

POETICS OF YEVHEN HREBINKA'S POEM "BOHDAN": (ANTI)COLONIAL STRATEGIES OF THE ART CONSCIOUSNESS

Olga V. Shaf, Oles Honchar Dnipro National University (Ukraine)

e-mail: Olga_shaf@ua.fm

Oleksandra V. Goniuk, Oles Honchar Dnipro National University (Ukraine)

e-mail: olexandrin31@gmail.com

DOI: 10.32342/2523-4463-2023-2-26/1-10

Key words: *Evhen Hrebinka's poem "Bohdan", anti-colonial and colonial strategies of art thinking, author's consciousness, (Pre)romanticism, anti-colonial resentment.*

Evhen Hrebinka's oeuvre, particularly his Russian-language works and the poem "Bohdan" (1843), have not been studied well. The theme of this historical poem is Bohdan Khmelnytskyi's decision to get political protection from the Tsardom of Muscovy. (Anti-)colonial moods of art implementation of this theme can be rethought with the help of a postcolonial approach. It is important to recognize the influence of psychical and mental backgrounds in the author's consciousness and literary aesthetics onto the juxtaposition of anti-colonial and colonial art thinking in the 19th century Ukrainian literature in general, and Hrebinka's works in particular.

Purpose of the article. The article seeks to study (anti-)colonial poetics in Evhen Hrebinka's poem "Bohdan" through the view of the author's consciousness as well as through Romanticism art and aesthetic paradigm in intertextual relations with Ukrainian romantic historical literature.

The article employs techniques of postcolonial deconstruction (the methodology is based on Russian imperialism studies by E. Tompson, M. Shkandrii, O. Yurchuk grounded in the West postcolonialism theory), intertextological and other literary analysis *methods*.

Evhen Hrebinka's poem "Bohdan" as well as his other Russian-language works have not been appropriately read because of its ideological points. In the view of postcolonialism, the balancing between imperial and Ukrainophilical narratives is the symptom of deformation of mental (art) consciousness under cultural and political imperial pressing, which is shown in the oeuvre of Hrebinka and his contemporaries. On the one hand, the appreciation of the past in the works of Ukrainian writers, particularly Hrebinka, was shaped by Russian historiographical doctrine which negotiated the state-creating capacity of Cossack Hetmanate leaders and spread fakes about "one-blood nations", "happy life under the reign of Tsar of Muscovy", and on the other hand, their reception of the Cossack history was steered by romantic anti-colonial resentment. This ambiguity determines the poetics of the poem "Bohdan" by Evhen Hrebinka.

In the poem, on the discursive level of writing both pro-imperial and pro-national creative intentions are evident. Their counterposition is most prominent in the collision of the historical (Chapters 1-9) and mythopoetic (the Prologue) plans of the poem. In the historical plot (Chapters 1-9), the neocolonial idea of agreement with Moscow's imperial authority to protect the Ukrainian lands from numerous enemies is dissonant with the anti-colonial narrative of the oppressed nation, in the Prologue. The discursive "non-alignment" of these plans is reflected in the compositionally unjustified retardation of the prologue (the scene of the mermaids' game), in the multiplicity of characters/images embodying sense of national resentment – the girl, Nalyvayko, Pavlyuk, Ostryanitsa, the oak tree, the Voice from under the stone, and the Spirit of Midnight. In the Prologue of Hrebinka's poem "Bohdan", the pathos of anti-colonial resentment prevails while it is re-extrapolated from Muscovy to Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth for the sake of compromise. In this part of the poem, mythological features of poetics are determined by a mental unconscious desire for vengeance cultivated by Ukrainian (Pre)romanticism. The Prologue can be seen as a separate mini-poem about anti-colonial resentment, while in the main part of the poem, the search for a compromise between the national and imperial perspectives is pursued.

In the main part of the poem, the elements of colonial poetics are present: 1) in the speeches of hetman Khmelnytskyi, who is ready to surrender his regalia to the Moscow tsar, 2) in the narrative emphasis on the cultural and religious closeness of Ukrainians and Muscovites, and 3) in the readiness of the community to submit to the (potential) imperial center as well as 4) in the ideological assertion of Moscow's historically determined rule over Ukraine as a blessing for it. However, the final scene of the people's decision to submit to the Moscow tsar can be interpreted both as a definitive victory of the pro-imperial colonial worldview and as a reproach to Moscow for the betrayed "brotherhood", which is voiced by the author from a distance of time, similar to the corresponding scenes in Cossack chronicles and the literary works of Ukrainian Romanticism. In the historical plot of the poem, it has been recognized the fluctuation between anti-colonial resentment redirected on the Ukrainian-Polish fighting and actualized as the reason for the rebellion led by Khmelnytskyi, and glorification of the Tsardom of Muscovy as the only ally and defender (in consonance with imperial doctrine and the XVIII century Ukrainian Chronicles based on it).

The postcolonial deconstruction of the poem "Bohdan" by E. Hrebinka highlights the problem of balancing the artistic consciousness of the Romantic era between anti-colonial and colonial poetic

coordinates. The intertextual juxtaposition of the poem with significant works of the time it was written as well as texts relevant to its author, demonstrates the typicality of the situation of ideological “duality” and reveals the extensive influence of imperial narratives and colonial stagnation on the Ukrainian literary process of that epoch. In Evhen Hrebinka’s poem “Bohdan”, the balancing between anti-colonial and colonial poetic strategies is driven by the authors’ (split) consciousness, the influences of romanticism cultural paradigm and Russian imperial doctrine as well. These multi-directional influences on writing are being deconstructed in the view of postcolonial studies. This approach can be helpful in understanding the threat of imperial propaganda framework in national cultural and literary process in the past. It is promising to further apply postcolonial methodology to texts from both the 18th and 19th centuries in order to gain a deeper knowledge of the specificity of the evolution of national self-consciousness and its reflection in literature.

