

The archetype of the *Wise Old Man* in modern Ukrainian prose: a diachronic perspective

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Prispevek obravnava predstavitev arhetipa modrega starca v sodobni ukrajinski literaturi. Avtorji raziskujejo pomensko polje, ki ga arhetip ustvarja v svetopisemski tradiciji. V okviru jungovske teorije, mitopoetičnega in semiotičnega uvida ter postkolonialnih in spolnih študij so predstavljene značilnosti arhetipskih reprezentacij v ukrajinski literaturi od 20. do 21. stoletja. Ugotovitve kažejo, da predstave modrega starca utelešajo integracijo samozavedanja postkolonialnega subjekta. Prikazujejo ga kot dejavnik zgodovinskega spomina, ob tem pa tvori jo specifičen narativni center, ki povezuje različne dele resničnosti. Zaznana je povezanost arhetipskih funkcij z generično strukturo sodobne ukrajinske proze (mistični in pustolovski roman, družinska saga). Avtorji preučujejo pomensko polje, ki ga je arhetip ustvaril v svetopisemski tradiciji.

The paper tackles the representations of the wise old man archetype in modern Ukrainian literature. The authors study the semantic field generated by the archetype in biblical tradition. In the framework of Jungian theory, mythopoetic and semiotic insight, as well as postcolonial and gender studies, the features of the archetype representation in the Ukrainian literature of the 20th and 21st centuries are outlined. The findings prove that the representations of the wise old man embody integration of the self-awareness of a postcolonial subject, demonstrate him/her as an agent of historical memory, and form a specific narrative center connecting the disparate parts of reality. The correlation of the archetype functions with the generic structure of the modern Ukrainian prose (mystical and adventure novel, family saga) is detected.

Ključne besede: Biblija, arhetip, roman, postkolonializem, generacija

Key words: Bible, archetype, novel, postcolonialism, generation

Introduction

The globalisation processes of modern Western civilisation have brought to light a set of stereotypical phenomena not only in economics or politics, but also in culture, lowering the importance of the national values of ethnic groups and causing their identity to be reduced to “cultural tourism”. At the foundation of its society, modern culture lays the cult of youth with its temporal perspective of corporeality,

which allows for the optimal development of both the individual and society as a whole, but at the same time greatly devalues old age. The incredibly rapid spread of knowledge among young people, combined with high rates of technological development and social innovation, has now shattered the strong association between old age and authority, replacing it with the image of old age as a phase of life worthy of only bitter contempt. These social and cultural circumstances are reflected in fiction, aimed to perform not only a receptive but also a prognostic function in relation to society; in addition, fiction creates certain types, based on deep archetypal thinking. Thus, the study of old age in modern literature enables us to understand in more depth the significant, often dangerous, trends of today. Modern Ukrainian prose reveals the patterns characteristic of the critical periods of cultural development, in particular the disappointment in positivist knowledge and the activation of intuitive, “poetic”, archetypal thinking. Also, it is an eloquent layer of current social problems. Thus, the applications of archetypal criticism, gender, and postcolonial approaches are justified.

Revisiting prolegomenon

The ambivalence of old age dates back to the historic period of primitive societies where the elderly were perceived as the *Other*, often treated diametrically opposed. On the one hand, as supernatural beings who evoked sacred fear and provided a mystical connection with ancestors; on the other hand, as obstacles to dynamic progress of the community, subjects to be got rid of. In societies with a developed culture, the elderly symbolised the continuity of their history and the stability of socio-cultural values.

Since ancient times, the physical and mental markers of old age were a part of myths, legends and fiction of the ancient Near East. The rather high status of the elderly in Eastern cultures gave the civilisation a considerable margin of stability. Yet, the Sumerian-Akkadian “Epic of Gilgamesh”, “Babylonian Theodicy”, the ancient Egyptian “The Debate Between a Man and His Soul” and “Harper’s Song” contrast old age with youth. Greek rationalist philosophy formed the basis of the modern tendency to treat the elderly as a subculture, or even a counterculture.

In his historical overview of aging, Achenbaum (2005: 21–23) traces the ambivalent perception of old age inherent in Western civilisation: at first, the emphasis was on the somatic disadvantage of the elderly. With the lapse of time, the cultural traditions would alter the aged’s status, promoting the positive elements of “wisdom” and “experience” associated with growing old (Achenbaum 2005: 28). Studying the sociology of aging, Chris Gilleard admits that “old age stumbles between sagacity and senility” (2005: 162). Whereas the Freudian works demonstrate existential fear of death, old age’s final frontier, Jungian “Modern Man in Search of a Soul” propels advancing years as a period of self-knowledge, individuation, a harmonious combination of male and female principles based on symbolic, especially religious experience (IOHR 1994). The leading social gerontologists from the US and UK call for a focus on wider social macro-setting contexts in the exploration of the issues of aging and old age (Bengston et al. 2005: 16–17) to what the attempt in the interdisciplinary context of the literary studies is made.

