³⁵ Соловій М., о. Божественна Літургія: Історія – розвиток – пояснення. Львів: Свічадо, 1999. Ст. 362.

³⁶ Грюн А. Пасхальна радість / Пер. з нім. Н. Лозинської. Львів: Місіонер, 2007. Ст. 141.

His heart, shines in the darkness of the sinful world. B.-I. Antonych believes in the Holy Spirit, understands His delicacy (the image of the Dove-Spirit), realizes his exclusive role in the mission of the poet, and that's why sets himself the goal to preserve the sacred burning of his heart in any circumstances.

2. The Image of the Virgin Mother in the Creative Biography of Bohdan-Ihor Antonych

In "The Great Harmony" the poems "Salve Regina", "Ave Maria", "Mater Dolorosa", "Mater Gloriosa", which Hanna Tokman calls hymns, are dedicated to the person of the Blessed Virgin Mother³⁷. The Virgin Mother is an eternal symbol of infinite mother's love, self-sacrifice, chastity, devotion to God and people, that's why the symbols associated with Herself are refined, perfect, full of beauty, each of them reveals to us the figure of the Mother of God in its own way, testifies about Her divine purpose, informs about spiritual virtues. This is reflected both in iconography and in spiritual-song texts. A special place is occupied by the symbolic names of the Mother of God. This is the Heavenly Ladder, the Golden Ciborium, the Mother of Life, and many others. The unshakeable faith in the Virgin Mother as the Queen of Heaven and Earth and above all as in the Mother and the Defender is, according to Antonych, a guarantee of the salvation of man.

The lyrical hero of Antonych's poems is constantly waiting for a meeting with the Virgin Mother, which "is clear, tender, glittering, like a lily" for him, he invites Her in his life with full confidence:

Fly to me, Most-Immaculate Virgin, and drive away evil from me
place your palm onto a young brow³⁸.

In the creative sense of B.-I. Antonych the revelation of the Virgin Mother is always accompanied by a reverent tilting and admiration of nature, which strengthens, and sometimes contrasts with the emotional state of the lyrical hero. Often, when "for the Mother of God is coming out of her blue palace in the sky, she is dressed in the golden-threaded garments of a seven-colored rainbow", the poet cannot "find the spirited and sweet-sounding words" to properly glorify the Virgin Mother, then music comes to the rescue to support the prayer spirit:

³⁷Токмань Г. Збірка Б.-І. Антонича "Велика гармонія" у діалозі з екзистенціальним богослов'ям. *Слово і час*. 2002. № 12. Ст. 48.

³⁸Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 101.

Play, harps, play, lyres, play lutes, play zitherns,
pour out joy, wash away cares, shroud grief with the mantle of
spring³⁹.

In the poem «Hail, Holy Queen!» the appearance of the Blessed Virgin is accompanied by the following metamorphoses: “the human soul awakens from earthly swaddling clothes”, “golden-haired rye grains fall to their knees”, “the horizon takes the sun from the mountains like a hat from your head”, “silver-stringed harps play”, the Queen of Heaven goes “in a four-horse carriage”, and “a bright-haired coachman – a curly-haired angel – holds the reins in his hand”. The presence of the Virgin Mother changes everything around: “where you ride through – great change, where you ride through – life laughs”, that’s why the lyrical hero hopes for positive changes in the soul, because the Mother of God will come to him – “at a meager night lodging, the dust-covered, accursed home of my heart”⁴⁰. “The development of the image of the Queen of Heaven and Earth Antonych carries out original and brightly; his images create a surrealist system, the poet places them around the Queen in space, which, due to her presence, is transformed from the profane to the sacred”⁴¹. I. Betko rightly observes that according to the artistic and symbolic logic B.-I. Antonych gives the image of the Virgin Mother on the background of yellow grain of stars, golden rye, the first flourishing of small petals of roses, the grove of noisy pines, the spring cloak of nature, the aromas of rose, violets and fresh hay etc., and the figure of the Mother of God, along with the hypostases of the Holy Trinity, acts as an important creatively symbol that forms the religious position of the lyrical hero⁴².

In works on the Virgin Mother’s theme B.-I. Antonych often uses the traditional appeal design: “Rejoice!”, the poet calls her the Queen, Immaculate and Virgin, as it is accepted in the Christian tradition.

A state of anxiety and non-harmonies often inherent to the poet’s soul, when the “hut of the heart is dust-covered, accursed”. It is the time to turn to the Virgin Mother, who alone can “bring a healing cure in a hard struggle” and “calm the enharmonic gnashing of the harp of the

³⁹ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 110.

⁴⁰ Антонич Б. І. Повне зібрання творів / Передмова Миколи Ільницького; Упорядкування і коментарі Данила Ільницького. Львів: Літопис, 2009. Ст. 88.

⁴¹ Токмань Г. Збірка Б.-І. Антонича “Велика гармонія” у діалозі з екзистенціальним богослов’ям. *Слово і час*. 2002. № 12. Ст. 53.

⁴² Бетко І. Лірика Б.-І. Антонича у дзеркалі аналітичної психології К.-Г. Юнга. *Слово і час*. 2003. № 2. Ст. 11.

heart”. “Salve Regina!”– the poet calls and knows that he has heard and that the help will come. Probably, it is precisely in the confidence that a person will wait till meeting with the Sacred, if he will look at his own heart, the humanistic pathos of the existential-Christian figurative thoughts of B.-I. Antonych is the most clearly manifested”⁴³.

