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STANISLAV PHENOMENON
More on Ukrainan national identity

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first publication

...One of the most central and influential phenomena of Central European ideological thought:[is] a permanent crisis of identity...[1]

Introduction

Identity discourse is so dominant in Ukraine that despite the vagueness of the term itself it penetrates almost every sphere of life, appearing in everyday economic, political, academic, social, cultural and individual contexts. The popularity of this topic in the public sphere and particularly in intellectual debates of country with a great number of more immediate and tangible problems is a phenomenon in itself that can be explained by the permeability of this topic in many spheres of Ukrainian life. This article aims to give some more insight into the Ukrainian national identity formation through the works of an avant-garde art and literary group called *Stanislav Phenomenon*.

Lóránd Hegyi labels the insistence on the question of identity in Central Europe a crisis; the specificity of identity issues in the given geographical space lies in its infiltration into practically all spheres of existence and all discourses. It is often seen as a *panacea*, which once discovered (re-discovered in most countries' discourses) can fix the world. The ephemeral nature of ›identity‹ escapes definition, creating agitation and disappointment of the quest itself. Hegyi reinforces that

> In Central Europe, addressing the question »who am I, where do I belong« continues to be a question of principle, recurring on [*sic*] a variety of ways and in a variety of contexts. The available answers, however, never seem quite satisfactory – in Central European culture, such unsatisfactory answers in turn produced a self-tormenting, masochist attitude which has always found it difficult to accept the independent, sovereign individual and has habitually viewed it with suspicion.[2]

My usage of the term ›identity‹ rests on several crucial interpretations. Firstly, identity, albeit one of the most subjective constructions, is a very real and important part of every person's life. The ›reality‹ of such a construction is unquestionable as the individual's ›reality‹ is; history has known many instances when people chose to die rather than to give up what they saw as their identity. However, the content of each identity can be indicative of larger and more objective factors that influence its construction. This makes identity open and interesting for analysis and interpretation. Secondly, identity has multiple levels all of which are highly personal but are also tied to the group with which an individual identifies. Though identity depends on an individual's evaluation, categorization and ability to generalize the qualities of a category-group, it is still a highly individualistic construction, which, among other things, depends on such factors as the individual's personal experience, type of personality and educational background. All the above-mentioned factors make this construction extremely fluid and constantly evolving, sensitive to one's daily experiences and even to one's shifting mood. More than any ›objective‹ past or history, identity reflects the most current and recent developments in a person's life, its most immediate contexts. In fact, it allows for constant revising and reinventing of the past and history itself in the light of the most immediate needs.

Meanwhile, despite its highly individual and unstable nature, some aspects of identity, such as the ›national identity‹, have been appropriated by the public domain and are now widely employed in and manipulated through public discourse, politics and academia. Thus, in Ukraine, ›national identity‹, along with the Ukrainian ›national idea‹, ›national thought‹, ›national consciousness‹ and ›national mentality‹ became one of the most significant discourses of the national consolidation and reformation of Ukraine after the collapse of the USSR. Most often, – especially in public and educational contexts, – these discourses raised the issue of the so-called *natsional'ne vidrodzhennja* or »national revival«. On the one hand, such terminology clearly demonstrated the country's decision to break with its recent Soviet past. On the other hand, the discourse of ›revival‹, ›revitalization‹ or ›awakening‹ outlines expectations regarding the country's development, i.e. towards re-evaluating its history, searching

1 Lóránd, Hegyi (Ed.): Aspects/Positions: 50 Years of Art in Central Europe, 1949-1999. Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig 2000, p. 10-11.

2 Ibid., p. 10-11

for contemporary motivations and vitality in the stories and myths of Ukrainian history. The term *revival* can also contain the assumption of the existence of a pre-Soviet, ›authentic‹ form of Ukrainianess, a ›real‹ history and identity that was disrupted and banned for a long time by the Soviet era. The Soviet experience itself, probably due to its immediacy, was seen as a stop in the development of Ukrainian identity in itself, an influence that should be abandoned or even reversed.

Therefore, in many popular and public Ukrainian discourses, identity is often seen as a construction that can stop developing, can be preserved in its authentic form if taken good care of. This understanding gives rise to the assumption that there is a possibility of reconstructing that ›true Ukrainian‹ nature under the conditions of liberal democracy. This also implies that this ›true Ukrainianess‹ will spring out of people once the repressions are gone and it will rule in the renewed and liberated society despite 50-70 years of totalitarianism. The discourse therefore encourages people to ›look back‹, ›listen to their hearts‹, and join the whole country in associating with historical experiences that are viewed as ›truly Ukrainian‹, i.e. the Cossack era, Shevchenko's poetry, the liberation movements in central and western Ukraine in the first half of the 20th century, the Ukrainian Insurgence Army (UPA), etc. An individual's inability to associate with some of these historical episodes is seen as a disastrous effect of assimilation and is expected to be corrected via adequate education, mass media and public discourses. Therefore, the discourse functions as a unifying and motivating aspect of the new country's ideology.

To investigate national identity development in independent Ukraine I have focused on the works of the avant-garde art group *Stanislav Phenomenon*, which developed in Ivano-Frankivsk between 1989-1996. This is not to say that *Stanislav Phenomenon* predominantly focused on national identity construction; but it has brought to light a wide range of identity issues, including localized identity, marginal/borderland identity, periphery vs. centre identity, gender identity, urban identity, collective and individual identity, etc. However, being active during the dissolution of the USSR and located at the USSR's western-most borderland, *Stanislav Phenomenon* reflected its ideological and cultural environment, where the quest for national identity was one of the most salient issues. The timing and location of the *Phenomenon* drew it into the dominant national discourse of the time, while the avant-garde and postmodern nature of the *Phenomenon* provided an interesting perspective on the wider nation-building project. It challenged the mainstream discourse on national identity discourse by critically evaluating and at times parodizing or mimicking it while simultaneously spinning its own, alternative construction.

This paper will use *Stanislav Phenomenon* as a framework to investigate the national identity construction in Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Seeing ›identity‹ as a construction, which derives from contemporary needs and that is shaped by the discriminatory highlights of past experience or selective memories (individual or collective) and their subjective interpretations, I explore factors that contributed to *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s interpretation of national identity.

Stanislav Phenomenon's activities are very varied, ranging from art installations, rock concerts to texts, which makes them difficult primary material to analyse at first hand. Hence this research is limited to a discourse analysis of the debate which *Stanislav Phenomenon* generated specifically due to its contribution to the broader identity discourse. As some of the *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s members – Yuri Andrukhovych, Izdryk, Volodymyr Yeshkiliev and Taras Prokhasko – took a more active part in this debate, I will use these authors more frequently. Structurally, the paper focuses on unfolding the background into which *Stanislav Phenomenon* emerged, national identity discourse as presented by *Stanislav Phenomenon* and the dissolution of the group in the light of the changed political and ideological developments in Ukraine in the second half of the 1990s.

Stanislav Phenomenon's Backgrounds

The name *Stanislav Phenomenon* was coined in 1992 to signify the formation of a group of artists, writers, poets, philosophers and essayists living and working in Ivano-Frankivsk. The group's peak of creativity was between 1989-1996. The unifying factor of the group was a creative collaboration aimed at synthesizing postmodern discourse in literature and art as an alternative to the dominating socio-realistic discourse of the USSR. Generated through

writing, art and joined performances, it reflected the changing conditions of the time, announced the fall of the Soviet empire and contributed to shaping the discourse of the newly emerging independent state.

As Volodymyr Yeshkiliev remarks, it would be unfair to lump into one group all the artists and writers who worked at that time in Ivano-Frankivsk. He suggests that the group united those writers and creators of the visual discourse who expressed themselves in their texts through the »situation«[3] of postmodernism. Among these writers, he lists Yuri Andrukhovych, Izdryk, Taras Prokhasko, Volodymyr Yeshkiliev, Halyna Petrosanyak, Maria Mykytsei, Yaroslav Dovhan, Oleh Hutsuliak.

