

# Postcolonial identity in Yurii Andrukhovych's poetry: landscapes and dislocation

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Postkolonialna teorija obravnava veliko pomembnih tematik, vprašanje identitete pa je ob dihotomiji moči/znanja in ob narativnih strategijah reprezentacije ključno. Analiza literarnega besedila omogoča prepoznavanje ideoloških sprememb v javnem diskurzu in posameznikovi zavesti, ki temelji na subjektivnem jezikovnem vedenju. Postkolonialni pristop omogoča analizo izgradnje identitete in transformacije ter presečišče med govorečim subjektom in njegovimi različnimi identitetami. V tem kontekstu se poezija Jurija Andruhoviča izkaže kot zanimiv predmet obravnave. Oblikovanje subjekta in transformacijske strategije je mogoče preveriti s pomočjo ključnega koncepta pokrajine in dislokacije. Transformacija je prisotna v kontekstu generacijske paradigme. Poezija temelji na generaciji iz osemdesetih let 20. stoletja in ponuja tematsko razširitev na poezijo generacije iz devetdesetih let, usmerjena pa je v podvajanje in širjenje tematskih vsebin.

Postcolonial theory deals with many important issues and the question of identity is a key one along with the power / knowledge dichotomy and the narrative strategies of representation. The analysis of literary text allows to identify ideological transformations in public discourse and individual consciousness which is based on subject's linguistic behavior. The postcolonial approach allows to analyze identity construction and transformation as well as the intersection between the speaking subject and its different identities. In this context, the poetry of Yurii Andrukhovych is an interesting object for reflection. Subject construction and transformation strategies can be examined through the landscape and dislocation key concept. This transformation is vivid in the context of generational paradigm. Based on the transition from the 1980s generation, this poetry provides subject expansion to the 1990s generation poetry, and is oriented towards the doubling and multiplying of subject.

**Ključne besede:** postkolonialna teorija, identiteta, subjektivnost, sodobna ukrajinska poezija, Jurij Andruhovič

**Key words:** postcolonial theory, identity, subjectivity, contemporary Ukrainian poetry, Yurii Andrukhovych

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## Introduction

In contemporary Ukrainian literature, Yurii Andrukhovych is perceived a trickster mythical character. The trickster is a medial persona who is able to cross the line between worlds. The trickster is immoral and conventional good and evil categories are meaningless when estimating some of his/her acts. The trickster is responsible for situations that undermine the strict and monolithic world structure through parodying creation acts. Most importantly, the trickster imitates or parodies cosmogenic ritual acts, thus he/she is able to produce the controllable chaos in the world.

In his first poetry collection *The Sky and Squares* (1985) and the subsequent books, Andrukhovych demonstrates the border between the Soviet and post-Soviet epochs. Andrukhovych's main poems have been written in the late Soviet era but his poetry cannot be inscribed in the Soviet rhetoric paradigm. What is more intriguing, the poetry of Andrukhovych marks the border between the generations of 1980s and 1990s. Thus, the aesthetical paradigms of preceding and succeeding generations are combined in his writings. Ultimately, Andrukhovych's creative works become a turning point in the subsequent literary hierarchy collapse. The literary life during the 1990s can be compared with that of 1920s: there are turbulent literary life and plenty of literary groups. The Bu-Ba-Bu (Burlesque – Booth – Buffoonery) literary group, founded by Andrukhovych and his counterparts in 1985, was the first one among a number of the 1990s literary groups. However, as I presume, Bu-Ba-Bu appearance can be considered, among other groups and phenomena of that time, as a parody of the Ukrainian Writers' Union that is the Soviet institution for literary life organization and control.

In Andrukhovych's writings, space conceptualization is a crucial mechanism for identity construction. Dislocations, conquests, adventures, pilgrimages, imprisonments, and military campaigns are existentially significant for the post-colonial uprooting and boundary-building, as well as for Andrukhovych's protagonist who constructs him/herself and is being created by the power discourse at the same time. There is no consensus on whether or not the term "colonial" should be applied for the facts connected with the Russian<sup>1</sup> and Soviet Empire of its late period. Vitaly Chernetsky argues that the "three worlds" symbolic geopolitical model, as a base for theorizing about power distribution, dominates in postcolonial studies (Chernetsky 2007: 7). The rhetoric on which this symbolic geography is grounded admits exclusion of the Second World from the Western interpretational scheme. This scheme is bipolar as it describes the relationship of the First and Third Worlds. Invisibility of the Second World in postcolonial studies is caused to a certain extent

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<sup>1</sup> There is no consensus on whether or not the colonial status of Ukrainian culture in the Russian Empire should be recognized. To illustrate, Oleh Ilnytzkyj draws attention to the fact of Ukrainian elite' participation in Russian imperial culture building. Ilnytzkyj insists that it would be an exaggeration to treat Ukrainian national identity as it was created in the first half of the 19th century in terms of Ukrainian culture subordination (Ilnytzkyj 2014). Alexandr Etkind prefers the term "internal colonization" based on the class and social approach but not the ethnic one. He proposes to analyze the Empire as the hierarchy including the subjects of power and subaltern objects (Etkind 2011). Yaroslav Hrytsak draws attention to the participation of Ukrainian elites in the Soviet political power as well as to the involvement of Ukrainians in imperial colonization processes (quoted in Horbyk 2016).