In the creative work of B.-I. Antonych the Virgin Mother is not only the Queen, but also “Mater Dolorosa” (“The Sorrowful Mother”). This poem according to the tonality and overlaying of biblical events on Ukrainian history is consonant with the works of Pavlo Tychyna, Yuriy Klen, priest Stepan Semchuk and others. “Mater Dolorosa” is filled with spacious symbolism and imagery, for example, “the black shawl of night”, “the hour of darkness”, “heart that is pierced by thorns”. The introduction of the symbolism of colors (“black night”, “silver stars”, “stars are like yellow grain”) and numbers (“three lonely stars, like three tears”) to the poem is particularly successful. The symbolism of triune has a profound artistic comprehending in all the poetic creative work of B.-I. Antonych, because it is based on the Holy Trinity. In the poem “Mater Dolorosa” under “three lonely stars” we can understand the verbal reproduction of the iconic tradition, which portrays the Virgin Mother with three stars in the head and shoulders that symbolizes Her virginity before, during and after the birth of Jesus Christ. It is the bodily and spiritual purity that made Her capable of perceiving the Incarnate Word and understanding its saving mission. Because of this the Mother of God was raised above the human race and was shone on the firmament as stars with many virtues.

The images-symbols of night and darkness in the poem “Mater Dolorosa” have an exceptional artistic load. The poet skillfully portrays the darkest night in the history of mankind. When Christ was imprisoned, the world dropped into sinful darkness, that’s why only three lonely stars can clear up the darkness, we can interpret them as those persons who remained faithful to Christ in the most difficult circumstances and did not extinguish the light of faith in the soul. Bohdan-Ihor Antonych actively used astral symbolism in all his collections, repeatedly used as the image of sun in the variety of its symbolic meanings, and also one of the favorite was the image of moon, interpreted mostly in the mythological tradition, but the night before the

⁴³ Токмань Г. Збірка Б.-І. Антонича “Велика гармонія” у діалозі з екзистенціальним богослов’ям. *Слово і час*. 2002. № 12. Ст. 53.

crucifixion of Christ is completely dark, because a man killed Christ – the Light that will shinefully on the Resurrection.

B.-I. Antonych also appealed to the image of the Virgin Mother in poems “Christmas” and “Christmas carol” (collection “Three rings”). Disposed side by side, they make an original diptych.

CONCLUSIONS

The tenet of the Holy Trinity has a deep artistic comprehension in the creative work of B.-I. Antonych. All three Persons of God (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit) are present on the pages of “The Great Harmony”.

But Through image-symbol of “The Great Harmony” is the First Person of the Holy Trinity – God the Father. The lyrical hero addresses to him in the overwhelming majority of poems, even when he speaks of God the Son and the Holy Spirit. God the Father in “The Great Harmony” is present not only at the level of the artistic image, but also there are allusions in which this image is only “preset”, and it can be read through symbolic actions, features, projections. Comprehending the image of the Creator, B.-I. Antonych tried through the act of creation of the universe to understand the appointment of the artist, who, similar to God, also becomes the creator of a new reality.

In “The Great Harmony” by B.-I. Antonych the Second Person of God – Jesus Christ – is very clearly depicted, the poet devotes to this a separate poem named “Lamb of God”, in which Christ does not appear either as a great miracle worker, nor a powerful prophet, nor a long-awaited Messiah, but the God’s Lamb. The poet in the collection “The Great Harmony” proclaimed his acceptance of God, which is not punitive, but merciful.

In “The Great Harmony” the Third Person of God – the Holy Spirit is a hope, a comforter, a treasure of all sorts (gift of knowledge, wisdom and courage). The author calls the Holy Spirit as “Holy Dove”, “Dove-Spirit”, “Great Reaper of Souls”. B.-I. Antonych asks Him for moral perfection, spiritual progress. The highest symbolic hypostasis of the perfect personality is the spiritual warrior “proud and hard, like a steel”, the blue knight of the Holy Spirit.

In the poetry of B.-I. Antonych there is an image of the Mother of God beside the outlined images of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In “The Great Harmony” such poems as “The Sorrowful Mother”, “Rejoice, Maria!”, “Hail, Holy Queen!”, “Glorious Mother” are

dedicated to the person of the Blessed Mother of God. The unshakeable faith in the Virgin Mother as the Queen of Heaven and Earth and above all as in the Mother and the Defender is, according to Antonych, a guarantee of the salvation of man. However, in the creative work of B.-I. Antonych the Virgin Mother is not only the Queen, but also “Mater Dolorosa” (“The Sorrowful Mother”).

SUMMARY

The poetic creativity of B.-I. Antonych on religious subjects is an intimate experience of poet's God-seeking and God-knowledge, these are prayer requests, in which there are both joyful tones from the experience of the Divine and unconcealed motives of spiritual struggle.

The originality of Antonych's collection “The Great Harmony” consists in non-traditional, non-typical combination and interpretation of Christian and heathen world outlooks. The collection does not only follow the tradition of Ukrainian religious and religious-mystic poetry but also reflects a tragic contradiction of XXth c. man's world perception and world reflection. “The Great Harmony” is saturated with religious mysticism and longing to plunge into the mystery of people's existence and find one's own way of faith.

The pages of “The Great Harmony” represent the images of the Three Persons of God – God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, which are often read through such biblical symbols as light, road, fire etc., as well as author's neoplasms. God in “The Great Harmony” is present not only at the level of the artistic image, but also there are allusions in which this image is only “preset”, and it can be read through symbolic actions, features, projections. Besides it, B.-I. Antonych often uses the symbolic names of God, which not only point to one of the Holy Trinity, but also contain a whole layer of biblical history.

The Blessed Mother of God is often appeared as the means of touching the sacred in B.-I. Antonych, the lyrical hero feels boundless trust, love to Her, and that's why he selects the most tender appeals to sing properly the one who is the Mother and the Deputy for him. It was characteristic for the poet to make an “apocrypha” from the image of the Virgin Mother, because the works on the Virgin Mother's theme often go beyond the religious-dogmatic canon.

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