3 Yeshliliev, Volodymyr/Andrukhovych, Yuri: Pleroma; av. at http://www.ji.lviv.ua/ji-library/pleroma/zmist.htm. [last visit 01.06. 2005]

To understand *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s position on national identity construction, it is important to take a look at the political, social and cultural conditions into which the group emerged. Three main factors, namely *timing*, *location* and *postmodernism*, were absolutely crucial for the formation of the *Phenomenon*, for the content of their creativity and the identity construction the group has generated. *Timing* concerns the group's emergence during the collapse of the USSR and the establishment of independent Ukraine, *location* means the group's situation in Galicia, USSR's western borderland. This combination of time and location marginality could best be recreated through *postmodernism* as it allowed magnifying decentralized, alternative, localized and individual versions of history and the new country's perspective.

This possibility of maintaining the diversity of perspectives became significantly important in the years of Ukraine's early independence when the newly formed nation-state engaged in intensive construction of a Ukrainian, as opposed to Soviet, mega-history. Although it was an alternative to the Soviet construction, this new consolidation of the discourse around the national values, based in its turn on a centralized vision and interpretation of Ukraine's history controlled the construction of the new national myth. Positioning themselves between the collapsed and the newly consolidating discourses, *Stanislav Phenomenon* on the one hand resisted the new centralized construction, and on the other, responded to it by its own version of national identity in an independent Ukraine.

Timing

Several factors preconditioned the emergence of *Stanislav Phenomenon* and other avant-garde groups in this period in Ukraine. The foremost factor was the decrease of the centralized power control over the freedom of speech, thought, and criticism of the government. Ukraine had had a particularly dramatic experience when its intelligentsia and artists were decimated in the 1930s through Stalin's repressions, and then later in 1970 through the less obvious but no less destructive repressions of the KGB, fake ›suicides‹, imprisonments, etc. The overall orientation towards *perebudova/perestroika* (»restructuring«) and *hlasnist/glasnost* (»opening«) and in particular the retirement of »hard-line communist leader of Soviet Ukraine«.[4] Volodymyr Shcherbytsky opened up significant space for the opposition movement. In fact, the conditions were not so much ›open‹ due to democratization of society but rather through a sheer lack of control and the absence of punishment for disagreement, which used to be a major discipline element. Such a lack of control allowed the opposition to skyrocket their actions from organizing groups masked by formal support of Gorbachev's policies of ›opening‹ in 1989 to open rallies against the Communist Party and towards the independence of Ukraine in 1990.

4 Warner, Catherine: Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine. University Park, PA: Penn State UP 1998, p. 34.

Another important characteristic of the time was that all spheres of life were ideologically charged. Wanner writes that in any society which experiences abrupt and dramatic changes of systems, the transformation occurs not under a slowly paced economic or social change but under the pressure of ideology. In such cases, ideology is called on to compensate for the inconsistencies between the slow changes in economy or society itself and the desired result. A similar mechanism worked in the USSR; Gorbachev, trying to revitalize the economy of the country, outlined a new ideological plan of ›restructuring‹ and ›opening‹, which the country was to follow. In their turn, supporters of the idea of independent Ukraine and *Rukh* (›Movement‹), – a political party which adopted independence as one of its political aims, – realized their chance to gain control over the discourse, and as Wanner points out

> sought to challenge official Soviet interpretations of Ukrainian history and to replace them with national myths and symbols in an effort to generate national consciousness and support for an independent Ukrainian state.[5]

5 Ibid., p. 35

6 Pavlyshyn, Marko: Kanon Ta Ikonosts [Canon and Iconostasis]. Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo »Chas« 1997, p. 231.

7 Ibid., p. 230.

In terms of culture and literature, the time period allowed for more freedom of speech. However, the timing of the transformation from being a part of the USSR into an independent state created an ambiguous situation. On the one hand, as Marko Pavlyshyn outlines in his essay on postcolonial features of contemporary Ukrainian literature,[6] due to the general devaluation of Soviet high culture, it became possible to step away from social realism, – the major recognized and appreciated literary style of the USSR, – which had required the artist's full collaboration with the state. On the other hand, the time required from the artists and writers to take a stand and either to support the USSR or to advocate vocally for the independent Ukraine.

Just as in the political situation in general, culture and art discourses were heavily ideological; just like in the Soviet times a writer was seen as closely connected to the state and having a responsibility to glorify the state, so that in the late 1980s and early 1990s a writer was expected to join the nationalism discourse to help to raise and cultivate the national consciousness of the masses. Thus, while the collapse of the USSR allowed for revising the ›official Soviet‹ history to bring out hidden and silenced moments of history, this revisionism was encouraged as long as it supported the nationalistic discourse. While the content of writing had changed, the mechanism was the same; an artist or a writer was not divorced from the propaganda of state politics. In the early years of independence an artist was expected to assume the role of martyr and prophet of the national liberation. As a matter of fact, some of them did, and as Pavlyshyn points out, this tendency caused many artists and writers to start political carriers and become professional statesmen.[7]

Thus, the conditions of the time placed *Stanislav Phenomenon* in an ambiguous position. On the one hand, they resisted a repetition of a Soviet-style consolidation of control over the cultural discourse and engaging artists and writers in propagating the new values. On the other hand, the new Ukrainian official discourse was not supportive of the divorce of art/literature from the state's new nationalizing position, which turned *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s attempt to be apolitical into a form of political protest in itself. Such an attempt to exist and write beyond state politics generated a new form of identity, which the group sought to establish as an alternative to newly centralized history and national identity in Ukraine.

Another aspect important to mention in the context of identity construction in this period was the accelerating access to previously banned western culture. In other words, music, art, literature which had been severely forbidden but highly admired by the end of the 1980s suddenly became legalized, and, moreover, translated and available on the market. In such a liberalizing environment, the location of Ivano-Frankivsk as the empire's western borderland became particularly significant.

Location

In her book *Borderland*,[8] dedicated to the stories and histories of Ukraine, Anna Reid provides a short but convincing argumentation for her title in the opening paragraph,

8 Reid, Anna: Borderland: A Journey through the History of Ukraine. Boulder: Westview Press, 1999.

9 Ibid., p.1.

> *UKRAINA* is literally translated as ›on the edge‹ or ›borderland‹, and that is exactly what it is. [...] Ukraine was split between Russia and Poland from the mid seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth, between Russia and Austria through the nineteenth, and between Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania between the two world wars.[9]

This is even more true for Eastern Galicia, which alone in the first half of the twentieth century alternately belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Poland and the Soviet Union and was a part of an independent Western Ukrainian Republic. This borderland position created a certain ambiguity. It resulted in the creation of multinational, mostly urban, ›universes‹ the demography of which was determined individually by the history of their occupations, migrations, and larger territorial re-drawings. The composition of these places was determined by the cultural and linguistic heritage of each of its demographic component, which was so diverse and vigorous that in 1918, when the Western Ukrainian Republic announced its independence, it published its banknotes in four languages, Ukrainian, Russian, Polish and

Yiddish.[10] The land therefore absorbed various cultures, mixing them only to a degree, and producing localized versions of cultural practices, languages and dialects, political views. The peripheral location, marginality of this »ever-transitional (from hands to hands, from camp to camp) strip«[11] also caused the formation of a specific view from the periphery, which on the one hand is characterized by looking up towards the centre, having its loyalty and fascination there, but on the other, due to its distance, has the perspective of a distant spectator.

Galicia's periphery had that geographical proximity to ›the other‹ territorial, cultural, and linguistic space, which allowed for later association with Central Europe, stirred urban legends and romanticized stories about ›the other‹ history of the land.

Postmodernism

With its main principle of deconstructing everything centralized, postmodernism was one of the alternatives for artists who did not want to associate with either the Soviet system or the homogenized nationalist discourse. Interestingly, in *PLEROMA: Small Ukrainian Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Literature*,[12] – one of the projects initiated by Yeshkiliev and Andrukhovych, – an article about postmodernism denies the existence of a postmodern socio-cultural situation as such in Ukraine. Just as the changes in society were triggered by the change of ideology rather than socio-economic changes, postmodernism was triggered not by the postmodern conditions of society but by the import of postmodern ideas. These were transplanted by intellectuals from abroad, where postmodernism was a recognized condition, and made it possible to interpret the conditions in Ukraine from a different, decentralized perspective.