by the reciprocal symmetry of the First World guilt and the Third World resentment<sup>2</sup>. According to this approach, the ruling center and the subordinated periphery asymmetry in the Second World can be interpreted in terms of the Second World internal hierarchy, beyond the universal three-part scheme. As Vitaly Chernetsky insists, “when direct challenges came to this continuing privileging of the First World as a synecdoche for the universal, they were formulated from the perspective of the Third World, and important and laudable as they have been, they perpetuated the exclusion of the Second World from global cultural models, now recast in the oxymoronic binary of the First vs the Third World, which can be found even in the work of otherwise forward-looking scholars” (Chernetsky 2007: 7).

David Chioni Moore’s article “Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet?” is one of the first attempts to call into question the universality of the three worlds geopolitical scheme. In this article, Moore anatomizes this three-part geopolitical model and analyses its essential prerequisite and the elements of this scheme. Moore argues that the core theoretical implications of postcolonial studies are based on racial and cultural difference and on territorial remoteness (Moore 2006: 15). However, Moore insists that Western colonization types, as described in his article, can be applied to the Russian (and after 1920 – to the Soviet) Empire. According to Moore, the classic type of colonization is based on economic, political, military, and cultural control, exercised over racially different people (Moore 2006: 21). The second type is the settler colonization and the third type, the dynastic one, is determined by the territories conquest of the neighbors (Moore 2006: 21). The fourth type, the reverse-cultural colonization, Moore describes as a specific Russo-Soviet phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> Moore states that “*Mittel-European* capitals such as Budapest, Berlin, and Prague were therefore seen in Russia, at least by some, as colonial prizes, rather than as burdens needing ‘civilizing’ from their occupiers” (Moore 2006: 26). According to Moore, the Russian and Soviet colonization of Ukraine is described as the third and fourth type of colonization (Moore 2006: 26). In this context, Marko Pavlyshyn applies the term “cultural colonialism” to the Russian and later Soviet Empire. This type of colonialism produces a hierarchy of institutional and ideological values in which the colonizer is central, visible, universal and dominant, and the colonized, accordingly, described as marginal, invisible, subordinate and local (Pavlyshyn 1992: 43–44).

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<sup>2</sup> As David Chioni Moore states, “One aspect of that commitment has been the reasonable belief that the First World has largely caused the Third World’s ills, and an allied, less-justifiable belief that the Second World’s socialism was the best alternative. When most of the Second World collapsed in 1989 and 1991, the collapse resulted in the silences apparent in Shohat (=Shoah, I. B.), and it still remains difficult, evidently, for postcolonial theorists to recognize the postcolonial dynamic within the Second World” (Moore 2006: 20).

<sup>3</sup> What is indicative, all attempts of postcolonial studies applying in Russian scientific discourse are not very consistent. If Alexandr Etkind, as stated above, in his analyses of the Russian Empire colonialism mostly ignores the national factor, then Madina Tlostanova’s book in her attempt of Soviet and Post-Soviet cultural situation interpreting is, as Chernetsky calls it, “a traumatized, melancholic utopia” (Chernetsky 2007: 46). Clearly, in the analyses of transcultural and postcolonial hybridity the traumatic experience of oppression that Russian and Soviet colonies have been forced to endure is omitted. For a detailed explanation of this metropolitan blindness – see (Chernetsky 2007: 41–46).

Another important issue regarding literary texts is the correlation / intersection of postcolonialism and postmodernism<sup>4</sup>. It is more a question of postcolonial studies genealogy than political and aesthetic decussating. Vitaly Chernetsky states that postcolonialist discourse is regarded as “a supplement and augmentation of the scholarly discourse on postmodernism originating from Third World contexts” (Chernetsky 2007: 7).

