

Yurchuk O.O. A

Kaleidoscope of Identities

Yurchuk Olena Oleksandrivna, Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Ukrainian Literature and Comparative Studies Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhitomyr, Ukraine

Received September 24, 2013; Revised October 9, 2013; Accepted October 28, 2013

Abstract. In the article has been explored the kaleidoscope of identities in the novel by Mikhail Bulgakov "White Guards". In the text we can see few national identities: Russian, Little Russian, Ukrainian, which are representative of the diverse population. Native Russian and Little Russian identity are military and intellectuals who inhabit the "City". Ukrainian identity is immanent to people, Hetmanate, and army of Petlyura. It exists outside the city of paradise, or is it part of aggressive "Otherness" which conquering the "City". Keywords: identity, national identity, ambivalent identity, empire, colony.

The legitimization of imperial discourse requires the transformation of the colonial experience into text. Such a transformation we can contemplate in the novel by Mikhail Bulgakov "White Guards". However, in the beginning we consider it necessary to activate some facts about the peculiarities of the Russian imperial textuality. Russian literary "colonial archives" appeared in the period of Romanticism. This delay is motivated by the fact that the imperial territory expansion was ahead of its cultural development. The imperial experience as a Russian text differs from the Western. European Orientalism often becomes a scientific practice that aims to inform Europeans of their colony. Russian texts that approve of this imperial paradigm are filled both with a romantic vision of the conquered territory (a "paradise" populated with "strange natives") and with the actions of the very conquerors – conquer as a love adventure (for example, Lermontov's texts). This leads to romanticizing / heroisation of the antecedent -in general. In the nineteenth century an imperial codification of Ukraine's image took place in Russian literature. Travel literature initiated the process that presented Ukrainian land -as a lost paradise, which is indicated for the Russian recipient with ambiguous romantics: it both repels and attracts (V. Izmailov, P. Sumarokov, P. Shalikovo, I. Dolgorukij, I. Vernet and others). V. Matsapura indicates that the authors of the "travel" genre, "heavily mythologized Ukrainian reality, creating attractive poetic images of Arkadiia and Avzonii, the

land where people have fun and live happily" [2, p. 5]. A moment of repulsion is associated with the subconscious understanding that the Ukrainian land is an alien territory, where different language, culture and traditions existed. Moreover, if imperial ambitions are taken into consideration the this "otherness" is coded as low, worse, and hopelessly provincial. However, there is an attractive side, which secures attraction to an apparently infirm object – the Ukrainian land is quite suitable for the development of the empire. This appeal provokes a suppression / forgetting of Ukrainian "otherness", "alienness" that leads to the substitution of concepts, when Ukraine from the "not-their" land changes into a long-lost anachronistic paradise, preserving the autochthonous face of Russia. Topos "of own, but long-forgotten land" needed domestic content. Such content becomes three levels of Ukrainian exoticism: entertainment exotics (exotic natives – "singing and dancing tribe" according to A. Pushkin), autochthonous exotics ("place where one stuck in the past", where old Russian tradition condenses in its thicken / non-evolutionism), and mysterious exotics (the land of the irrational and diabolical). For the formation of the image – "Ukraine is second Italy" or "Ukrainian Eldorado" – Russian writers sentimentalist joined. Their sketches of exotic Ukrainian landscapes have become popular not only among Russian readers, but also among foreign readers. They also resorted to fixation on rites and customs of Ukrainians, paying attention to

the motionless Ukrainian patriarchy ("Letters from Little Russia" by O. L'ovshin, "Little Russian village" by I. Kaluzhynskii, "Travels across holy Russian places. Kiev" by O. Muravjov). The Russian myth

about native Ukraine is supported by Ukrainian "adoption" (E. Said), when the rejection of "sonship" (real identity) happens and integration ("adoption") into a strong imperial identity by dressing

22

Science and Education a New Dimension: Philology, I(3), Issue: 13, 2013 [www.seanewdim.com](http://www.seanewdim.com)