Marko Pavlyshyn, in his essay *Ukrajinska kul'tura z pohliadu postmodernismu* (*Ukrainian Literature from the Point of View of Postmodernism*) also suggests that Ukrainian culture cannot be considered postmodern even despite the presence of literary texts with postmodern features. He concludes that in the culture as a whole, there still dominates an »ideologized« monologue, which is »a direct denial of yesterday's ideologized monologue«.[13]

Serhiy Hrabovs'kyj, in the essay *Posmodernyj dyskurs I kryzove buttja ljudyny* (*Postmodern Discourse and the Crisis Being of a Person*),[14] goes even further, defining the Ukrainian situation as a transition from the unfinished modern project (two constituent epochs of which were the unfinished pre-Soviet modernization and the Soviet deformed totalitarian modernization) and a postmodern project. Therefore, postmodernism, as a state emerging from the denial of modern values, could not have possibly fully developed in Ukraine.

If in the time and place of the crystallization of postmodernism, – the turbulent 1960s in the ›western world‹, – »the fate of postmodernism seemed to have been indissolubly linked to the fate of the countercultures«[15] then in the no less turbulent 1990s of the former Soviet bloc, the chaos and uncertainty about the future most naturally evoked postmodern forms of cultural manifestations. Sergiy Hrabovs'kyj, in his article[16] on postmodernism in Ukraine singles out several main components of postmodern discourse, among which are the perception and treatment of the actual world as a text; the denial of the ideals of humanism and enlightenment, and human responsibility, transforming the logical, reasonable and practical into a play on words; the acceptance and equal value of all cultural systems; and the need to deconstruct all that is habitual, well-accepted or traditional.

Pavlyshyn and Yeshkiliev enumerate similar features of postmodernism as significant hallmarks of the *Stanislav Phenomenon* artists' creativity, and yet, they both deny the *Phenomenon*'s full immersion into postmodern discourse, primarily due to the absence of a postmodern context in the Ukrainian social or cultural environment. However, these features are significant enough to talk about attempts to construct postmodern dispersed identity or a postmodern cultural context through the form and content of the *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s texts.

Stanislav Phenomenon, which emerged into the rejection of the Soviet value system and need to construct a different one, turned to postmodernism as a way of liberation from national discourse consolidation and a way of formation of dispersed identity. Postmodernism also symbolized belonging to the cultural space of Europe and its modernity. Importantly, it was a rebellion against centralized, manipulated culture and literature established either in the name of the Soviet ideals or national Ukrainian values. Specifically, it rebelled against the very idea of responsibility of art before its country and against the predestined role of an artist as a ›prophet‹ and ›martyr‹ of the national idea. Postmodernism allowed space for inclusion

10 Ibid., p. 147

11 Andrukhovych, Yuri/Yeshkiliev, Volodymyr: Potyah 76/1 (2002), p. 14.

12 Yeshkiliev/Andrukhovych: Pleroma.

13 Pavlyshyn 1997, p. 220.

14 Hrabovs'kyj, Serhiy: Posmodernyj Dyskurs I Kryzove Buttja Ljudyny [Postmodern Discourse and the Crisis Being of a Person]. In: Ji 26 (2002), pp. 8-32, p. 9.

15 Calinescu, Matei: Five Faces of Moderty: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism. Durham: Duke Univ. Pr. 1987, p. 268.

16 Hrabovs'kyj 2002, p. 9.

of all diverse experiences of Ukraine, expanding to an infinite possibility of their combination and interpretations, which was seen by *Stanislav Phenomenon* as a major freedom and advantage of a new, post-Soviet identity.

However, it is important to keep in mind that *Stanislav Phenomenon* was not all postmodern, and that the cultural, political, and social context into which it emerged did not allow for a complete divorce from responsibility and participation in the political scene of the country. Rather it resulted in some sort of synthetic construction, which used postmodern devises and elements of such discourse but also combined it with other forms. Olha Hnatiuk[17] pointed out that the major theme of identity discussions for *Stanislav Phenomenon* writers was targeted at writing Ukraine back into European cultural context, and, specifically, locating it within an intellectually reinvented and expanding space of Central Europe.

Hnatiuk outlines three major models of reconstructing cultural identity in the late 1980s and first half of the 1990s, which were triggered by the need of democratization and modernization of national identity. The first model, equating modernization of society with an orientation towards Western Europe, is based on a school of thought that first originated in Ukraine in the 1920s. The second, the postmodernist approach, questions the entire concept of a unified national identity (perceiving that as a legacy of Soviet collectivist politics) and underscores the existence of a multiplicity of dispersed identities. The third, and most widely promoted in public discourse at the end of the 1980s, relies on nationalistic discourse that emphasized the uniqueness of modernization processes in Ukraine. In the second half of the 1990s, these three models merged into two competing histories: the Soviet and the nativist models. The Soviet one, based on the support of institutions survived after the collapse of the USSR, can be viewed as a backlash to the frustrating economic and social conditions, and the result of heightened Russian influence in Ukraine. The nativist trend supported the uniqueness of the Ukrainian historical experience and identity. This trend was promoted by a group of intellectuals and writers and has never achieved significant popularity or influence. Positioning *Stanislav Phenomenon* on this scale, I would put it in opposition to the Soviet pole and close to the nativist pole, with only two more remarks. One is that opposition to the Soviet pole in *Stanislav Phenomenon* did not mean denial of the Soviet experience *per se*, but rather opposition to perseverance of the Soviet methods and values. Second, that nativist position was dispersed by *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s fascination of European values and the group's ultimate desire to make Ukraine a part of Europe.

In decoding the name, of *Stanislav Phenomenon* we can begin to understand the ideological and philosophical perspectives of the group. The usage of the old name of the city (before 1962 Ivano-Frankivsk was called *Stanislav*, before 1939 Stanisławòw) illustrates, a particular familiarity and intimacy of the artists with the city. Although the city was renamed in 1962, those who were born here or are at least second-generation city dwellers, still call it Stanislav or Stanisławow. The name Stanislav affirms that the artists are ›of the city‹, a point which can be supported by the significant role played by the city in the group's creativity; particular focus on the city's image, its architecture, maps, urban legends of past and present. *Stanislav* also refers to the group's evocation of the region's pre-Soviet, Polish, and Austro-Hungarian past.

The word *Phenomenon* refers, on the one hand, to the turbulent conditions into which the group emerged; such as rapid devaluation of centralized soviet culture, open, bordering on chaotic, flow of the previously forbidden culture from abroad, uncertainty as to the future prospects of one's own culture and country in general. This instability allowed the group to push for a conscious installation of the postmodern discourse in the Ukrainian context, which created a ›phenomenon‹ of controlled construction of art and literature discourse by the group. On the other hand, *Phenomenon* also refers to the seeming imbalance between the powerful conceptual and creative energy of the group and the ever marginal, peripheral location of Ivano-Frankivsk. As Olexandr Boichenko remarks,

> For some reason, in Ivano-Frankivsk the quantity and quality of the artists per population capita exceeds the average statistics in Ukraine. [...] The concentration of writers (and not only) has reached here its critical mass and has started a chain reaction, which keeps going on even now.[18]

Indeed, *Stanislav Phenomenon* did not limit itself to writing only but also organized public lectures, poetry readings, performance, issued a number of periodicals such as *Chetver*, *Pereval*, *Pleroma*, and *Kinets Kintsem*, thus indeed creating a context and a phenomenon in culturally

17 In »Tsenntral'noevropejs'ki debaty« (»Central European Debates«). Source: E-mail correspondence.

18 Boichenko, Olexondr: Kollektsioner Dosvidu [Collector of Experience]. In: Andrukhovych/Yeshkiliev 2002, pp. 92-94, here p. 92.

marginal Ivano-Frankivsk. A lot of these projects continued after 1996; they became independent projects by individual artists and writers, therefore continuing to generate discourse and maintaining a certain cultural space, the »chain reaction« to which Boichenko refers.