The combination of postcolonial and postmodernist approaches is particularly effective for analyzing Ukrainian post-Soviet literature. As Chernetsky puts it, “I would like to assert, following Foster and Jameson, the understanding of ‘post-modernism’ as a condition and logic of a cultural era (generally dated back to the 1960s) – that is, as this era’s dominant rather than just a movement or a style (as the Russian literary critics have tended to view it)” (Chernetsky 2007: 13). In this case, postmodernism is interpreted as an attempt “to deconstruct modernism not in order to seal it in its own image but in order to open it, to rewrite it” (Foster 1983: xi). That is to say, dominant narratives of modernism interact with repressed or marginalized discourses along with other strategies of deconstruction (Foster 1983: xiii). According to Hall Foster, postmodernism is connected with the crisis of Western culture representations; therefore, categories which are considered to be universal and immutable, need revision and rewriting. One of these categories is the modernists’ “utopian dream of a time of pure presence, a space beyond representation” (Foster 1983: xv). For this reason, the postmodernist “anti-aesthetic” project is linked to deconstruction and representation order rewriting as “we are never outside representation or rather, never outside its politics” (Foster 1983: xv). In that regard, the postcolonial discourse as connected with expelled and marginalized groups is correlated with a postmodern strategy of universality and normativity deconstruction. The question of representation in liaison with identity construction cannot be separated from the issue of narrativity as long as it is the narrative wholeness that maintains the illusion of a unified, completed, and coherent identity (Hall 1996: 598). In this respect, the subject fragmentation (alienation, death) is important for the discussion. Fredric Jameson believes that decentering of the formerly centered subject is closely linked to “the end of the autonomous bourgeois monad or ego or individual” of the classical capitalism and nuclear family period (Jameson 1991: 15). Stuart Hall proposes the theory of three identities (Enlightenment subject, sociological subject, and post-modern subject) that follow one another in a historical perspective. The modern sociological subject identity is constructed as “interaction” between self and society, the private and the public, the “inside” and the “outside”. It replaces the Enlightenment subject whose identity “was based on a conception of the human person as a fully centered, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness, and action, whose ‘center’ consisted of an inner core which first emerged when the subject was

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<sup>4</sup> This has been reflected in the studies of Marko Pavlyshyn (1992, 1994), Tamara Hundorova (2013), and Olena Yurchuk (2013). The more detailed postcolonial methodology implementation analysis has been made by Marko Pavlyshyn (2014). However, his investigation reveals the lack of modern methodology implementation in Ukraine.

born, and unfolded with it, while remaining essentially the same – continuous or ‘identical’ with itself – throughout the individual’s existence” (Hall 1996: 597–598).

According to the sociological understanding of identity, the subject’s inner core is formed in the interaction between self and society, or in other words, in relation to significant others; therefore, “the fact that we project ‘ourselves’ into these cultural identities, at the same time internalizing their meanings and values, making them ‘part of us’, helps to align our subjective feelings with the objective places we occupy in the social and cultural world” (Hall 1996: 598). From this perspective, the subject’s identity is formed as stitching the subject into the structure (Hall 1996: 598). On the contrary, stitching the post-modern subject into the structure is more complex: “The very process of identification, through which we project ourselves into our cultural identities, has become more open-ended, variable, and problematic. This produces the post-modern subject, conceptualized as having no fixed, essential, or permanent identity” (Hall 1996: 598). Hall states that “The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent ‘self’. Within us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions, so that our identifications are continuously being shifted about” (Hall 1996: 598).

In this context, terminological relevance in relation to the Second World literature is important, inasmuch as Fredric Jameson describes postmodernism as a phenomenon pertaining only to late capitalist societies. However, Chernetsky proposes the convincing evidence: “the first signs of the shift from modernism to postmodernism arose in the Second World more or less simultaneously with their appearance in the West” (Chernetsky 2007: 10). In the case of Ukraine, examples can be drawn from Ukrainian “chimeric prose” “initiated by Oleksandr Il’chenko’s 1958 novel, *Kozats’komu rodu nema perevodu, abo zh Mamai i chuzha molodytsia* (The Cossack kin never wanes, or Mamai and the stranger woman), subtitled *ukrains’kyi khymernyi roman z narodnykh ust* (a Ukrainian chimeric novel derived from people’s word – literally, “from the people’s lips)” (Chernetsky 2007: 189). According to Chernetsky, Ukrainian chimeric prose fits into the postmodern / postcolonial paradigm. In addition, it should be noted that not only the genre approach but also the generational one is crucial. In the 1960s–1970s poetry (Oleh Lysheha, Hryhorii Chubai, and Taras Melnychuk) as well as in prose, the narrative strategy represents subject’s decentralization and fragmentation.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the strategies of subject’s postcolonial identity formation. Roman Horbyk’s paper, “Ideologies of the Self: Constructing the Modern Ukrainian Subject in the Other’s Modernity” (2016), is an interesting example of strategies for subject’s identity construction in the colonial situation. Basing his analysis on Foucaultian subject / knowledge / power triangle, Horbyk investigates ideological implications in the 1920s fiction and articles in periodicals. In this paper, the author focuses on ideological prescriptions and didactic elements, inserting analyzed narratives in the Foucaultian knowledge / power configuration. My suggestion is that in Ukrainian literature of the last third of the 20th century the strict generational pattern, manifested in the transformation of the narrative subject, can be observed. For instance, in the poetry of the 1980s there is a subject’s extension strategy, and this correlates with Stuart Hall’s statement that modern