Old age representations in the biblical tradition

This study refers to the Biblical texts, the influence of which on the formation of European mentality is difficult to overestimate. The role of the elderly is interpreted as a bridge between generations, the preservation of religious and cultural traditions that ensure the spiritual progress of society. The Book of Genesis speaks of the Fall as the ascent of the first people from eternity to the temporal linear dimension. Man's free choice, apostasy from God results in the sinking of human nature in the physical world, the main parameter of which is temporal longevity. Mortality means the gradual deterioration of the human body – aging with its whole complex of physiological and psychological processes, yet the fading of biological activity is compensated and rewarded with the achievement of spiritual maturity.

The formation of patriarchal relations led mainly to the sacralisation of the elder's personality, to the development of the cult of the old leader. This motif, pervasive for world civilisation in general and local cultures in particular, has acquired a special development in the Jewish and Christian mentalities. Old Testament biblical prophets and New Testament apostles personify social wisdom. Whereas the Jewish tradition does not anthropomorphise God (who is presented as a transcendental entity or pure spirit) the Christian tradition develops the image of God as a *wise old man* in public perception (particularly, it is reflected in Ukrainian traditional iconography). The process of aging in the Bible is not just a sequence of individual age transformations, but mainly a process of historical development, succession of generations and continuity of tradition, primarily religious ones. In social terms, this is the age of judges and prophets, of undisputed moral and social authorities, custodians of religious doctrine, corporate and class privileges, which result in the emergence of gerontocracy. The Hebrew Bible emphasises the exceptional longevity of Noah, Methuselah, Abraham – full of vitality and fertility, even in their old age. The founder of Judaism, Moses, died at the age of one hundred and twenty. Thus appears the traditional Jewish wish for longevity “up to 120 years”.

In the Scripture, old age is often associated with wisdom, the greatest good that God can bestow on man. In the Old Testament, texts called “literature of wisdom” (higher wisdom) are associated primarily with the parable tradition of ancient Hebrew literature. The term “wisdom” (Hebrew חֵכְמָה “chokmâh”, ancient Greek “sophia”) has a wide range of meanings starting from skillful art to political calculation. This term is not a static category, but one of the aspects of God's interaction with the world. In texts of the Old Testament, wisdom is not always associated with later life, and old age is deeply appreciated from the perspective of the comprehension of the Torah and life experience. In biblical texts, disregard or contempt for an old person who ceases to be socially effective is not only unacceptable, but also sinful (Exodus 3:16; 3:18).¹ The important role of the elderly is obvious to the biblical mentality: without the life-long and religious experience of older people, society cannot survive. Also, veneration of parents means patient care for them in their infirmities, and the New Testament admits it as a test of

¹ Henceforward the Biblical quotes are given in *New International Version* available at: <https://www.biblegateway.com/>

a person's righteousness, their existential potential on a large scale: "Honour thy father and mother, which is the first command with a promise, 'That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live a long time upon the land'" (Ephesians 6:2–3). The second meaning of the Fifth Commandment is to respect your Creator as a father. Disrespect for God as Father is manifested in the disobedience of Israel people crossing the Sinai Desert from Egypt to the Promised Land. The result of the Commandment's violation is 40 years of wandering of the Jewish people in the desert.

The Old Testament interprets old age as an important stage in life: preparation for death becomes close and tangible requiring a person the utmost courage in life. Although death is equal to saying farewell to all things on earth, "for they will take nothing with them when they die, *their splendor will not descend with them*" (Psalm 49:17; NIV), there is possibility for victory over death. Psalm 16:10-11 addresses God with the words:

*because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.
You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

The Old Testament model presents the old man as the agent of moral and ethical principles of the ethnos, who preserves and conveys the basic norms of society to the future generations. The Christian model presents the destruction of the physical body as a process of ascension from a human's exterior to a human's interior that alone can unite with God after death. Once, exceptional longevity was given to a New Testament character, the Jewish elder Simeon, to perform a special mission. He lived 360 years, and such a long life was both a punishment and the greatest reward: Simeon doubted Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 7:14) and wanted to replace the word "virgin" with "woman". The old man was doomed to long life, yet he saw with his own eyes the one who brought people hope for immortality in God: "Therefore we do not lose heart" (Corinthians 4:16). Even though late adulthood may present no interest in the pleasures of life, it helps focus on communication with God. With its precept of love as the infinite wisdom Christianity turned out to be in line with the Ukrainian mythical perception focused on the pervasive pantheism, primacy of personal and national freedom as the full meaning of existence.