References

- Brekhunenko, V. (2003). *Pereiaslavska rada 1654 roku v rosiiskii istoriografii* [The 1654 Pereiaslav Agreement in Russian Historiography]. *Pereiaslavska rada 1654 roku (istoriografii ta doslidzhennia)* [The 1654 Pereiaslav Agreement (Historiography and Searching)]. Kyiv, Smoloskyp Publ., pp. 605-652.
- Chyzhevskiy, D. (1994). *Istoriia ukrainskoi literatury (vid pochatkiv do doby realizmu)* [The History of Ukrainian Literature (from Beginning to The Realism Age)]. Ternopil, Prezent-Femina Publ., 480 p.
- Horobets, V. (2011). *Pereiaslavska rada 1654* [The 1654 Pereiaslav Agreement]. In V. Smoliiy (ed.). *Entsyklopediia istorii Ukrainy* [Encyclopedia of Ukrainian History]. Kyiv, Naukova Dumka Publ., vol. 8, pp. 143-143.
- Hrebinka, Ye. (1980). *Bohdan. Stseny iz zhyzny malorossyiskoho hetmana Zynovyya Khmelnytskoho* [Bohdan. Scenes from Hetman Zynovyi Khmelnytskyi’s Life]. *Tvory u 3-kh tomakh* [Literary works in 3 volumes]. Kyiv, Naukova Dumka Publ., vol. 1, pp. 114-168.
- Hrebinka, Ye. (1989). *Lysty* [Letters]. *Tvory u 3-kh tomakh* [Literary works in 3 volumes]. Kyiv, Naukova Dumka Publ., vol. 3, pp. 503-622.
- Drach, I. (ed.). (2003). *Istoriia Rusiv* [The History of Rus]. Kyiv, Veselka Publ., 366 p.
- Kozak, S. (2003). *Ukrainskyi preromantyzm: dzhherela, zumovlennia, konteksty, vytoky* [The Ukrainian Preromanticism: Sources, Conditions, Contexts, Origins]. Warsaw, Warsaw University Publ., 227 p.
- Matsapura, V. (2000). *Ukrainska tema v rosiiskii literaturi pershoi polovyny XIX stolittia (problemy evoliutsii, mifolohizatsii, intertekstualnosti)*. Avtoref. dis. dokt. filol. nauk [The Ukrainian Theme in the first half of the 19th century Russian Literature (the Problems of Evolution, Mythologizing, Intertextuality)]. Extended abstract of Dr. philol. sci. diss.]. Simferopol, 33 p.
- Nakhlik, Ye. (1988). *Ukrainska romantychna proza 20-60-kh rokiv XIX st.* [Ukrainian Romanticism Prose of the 20s-60s of the 19th Century]. Kyiv, Naukova Dumka Publ., 320 p.
- Ostanina, H. (2018). «*Dialoh*» *zi skhodom Yevhena Hrebinky* [Yevhen Hrebinka’s “Dialogue” with the East]. *Suchasni problemy movoznavstva ta literaturoznavstva* [Modern Issues of Linguistics and Literary Studies], vol. 23, pp. 260-264.
- Pereverten, N. (2010). *Obrazna paradyhma romanu Ye. Hrebinky “Chaikovskiy”* [The Imagological Paradigm of Ye. Hrebinka’s novel “Chaikovskiy”]. *Literaturoznavchi studii* [The Literary Studies], vol. 26, pp. 442-447.
- Shevchenko, T. (2006). *Usi tvory v odnomu tomi* [All Works in One Volume]. Kyiv, Irpin Publ., 824 p.
- Shkandrii, M. (2004). *V obimakh imperii: Rosiiska i ukrainska literatury novitnoi doby* [Russia and Ukraine: Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times]. Kyiv, Fakt Publ., 496 p.
- Tompson, E.M. (2006). *Trubadury imperii: rosiiska literatura i kolonializm* [Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism]. Kyiv, Osnovy Publ., 368 p.
- Yurchuk, O. (2013). *U tini imperii: ukrainska literatura u svitli postkolonialnoi teorii* [In the Empire’s Shadow: Ukrainian Literature in View of the Postcolonial Theory]. Kyiv, Akademia Publ., 224 p.
- Yas, O. (2003). *Obrazy Pereiaslava v ukrainskii istoriografii akademichnoi doby (pochatok XIX – kinets 80-kh rokiv XX stolittia)* [The Image of Pereiaslav in Ukrainian Historiography of Academic Age (early 19th – late 1980th)]. *Pereiaslavska rada 1654 roku (istoriografii ta doslidzhennia)* [The 1654 Pereiaslav Agreement (Historiography and Searching)]. Kyiv, Smoloskyp Publ., pp. 524-604.
- Yatsenko, M. (ed.). (1995). *Istoriia ukrainskoi literatury XIX st. u 3 knyghah* [The History of Ukrainian Literature of the 19th century: in 3 volumes]. Kyiv, Lybid Publ., vol. 1, 368 p.
- Zadorozhna, L. (2000). *Yevhen Hrebinka: literaturna postat* [Yevhen Hrebinka: The Literary Person]. Kyiv, Tvim-Inter Publ., 160 p.

Одержано 20.04.2023.