subject's identification is a process of stitching the subject in the structure. It means that there is a national history and cultural context for the representatives of the 1980s generation. On the contrary, in the 1990s poetry doubling or even multiplication of the subject can be observed. This correlates with postmodern subject's characteristics and fits into "the play of identities" scheme (Stuart Hall's term) determined by inside and outside identity's contradictions and by its conceptual identification as a process of differentiation in contrast to unification. According to Kobena Mercer, "the political landscapes of the modern world are fractured in this way by competing and dislocating identification – arising, especially, from the erosion of the 'master identity' of class and the emerging identities belonging to the new political ground defined by the new social movements: feminism, black struggles, national liberation, anti-nuclear, and ecological movements" (quoted in: Hall 1996: 601). In post-Soviet Ukraine, this identification diversity is determined historically. There is a competition between nostalgic Soviet subject's integrity and incoherent post-Soviet subject whose identity cannot be constructed as "master" as this post-Soviet identity is determined by national, linguistic, gender, and class factors in different proportions. This is exactly why the postmodernism of the 1990s poetry cannot be defined from the perspective of the instrumentalist approach and conceptualized as an artistic style or manner. In fact, not all texts of this period contain the elements of intertextuality, carnivalization, and parodying, the free play of signifiers, the erosion of boundaries between mass and high cultures. On the contrary, the texts of the 1990s include doubling / multiplication of the narrative subject, features which are common for Maryana Savka's or Serhiy Zhadan's poetry. The 1990s poetry is characterized by the actualization of our / their voices differentiation, substitution and replacement narrative strategy, and plurality of the world.

### **Toward the West**

In postcolonial theory, the term "dislocation" concerns "the experience of those who have willingly moved from the imperial 'Home' to the colonial margin" as well as "the extreme form of physical, social and individual dislocation involved in the institution of slavery". In other words, "The phenomenon may be a result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion and settlement, a consequence of willing or unwilling movement from a known to an unknown location" (Ashcroft 2007: 65). This terminological duality is reflected in the poetry of Yurii Andrukhovych. His poem *The Kolomyia Regiment in Paris. 1815* ("Коломийський полк у Парижі. 1815") most likely refers to the historic event on 20 November 1815 when the Treaty of Paris (the second peace treaty) was signed between France and Great Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia. In this poem, Andrukhovych appeals to the traumatic issue of Ukrainian participation in other people's wars and, more importantly, in rival armies. Besides, his poetic cycle *The Depictions of Battles* ("Батальні сценки") includes the other texts alongside *The Kolomyia Regiment in Paris. 1815* referring to World War I (*Chernihiv Municipal Artillery* – "Чернігівська міська артилерія") and to the Ukrainian liberation struggle of 1917–1921 as well as the October Revolution in

Russia (*Narbut's A. 1917* – “*Нарбутове “А”. 1917*”). In *The Kolomyia Regiment*, Andrukhovych describes a typical situation when the inhabitants of Ukrainian lands (and the people of *Kolomyia* as well) administrated by the Austro-Hungarian Empire were killed in imperial wars.

However, text's anticolonial orientation is less straightforward than readers anticipate: for its interpretation, the poem needs consideration of the different contexts. At first sight, *The Kolomyia Regiment* describes a typical situation of colonial dislocation through the native / foreign country opposition. Andrukhovych's textual strategy is based on the space / place dichotomy. The place emerges as a result of the interaction between landscapes and people. Paul Ricoeur argues that a space becomes open for our experience and observation in the process of interaction between human beings and lands (Ricoeur 2004: 206). The place is inserted in the hierarchies and cultural matrixes and is formed as a structure in the process of central / marginal and determinant / unessential issues interrelation. In postcolonial context, dislocation may take a form of converting “the uncolonized ‘space’ into colonized ‘place’ exercising by language (Ashcroft 2007: 65). In the poem by Andrukhovych, linguistic appropriation of the alien space is conceptualized as a colonial process of mimicking. That is to say, Paris is described through the determinant (recognizable) places, such as Arc de Triomphe and the Palace of Justice (“oh you the palace of justice, the arch of triumphs”<sup>5</sup> – “палаце правосудний триумфів арко”), the Palace of Versailles (“the islands are floating in the river oh Versailles do waltz!” – “острови плинуть річкою вальсуй версале”), and the Seine river (“the ash-tree leaf is floating in the Seine” – “сеною плине яворовий листочок”). But the hierarchy formation is a process of stereotyping linked to the Other's glance. Paradoxically, Paris (or Europe, in a broad sense) becomes an object of linguistic and semantic appropriation. Widely reproduced in mass culture, the image of Frenchmen as wine lovers (“the war is over and there are seven barrels of wine” – “скінчилась війна і вина сім бочок”) is a specific description originated from the language of the observer but not from that of the observed subject. But the most representative case of linguistic appropriation are linguistic games which are an important characteristic of Andrukhovych's literary style. For instance, the cross-linguistic homonymic effect built on *hryzety* (French: grisettes) / *hryzutsia* (Ukrainian: gnawing) the sound of words (“grisettes are gnawing on the arks of balconies” – “на ковчегях балконів гризуться гризетки”) is the playful integration of Other in the native language space. This playfulness is an ironic deconstruction of “the plucked roosters” (“обскубаних когутів”) and the heartbreaking laments of “soldiers with burned mugs” (“вояцтва з обгорілими писками”).