Part II: Identity construction

In *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s representation, two main traits became the cornerstones of the new national identity of the post-Soviet Ukraine. This was firstly Ukraine's orientation westwards, i.e. towards Europe and secondly its divorce with the Soviet legacy and estrangement from Russian influence. These two elements of the new national identity were related and in a way complemented each other. A third hallmark was not so dominant in the group's discourse but is important for the purposes of this paper: the position of *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s national identity construction in the framework of a wider Ukrainian identity discourse. *Stanislav Phenomenon*, which introduced a decentralized alternative vision of new national identity, was strongly associated with ›western Ukrainian‹ identity. The *Phenomenon* itself did not reinforce the split between western and central/eastern identity, but advocated for the acknowledgement of the diversity of all local identities. It supported the postmodern unity of the dispersed personality, each part of which would be valid and take its place in the national discourse without domination over the other.

These features of the new identity were both shaping features of identity and objectives, a desired direction of identity development. Such a portrayal of a desirable identity is in fact a form of construction of national identity, a process which can be investigated through the works of the group.

Divorce from the Soviet heritage

The attempt of disassociation with the Soviet legacy and Russian culture is reflected most fully in the *carnival* or *post-carnival* metaphor. Applying Mikhail Bakhtin's carnival theory, the metaphor had several levels. On the one hand, it signified the death of the old and beginning of the new system, but also brought attention to the artificiality of the transition. On the other, the use of the carnival metaphor allowed the artists to blur the margins of social and historical experiences, to introduce a carnivalesque diversity of interpretations and identities. Another important element of the carnival discussed in this paper is the significance of masks as a chance to switch identities and to both conceal and to reveal one's identity without fear of being persecuted for it.

19 Andrukhovych, Yuri: Recreations. Trans. by Marko Pavlyshyn. Toronto: Canadian Inst. of Ukrainian Studies P., 1998, p. 8

Carnival was unfolded to the fullest by Yuri Andrukhovych, who developed this concept through participation in another literary group, *Bu-Ba-Bu* (the first syllables of the words *burlesque*, *farce* and *buffoonery*, »a group of poets specializing in literary happenings, scandals, and provocations«).[19] Organized in Lviv in 1985 the group was built around the principle of carnival with particular emphasis on the role of masks, jesters or *blazen*, the fake and disruptive nature of the event.

Just like in *Bu-Ba-Bu,* carnival in *Stanislav Phenomenon* referred to the Soviet crisis and the change of the system in the late 1980s and early 1990s. According to Mikhail Bakhtin's theory, the European medieval carnival was an important ritual for breaking the rigid social boundaries. Here, in this world upside down, a symbolic death of the old and ugly was reenacted and celebrated as a means of the beginning of the new. Grotesque, – an important feature of any carnival, – emphasized old age and death, blood and defecations as symbols of birth, fertility, and new life. Special focus was given to reversing positions; beautiful was considered ugly, rich would dress as poor, the holy was treated as profane while the profane was celebrated as sacred. All this was reinforced by wearing masks, which concealed the ›real faces‹ and allowed for easy trespassing of boundaries of social strata, cultural norms and moral laws.

Stanislav Phenomenon's carnival is slightly different; it is rather ›post-carnival‹: Everyone is still wearing a mask, but the reproductive force of the rite is at question. This means not only the death of the Soviet system, but also the nature of the new construction of independent Ukraine. The persistence of Soviet methods and ideologies was so dominant that the newly formed Ukrainian independence discourse could well have been taken for a re-masked Soviet one.

The situation was reinforced by the mass ›conversion‹ to the Ukrainian national idea characteristic of the time; many party leaders and communist political workers, who had fiercely propagated Soviet regime and used it for their career swiftly changed their views and with the same vigour spread nationalistic values and ideas. This paradox was so overwhelming that it persisted in practically all spheres and professions, causing a situation in which the ›new generation‹ in fact never followed the ideological switch, the old one staying in the same seats with apparently new views. This situation made the carnival metaphor particularly convincing: As the carnival goes on, its participants entertain themselves by changing their masks. This carnival nature of the epoch is best reflected in Anrukhovych's first two novels *Recreations* (1992) and *Moskoviada* (1993).

Moskoviada is a horror novel depicting a system that only pretends to be dead.[20] The novel describes one day of Otto von F., a Ukrainian poet studying in Moscow. During this day, as Otto's blood alcohol level increases, he is literally driven deeper into the Moscow underground by a combination of personal misunderstandings, terrorist acts, KGB persecution, and mere coincidences. Here, in a famous Moscow subway he finds a mythical underground city, presumably built as a nuclear shelter for the party leaders. It is a grotesque world where Otto von F. finds thousands of people including such historical figures as Ivan the Terrible, Catherine the Great, Lenin, Dzerzhynskyj. They are all alive and kicking, dressed in carnival costumes, drinking, but still making well-functioning decisions about the fate of the country and determining its policies. The whole celebration looks like a farce, with people dressed up in masquerade costumes. However, the reality of KGB prosecution even here in the underground, betrayal and collaboration of the lover with the secret organization, and the threat of torture convince Otto von F. that the real farce is on the surface. What is fake in this whole situation is any change in the Soviet system. The system has staged its own death on the surface of Moscow just to thrive and accumulate strength in the Moscow underground – surface changes hide the in-depth persistence of the system.

Andrukhovych is similarly suspicious of the artificiality of the newly formed nationalistic discourse in Ukraine. In his first novel, *Recreations*, Andrukhovych depicts the carnival nature of the awakening of national consciousness in Ukraine. However, this carnival is different. Just as in *Moskoviada*, the main characters in the novel are Ukrainian poets and the plot of *Recreations* unfolds within a 24-hour time frame. The setting of the novel is a festival called *Sviato Voskresaiuchoho Dukha* (Festival of the Resurrecting Spirit). Massive public celebrations were popular in the early 1990s, but as Pavlyshyn describes below, often had a strong political subtext:

> Mass manifestations of what had recently been subculture or counterculture became increasingly frequent and bold. There were rock and pop music concerts and festivals including the famous *Chervona Ruta* (Red Rue Flower) Festival [...]. The major religious festivals, celebrated openly for the first time in decades, were accompanied by mass participation in revived folk customs and rituals. There were also mass events with a more mythological orientation, such as the Holy Ukraine festival [...].[21]

Festivals thus allowed a public celebration of previously forbidden elements of culture, be that rock music or religion, and created an atmosphere of public euphoric enjoyment of this freedom. The readers of *Recreations* were expected to be fully familiar with the nature of an imagined event described in the novel. According to the plot, it is to this celebration in a small imaginary town in the Carpathians, called Chortopil, that four promising Ukrainian poets were invited as participants. In his article *Irony and Self-Creation of Identity in Yuri Andrukhovych's Novels*[22] Serhij Borys gives an interesting analysis of the name of the celebration, the *Festival of the Resurrecting Spirit*. The grammatical form of the word ›resurrecting‹ implies an imperfect aspect. This ironically reinforces the fact that we are dealing not with a registered national awakening, but rather with a process captured in slow motion; the whole celebration is a carnival in itself. Unlike in *Moskoviada*, this carnival is fertile; the main characters go through this night separately from each other, gaining a valuable experience by going beyond themselves. All participants spend their night rediscovering or adjuring a new aspect of themselves, their past, and the past of their people. To do so, however, they have to join the carnival, dress up in historical costumes of different epochs. Only after such masking do the characters feel safe to trust themselves enough to open up in search for their identities.

20 Cf. Hnatiuk, Olha: Introductory Word. In: Andrukhovych, Yuri: Recreatsii [Recreations] Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo »Chas« 1997.

21 Andrukhovych 1998, p. 9.

22 Borys, Serhij: Ironija I Samotvorennja Identychnosti V Romanakh Yurija Andrukhovycha. [Irony and Self-Creation of Identity in Yuri Andrukhovych's Novels]. In: Ji 26 (2002), pp. 141-155.