The medieval literature of Kievan Rus² combines harmoniously the folk mind-set rooted in the Indo-European basis with the canonical Scriptures: in his texts, namely "The Parable of the Human Soul and Body, and the Violation of God's Commandment, and the Resurrection of the Human Body, and the Last Judgment, and the Martyrdom" Cyril of Turov (aka Kirill of Turov, 1130–1182) interprets the image of God as a loving, wise father who forgives mankind their sins in the capacity of consolation and hope for reunion in eternity. The Baroque tradition accentuates this specific capacity of the Maker, particularly, in the works of Hryhoriy

² The historical East Slavic state (the late 9th–13th century), based in the capital of present-day Ukraine.

Skovoroda³ – “Narcissus. Conversation about it: get to know yourself” (1769–1770), “The Conversation-Alphabet or the Primer of the World” (1772), Song 28 from “The Garden of Divine Songs” (published posthumously in 1861). Not only does God (invisible world) in Skovoroda’s texts create the visible world, but also permeates it indefinitely with his love. The very life of Hryhoriy Skovoroda embodies the archetype of wise old man to a great extent. A remarkable figure in the development of the Ukrainian culture Skovoroda would not comply with the temptations of the material world manifesting the model of inner freedom for generations to come. The modern Ukrainian literature reflects his cordocentrism or “philosophy of the heart”. Cordocentrism serves as a criterion for assessing the morale of a person and society. This allows us to regard the Baroque tradition as a cognitive background of modern Ukrainian literature, employing the archetype of the wise old man whose wisdom often verges on naivety and purity of childhood. On the other hand, in classical Ukrainian literature, this figure is associated with the icon of a national political leader who could ensure the unity of a people deprived of statehood. It is significant that in their works, Ukrainian writers would turn to the biblical tradition, especially the figures of the prophets (“Isaiah. Chapter 35” by Taras Shevchenko, “Moses” by Ivan Franko). These tendencies are creatively reconsidered in Ukrainian literature of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century.

The archetype of the *wise old man* in modern Ukrainian fiction

Both Jewish and Christian mentalities establish the reception of the theme of old age in classical and modern Ukrainian literature. The beginning of the 21st century shows a close connection of Ukrainian prose (e.g. “The Centenary of Yakiv” (2010) by Volodymyr Lys, “There are beaten” (2011–2012) by Luko Dashvar, “Ice Carousel” (2019) by Oleg Polyakov) with the patriarchal picture of the world, in which the image of the *wise old man* is associated with paternal authority as guarantee of stability in family life, and often with the divine beginning. Still, Ukrainian novelists demonstrate frustration in parental authority as well as the tendency to restore it via postcolonial and post-totalitarian modes of worldview (as in “The Museum of Abandoned Secrets” (2009) by Oksana Zabuzhko, “Coffee flavor of cinnamon” (2005) by Larysa Denysenko, or “Notes of a Ukrainian Madman” (2010) by Lina Kostenko). At the same time, the new millennium actualises basic archetypes (particularly wise old man) and a powerful neomythological current in modern fiction of Ukraine (“Elemental” (2001) by Vasyl Shklyar, “Frida” (2006) by Maryna Grymych, “Milk with Blood” (2008) by Luko Dashvar, “Stone in the middle of the garden” (2015) by Volodymyr Lys).

The character of the sage in the national literature is closely connected with the “wandering deacon”, one of the powerful Ukrainian literary types in 17th–18th century (represented mainly by students of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy⁴ or clergy without office who would wander across the country looking for job opportunities). It originates allegedly from the specific historical personality of Hryhoriy Skovo-

³ Significant Ukrainian philosopher of the 18th century.

⁴ The first higher education institution in Kyiv opened in 1615, the oldest in Eastern Europe.

roda. Each literary tradition adds or even transforms the “wandering deacon” type encompassing a variety of the character’s features – starting from the aspiration to reform society on the basis of goodness and justice (“The People’s Malakhiy” (1927) by Mykola Kulish) to a deliberate break with society in pursuit of philosophical alienation (“A House on a Mountain” (1983) by Valeriy Shevchuk). Above all, Skovoroda’s prominent features are isolation from the world (the testament engraved upon his tombstone reads “The world was trying to catch me but failed”⁵) and eccentricity (“varyatstvo”⁶). In the 20th century, the archetype of the *wise old man* under the guise of the “wandering deacon” frequently functions in the works of Ukrainian poets, prose writers, and dramatists (“A Pathetic Sonata” (1929) by Mykola Kulish, “Maria. A Chronicle of a Life” (1934) by Ulas Samchuk, “Tale of Mara” (1958) and “Marusya Churay” (1979) by Lina Kostenko, “The Swan Flock” (1971) by Vasyl Zemlyak).