According to this principle, the native land space is formed as well. The *Kolomyia* recognizable image as a capital of Easter eggs painting (the unique Museum of Easter Egg and the Easter Egg Monument are in *Kolomyia*) is manifested through the body-map metaphor. There are the human body (“we are painted by sobers that are sort of blades we are glowing with our many wounds” – “розмальовані шаблями ніби бритвами / світимосся наскрізно рана на рані”) and the terra's body (“have we ever come to you the capital of our pain you are *kolomyia* the

<sup>5</sup> Here and further translation from Ukrainian is mine, except “Jamaica the Cossak”.

easter egg you are kolomyia the city” – “чи ж дійдемо до тебе столице нашого болю / коломіє писанко коломіє місто”). In this way, Easter egg ornaments are conceptualized as writings that describe the traumatic experience of soldiers. The inversion of sense is clearly seen – in the Easter ritual, the clear egg’s surface painting is a cosmologic metaphor. On the other hand, a human body or a terra’s body is seen as a map of loss, a destruction and dismemberment visual metaphor. Divided by imperial borders homeland and scarred by the war, bodies are symbolically identified through the metaphor of writing. In other words, Ukrainian soldiers are not only inserted into a strange space (“we are the ones who have camped in the heart of Paris” – “а то ми серед парижу табором стали”) but they also mark this space with their native language. Moreover, linguistic markers include their textual and ideological patterns as well. In his poem, Andrukhovych uses dialect Galician words. In this case, the language becomes not only the way of establishing “the Galician camp” in Paris but also the dismantling of linguistic norms. That is to say, Andrukhovych combines the time of narration and that of reading, reaching ironic effect.

This irony is based rather on the context and is outlined by the time of reading and the reader’s experience than on textual senses. Yet, in the reader’s present time, there is a Ukrainian myth of Europe originating in the trauma of elimination and desire – something that could not happen in 1815 as described by Andrukhovych. The irony is linked with different contexts related to the contemporary myth of Europe. In this myth, Paris is a quintessence of desired Europe and Arc de Triomphe with other places become the objects of tourists’ consumption but not the places where the historical drama emerged. Andrukhovych’s irony outlines the Austro-Hungarian Empire utopian vision. According to this point of view, the Empire is not the metropolitan power but it is Europe from which Ukraine has been brutally separated.

### Inside the Empire

The other story of dislocation refers to other empire. The poem *Vania the Cain* (“*Ваня Кайн*”), as Andrukhovych has noted in the motto, is based on “the old Moscow picture book (*lubok*)”. Van’ka Cain’s literary biographies and picture books, which can be viewed as an analogue of mass literature, were extremely popular in the eighteenth century Russia amongst the townsfolk and merchants. Van’ka Cain, whose real name was Ivan Osipov (1717–1756), was not only the famous burglar and robber but also the outstanding organizer who integrated the criminal world into Moscow police. In 1748, this resulted in the mass terror in Moscow, further leading to anarchy and paralyzing power institutions. Osipov’s nickname can be easily explained by his cooperation with the police as he surrendered low-level criminals and harbored major ones.

In fact, *Vania the Cain* demonstrates the deconstruction of the Soviet / Russian myth. It should be noted that the key argument, determining the post-colonial researches’ reluctance to analyze the Second World in terms of post-colonial methodology, is the approval of the racial, linguistic, and religious similarity of the colonizer and the colonized, taking into account Russia’s colonial domination

over Slavic countries, Ukraine and Belarus. It is difficult to say now if this scholarly prejudice is linked with the myth of the three fraternal nations thoroughly cultivated by Russia. However, this myth becomes fatal for Ukraine in the current Ukrainian-Russian war. Andrukhovych refers to this propagandist myth, veiling it under the other historical plot: the Russian “brother” turns out biblical Cain.

Similar to *The Coloma Regiment*, *Vania the Cain* is based on our / their land opposition. Yet in *The Coloma Regiment*, a foreign land is not a colony opposed to a metropolis but a neutral space (however, when being read in the context of the modern Ukrainian myth, it plays a role of the Europe metonymic substitution). In *Vania the Cain*, a foreign land is the territory of the enemy which absorbed the colony. Our / their asymmetry is absolute as the empire represented in the textual space takes the place of the lyrical subject’s native land, marked by the words “the bright stars” (“ясні зорі”). Driven from its space by the empire, homeland becomes not only invisible but also unnamed, and the paraphrase “the bright stars” which is a reduced form of the idiom “to the bright stars, to the calm water” (“на ясні зорі, на тихі води”) does not identify Motherland but just points at it.