the masks offered by empire. This is largely realized in the works by Nikolai Gogol. After settling down in St. Petersburg in 1829, he did not ignore the Russian intelligentsia's widespread interest in Ukrainian folk art and history. This encourages the young writer to continue working in a field of "Little Russian" subject: "Ukraine is both own and not own, native and still easily imagined in the world of a half real romantasy as a "Slavic Avzoniya", and occupies an increasing place in his poetry and prose works" [4, p. 99]. The revolutionary events that occupied the Russian Empire in the early twentieth century catalyzed the awakening of national forces, which in turn provoked efforts to create a Ukrainian state with an independent center of power (Central Board, Hetmanate with Skoropads'kyi). This resulted in the creation of a new imperial view on the "Ukrainian theme" in Russian literature. The unambiguity loses in the imperial discourse about Ukraine, where Ukrainian often fitted into the context of exotic and archaic Russian "otherness". From the Russian imperial legitimacy Ukraine returns to "itself", but this return is accompanied by populating Ukrainian national with markers necessary for the empire: from the kaleidoscope of identities to the ultimate identity (Ukraine is not Russia, but it is Russian territory). Interestingly, Ukraine as a kaleidoscope of national identities is presented by imperial writers for whom Ukrainian land is their (at least according to the place of birth) territory. Mikhail Bulgakov occupies a notable place among them. However, in the writer's texts (namely, "Days of the Turbins", "The White Guard"), the topos of "Ukraine" is countered with a topos of the "City" (Kyiv). Ukrainian studies of texts by Mikhail Bulgakov demonstrate a careful look at the Ukrainian theme (generally, it revolves around Bulgakov's exceptional attitude to

Kyiv). Russian studies suggest an unambiguous reading of the writer's works in the Russian system of coordinates: "Meanwhile, the very type of thinking, Bulgakov's "feeling" of life have a strong national foundation. Russian Logos and the Russian Soul – central in Russian classic literature – were axial for writer's artistic universe" [3, p. 3]. This ambiguity taking into consideration the reality of Bulgakov's text, seems to be ideological. Ukrainian modus in his drama "Days of the Turbins", in the novel "The White Guard" exists within the boundaries of kaleidoscopic Ukrainian identity. In "The White Guard", the topos "Ukraine" is divided into several semantic images and models, which together quickly construct the varied Ukrainian identity: Russian (Ukraine is Russia); national and marginal (Ukraine is Little Russia), Ukrainian (Ukraine is a land of "wild" people). Russian identity is based on the thesis that "Kiev is a mother of Russians cities" ("Gentlemen, you are the City's last hope. It is your duty to live up to the trust placed in you by the Mother of Russian Cities" [1, p. 204], therefore the coincidence of Ukrainian and Russian available within clearly defined territory – "City". It presents two representations of Kyiv: city the paradise and borderland territory. The archetype of 'city the paradise' is revealed in the

context of a depiction of an apocalyptic revolutionary time in which the city was conceivable as Russian Jerusalem. M. Bulgakov, on one hand, highlights the "paradiseness" of Kyiv with landscapes and, on the one hand, – a special mission. The writer, describing the city, emphasized its beauty and insight special light, framed by the gardens. The biblical concept of the "garden" reinforced the image of the city as a paradise: The gardens lay silent and peaceful, weighed down with white virgin snow. And there were more gardens in the City than any other city in the world. They sprawled everywhere,

with their avenues of chestnuts, their terraces of maples and limes" [1, p. 203]. Bulgakov imbues Kyiv with a special mission. It becomes a shelter for Russian intellectuals and a springboard for new political developments: "The drapes parted and into the hall came Tsar Nicholas II. Go back to the Ukraine, gentlemen", he said, "and raise your regiments. When the moment comes I shall place myself in person at the head of the army and lead it on to the heart of Russia-to Moscow. With these words he broke down and wept" [1, p. 223]. Note that Kyiv as city the paradise, a shelter, a place to escape the turbulent revolutionary reality falls well into the range of irony, which leads to the desecration of the "paradise" context (Tahlberg calls the events in city "a ludicrous operetta"). The author understands Kyiv as a Russian boundary space that separates the temporavl present (revolutionary and bolshevik) and past (monarchist). Topos of Ukrainian city in this context is connected with the idea of the unity of the Ukrainian and Russian. The bridges across Kyiv are symbolic images that determine the trajectory of "Kyiv – Moscow": "But the brightest light of all was the white cross held by the gigantic statue of St Vladimir atop Vladimir Hill. It could be seen from far, far away and often in summer, in thick black mist, amid the osier-beds and tortuous meanders of the age-old river, the boatmen would see it and by its light would steer their way to the

City and its wharves. In winter the cross would glow through the dense black clouds, a frozen unmoving landmark towering above the gently sloping expanse of the eastern bank, whence two vast bridges were flung across the river. One, the ponderous Chain Bridge that led to the right-bank suburbs, the other high, slim and urgent as an arrow that carried the trains from where, far away, crouched another city, threatening and mysterious: Moscow" [1, p. 231].The concept "Ukraine is Russia" is underscored in the novel by the author take on the Russian language, with an irony that it should be replaced it with Ukrainian. The Russian language is presented as a sacred / orthodox: "What's that? Aren't we allowed to use our own orthodox language any more? " [1, p. 397]. In the novel there is also present a marginal and national identity – a Little Russian. It is presented not so much in nominating Ukraine as a Little Russia (though it also takes place in the text – Turbin's words: "Not only would we have chased Petlyura out of the Ukraine" [1, p. 222], but with a consciousness of the characters / the author himself. Little Russianess emerges in repeated emphasizing of the need to form Russian troops on the territory of the "City". Turbin reproaches Hetman the belated desire to create an army that could save Russia: "Who was it who forbade us to form a loyalist Russian