This type acquires a peculiar interpretation in Lina Kostenko’s poetry: “Tale of Mara” (1958), “A Strange Man Wanders in the Forest...” (the collection “The Uniqueness”, 1980), “Oh no, it’s too early to think about everything” (the collection “Garden of non-melting sculptures”, 1987), “In a Village on Podillya...” (the collection “Selected”, 1989). In her early “Tale of Mara”, the character of the Stupid Man appears as a masculine invariant of the archetype of the “wise old woman” (his counterpart in the poem is Mudra Baba⁷, descendant of the Slavonic fairy tale character Baba Yaga). The very epithet “stupid”, applied to the name of this character, ironically describes him not only as “varyat” (mad), but also as an agent of higher wisdom inaccessible to common people. In Kostenko’s verse novel “Marusya Churay” (1979), the “wandering deacon” functions as a historical memory agent. Skovoroda’s spoken testament “The world was trying to catch me but failed” (see footnote 5 above) forms the plot: the deacon leaves Marusya in fear that he becomes attached to the girl.

On the other hand, the *wise old man* is endowed with the characteristics of the head of the family, the embodiment of the historical memory and conscience of the people. The Ukrainian variant of this archetype is close to the biblical patriarch or even the anthropomorphic idea of a higher divine essence that organises the Cosmos. Such characters of old men abound Oleksandr Dovzhenko’s dramas, namely, the grandfather’s similarly to the icon-painter Sabaoth in his autobiographical novel “The Enchanted river Desna” (1956). In Oleksii Kolomiets’ drama “The Wild Angel” (1978), realism in depiction of everyday life, which helps develop the protagonist, a tough father, gradually symbolises the spiritual dimension of the character, whose paternal origin is associated with law and ensures the existence of family microcosm and society macrocosm.

⁵ The testament was spoken only; it is not mentioned in any of Skovoroda’s writings.

⁶ In Ukrainian, *вар’ятство*, means madness with somewhat buffoonery.

⁷ In Ukrainian, wise old woman.

The varieties of the *wise old man* archetype in the Ukrainian prose of recent decades: postcolonial aspect

The similar tendencies, though somewhat rethought and transformed, define the Ukrainian literature of the first decades in the 21st century. Sometimes, radical transformations of the *wise old man* archetype are caused by the specifics of postcolonial discourse. It is relevant to refer in detail to those features of postcolonial writing which relate Ukrainian literature to a number of other national literatures reflecting a similar historical experience. T. Gundorova qualifies modern Ukrainian literature as “transit”, i.e. transitional “after totalitarianism, colonialism, socialism” (2013: 118). Yet, the scholar urges not to equate “transit” with incompleteness, because cultures of this type can be perceived as incomplete only from the standpoint of ideas of a certain perfection, but if we perceive this transitional state in its originality, a “transit culture” reveals a number of unique features that define its systematicity and special patterns of functioning. One such feature is the traumatic experience that postcolonial culture seeks to overcome.

In her studies of narrative strategies in modern Ukrainian prose, Gundorova applies Ankersmith’s theory, according to which the development of postcolonial discourse takes place around a certain traumatic “core” that seeks to be detected and yet avoids verbalisation. The presence of this “core” with its painful experience exposes generational gaps and, naturally, the ambition to restore the integral histories of a family, which become the basis of a great national history (Гундорова 2013: 118).

Another important concept of postcolonial consciousness is resentment. Gundorova fundamentally revises the evolution of this Nietzschean concept in Western philosophy through the readings of Scheler, Camus, Baudrillard, and Fanon. Applied in politics and the arts, resentment is generally interpreted as a specific response of the oppressed to the oppressor’s violence. One of the current features of resentment is negative self-identification, which is carried out through the denial of authorities, both private and public (in case of a postcolonial subject it is the denial of the metropolis’ authority).

The scholars of modern Ukrainian literature, V. Ageyeva (2004, 2008) and T. Gundorova (2013), emphasise the discourse of opposition to the power of parents, quite exacerbated in the fictional texts. The features of the representation of intergenerational conflicts evolve from a number of social and cultural factors. The first one is the existence of a postcolonial subject in the “fatherless world” (Гундорова 2013: 191), i.e. in the absence of their own statehood, traditionally associated with a strong paternal figure. The second factor is the identification of the homeland with an offended mother, who, on the one hand, demands revenge from her sons, and, on the other hand, prevents their personal development (Агеєва 2008: 47). Finally, it is the “daughters’ rebellion” against the tradition represented by the patriarchal figures of literary “fathers” that marked the formation of Ukrainian modernism (Агеєва 2004: 437).

In Ukrainian prose of recent decades, cross-cutting themes, motives, and characters are defined by intergenerational conflicts in such novels as “Depeche Mode” (2004) by Serhiy Zhadan, “БЖД” (the Ukrainian abbreviation of life safety, 2007)

by Sashko Ushkalov, “Coffee flavor of cinnamon” (2005), “24:33:42” (2007) and “Sarabanda bandy Sary” (2008) by Larysa Denysenko, “The Museum of Abandoned Secrets” (2009) by Oksana Zabuzhko, “Frida” (2006) by Maryna Grymych, “There are beaten” (2011-2012) by Luko Dashvar. In a deep ideological crisis that accompanies the postcolonial subject, the images of older relatives (grandparents) are sacralised, playing an important therapeutic role and correlating with eternal values that can provide mental balance and integrity for fragmented awareness of the “fatherless” protagonist.