The colonial dislocation plot of *Vania the Cain* is more tragic than the military drama of *The Kolomyia Regiment*. However, this plot refers to Andrukhovych’s *The Moscoviad* (“*Московіада*”) (1992). Wandering around the metropolis center, the protagonist of this novel, Otto von F., finds both horizontal and vertical (spatial and symbolic) imperial dimensions and returns finally to Ukraine with a bullet in his skull. In *Vania the Cain*, the source of voice is discovered in the poem’s last verse; thus, the subordinated object is replaced with the speaking subject. The intertextual game is actualized by an allusion to the biblical context: “you who are quick with your fraternal hands / give me a drunken embrace / let me go to the bright stars / I am immortal now and you are not my keeper anymore” (“братні руки до розправи скорі / для обіймів п’яних розпросториш / відпусти мене на ясні зорі / я вже вічний ти мені не сторож”).

The biblical phrase “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Genesis 4:9) is not only a key for reading the plot of this poem but also a marker for ideological and linguistic dismantling of the imperial myth and for the inscription of the colonized subject into discursive space. There is inversion of speaking subjects – in the Bible, Cain is a narrating and acting subject; however, the killed “brother” of Andrukhovych’s text is able to tell his own truth. In this way, Andrukhovych deconstructs the hierarchy based on language / power interaction. The power relation dichotomy is called into question by the colonized subject’s linguistic representation; this subject not only manifests its presence through the speaking act but also builds a narrative in which the empire is described from the viewpoint of the colonized subject.

In *The Coloma Regiment*, Paris is described through real and symbolic topography; in the “Russian kingdom” (“в руськім царстві”), however, concrete loci are denoted through culturally produced meanings. These meanings are constructed from the colonized subject’s viewpoint: the imperial space is marked by traumas, repressions, and violence. Moscow here, as in *The Moscoviad*, is a center of the metropolis: “for whipping again at the stables / from Moscow to the very to Alaska” (“знов на стайнях батою пороти / від москви до самих до аляски”). The locus of Moscow is inscribed in Andrukhovych’s text as a line from

*The Song about Motherland* (1936) by Vasilii Lebedev-Kumach – “from Moscow to the very margins / of my immense Motherland” (“от Москвы до самых до окраин / неотъемлемой Родины моей”). This song was so recognizable in the Soviet Union that it claimed to be the official hymn of Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union; the song’s first chords were the main theme of the Soviet Union Broadcasting. The other Andrukhovych’s significant topos is the Yenisei which is conceptualized in this context as a metonymy of Siberia: “you are tearing your shirt off and my skin having been peeled off me somewhere on the Yenisei is under your shirt”<sup>6</sup> (“рвеш сорочку та під нею шкіра / здерта з мене десь на єнісеї”). This concealed collective trauma (a mass eviction of the Ukrainians to Siberia in 1920–1950 as well as their mass executions and their imprisonment in Soviet labor camps) is represented through the reference to the concrete locus and treated simultaneously as a place of remembrance. Therefore, the speaking subject not only constructs his narrative through the nominative practice, that can be conceptualized as a linguistic appropriation of things and places, but also re-orders a symbolic space of the empire from the standpoint of the colonized subject and its traumatic experience.

Cultural stereotypes used by Andrukhovych in his poems are geared to creating the counter-narrative by dismantling the position of colonizer who has a privilege to be the only subject of speaking and observing. Such obsessive observation is a powerful instrument of the imperial domination as surveillance “objectifies and interpellates the colonized subject in a way that fixes its identity in relation to the surveyor” (Ashcroft 2007: 207). The exercise of power over the space includes obtaining “the position of panoramic observation, itself a representation of knowledge and power over colonial space” (Ashcroft 2007: 208). Andrukhovych exercises an ideological inversion of the imperial strategy: in his poems, the observer and the observed are reversed, and the colonizer is an object of observation, estimation, analyses, and representation. This is counter-narrative produced by the colonized. In Andrukhovych’s text, the Russian empire consists of cultural stereotypes rooted in public consciousness. It is heavy drinking of the Russians (“in the Russian kingdom, there is a bender again / and even pigeons on temples are livid with boozing” – “знову в руськім царстві пиятика / навіть голуби на храмах сизи”), their propensity for violence (“for whipping again at the stables” – “знов на стайнях батогом пороти”, “you are stomping on it just like you have stomped on<sup>7</sup> the foreign princess” – “топчеш, як топтав чужу князівну”), and a specific zoo- and geo-symbolism outlining Russia as a land of cold, Arctic nights and wild bears (“you are tearing your caftan off as if you are dying / at this immense winter bear night” – “рвеш каптан бо ніби й справді гинеш / у безкраю ніч ведмежу й зимну”). However, Andrukhovych’s poems are more based on the literary background than on social stereotypes and prejudices. Represented as specifically Russian, predisposition for being the object and subject of violence (“you are the dark mouth looks like a Russian shirt / you are the one who pray

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<sup>6</sup> The Russian idiom *to tear one's shirt off* (*rvat' na sebe rubashku*) has a meaning of expressing one's feelings explosively.

