

# Translation as a Psychological Strategy of Self-Fulfillment in Lesia Ukrainka's Epistolary

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## ABSTRACT

The article explores Lesia Ukrainka's translation activity in her epistolary from the perspective of creativity psychology. The idea of creating the "European library" in Ukrainian is seen through the lens of how the translation of world-class creative works into Ukrainian performs a nation-building function, preserves the national morale and culture, proves the full value of the Ukrainian language. Lesia Ukrainka's letters evidence that these factors were her motivators. She sees translation activity as a creative process as it reflects her creative thinking, idiosyncrasy, and self-actualisation manifested in the expressive and existential essence of the author's creativity. Lesia's epistolary reveals elements of creativity psychology, offers ideas on the artistic value of translated works and further development of Ukrainian literature. The translations demonstrate Lesia's ability to self-develop and self-actualise, proven as the most advanced human needs.

**Keywords:** *creativity psychology, self-actualisation, epistle, literary translation, psychological strategy.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

To celebrate Lesia Ukrainka's 150th birthday, the academic community and those who appreciate her received a wonderful gift - 14 volumes of a complete, uncensored collection of the author's works. It is a prominent event in our society's cultural and literary life, since we finally witnessed not talks but deeds on the cultivation and promotion of the Ukrainian word, and we can and should be really proud of it.

It is the first time when the poetess' epistolary legacy is available for familiarisation and analysis to such an extent. Epistolary heritage as a phenomenon enables us to analyse Lesia Ukrainka's work through the lens of this correspondence. The epistle has been known for a long time: correspondence was quite common in ancient times, especially in ancient Rome. It was seen as a widespread, elegant, and free art while writing letters was an integral part of elite education. Until now, it remains intriguing evidence of an individual character.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The peculiarities of a letter, its definition, and composition were explored in the works by S. Antonenko, M. Bakhtin, N. Bielunov, L. Vankiv, R. Hromiaka, R. Dotsenko, O. Kopach, V. Kuzmenko, M. Kotsubynska, L. Kurylo, L. Morozova, M. Nazaruk, S. Pavlychko, I. Pohrebniak, V. Sviatkovets, V. Tkachivskyi, Yu. Sherakh.

In particular, V. Sviatkovets, when analysing Lesia Ukrainka's epistolary legacy, indicates that the letters expose Lesia's multifaceted activity as a poet and especially a playwright, critic, and literary theorist. However, translations, their place in Lesia's creative heritage and epistolary, in particular, have not been yet in the spotlight of any dedicated research. R. Hromiak investigates the letter as a source of the history of literary criticism.

Following the definition of M. Bakhtin, who refers to the letter as "... a secondary speech genre that combines various primary subgenres: greetings, wishes, suggestions, thanks, reproaches" [1], we will analyse Lesia Ukrainka's

epistolary from the standpoint of a communicative approach to the psychology of creativity, translation, and the epistle as a genre. This approach makes us prioritise the definition, suggested by M. Kotsiubynska, who believes that the letter is "the text as a multifunctional system, related to different areas of social and individual consciousness, stylistically heterogeneous, meaningfully multifaceted, and closest possible to the most intimate layers of human spiritual existence, a kind of ratio-and-emotion synthesis" [2]. As a literary genre with its own composition, rhetoric, and poetics, letters are fascinating research material. On the other hand, Lesia's choice of Western European authors to be translated is a sign and element of her writing strategy; it is a literary and textual game the author plays with the reader.

The psychological strategy of self-fulfilment in epistolary and translations has never been a subject of a separate literary study before.

We argue that the strategy of self-fulfilment and self-actualisation is directly related to the concept of psychology of creativity, studied from various perspectives. The sources of determining the psychological structure of the creative personality and detailed classification of its features in terms of various creative activities were investigated by N. V. Honcharenko, B. M. Kedrov, V. L. Kruteskyi, O. N. Luka, Ya. O. Ponomariov, V. V. Rybalka. The structure of creativity was explored by both domestic and overseas researchers, such as V. G. Andreiev, L. S. Vyhotskyi, A. N. Tsybulia, A. Maslow.

### **3. RESEARCH RESULTS**

Employing P. Torrence's classification of five types of creativity, it deems most relevant to analyse the list of authors Lesia Ukrainka translated or referred to in her epistolary in terms of a level approach. A. Taylor (1959) suggests the following creativity levels: expressive, productive, invective (inventive), and innovative. It promotes an entirely new principle or assumption around which new movements and schools may emerge.