The salient feature of modern Ukrainian prose is the process of desacralisation of the parents’ characters with the successive transfer of “divinity” markers to grandparents. For example, the eponymous protagonist of Luko Dashvar’s novel “Max” (2012), the middle part of the “There are beaten” trilogy, having undergone an emotional shock, is deeply disappointed in his father, who had no experience of death unlike Max’s grandfather and Max himself. Instead, his grandfather, the ruler of a huge financial empire, becomes a model to follow for him. In Dashvar’s novel, “Milk with Blood” (2008), the deceased grandmother, coming to her granddaughter in her dreams, reveals to the girl the hidden action of destiny and advises how to restore continuity and order in the family. The episode alludes to Jungian process of *differentiation of the ego from the mother* experienced by the daughter who transfers all the mysterious properties to the grandmother: “As the mother of the mother, she is “greater” than the latter; she is in truth the “grand” or “Great Mother”” (Jung 1968: 188). Modern Ukrainian prose manifests the process of “elevation to a higher rank” of both genders in the network of characters. The parents get marginal roles, and sometimes even negative ones, whereas the grandparents or other elder relatives obtain higher status. The latter embody the ontological meaning of human existence, for these characters are frequently on the verge of afterlife: the gravely ill grandfather in “Max” and the deceased grandmother in “Milk with Blood” by Dashvar, the elderly characters in the novels “Intent!” by Deresh, “Frida” by Hrymych, and “Coffee flavor of cinnamon” by Denysenko. Max’s grandfather is built on the Old Testament patriarch, who embodies the symbolic law and ensures the unity of the family legal and economic space. In the postcolonial context, the grandfather assumes the masculine function of active assertion in the outside world.

T. Bureychak emphasises the post-Soviet masculinity markers of deep trauma and devaluation in comparison with the more “prestigious” masculine markers imposed by the metropolis (Бурейчак 2014: 54). Therefore, the rehabilitation of national types of masculinity becomes an important strategy of Ukrainian literature (ibid.). To implement this strategy, one needs to restore the intergenerational bond via a powerful male character in the immediate family environment, dealing with rather a triumphant life experience than a traumatic colonial one. Such an experience is often associated with the character of grandfather who embodies the archetype of the *wise old man*, ambivalent and polysemantic.

Compared to Dashvar’s “Max”, Lyubko Deresh’s novel “Intent!” (2006) continues to implement the rehabilitation strategy, yet with a somewhat different focus. The protagonist, Petro Pyatochkin, is a stranger in his own family: Pyatochkin is interested in a spiritual quest. Having learnt from his grandmother the story

of the deceased “varyat” grandfather, the boy grasps his own destiny. It should be mentioned that in Dashvar’s novels the sacralised character of the grandfather belongs to the afterlife in contrast to the profane characters of siblings, parents, and grandmother. At the same time, the grandfather’s characteristics are those of an eccentric, indicative of the national type of a wandering philosopher. Similarly to Dashvar’s patriarch in “Max”, who is an active participant outside his family, Pyatochkin’s grandfather in “Intent!”, like his grandson, strives for a spiritual goal. In both novels, the older relative is a mentor, a role model for building one’s own identity.

T. Gundorova (2013) and A. Merezhinskaya (2007) study postcolonial and postmodern subject and repeatedly emphasise the situation of “homelessness”, orphanhood, and “aimless wandering”. In the postcolonial context, these layers are closely connected with the “death of the father” (real or symbolic), of a powerful character capable of structuring a chaotic world. Thus, rediscovery of a character’s father or reconciliation with him is tantamount to restoring the stability of the world. Sometimes, it is not the grandfather, but rather the father who obtains the features of the *wise old man*. For instance, in Yevhen Polozhiy’s novel “Uncle named God” (2008), the father, whom the son meets in a foreign country, gives him a valuable advice, once and for good changing his son’s worldview, although unidentified by him. The father’s character correlates not only with the archetype of the *wise old man* but also with God as the central concept of the author’s concept of the world. The novel’s theme is God’s refusal to take care of his creation tuning in to the postmodern mentality of “the world as chaos”. Polozhiy’s intentions go hand in hand with the musings of Franco Nembrini in his “Di padre in figlio”, who sees the main problem of modern education as well as the cause of society infantilism in the loss of respect for parental authority (Нембрини 2015: 264). The rehabilitation strategy of the psychological integrity of the postcolonial subject in Polozhiy’s novel is the journey as initiation model. The figure of the divine father is important in the mythological act of initiation within which the protagonist has to perform extremely difficult tasks, defeat God or reconcile with him (Мелетинский 2012: 202–203). The journey helps the protagonist to recognise himself as a representative of the unique Ukrainian culture in the circle of world cultures.