<sup>7</sup> The sense is “to rape the foreign princess”.

to God rather for his thong than for his mercy / who pray for whipping again at the stables / from Moscow to the very to Alaska” – “мій косоворотий темний роте / в Бога просиш різки паче ласки / знов на стайнях багатом пороти / від москви до самих до аляски”) refers to *Dream* by Taras Shevchenko. Besides, “the axe that has fallen from heaven into mountains” (“сокира, що з небес упала у недеї”) might be Raskolnikov’s axe as well. Through these implicit allusions Andrukhovych, like Les Poderevianskyi with his play *Pavlik Morozov*, refers to the Godbearing people concept rooted in Russian culture and deconstructs it at the same time. The textual strategy of inversion and dislocation works to construct the de-colonized subject who not only becomes the source of glance and voice but also creates his own narrative.

### The Exotic Otherness of Self

Andrukhovych’s other poem, *Jamaica the Cossak*, which can be described as a dislocation text, is much more controversial from the viewpoint of subject-constructing strategy. *Jamaica the Cossak*<sup>8</sup> is the most representative text regarding the postcolonial discourse in Ukrainian literature (see Pavlyshyn 1994). This unexpected mixture of Ukrainian reality and Caribbean exoticism have been conceptualized as the postmodern game with different cultural contexts and the implicit juxtaposition of Ukrainian and other post-colonialisms, in particular Caribbean (Chernetsky 2007: 216). First of all, unforced dislocation in *Jamaica the Cossak* is a sign which indicates the position of the colonizer but not the colonized: “on this side is bahama mama on the other palms of Haiti / at night stepping out of the bungalow i see the towers of freetown” (“по сей бік багама-мама по той бік пальми гаїті / і вежі фрітауна бачу як вийду вночі з бунгало”), “when father wanted to take that blessed place, freetown” (“а батько ж хотіли взяти отой блаженний фрітаун”). In the poem, Andrukhovych constructs the speculative situation describing numerous Cossacks’ see campaigns as if they would have been included in the foreign conquests context. The Freetown conquest (Chernetsky pays attention to the etymological symbolism – (Chernetsky 2007: 216)) can be interpreted as a metaphor of Ukraine’s freedom and independence. In that case, an allusion to Ukrainian Liberation battles of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century is quite reasonable as well as allies’ betrayal topos that is common for Ukrainian folklore and literature: “the sea mowers-corsaires betrayed us in the battle” (“та й зрадили нас у битві морські косарі корсари”).

However, I believe that the poem’s deeper sense is revealed in the collaboration of the Cossak and the drinking episode of the pirate with the phallic name Dick. The pirate’s name is not a coincidence or a sign of Andrukhovych’s spontaneous wit, it is a problematization of desire in the context of which women’s and terra’s bodies that have to be conquered are converged: “when father wanted to take that blessed place, freetown / there they have thirteen churches and an eternal war with cupid / and also thirteen abysses where silver and gold are hidden / young girls there are like vines growing quietly behind the walls / they’re dying to make love

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<sup>8</sup> The poem is translated by Vitaly Chernetsky.

but they've been dressed in black" ("а батько ж хотіли взяти отой блаженний фрітаун / а там тринадцять костьолів і вічна війна з амуром / а там тринадцять безодень де срібло-золото коморне / дівчата немов ліани нечутно ростуть за муром / і хочеться їм любитись а їх зодягли у чорне"). A delayed / prohibited sexual desire, embodied in the images of nuns, is correlated with the refusal of domination / rootedness: "he says i have a slave girl with skin the color of cocoa / buy her oh my grey eagle it's tough without a woman / no need to plant a garden he adds chuckling slyly / a garden grows out of her body with tobacco pineapples melons / you'll make a lot of little Cossacks take all of them into your host / however my neck my soul does not yield to a yoke" ("невільницю каже маю зі шкірою мов какао / купи сизокрилий орле маркотно ж без господині / город засівати не конче прицмокує так лукаво / город на ній проростає тютюн ананаси дині / наплодиш каже козацтва припнеш усіх до коша / тільки ж ярму не дається шия моя душа"). The symbolic woman and terra identification is provided through the fertility concept: a woman as the terra gives birth both to plants and descendants, "the little Cossacks". But why this rooting in a land and family is treated as a yoke?

This fact can be explained through the nomadism of a Cossak whose lifestyle of a warrior / merchant is based on the family temporary refusal. On the other hand, it can be explained through the anti-colonial pathos (human being is not a commodity to be bought and sold). Interestingly, the pirate presents the position of supremacy (to buy a slave girl, to establish a colony-family) but the Cossak rejects a yoke. This episode is a key one for the interpretation of the poem. In fact, opposite concepts (supremacy / subjection) belong to the binary black and white worldview: "to be or not to be he says and burps I'm sorry" ("to be or not to be каже і булькає I'm sorry"). Supremacy in this case is a base of subjection, and domination means dependence. Absolute freedom is a mirage, utopian Freetown that will never be reached. Through this opposition, the motif of Dick's betrayal can be explained: "is it really that if you're European you don't have to be a man / why the fuck have you sold yourself for thirty rotten escudos" ("невже коли ти європа то вже не єси чоловіком / якого хріна продався за тридцять гнилих ескудо"). As can be seen, the betrayal of freedom means taking away the other's freedom.