At this point, masks allow them to become someone, to assume specific roles and simultaneously to take off their daily masks of cynicism and carelessness to do some serious soul searching. On the one hand, masks and costumes are symbols of the artificial and at times insincere identity consciously adopted to conceal one's real face. On the other hand, masks can serve as a protection, a way to preserve unpopular values or beliefs as a part of one's identity. In the context of carnival, it is impossible to say which face is real or which is just a mask, which opens another aspect of carnival, i.e. the framework for revealing one's own identity without fear of being criticized or prosecuted. In his later essay *About Time and Method,*[23] Andrukhovych looks back at the *Bu-Ba-Bu* fascination with carnival and tries to find its reasons. He recalls that in the mid-1980s the issues of totalitarianism and censorship were both still very strong factors. Looking back, the author does not know anymore if the carnival concept was a challenge to totalitarianism or borne out of a necessity to »mask« and protect themselves from the system.[24]

In *Recreations*, in the course of one night, each character goes through an experience allowing the discovery of new aspects of their own selves.[25] However, the initiation effect of the night is destroyed by the next morning; all participants of the celebration are rounded up on the market square by armed soldiers and it is announced that, due to Coup d'Etat, the power is back with the Soviets and all participants will be executed as ›enemies of the nation‹. Just as the heroes reveal the sincerity of their souls in the face of grave danger, the celebration's director, Pavlo Mazapura – according to the chronicles, an 18th century criminal who had committed almost every possible crime, including cannibalism – arrives to proclaim that it was all a joke, or rather a part of the celebration, the ›surprise‹ he had advertised in the program billboards, and thus he announces the beginning of the first day of the celebration. However, the ease with which he performed his surprise trick leaves the reader asking what could have happened had he not been joking, and wondering at the extend of his power over the people. Therefore, the *Festival of the Resurrecting Spirit* leaves a strange aftertaste of a puppet theatre where Mazapura and other organizers pull the strings.

The entire epoch of the collapse of the USSR and establishment of independent Ukraine are presented in Andrukhovych's works as one big carnival. Here, people, who sought liberation from the system suddenly realized that they are a part of that system and the system is an integral part of their identity. Moreover, during the communist era his characters knew who they were; they were poets in opposition, who could have either confirmed the system, or have become dissidents and martyrs of the national liberation movement. With the collapse there came the formal liberation; removing the system from the outside just to reveal people's inability to use this liberation, to reveal how permeable the system is in people themselves. Andrukhovych's poets longed for this Ukrainian independence, however they did not welcome dressing Soviet totalitarian methods in new nationalistic skins. The ›renewed‹ discourse placed similar expectations of collaboration with the new nationalized discourse and politics on the poets as the Soviet regime had done. Their response was rather passive and one of postmodern irresponsibility; they self-indulged in alcohol, scorned all ideals and cultural values, were incredibly cynical, and constantly,- rather superficially, - played with philosophic concepts, pop-culture, Soviet and nationalistic discourses. As Borys well points out, it was their vulgar and trivial cynicism that brought out their sharp but still not fully recognized need to become different.[26]

In one of the most widely quoted passages from *Recreations*, Andrukhovych conveys the abundance of influences, variety of origins and the impossibility to capture it in frames through the description of the carnival crowd. It is impossible to say who of them is wearing masks, and who dared to take them off only in the festival multitude:

> There were Angles of God, Gypsies, Moors, Cossacks, Bears, Studiosi, Devils, Witches, Naiads, Prophets, the Basilian Fathers in brown cassocks, Jews, Pygmies, Uhlans, Whores, Legionaries, Shepherds, Lambs, Cripples, Lunatics, Murderers, Bandits, Turks, Hindus, Sich Riflemen, Vagrants, Kobzars, Heavy Metallists, Samurai, Idlers, Serdiuks, Oil-Pressers, Mamelukes, Janissaries, Saracens, Hebrews, Negroes, Patricians in togas, Sluts, Scribes, Liars with their tongues hanging out, cretins, Zaporozhian Cossacks, infantrymen, Musicians, Mohammedans, Malankas, Malantsi, Molls, Fallen Women, Hutsuls, Trijans, Srmatians, Hippies, the Blind, Trembita Players, Harlots, Saints with cardboard halos, Hetmans, Monks, Punks, Tramps, Gossips, Troubadours, Butchers, Jurists, Bride Takers, Drunkards, Physicians, Arabs, Brigands, the Dominican fathers

23 Andrukhovych, Yuri: Pro Chas I Metod [About Time and Method]. In: Kinets' Kintsem 1999, pp. 69-73.

24 Ibid., p. 70-1.

25 E.g. Hryts Shtundera, one of the four poets, rediscovers the spot of the village from which his father was deported to Karaganda, Marta Martopfliak, the wife of the most promising poet Rostyslav Martopfliak, has an affair with her husband's friend Khomskyj, thus stepping for a while out of her typical role as a wife, mother and admirer of Martofliak's talent.

26 Borys 2002, p. 146.

> in white, Strumpets, Heroes, Beer Drinkers, Snout-Dippers, Lard Eaters, Ragamuffins, Oakbreakers, Minstrels, Prostitutes - and it is impossible to enumerate all the others, for there were also Generals, Gorillas, Baboons, Paulicians, Danaids, Nanai, Nymphs, Nivkh, Assyrians, Albanians, Pickpockets, Lyre Players, Innkeepers, Macedonians, Brewers, Anachorites, Goat Skinners, Ukrainians, Midwives, Gnomes, Dryads, Bats, Black Cats, Frogs, Alchemists, Tarts, Lepers, Tatars, Abyssinians...[27]

This grotesque crowd stands as an allegory for the multitude of components of the Ukrainian culture and nation. Interestingly, in the 1997 Ukrainian edition of *Recreations*, the last group in the list is not ›Abyssinians‹ but ›Bubabists‹. Thus Andrukhovych brings references to himself and his circle into his novels, erasing the borders between the imaginary and the real worlds, creating, on the one hand, a sense of mysticism around his persona and making the characters of the novel more real, on the other. Each name is capitalized, thus given the same amount of respect. Interestingly, among the rest of the people the author differentiates also the ›Ukrainians‹, emphasizing the non-homogeneous nature of the participants. Andrukhovych does not see any problem with the fact that they all seemingly have nothing in common. The aspect that does unite the crowd is the fact that they all came, or, rather, made their pilgrimage to this obscure festival of the Resurrecting Spirit, and thus they all see this revival as theirs, all hope to have a place in this new country.

The idea of the artificiality of changes is reinforced, among other works, in Andrukhovych's essay *Ave, Chrysler!*[28] Here, the author, contemplating on whether anything has really changed in Ukraine since the collapse of the USSR, draws a negative conclusion blaming it, among other things, on exaggerated patriotism, suspicion of national betrayal, destruction of ideals, and spiritual poisoning in any ›different‹ thought.[29] Another good example of infiltration of soviet and nationalistic discourses can be found in *Chetver #6* illustrated by Olga and Yurko Kokh. Here, the ancient symbol and contemporary Ukrainian coat-of-arms of a trident is constructed of walls and a tower bearing the star of the Moscow Kremlin.[30]

In *Stanislav Phenomenon*, similar carnival topics were also developed by Izdryk, Yeshkiliev and Hutsuliak. However, Izdryk's perspective is more focused on the postmodern deconstruction and game, while Yeshkilev's, and Hutsuljak's works are heavily accented on the value of symbol/sign, the demiurgic construction of texts and contexts.

The carnival metaphor became an allusion for the surreal events of the collapse of empire and symbolized the shallow and façade nature of value system changes in independent Ukraine. The carnival and mask metaphor was also a defence mechanism, under which *Stanislav Phenomenon* could convey their thoughts openly in the conditions of a rather questionable freedom of speech of the late 1980s and early 1990s. For national identity construction in *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s works, carnival became a primary symbol of dispersed identity, a possibility of thriving decentralized culture, which easily incorporated all the diversity of historical experiences of a borderland such as Ukraine.

It is no accident that Andrukhovych's horror-novel *Moskoviada* finishes with Otto von F. leaving Moscow for Ukraine. While it is hard to say if it is a happy end, it is definitely highly symbolic on many levels. After the nightmarish phantasmagorical odyssey through the heart of an officially non-existent but in fact rather vigorous Soviet empire, Otto von F. finds his liberation in shooting a bullet into his head. This ›death‹, – real or metaphorical – is his only possible way out of KGB persecution, Russian chauvinism, and the ever-present Soviet regime that had collapsed on the surface only.