Linking generational gaps and restoring family history is central to postcolonial writing, and the elderly often act as mediators, becoming a painful narrative “core” that seeks to be verbalised and at the same time avoids verbalisation. In a number of works of Ukrainian prose of recent decades, the elderly characters as representatives of historical memory manifested in the biblical tradition form the national mentality. Volodymyr Lys’s “The Centenary of Yakiv” (2010) is a seminal novel tackling aging from historical and personal retrospectives. On the eve of his 100th anniversary the protagonist, Yakiv Platonovych Mekh, a Volyn peasant from the Polissya hinterland, is set to review his long life. Yakiv’s life review spurred by Olenka (who could well be his granddaughter) forms the basis of positive generational interaction in the novel. Olenka’s functional role is that of a trigger, whereas Yakiv, in effect, addresses himself in the novel. Despite Olenka’s marginal status and rather minor role, her respect for the centenarian to whom she addresses as “grandfather” or by his patronymic is noteworthy. Indirectly, Lys

emphasises the therapeutic function of memory. Although Yakiv's reminiscents seem to be "a bottomless well" (Лис 2016: 27) or "overgrown with moss in the swamp" (Лис 2016: 27), they form the integrity of the protagonist's "Self" creating a rather positive open ending. The generational continuity is represented by the protagonist's recollections of his own parents: Platon, who died at the age of 64, and Paraska, his mother, who had spoken about his grandmother. For young Yakiv, old age is strongly associated with wisdom: he compares the sexagenarian Jew Gershko, a shopkeeper in his village Zagoryany, to a "biblical apostle". Biblical allusions abound Lys's novels, specifically in family sagas ("The Centenary of Yakiv", "Solo for Solomiya"). The self-awareness of old age deprives the character of negative self-stereotyping that helps sustain the integrity of the "Self" in late adulthood. Yakiv understands the end of his earthly existence through direct association with eternity referring to the biblical line: "Death is swallowed up in victory" (Corinthians 15:54).

Lys's novel "Solo for Solomiya" (2013) demonstrates the dynamics of aging in the network of older yet minor characters: priest Androniy, Solomiya's grandparents, old vorozhka Nastya. Father Androniy is an agent of wisdom as the highest manifestation of human spirituality whose influence upon the identity of the protagonist, Solomiya, is crucial. Still, the motif of intergenerational solidarity of an elderly man and a girl (or a young woman) is typical of Lys's novels: "The Centenary of Yakiv", "Solo for Solomiya", "Hrafynya" (The Countess). The motif actualises the deep archetypal meanings that embody the psychological integrity of the individual, namely – the archetype of anima, looking like a younger woman for a mature man. In Jung's words, it is the anima's ambivalence that may provoke quite negative perception caused by the male fear of the opposite sex (1968: 200). Thus, "[a]n infantile man generally has a maternal anima; an adult man, the figure of a younger woman. The senile man finds compensation in a very young girl, or even a child" (Jung 1968: 200). Father Androniy and young Solomiya ("Solo for Solomiya"), the old count and Wenceslava Lovyga ("Hrafynya") are, therefore, symbolic pairs of "external" and "internal" forms of one human being, the union of prospect and experience as a complete human life realisation. The girl child in each of these pairs embodies purity, innocence, and, essentially, the soul of the elderly character. This motif matches the evangelical meeting of the elder Simeon and the little Christ, commemorating the presentation of Jesus at the Temple (the religious holiday of Candlemas). In her late adulthood, Solomiya personifies a "wise old woman", the archetype of "spirit and meaning hidden behind the chaos of life" (Аверинцев 1991: 110), "the highest spiritual synthesis that harmonises conscious and unconscious spheres of the soul" typical of the sound old age (Мелетинский 2012: 74).

The genre of a family saga allows Lys to establish the generational continuity with minimum of conflicts, which are always resolved in favor of solidarity. One of the markers of generational continuity in Lys's prose is the absence of blood kinship among family members. The role of parents and grandparents, thus, is extremely symbolic, manifesting the older characters as mentors, memory agents, and peacemakers. In Lys's novel "The Land of Bitter Tenderness" (2015), three female characters of different generations are not biological mothers to their

daughters, although each of them plays a significant role in preserving family memory. Memory represents classified information in terms of the official Soviet history that correlate with the traumatic “core” of the postcolonial narrative (in Ankersmith’s words). In the novel, the grandmother Dazdraperma⁸, is the leader of a small female community; she is the first to start the tradition of foster motherhood.