For this reason, this text can hardly be called the postmodern frivolous and frisky result of an irresponsible play with cultural symbols. As well as in his poem *Vania the Cain* and novels *The Moskoviad* and *The Perversion*, Andrukhovych eliminates his hero from the final scenes. However, is it really the hero's death or his nonexistence? Otto von F. from *The Moskoviad*, with the bullet in his skull, goes in a train going from Moscow to Kyiv and thinks about Ukrainian history and geography. Stas Perfets'kyi from *The Perversion* had left the trace as an evidence of his return. The protagonist of *Vania the Cain* is speaking from the world of death and his voice is the evidence of his existing. And Jamaica the Cossak's exclusion is not only the symbol of human mortality. Jamaica the Cossak does not want to belong to the black and white world where there is no alternative to the domination / oppression frame: "I will go out at sunset / make a flute out of sugar cane / sit down by the ocean / and now I am no more" ("пиду на зорю вечірню зріжу цукрову сопілку / сяду над океаном та вже мене і нема").

In all these cases Andrukhovych uses the specific narrative strategy that can be conceptualized as discourse inversion of the colonizer. Thus, the speaking subject appropriates this disparaging, full of stereotypes, black-and-white narration of the Other and constructs its own narration through the power discourse inversion and parody.

In a symbolic way, this narration not only dismantles the empire as the narrative object but also ruins the very imperial discourse through reducing the imperial narrative of the Other to absurdity. Denuding the mythic matrix of the human / natural, on which the Self-Other opposition is based, Andrukhovych deconstructs the treatment of Other as non-human.

## Conclusion

In Yurii Andrukhovych's poetry, subject is constituted through the space and body nexus. However, dislocation as a key factor of colonial identity construction becomes a mechanism for the dismantling of the colonizer / the colonized dichotomy. The inversion used in Andrukhovych's poetry calls into question the normativity of the power discourse as well as the Self / Other dichotomy. Space conceptualization depends on configuration of the space type inscribed in a power discourse network. In the poetry by Andrukhovych, there are three types of space configuration. The first type is a native space which is colonized; the second type is an imperial space which is a source of colonial power. The third type is an exotic space which is an object of colonial desire and linguistic appropriation. The last type marks the inversion of power relations and the dismantling of the colonizer / colonized dichotomy.

Andrukhovych's poetry reflects the transition between the colonial and post-colonial conditions. From this perspective, Andrukhovych's texts are more than a cultural game with signifiers through fundamental postmodern irony. The postmodern construction in his poetry is ideologically determined by monolithic narratives dismantling postcolonial strategies. These strategies are the most obvious in tension between Self and Other, especially when Self / Other space mapping means dislocation, shifting boundaries, construction of masks and characters. Deconstruction of ideological narratives and frames, conceptualized as universal, is exercised in different ways, for instance, through parodying, shifting the focus, speaking out displaced / unspeakable, hierarchy destruction. These techniques bolster the linguistically adequate narrativization of the Self. Importantly, the linguistic modus helps to identify fragmentation of the speaking subject of the postcolonial identity.

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## POSTKOLONIALNA IDENTITETA V POEZIJI JURIIJA ANDRUHOVIČA: POKRAJINE IN DISLOKACIJE

Jurij Andruhovič je ključna osebnost v ukrajinskem literarnem procesu zadnje tretjine dvajsetega stoletja. Njegova poezija označuje mejo med sovjetsko in postsovjetsko dobo ter med generacijami osemdesetih in devetdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja. Dislokacije, osvajanja, pustolovščine, romanja, zapori in vojaške akcije so eksistencialno pomembne za postkolonialno izkoreninjenje in ustvarjanje meja ter za Andruhovičev lirski subjekt, ki ga oboje določa in ki ga ustvarja diskurz moči. Konceptualizacija prostora je v tem pogledu ključni mehanizem za oblikovanje identitete.

V Andruhovičevi poeziji obstajajo tri vrste konfiguracije prostora: 1) domači kraj, ki je koloniziran; 2) imperialistični prostor, ki je vir kolonialne moči, in 3) eksotični prostor, ki je predmet kolonialne želje in jezikovne prisvojitve. Slednji označuje inverzijo razmerij moči in uničenja kolonizatorja oz. kolonizacijske dihotomije. Andruhovič v svojih pesmih

dekonstruira hierarhijo, ki temelji na interakciji jezik–moč; pri tem je podrejeni predmet nadomeščen z govorečim subjektom. Tekstualna strategija inverzije in dislokacije deluje na oblikovanje dekoloniziranega subjekta, ki ne postane le vir pogleda in glasu, temveč ustvarja tudi svojo zgodbo. V poeziji Jurija Andruhoviča je subjekt oblikovan skozi prostorsko-telesno povezanost. Dislokacija kot ključni dejavnik izgradnje kolonialne identitete pa postane mehanizem za uničenje kolonizatorja oz. kolonizacijske dihotomije.

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