Otto von F.'s death is one of several biblical allusions. As Jesus had to die to conquer death, Otto von F. can be liberated from the system only by putting an end to his own life within this system. This allusion is reinforced by the fact that after the shot Otto von F. suddenly finds himself at a railway station in front of the train #41 (Moscow-Kyiv), with a big fish in his bag. The fish – a widely-recognized symbol for Jesus Christ and the resurrection – can symbolize a possibility of resurrection for Otto von F. beyond the Soviet system, but necessitates his return to Ukraine, as he uses it to pay for the ›third shelf‹ (luggage space) in an overcrowded train going home.[31]

Andrukhovych's other charcters do not stop in Kyiv but keep moving westward. Indeed, one of the main highlights of his interpretation of the new Ukrainian identity was not only the divorce from the Soviet past and breaking free from a Moscow-oriented centralized culture, but the re-orientation towards a European cultural space, where Ukraine could find its place in a diverse mosaic of independent national cultures. Thus, the train/locomotive became another of the central conceptual ideas of *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s identity discourse.

27 Andrukhovych 1998, p. 64-65.

28 Andrukhovych, Yuri: Ave, Chrysler! In: Chetver 6 (1995), pp. 50-65.

29 Ibid., p. 56

30 Pohribna-Kokh, Olha: Kokh Yuri. In: Chetver 6 (1995), p. 24.

31 Andrukhovych, Yuri: Moskoviada. Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo »Chas«, 1997, p. 244-5.

Writing Ukraine into the Central European cultural space

In many ways, reinforcement of the separation from the Soviet past and Russian influence was important for a large identity construction project, that is for creating European identity in Ukraine. Therefore, ›writing Ukraine back‹ into European cultural, intellectual, ideological and experiential space was one of the major projects undertaken by *Stanislav Phenomenon* through their texts, visual-textual media, performances, presentations. Since most hopes were put on the participation of Ukraine in the Central European discourse that was being revitalized with new vigour in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania in the mid-1980s, *Stanislav Phenomenon* engaged in and initiated many joint projects with many intellectuals from the Central European space.

In 2002, B. Zahajskyj, Yu. Andrukhovych, O. Boichenko, and V. Yeshkiliev initiated a literary project called *Potyah (Locomotive) 76: Chernivtsi – Europe*. In the foreword explaining the title of the project, the authors play with the semantic meaning of the Ukrainian word *potyah*, which besides ›locomotive‹ can also denote ›desire‹, ›lust‹ or ›libido‹. The object of this desire is also determined in the foreword; it is Europe. »Westward...westward...westward«,[32] repeats the author with the excitement of a traveller who foresees the joy of a journey rather than a place of destination. Echoing this flight is the excerpt on the dustcover of Yeshkiliev's and Hutsuliak's novel *Adept* that reads, »In vain you try to escape to the West. The East will get you even there.«[33] »Escaping« the east, movement westward into the ideological and cultural space of Central Europe is a significant feature of the *Phenomenon*'s national identity.

Potyah 76 was a long-cradled project (a published periodical and an extended on-line version), which aimed specifically at creating or, rather re-creating, a common Central-European cultural and ideological space that is assumed to have existed once when Galicia's belonged to the Austro-Hungarian empire and might presumably still be revitalized and enjoyed. Just like its real prototype, the train #76 Chernivtsi – Przemyšl, the literary locomotive leaves from Chernivtsi and, heading westward, stops in Stanislav, Lviv, Przemyšl, to ›pick up‹ authors from the regions. In fact, the literary train goes much further, including authors from Hungary, Romania, the former Yugoslav territory, Czech republic, Slovakia, Austria. Therefore, the whole magazine is a form of anthology, where voices from Ukraine, Poland, Hungary and Serbia create one canvas of contemporary literature from Central Europe.

The effect of multiculturalism shared in the common space of Central Europe is reinforced on many levels. For instance, in the first published edition, the chapter Chernivtsi-Stanisławów includes three German-writing Jewish poets from Chernivtsi who emigrated during the World War II but who wrote a lot of their poetry about the Chernivtsi of their childhood and youth.[34] In this poetry they recreated a small provincial town which was a home for many distinct ethnic and religious communities. The selection reinforces the effective irreality of nation-state borders, which are easily moved, and which are still unable to create a homogeneous cultural space within their limits.

Other authors in the locomotive often share works dedicated to places other than their homes; Andrzej Stasiuk, a Polish writer, contributes an essay about his trip to Ukraine,[35] Hungarian Peter Zilahy writes about his experience in Beograd, Serbia, etc.[36] In addition, the literary stations in the magazine are written in mixed Cyrillic and Latin letters, reinforcing a feeling of unity of the space, the intertwining of its roots and fates.

To investigate *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s interpretation of Central Europe it is useful to look at the Lviv elitist journal *Ji*. Since 1995, it has become a major forum dedicated to the Central European debate, as it issued several full editions[37] as well as individual articles in almost every edition on the topic.

The concept of Central Europe is not a geographical term but an ideological, and conceptual construction. While during the Cold War Eastern and Western Europe demarcated the borders of the political systems, Central Europe was revitalized in the early 1980s by the intellectuals of the so-called ›buffer zone‹: Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania and other countries of the ›eastern block‹ striving to re-create a Central European space on the grounds of uniqueness of their common experience and the marginality of their location between the two major ideologies.

The legitimacy of Ukrainian strivings to join the Central European space were rooted in the experiential similarity of being marginalized in a geographically central location, and the common history (at least partially) with the countries of the revived Central European space.

32 Andrukhovych/Yeshkiliev 2002, p.1.

33 Yeshiliev, Volodymyr/Yeshiliev, Oleh Hutsuliak: Adept. Ivano-Frankivsk: Lileja - NV 1997.

34 Rose Ausländer, Paul Celan, Alfred Gong.

35 Stasiuk, Andrzej: Opys Podorozhi Ukrainoju [Description of a Trip through Ukraine]. In: Potyah 76, 1 (2002).

36 Zilahy, Peter: Ostannia Viknozhyrafa [from the Last Window Giraffe]. In: Potyah 76, 1 (2002).

37 Editions particularly focused on Ukraine in the European context are 23(2002), 20(2001), 19(2001), 14(1999), 13(1998), 12(1998), 9(1996), 6(1995). Av. at: http://www.ji.lviv.ua/ji-arhiv.htm. [l.v.: 04.22.2005].

The value of belonging to this space lay in joining a cultural, social and economic environment more removed from the Soviet heritage and more democratized, giving access to the literature and art of previously forbidden artists and the possibilities of travelling, which was an important advantage after the Iron Curtain experience. For *Stanislav Phenomenon*, Central Europe first and foremost meant a zone of diversity and decentralized multiple identities living side by side.

For *Stanislav Phenomenon,* the taste of this multiplicity has remained in Galicia in architecture, urban legends, village dialects and recipes. In *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s representation, memories of once belonging to that multicultural space at times are nostalgic, at times scep-tical, but always a matter of the author's individual interpretation. ›Historical truth‹ here is a less concrete notion than the truth of personal or collective memories, while the postmodern approach gives more value to individual reading than to any centralized vision of the history.

Overall, the representation of Austro-Hungarian or Polish past of Western Ukraine comes precisely in the form of these rather intimate, highly localized and personalized experiences, such as in Halyna Petrosanyak's volume of poetry *Svitlo Okrain*[38] (*The Light of the Outskirts*). The very design of the book convey this, consisting of many photographic images from the beginning of the twentieth century, capturing images of Hutsuls, their houses, as well as panoramic views of the small Galician town Vorochta, accompanied with its Latin (rather than Cyrillic) inscription *Worochta*. The book forms a world where Hutsul folk culture captions, Latin script, poems about town parks, cathedrals, towers and balustrades constitute one mosaic space, a space of the ›outskirts‹, unique but still reflecting the »influence of Parisian architecture, towers of Vienna.«[39] While Petrosanyak's poetry cannot be considered postmodern but rather belongs to ›neoclassicism‹,[40] it still celebrates a similar idea of merging of cultures, elements that can exist simultaneously, be combined harmoniously, and interpreted individually.