Lesia Ukrainka's translations can and should be seen as works that contributed to a new movement in Ukrainian literature and Ukraine's social life because the translated texts enable the implementation of creative strategies and tactics of many Ukrainian authors.

A. Maslow's studies, shaping the concept of a person's potential ability to self-develop and self-improve, can also serve as a basis for analysing the nature of Lesya Ukrainka's translation psychology. A. Maslow's concept is based on a hierarchy of needs, the range of which is determined by human motivation. Within this theory, the

hierarchy of needs is traditionally presented as a pyramid, topped by the need for self-actualisation. According to A. Maslow's observations, to meet this need, individuals must achieve everything they can, having met and fulfilled all the previous needs. In his "Motivation and personality", the author notes: "Creativeness stresses first personality rather than its achievements..."; therefore, the achievements are secondary to self-actualising personality. It stresses characterological qualities like boldness, courage, freedom, spontaneity, perspicuity, integration, self-acceptance. All of which make possible the generalised creativeness to express itself in creative life, creative attitude, or creative person" [3]. The author also points out the expressiveness or Being quality of creativeness that enables self-actualisation. "Creativeness is "emitted" or "radiated".

Maslow's definition of self-actualisation, detecting its features, traits, characteristics, including its connection with creativity, is essential for us. In our opinion, it is pronounced in Lesia Ukrainka's translation work, which is evidenced by her brother's letters.

### **4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

We will attempt to answer what creativity is, employing the concept of creativity by the modern Ukrainian psychologist V. Moliako. He defines creativity as the process of creating something new for a certain subject. Creativity, he argues, is inherent in every person. He suggests that creative activity can be characterised by such parameters as the subject (personality) of creativity, the product of creativity, and the conditions under which the creative process takes place. The researcher believes that the main features of creativity are originality and novelty; an individual brings them into the activity to distinguish it from what was created before and is already known. According to V. Moliako, the essential feature of any creative individual is the pursuance of something original, new, advanced knowledge and skills to analyse phenomena and compare them. The researcher argues that a creative individual always shows perseverance in their work. V. Moliako believes that the main characteristic of human creativity in the process of problem-solving is a solution strategy - a subjective program to solve a new problem, which reflects the primary trend of search activities [4].

The scientists conclude that the concept of a strategy encompasses the entire structure of a problem-solving process: preparation activities (understanding of conditions), planning activities (formation of a plan) and implementation activities (idea verification, an experiment). All these subjects' activities are coordinated with the leading mental trend in their intellectual behaviour. This dominant trend determines the strategy. Every strategy is of an exclusively local nature that corresponds to a

specific local task. However, the individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities that existed before this solution and formed the strategy contribute to shaping an original "pre-strategy" that can serve as the basis for developing a real strategy. Understanding and planning are parts of the strategy, too. Nevertheless, they are not the strategy. The strategy emerges when the "third fulcrum" steps in - the confidence that the chosen method is correct and the idea is relevant. This confidence usually results from a more or less precise and clear forecast and is similar to imaginary "reproduction". The strategy is based on the plan, idea, sequence, direction of the search, and the choice of certain landmarks, made from the very beginning. V. Moliako identifies five key strategic forms of intellectual activity, implemented through specific actions: analogue search / analogising (based on actions related to the search for analogues), combination strategy (based on actions related to the combination of elements), strategy of reconstructive actions (based on actions related to reconstruction, the introduction of new elements, creation of new functions), universal strategy (represents almost harmonious use of the actions mentioned above), random substitutions strategy (based on chaotic, aimless search, on "blind" actions, without any plan or clear hypotheses).

Strategies are implemented through specific actions, the combination of which is provided by certain mental tactics. This psychological approach to determining the strategy can be supported by the ideas of L. Syniavska, who explores the drama's communicative strategies at the turn of the century, including the analysis of Lesia Ukrainka's drama. "One of the ways to re-envisioning the problems of the artistic creativity psychology is the of communicative strategies analysis, both authorial and generic, read in a unique way in the work of art" [5].

The research by V. Moliako and L. Syniavska enables us to conclude that Lesia Ukrainka's translations boost her own creative activity and that of the writers and associates she corresponds with. She influences Ukrainian people's behaviour and intellectual identity.