23

Science and Education a New Dimension: Philology, 1(3), Issue: 13, 2013 [www.seanewdim.com](http://www.seanewdim.com)

army in the Ukraine? The Hetman. And no that things have gone from bad to worse, they've started to form a Russian army after all" [1, p. 221]. At first, we see in Turbin's speech (as in many characters) a mixture of identities: he lives in Kyiv (Ukrainian code), calls to form the Russian army based on Kyiv military (dual code), want's to save the Russian Empire (Russian code). The Little Russian identity is associated with the idea of the Ukrainian world dependence -that needs the presence of powerful imperial center, which the Russian army symbolizes. The characters of the novel, defining Kyiv as the

"motherland", do not much identify themselves with the empire (the Russians), but distinguish the Russian context as desirable in any form: the Tsarist (Turbin's monarchist views), the Bolshevik (Myshlayevskii's readiness to join the Red Army). The Ukrainian identity exists in the novel in the context of opposition "Kyiv – Ukraine", which can be read as – Russian opposition to Ukraine. Bulgakov's Kyiv, city the paradise, opposes territory beyond – Ukraine. If in the "paradise" / Russian / Little Russian live confused, but mostly noble intellectuals characters who are trying to adapt to rapid events of revolution, then outside of Kyiv is Ukraine inhabited by "wild people": "They are nothing more than a bunch of animals" [1, p. 236]. Ukrainian world in the

eyes of characters is not only wild, but it is diabolical. In Bulgakov's novel, the Kyiv diabolicness starts with Petliura's forces entering Kyiv. The writer offers a chain of events: at first, in the witch place – "Lysa Gora" – a murder happens, then Petliura is released from the imprisonment and later he captures the "City". This combination of facts provokes understanding of Ukrainian as devilish, wild and uncontrolled: "– Petlyura, it is crazy... Fact is that this country's completely ruined now" [1, p. 232]. Interestingly, in the interlude between the murder on Lysa Mountain and Petliura's release, M. Bulgakov creates a scene of Vasilisa buying milk from Yavdokha the peasant, during which a man experiences sexual fantasy nominating the Ukrainian woman a witch: "Suddenly he seemed to see Yavdokha standing in front of him stark naked, like a witch on a hilltop. –'What cheek...We'll teach 'em? But those breasts of hers... 'The thought was so disturbing that Vasilisa felt sick and dizzy and had to go and wash his face in cold water" [1, p. 240]. This scene ensures the traditional for an imperial discourse model of relationships: colony / woman – empire / man. Enlisting the Ukrainian into an evil aggressive context (Ukrainian are the sexual people-animals) turns Petliura history of Ukrainian independence into a farce-game. A significant part of this game is hypocrisy / fraud connected with a "quest" of real Petliura: " – Look, Manya, look! There's Petlyura himself, look, on the gray horse. Isn't he handsome ... – That's not Petlyura, that's a colonel. " – Oh, really? Then where is Petlyura? " Petlyura's at the palace receiving the French emissaries from Odessa" [1, p. 242]. Masquerade of "Petliuras" has its own version of the author. In the author's reception of individual "I" of an Ukrainian politician is replaced with the collective "we" the people:... But there was something else too – rabid hatred. There were four hundred thousand

Germans and all around them four times forty times four hundred thousand peasants whose hearts blazed with unquenchable malice" [1, p. 221]. However masquerade of Petliura's masks, like the slapstick game in independence ends with a statement: " – Now listen: there's no such person.