As opposed to Lys’s novels, Dashvar texts build the concept of “blood”, biological kinship, to establish the spiritual connection among family members. Yet, the exceptional role of the elderly character in a family is determined not so much by the biological kinship as by wisdom and vitality. With its polysemantic title, Dashvar’s “PoKrov” (2016) plays on words in the very name of the novel: in Ukrainian, the title can be interpreted as the religious holiday of the Protection of the Blessed Virgin; the family protection; “Krov” (as the capitalised part of the novel’s title) means “blood” in the Ukrainian language. The grandmother character in “PoKrov” embodies the feature of the postcolonial pattern: the elderly woman, deliberately “forgotten” by her daughter, is the agent of a painful family secret, a traumatic experience. Grandmother’s keeping silent prevents the authentic reunion of family members.

Marina Hrymych’s novel “Frida” (2005) develops the motif of an intended “amnesia”: the protagonist comes up with a new life for herself not to reexperience the tragic death of her grandmother and her own mutilation. After all, the restoration of missing links in the family history allows Frida to achieve her personal wholeness and happiness. In “Frida”, the elderly characters of Moysey Davydovych and Berta Solomonovna represent the trade elite and the Jewish and Armenian cultural traditions acquiring the characteristics of biblical patriarchs and the status of “saints”. In addition, an elderly neighbor introduces little Frida to the Book of Genesis. Parallel to the episode of reading the Bible in Lys’s “The Centenary of Yakiv”, intertextuality in “Frida” forms the perspective of timelessness and spiritual dimensions, revealing old age as wholeness of human existence. In the framework of Old Testament’s concept of the historical and social role of the elderly, Moysey Davydovych and Berta Solomonovna convey peoples’ memory and the hidden mechanisms that govern society (the ability to negotiate and conduct business; the metaphor of “mysterious doors” for keeping family secrets).

Yet, modern Ukrainian literature infuses the old characters with features opposed to the figure of *wise old man*. It depends on the genre. The family saga, centered on the history of the restoration of family and national history relevant to postcolonial writing, represents the positive meanings associated with old age. Saga’s elderly character acts as a historical memory agent, a symbol of the wholeness of life, an example to follow. However, mystery and adventure novels manifest often salient gerontophobia. The protagonist of Vasyl Shklyar’s novel “Elemental” (2001), a legionnaire, endowed with the traits of a *Cossack-characterник*⁹, despises his elderly peasant parents, criticising their limited world outlook, obedience to

⁸ Her name is the acronym of the early Soviet slogan – *да здравствует первое мая* (Long live the First of May!).

⁹ *Козак-характерник* is a legendary Ukrainian warrior able to manipulate masses with the help of mental power, emotions, and instincts.

fate and slavish traits. The protagonist's position is spurred by the dominant intentions of the adventure genre which main features are action, achieving a goal, physical strength and endurance. Still, in Shklyar's historical novel "The Outcast. The Black Raven" (2009), old age is consistently associated with wisdom via an archetypal character of blind prophet and the symbol of raven as a living embodiment of historical memory.

The theme of aging is closely connected with the motif of madness in Lys's Gothic novel "Hrafynya" (2010) in a vast network of major and minor characters on the cusp of their late adulthood. They anticipate the end of life with terror. The novel's aging protagonist, Platon, is the provincial artist. His negative self-identification of the protagonist has a certain therapeutic effect though. Awareness and acceptance of his creative impotence (artistic block) propels him to achieve the integrity of his "self" that is the key to successful aging: "I do not paint canvases any longer and I never will. I am not interested in what has been the meaning of my life until recently"¹⁰ (Лис 2010: 138).

The ultimate manifestation of gerontophobia is revealed in the demonisation of older characters, the origins of which may be found in the ambivalence of archetypes. So, the character of baba (an old woman), "[n]ot infrequently assumes the attributes of wisdom as well as those of a witch" (Jung 1968: 102). For instance, in Oleg Polyakov's novel "The Chronicles of Foggy Troy" (2016), story within a story narrates about a woman afraid of growing old. She is to visit a witch (fortune teller) who looks so scary that the woman accustoms herself to witch's looks with the help of her photo before the visit. Finally, after visiting the dwelling of the fortune teller in the vicinity of cemetery (at the periphery of the human world, Lotman's "non-human" space), the female character overcomes her initial fear and, in her turn, inherits a demonic nature herself, becoming involved in the chaotic world of the unconscious, death, and afterlife: it leads her to murder, attempted suicide, and madness. The early 21st century Ukrainian novels (Shklyar's "Elemental", Lys's "Hrafynya", Polyakov's "The Chronicles of Foggy Troy") reflect gerontophobia in the network of characters and subject-lines as opposed to the archetype of the *wise old man* indicative of a clear consciousness, powerful memory and the universe's hierarchy. Fear of old age goes hand in hand with the motives of madness, the concept of the "world as chaos", other irrational spheres of human existence.