Appealing to Lesia Ukrainka herself, we notice that her translation activity is associated with her self-actualisation (K. Rogers), which manifests itself as the ability to overcome stereotypes. According to A. Maslow and S. Copper, this recalibration of associative elements into new combinations and approaches, more relevant for a specific task, is a creativity criterion. What is essential in the translation process is presenting the author's creative thinking, idiosyncrasy, and vision of the images created in the text, so literary translation performs a creative function. It is exactly what Lesia Ukrainka looks like in the epistolary. Through the lens of our study, the work by M. Strikha poses a considerable interest. Exploring the role of

Ukrainian translations in the 19th and 20th centuries, the researcher claims that the translation into Ukrainian of world-class literary texts was intended to emphasise the "full value of this language" [6].

Back then, the possibilities of creating one's original works in the Ukrainian language were extremely limited and partially banned, so translation became the creative realm of many artists. This translation's function is observed in other cultures, too, where nations needed self-affirmation through national culture. Respectively, the essence of the function was in preserving the national spirit and culture for a certain period of time "[6]. The researchers refer to V. Koptilov to be the first to comprehend the nation-building function of translation. His idea faces no objections, given the then harsh political, cultural, and literary environment, since for some time, not only did translation takes over the function of fiction, but also "become one of the few areas of free artistic expression, a means of expression and the implicit bearer of the ideas of national revival, resistance and memory" [7].

The correspondence reflects the complexity and variability of relationships, noticeable even at the level of addressing, text play, roles, masks, associations; the tone of the letters indicates the vicissitudes of relations between the younger and older literary generations. As a result, reflections on creativity psychology are quite consistent. Traditionally, most literary critics see Lesia Ukrainka as the author who consciously drives a literary work to serve society.

A detailed and careful analysis of Lesia Ukrainka's epistolary legacy shows the following: she does not prioritise ideology and duty because writing and creativity are carried out at a subconscious level.

"In fact, the most difficult thing is to "weigh" not to write poetry, because it is not a job, but a wave-like improvisation, a form of madness episodes, a person usually cannot vouch for; in general, I never do it on purpose, never make this intention to rhyme, - if poems do not emerge themselves on my mind, I never call them. Even if it is during a year or so, it does not bother me" [8].

In other letters, the creative process is associated with science and "... not so much to people in general, as poets and artists: you should be either hot or cold, but never tepid" [8].

"Nerves are in tatters sometimes, but this is the way they are, including because the profession asks for it", she says in her letter to M. Pavlika" [8].

Therefore, Lesia Ukrainka's epistolary provides material for psychoanalytic interpretations of the character

of the poet's creative writing through the lens of the author's self-esteem and the possibility of receptive interpretation.

Lesya Ukrainka is fond of translations - her whole family, like-minded people, and her fellow writers work on them. It is not a hobby but a dream to create a European library in the Ukrainian language. It is undoubtedly a motivation for creativity, self-actualisation, self-improvement, expansion of topics and figurative system in the works of her own and the Ukrainian literature in general.

From the viewpoint of creativity psychology, the "European library" concept encourages and drives Lesia's intellectual activity. We adhere to D. Bohoyavlenska's concept of "intellectual activity" and define it as "an internal need that is the "engine of creativity" [9].

Lesia's vision of creating the European library becomes the "engine" that drives her fight for the cause "at full fledges!"

"I will do everything it takes; sure, I will, what else can I do! After all, no matter what, literature is my profession" [8].

Directing her own intellectual abilities toward the motivational and well-grounded creation process, Lesia becomes passionate about translations. However, as always, she approaches the issue of creating the European library thoughtfully and tries to find out "whether translated literature is what you call popular publications, or popular publications are something completely different from translated literature?" [8].

She further indicates in her letters that if this literature is meant for the people, then "the catalogue of works to be translated can and even should be reduced... because why the people need those Paul Bourgeois, Byron, Leopardi, Schiller, and Goethe, at least now? However, if these publications target, among others, the intelligentsia, the list should be expanded" [8]. In the letter to her brother, Lesia lists 14 authors she believes should be translated into Ukrainian.

Reflections on the role, place, and purpose of translated literature for the Ukrainian reader, differentiation and separation of readers' interests and preferences are evidence of a creative and thoughtful approach based on a combination of scientific and literary-critical discourses.

Given the specifics of Ukrainian literature, the list of authors suggested by L. Ukrainka for translation enables us to establish that it embodies the psychological idea of the opposition of natural and cultural. This opposition was thoroughly developed by L. Vygotsky in his research on advanced mental functions, realised through the signs and sign systems that surround an individual. Using the

aforementioned L. Vygotsky's position regarding the definition of translation psychology, we would like to add that Lesia Ukrainka does not contradistinguish the literature she proposed to translate and the Ukrainian literature (as "cultural" vs "natural"), but combines them with complementary features. Therefore, it is quite fair to conclude that the "cultural" derives from the "natural", does not exist without it, and cannot be perceived beyond their correlation.