This fellow Simon Petlyura never existed. There was no Turk, there was no guitar under a wrought-iron lamp-post on the Malaya Bronnaya, he was never in the Zemstvo Union... it's all nonsense.' Simply a myth that grew up in the Ukraine among the confusion and fog of that terrible year 1918" [1, p. 300]. Hence, in the novel "The White Guard", we encounter a kaleidoscope of national identities: Russian, Little Russian, Ukrainian, whose representatives serve different segments of the population. Those who carry Russian and Little Russian identity are military people and intellectuals who inhabit the "City". There are many vectors in the national self-determination that affect the rapid change in political orientation: from monarchical ideas with the Russian center in the Ukrainian Hetmanate under the auspices of the Germans, from White Guards to Bolshevism. Ukrainian identity is immanent to people, Hetmanat, army of Petliura. It exists outside city the paradise or is a part of an aggressive "otherness", which conquers the "City". We should note that the Ukrainian identity in the novel exists as a part of the game-farce when their participators, on the one hand, are wearing Ukrainian military clothing (Skoropads'kyi's Hetmanat), speak the Ukrainian language, use addresses that send us to the Cossack past (Petliura's army), and on other hand, they do it all without rejecting the Russian context. The military people of the Hetmanat are indignant because of their need to not speak Russian: "– He's a swine, – Turbin went on with hatred in his voice, – why, he can't even speak Ukrainian properly himself! Hell – the day before yesterday I asked that bastard Kuritsky a question. Since last November, it seems, he's forgotten how to speak Russian" [1, p. 221], the Petliura people mix Ukrainian and Russian words: "– Sergeant, sir, that's the wrong document... May I... " [1, p. 300]. This game-farce with its ambiguous national precept causes the impairment of a Ukrainian code that creates frivolous / unserious context of efforts for Ukrainian independence. Thus the Russian Empire as the text begins in the XVII century with the assistance of Ukrainian cultural and literary establishment, and finally formed in the nineteenth century. The beginning of the nineteenth

century indicates the process of codification image of Ukraine in the Russian imperial text; Ukrainian was interpreted on two levels: as an exotic (literature wandering, texts by Gogol ) and as a hostile "other" ("Taman" Lermontov ). The representatives of Romanticism in Russian literature not only create the desired image of the Empire colonized Ukrainian land, but also resorted to

legitimize imperial expansion through the creation of consolidating imperial myths. In addition Russian literature presents Ukrainian colonized view of Ukraine, which is immanent Russian writers - came from Ukraine, Ukrainian tragedy of so - called " people of the empire " that they had to play by the imperial rules, and repressioning they national originality.

24

Science and Education a New Dimension: Philology, I(3), Issue: 13, 2013 www.seanewdim.com

Twentieth century was a time of formation of the new imperial view of the Ukrainian issue, was seen several of its variations: Ukrainian-Russian kaleidoscope of identities in the texts by Mikhail Bulgakov. The writer 's novel "The White Guard" notes the presence of several variants of national identity: Russian, Little Russian, Ukrainian. Carriers of these identities are people from

different social start. Russian and Little Russian identity immanent intellectual representatives of the military establishment. Ukrainian identity characteristic come from the people, the military and army Petlyury Hetmanate. Note that Ukrainian identity is often outside the city of paradise, it is part of "otherness" that tries to aggressive actions to win the "City".

#### REFERENCES (TRANSLATED AND TRANSLITERATED)

1. Булгаков М.А. Белая гвардия / В огненном кольце. – Москва: Молодая гвардия, 1988. – 698 с. Bulgakov M. A. In the ring of fire. The White Guard / In the Ring of Fire. – Moscow: Young Guard, 1988. – 698 p. 2. Мацапура В.І. Українська тема в російській літературі першої половини ХІХ століття (проблеми еволюції, міфоло-гізації, інтертекстуальності). – Сімферополь, 2002. – 33 с. Macapura V.I. Ukrain's'ka tema v rosijs'kij literaturi pershoi polovyny XIX stolittia (problemy evoljucii, mifologizacii, intertekstual'nosti). – Simferopol,

2002. – 33 p. 3. Урюпин І.С. Национальные образы-архетипы в творчестве М.А. Булгакова. – Елецк, 2001. – 25 с. Urjupin I.S. Nacyonal'nye obrazu-arhetipy v tvorcestve M.A. Bulgakova. – Eletsck, 2001. – 25 p. 4. Зеров М. Українське письменство ХІХ ст. Від Куліша до Винниченка: Лекції, нариси. – Драгобич: Видавнича фірма "Відродження", 2007. – 568 с. Zerov M. Ukrain's'ke py's'menstvo XIX st. Vid Kulisha do Vynnychenka: Lekcii, narysy. – Drohobych: Vydavnycha firma "Vidrodzhennia", 2007. – 568 p.

Юрчук Е.А. Калейдоскоп идентичностей Аннотация. В статье проанализировано калейдоскоп идентичностей в романе Михаила Булгакова "Белая гвардия". Показано, что в тексте присутствует несколько вариантов национальной идентичности: русская, малорусская и украинская, которые представлены разными слоями населения. Носителями русской и малорусской идентичности есть военные и интеллектуалы, которые обитают в "Городе". Украинская идентичность имманентна народу, Гетманщине и армии Петлюры. Она существует за пределами города-рая или стает частью "Инаковости", что завоевывает Город.

Ключевые слова: идентичность, национальная идентичность, амбивалентная идентичность, империя, колония.