References of Galicia's history in the Austro-Hungarian space creates even beyond *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s works a precedent of once having belonged to Central Europe. In his article *Zblyzhennja Krajin* Vaclav [Chihak], finds that the Central European territory consists first of all of the countries once belonging to the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and contemporary Poland.[41] In the light of such opinions, reinforcing Ukrainian membership in the Empire's history provides initial legitimacy for a participation in the Central European debate.

Among things that attach Western Ukraine to the Central European space in *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s symbolism are old maps, which unfold another reality, another history, another world, and architecture that still bears an imprint of history. Both maps and architecture are dominant images in the works of Andrukhovych, Izdryk, Prokhasko, Petrosanyak and Yeshkiliev. Maps, no matter how artificial and constructed, serve as some sort of proof that there once existed a united space, where there were no borders between Ukraine and Europe.

Mapping and frequent border changes are also significant for the ever-marginal position of Galicia. Always a borderland and a backyard of different empires, it has created a unique discourse, of which *Stanislav Phenomenon* in itself is seen as an ultimate proof. The inconsistencies of geographical and cultural epicentres and borderlands of Europe allow Andrukhovych to comment that »in Europe, what is in the East is the Centre«.[42] This marginality and instability of borders is seen by *Stanislav Phenomenon* as an advantage that once allowed for the creation of multi-cultural provincial urban centres, and which will today allow Ukraine an easier transformation into a wider European postmodern discourse of dispersed identities.

Architecture also serves as petrified history, which one can see but no longer read. In his essay *Chas i Metod abo Moja Ostannia Terytorija* (*Time and Method or My Last Territory*), Andrukhovych talks about a specific aspect of postmodern composition of Galicia, its multiculturalism being directed into the past. The author calls it »postmulticulturalism,«[43] saying that the only things we have left of the former diversity are traces and imprints, most of which are ruins. These ruins are the signs of layers of cultures, a game with the bricks of existence, a game in which we are not the players.[44] However, the presence of these ruins is enough for *Stanislav Phenomenon* to feel connected to Central Europe.

However, *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s claims to Central European membership did not rest exclusively on the re-evaluation of history. The Central Europe of the 1980s and 1990s was a significantly different project from the Central Europe of the beginning of the 20th century.

38 Petrosanyak, Halyna: Svitlo Okrain [The Light of the Outskirts]. Ivano-Frankivsk: Lileja-NV 1998.

39 Ibid., p. 4.

40 Yeshliliev/Andrukhovych: Pleroma.

41 Chihak, Vaclav: Zblyzhennja Krajin. In: Ji 9 (1996). Av. at.: http://www.ji.lviv.ua/n9texts/n9-avstr.htm.

42 Andrukhovych, Yuri: Chas I Metod Abo Moja Ostannia Terytorija [Time and Method or My Last Territory]. In: Dyzorjentatsija Na Mistsevosti. Ivano-Frankivsl: Lileja-NV 1999, p. 120.

43 Ibid., p. 121.

44 Ibid.

Thus, Otto von Habsburg in his 1997 interview with *Ji* said that though the renewal of »centraleuropeanness« had been one of the most important task of the previous years, it is not the archaeological reconstruction of identity that is expected.[45] Instead, Central European identity was to be constructed anew after its neglect during the Cold War era and under consideration of the Cold War experience. *Stanislav Phenomenon* sought to participate in this creative process as an equal partner. Their contribution consisted of a popularization of the Central European idea in Ukraine through multicultural projects like *Potyah 76,* collaboration with other European writers and art groups, and through translation and publishing of many Central European writers in Ukraine. A significant part of this project was an attempt to adopt forms of national identity where tolerance and acceptance of multiculturalism would be important values and where all experiences could be equally valuable and play a part in a larger cultural mosaic.

45 von Habsburg, Otto: Ukraina Takozh Nalezhyt Do Serednioji Evropy [Ukraine Also Belongs to Central Europe]. In: Ji 9 (1997), pp. 38-44, p. 42.

Reconciliation of east- and west-Ukrainian historical experiences

Stanislav Phenomenon is rightly perceived as a highly local occurrence. However, its voice and presence reached further than just the Galician cultural discourse. It was one of the most active representatives of Ukrainian literature in the Central European discourse and a part of a broader national Ukrainian literary discourse. Thus, Hnatiuk comes to distinguishes between the Galician identity discourse – *Stanislav Phenomenon* being one of its major generators – and the central/east/southern Ukrainian discourses, where the issue of a common identity with Russia is much more prominent than in Galicia. Her analysis highlights *Stanislav Phenomenon* as being situated more firmly in a Central European discourse than an all-Ukrainian one. The degree of the group's involvement in both discourses, however, reveals another problematic issue in their national identity construction: The relevance of the Galician historical and cultural experience to the rest of the Ukrainian cultural experience and the possibility of reconciling possible inconsistencies that arise between these experiences and *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s European-oriented construction. Though this question is not so dominant in the works of *Stanislav Phenomenon*, it is important to look at the group's position on this issue in order to place *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s identity construction into a wider all-Ukrainian framework.

46 Andrukhovych 1999, p. 118.

47 Hnatiuk, Ola: Tsentral'nojevropejs'ki debaty

Western Ukraine has an ambivalent position in the popular Ukrainian discourse. On the one hand it is seen as a kind of safeguard of ›authentic Ukrainianness‹, which the rest of Ukraine has lost in the course of colonization and assimilation. The reverse side of this myth is the actual remoteness of the Galician experience from the ›true‹ Ukrainian experience. The first part of the myth was maintained primarily through the fact that Western Ukraine fell under Soviet occupation later than the other parts of Ukraine. The second part is re-inforced by the fact that it had been a part of Austro-Hungary and Poland and that it a home of vigorous urban communities, where the Jewish, Polish and German populations practically outnumbered the Ukrainian population in the cities. This allows Andrukhovych to comment on the surrealism of the ›Galician construction‹ from the position of Polissja, - the ›cradle‹ of Kyjivan Rus,

> Galicia is not Ukraine, it is some kind of geographical adjunct, a Polish hallucination. Galicia is thoroughly mannequin, puppet-like, blown up; at all times and everywhere it seeks to make Ukraine act according to its non-Ukrainian, brewed up in mysterious Zionists' laboratories, will.[46]

During the 1980s and 1990s, the controversial public myth about the position of western Ukraine was reinforced. The independence movement was most vocative here, where the heritage of the early 20th century independence struggle was actively rediscovered and incorporated both into the official discourse and pop culture. This caused a controversial situation in which Western Ukraine was seen as a place where one could catch a glimpse of ›true Ukrainian culture‹ while on holiday in the Carpathians, while at the same time many easterners truly believe they could be attacked in the streets of Lviv for speaking Russian. This declaration of a Galician uniqueness, its ›otherness‹ from the rest of ›Sovietized‹ Ukraine even gave rise to talk of the emergence of Galician separatism. However, Olha Hnatiuk, while briefly discussing this debate as reflected in the mass media (*Polityka*, *Postup*), says that it bears a provocative character rather than reflecting the real loyalties of the population.[47]

Stanislav Phenomenon, while recognizing the objective differences in the cultural and linguistic patterns of many Ukrainian regions (not limited to the »east v. west« divide), did not subscribe to the fact that such diversity can cause any threat to the country's unity. Nor should *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s pride in and glorification of the uniqueness of the Galician historical and cultural experience be taken as a threat of separatism as it does not in any way diminish the value of any other regional culture. Nevertheless, *Stanislav Phenomenon* did take special pride in Galicia's uniqueness, such as in Andrukhovych's essay *ErtsHertsPerts*.[48] The author encourages to face the truth; a little over half a century ago, Galicia was one country with Venice and Vienna and not with Tambov or Tashkent and there is no denying the fact that Stanislav looks very different from Dnipropetrovs'k, Kryvyj Rih, or Zaporizhia, which, in turn, all look the same.[49] He declares pride in the Austro-Hungarian history of his land, especially so after the Soviet denial of this history. After all, who but him and others inhabiting the land were to take care of those memories and landmarks.