The analysis of Lesya Ukrainka's translation activity as the author's creative phenomenon attempts to find, understand, feel the system-forming factor that combines intelligence, cognitive, personal, and motivational characteristics.

Ya. Ponomariov sees a level transition as a creative act criterion while associating the creation and emergence of a creative product not only with logical conclusions but with intuition, too" [10]. Following his views, we can state that such a translation act results in artistic images, as evidenced by Lesya's epistolary. Therefore, it brings us to a reasonable assumption that this translation activity inspired Lesia Ukrainka to create new, original, individual-and-proprietary and unique artistic images that enriched Ukrainian literature and expanded its image-and-thematic level.

In this translation strategy, we believe that Lesia Ukrainka realised her emotional state because, as L. Vygotskiy rightly commented, emotions are a fact of art; they go beyond an individual, so they are a part of the author's emotional dialogue with the reader. They become understandable only when they are included into a broader socio-psychological system they are incorporated into" [11].

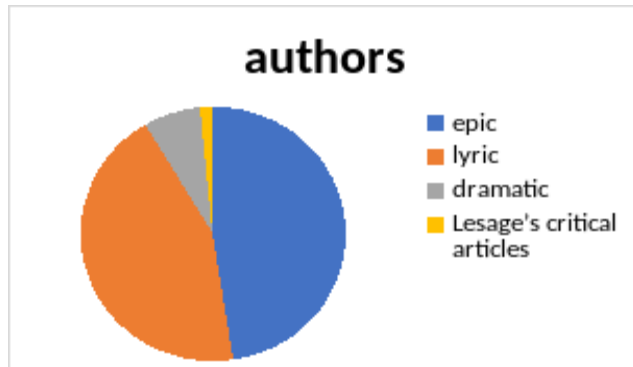
One of the opening lines in Lesia's letter can serve as such socio-psychological guidelines: "get down to business" and "do not get disheartened or lose your nerve" [8]. Such motivation is quite artistic and creative.

So, how did Lesia Ukrainka imagine the European library, and whose works would she like to have translated in the first place? She reflects on it in her letters to her brother Mykhailo. We presented it as a diagram (Figure 1), indicating the generic correlation of the works.

The list of the proposed texts is dominated by epic (28) and lyric (26) authors, with only 4 dramatic and 1 critical works.

Lesia Ukrainka offered English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, and Russian authors to be translated in terms of nationalities. The analysis of the authors' personalities selected for translation indicates the awareness, exquisite aesthetic taste, erudition, thorough

knowledge of classical works of foreign literature, and advanced philological competence. Moreover, the proposed selection of authors and texts outlines Lesia's reflections and observations on the further development of Ukrainian literature and the artistic value of the works.



**Figure 1** Generic correlation of the works

It is how translation work becomes Lesia Ukrainka's inner readiness for self-realisation in creativity. Her translations are of real value since they promote not only her own self-development but, even to a more significant extent, benefit for others.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, based on Lesia Ukrainka's epistolary analysis, specifically her letters on translation issues, we can conclude the nature of this translated literature and the author herself, her creative method, creative nature, and the

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psychological basis of the creative translation act. Lesia Ukrainka's epistolary indicates that translation activity is a change of creative stages explained by the modern theory of psychology. Applying this theory to the author's translations and epistolary makes it possible to analyse not from the traditional literary approach but within the framework of communicative poetics and the new theory of the psychology of creative processes.

The analysis of Lesia Ukrainka's translation activity in her epistolary enabled us to establish that the vision of this process contains dynamic components of the creative process, such as creator's psychology, aesthetic perception psychology, text psychological nature. Moreover, the text contains elements of the psychological diachrony of the original text and the translated text, its interpretation prospects and contexts, as they are hidden yet actualised components of the text existence in time and space of the human existence.

In addition, Lesia's ideas and remarks expressed in her letters make it reasonable to study translations and her work in general due to the theory of changed creative stages. It gives a deeper comprehension of the nature of inspiration, enlightenment, vision, and obsession.

Therefore, the translation process of psychology as a kind of artistic creativity in Lesia Ukrainka's epistolary provides vast material for integrated research that considers the views of representatives of different cultures, scientific fields, and schools and reveals elements of creativity psychology.

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