Conclusion

The postcolonial and post-totalitarian context determines the comprehension of *wise old man* archetype in modern Ukrainian literature through narrative strategies, inherent mental layers and the specifics of national history. The masculine and feminine invariants of the *wise old man* play the role of a sacred figure, modelled to integrate the fragmented awareness of the postcolonial subject, restore the wholeness of the subject's identity and atone for the deep disappointment in parental authority. Hierarchy as the structuring of chaos is based on the idea

¹⁰ The translation of this quote into English is done by one of the authors of the article, Anna Gaidash.

of the supreme spiritual essence (God) of a father who makes life meaningful and purposeful. The main attribute of the fulfillment of God's will in the earthly existence, wisdom is deeply connected with old age as the frequent case of a personality development's climax. This sort of connection is detected primarily in the family saga genre: Lys's "The Centenary of Yakiv" and "Solo for Solomiya" as well as Dashvar's "PoKrov" employ in abundance the biblical discourses of the patriarchal prophets and the gospel idea of filial obedience to the Father's will. Memory occupies the salient layer in these texts, so the elderly, as the memory agents, play leading roles in restoring the intergenerational connection and creating a holistic national history. When the elderly protagonists review their lives to better understand their selves and share the experience with younger generations, they get substantial therapy, too. Grymych's "Frida" is such a case providing awareness of the integrity of the individual and the world to that. The character of the *wise old man* accumulates inherently national mental features, in particular, those of a wandering philosopher, eccentric (varyat) and hermit in Deresh's "Intent!". Yet, there are demonic elderly characters linked with madness and terror in the mystical "Hrafynya" by Lys and fantastic "The Chronicles of Foggy Troy" by Polyakov. The aforementioned features of the representation of aging are determined by the ambivalence of the *wise old man* archetype capable of combining diametrically opposed meanings. In the Ukrainian literature, the dominant view of the elderly as agents of wisdom and main representatives of generational continuity supports the constructive intentions of rehabilitation of national identity and mental rehearsal of traumatic experience.

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ARHETIP MODREGA STARCA V SODOBNI UKRAJINSKI PROZI: DIAHRONI VIDIK

Članek predstavlja arhetip modrega starca v sodobni ukrajinski literaturi. Močna svetopisemska tradicija, ki že stoletja ohranja svojo avtoriteto v nacionalni literaturi, predpostavlja obravnavo zastavljenega vprašanja z vidika simbolnih pomenov in moralno-etičnih vprašanj Stare zaveze. Avtorji predstavljajo kratek opis semantičnega polja, ki v svetopisemskih besedilih generira lik modrega starega človeka (modrost, dolgoživost, zgodovinski spomin, vmešavanje zgodovinskega in biološkega, popolnost osebne samouresničitve). Članek poskuša določiti posebne nacionalne značilnosti recepcije arhetipa v ukrajinski literaturi na podlagi primerjave veliko besedil ukrajinskih avtorjev 20. stoletja.

Ugotovljeno je, da je podoba modrega starca v nacionalni tradiciji utelešenje življenjske modrosti, očetovskega principa, ki določa svet, hkrati pa je prisotna konotacija ekscentričnosti (»norosti«), ki je v korelaciji s kulturno prakso potujočih filozofov. Avtorji na osnovi teorije arhetipov K. G. Junga, nekaterih določb mitopoetične in strukturno-semiotične analize (E. Meletinsky, Y. Lotman) ter postkolonialne in spolne študije (T. Bureychak, T. Gundorova, F. Fanon) predstavljajo značilnosti umetniške reprezentacije arhetipa v ukrajinski literaturi na prehodu iz 20. v 21. stoletje. Te značilnosti so v veliki meri posledica postkolonialnega konteksta. Zavest postkolonialnega subjekta zaznamujejo občutki brezdomstva, negativna samoidentifikacija in globoka frustracija s starševsko avtoriteto. Glede na to, prav lik starih staršev omogoča vključevanje razdrobljene zavesti, zagotavljanje celovitosti in ravnovesja v svetu. Pomemben vidik postkolonialnega pisanja je tudi stalnost spomina. Starejši pogosto delujejo kot nosilci spomina, kot posebno pripovedno središče, ki povezuje različne dele resničnosti. A sodobna ukrajinska proza predstavlja tudi polarne pomene arhetipa, ki se ujemajo z nespremenljivostjo šibkosti, norosti, občutkom »sveta kot kaosa«, smrtnimi temami. Dokazano je, da takšne semantične dimenzije ustrezajo literarnim delom, v katerih prevladuje mistični in pustolovski tok, medtem ko žanr družinske sage, priljubljen v sodobni ukrajinski literaturi, predstavlja podobo starca, ki uteleša modrost in povezanost generacij ter zgodovinski spomin.