In general, the position of *Stanislav Phenomenon* on the issue of the presumed juxtaposition of western vs. central/eastern Ukraine was formed according to the postmodern value of multiple identities. Galicia is seen as a fragment, one among many fragments of the dispersed identities in a mosaic where each is equally precious and valuable and where the multiplicity and diversity of these segments can only benefit the fullness of the overall picture, reinforce its unity and creative potential. Thus, over and over again the writers of *Stanislav Phenomenon* praise the diversity of their roots, seeing it as a doorway to a more open, more liberating worldview.

In his essay *BO TAK JE* (*Because this is how it is*) Taras Prokhasko reminisces in his family memories – memories that were never his own but became an indistinguishable part of his identity via relatives whose origins range from the Czech Republic to Asia. Prokhas'ko contents that his children inherited such »mixed and chimerical« blood, which will always make a part of their memories too and will never allow them to feel lonely.[50] Similarly, Andrukhovych recognizes that his grandmother's experiences of many changes of systems and numerous border redrawings in her lifetime make it possible for him to unite many things that could not otherwise be united or at peace with each other.[51] The previously quoted passage about the carnival crowd in Andrukhovysh's *Recreations* includes many representatives from various parts of Ukraine and its different epochs: Cossacks, Sich Riflemen, Kobzars, Zaporozhian Cossacks, Hutsuls, Trembita Players, Ukrainians and Tatars, all equally contributing to the festivities.[52] The metaphor suggests that Ukraine should not strive for a centralized homogenized identity, but rather be open to incorporate the multiplicity of Ukrainian historical and cultural experiences. All this »mixed and chimerical« blood gives Ukraine its fluidity and borderland perseverance, the ability to transform and change without loosing its ›roots‹, no matter how numerous and tangled.

48 Andrukhovych, Yuri: Ertshertsperts. In: Chetver 1 (1995), pp. 48-54.

49 Ibid., p. 50.

50 Prokhasko, Taras: Bo Tak Je [Because This Is How It Is]. In: Kinets' Kintsem 1999, p. 90-91.

51 Andrukhovych 1995, p. 50.

52 Andrukhovych 1997, p. 64-65.

After *Stanislav Phenomenon*

The dissolution of *Stanislav Phenomenon* was indicative not only of individual tendencies within the group. It reflected the changed conditions which made the existence of *Stanislav Phenomenon* redundant. As Stepan Protsiuk says about the dissolution of another literary group of the 1990s, *New Degeneration*, the dissolution of the group happened spontaneously after they had performed their function.[53] Similarly, *Stanislav Phenomenon* could not fit its postmodern, carnival existence into the changed environment.

Among the factors that conditioned *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s dissolution some have more relevance to national identity construction than others. These more relevant factors include the strengthening of the political and cultural consolidation within the country and establishment of new political and cultural ›canons‹, the disappointment with the ingenuine western values and the postmodern discourse, and finally and most crucially, the disappointment with the Central European project itself and a realization of the relative European disinterest in Ukraine's attempts to join it. With this final disillusionment, *Stanislav Phenomenon* seemed to have lost its crux.

Following the political, social and cultural development in Ukraine, one can trace an obscured but steady decline of liberalism and democracy, which eventually, and to a considerable degree, was brought to light during the presidential elections in 2004-2005.[54] In a Moscow interview in January 2005[55] Andrukhovych remarked that the 1990s had in general

53 Protsiuk, Stepan: Srakh Ta Ideja [Fear and Idea]. In: Kurjer Kryvbasu 170 (2004), p. 146.

54 This paper was originally written in the summer of 2005, thus does not take into consideration the most recent political changes in Ukraine.

55 Andrukhovych, Yuri: Interview with Andrukhovych and Zhadan in Moscow (26.01.2005); av. at: http://www2.maidan.org.ua/n/culture/1107001808 [l.v.: 01.06.2005].

become a decade of tremendous disappointment; in 1991 he believed in and worked for the construction of the new country, but eventually the old turned out to be invincible. Moreover, Andrukhovych remarks that the old had not only stayed but also regenerated itself in even more ugly forms.

Indeed the end of the 1980s were characterized by the overwhelming mobilization of the masses for independence and democratization of society in Ukraine. Repressed for decades by Soviet prosecutions and highly centralized control of all spheres of life, the Ukrainian opposition was mostly formed in response to these repressions. Therefore, according to Pavlyshyn, once »the goal of state independence had been achieved, the liberating project lost the goal of its existence.«[56] Before independence, the discourse of national liberation had primarily focused on portraying Ukraine as an oppressed occupied territory, which could never achieve its prosperity due to external intrusion. However, after achieving independence it became clear that getting rid of the external oppressor was not enough for Ukraine's democratization, and that an oppression generated from within had already become a part of identity.

Similarly to Pavlyshyn, Bohdan Boychuk in his critical article about contemporary Ukrainian literature recalls how at the beginning of ›thaw‹ era in the USSR, he had hoped for a »rebirth of Ukrainian literature«,[57] for »an explosion of artistic energy that was repressed for over half a century.«[58] However, Boychuk concludes that such a revival never occurred. Instead, the ›thaw‹ signalled the beginning of a great decline, the reasons for which Boychuk suggests include the deformation of the Ukrainian people by the Soviet system, the redirection of creative forces into destructive spheres, the fear of being exploited, of the unknown world and of our own past.[59] He proceeds by blaming the new generation of artists for having stopped experimenting, adopting Soviet intolerance and methods of pressure. Boychuk remarks that »I am sometimes scared of how much the young people still remain *homo sovieticus*.«[60]

Significantly, one of the most powerful the factors of control in the 1990s was not so much political but economic pressure: limited access to resources, selective subsidies certain literature, laws on book import, the common practice of not paying salaries, etc. Andrukhovych remarks that in the mid-1990s there was such a decline in the public's interest in literature that for a few years he even gave up organizing literary evenings, knowing that they would fail miserably.[61]

The creative storm of the transition era, in which *Stanislav Phenomenon* had emerged as a true phenomenon, was gone. Further consolidation left less and less space for the carnival diversity of *Stanislav Phenomenon*, which was now ousted or ignored as a provincial and marginal occurrence in consolidating canons of Ukrainian literature. In such conditions, carnivalesque allusions were not enough to deconstruct the discourse, while deconstruction in itself was not sufficient either. It was important to take an active part in creating a new constructive discourse, which required taking open positions. This leads to another factor of *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s dissolution, the disappointment with the western postmodern discourse.

In 1999 edition of the almanac *Kinets' Kintsem*, Izdryk very openly asserts an »endless crisis which permeated all spheres of our life.«[62] He encourages a search for a remedy from hopelessness in ourselves. Izdryk focuses on the overwhelming ousting of ›art‹ by ›culture‹, where ›art‹ represents a work by an artist with the creative spark of an artist combined with freedom of expression, while ›culture‹ exercises only freedom of expression for its own sake, loosing any content, leading to an imitation of imitations up to a complete loss of identity.[63] Similar disillusion with the western postmodern project that *Stanislav Phenomenon* had earlier subscribed itself to comes across in Andrukhovych's essay *Suchasne Mystetstvo Ukrainy? Suchasne Mystetstvo Skhidnoji Evropy i Ukraina?*. The major disappointment is not aimed at the postmodern project itself but its trivialization and commercialization in western Europe: Postmodernism had lost its genuine deconstructive force and in itself became a norm of artistic expression, subject to popularity and commerce.

However, the most devastating effect on *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s identity construction was the disillusionment with the Central European project. In the 1997 issue of *Dyzorjentatsiji na Mistesevosti* Andrukhovych included an essay which can serve as a manifesto of bitter recognition of the separation and estrangement of Ukraine, and Galicia in particular, from the other Central European countries. With bitter irony Andrukhovych remarks how the Central European space was never meant for Ukraine; Ukraine has always been ostracized and pushed into the margin, manipulated so that it would benefit the interests of empires. The whole

56 Pavlyshyn 1997, p. 216.

57 Boichuk, Bohdan: Deshcho Pro Dejakykh Molodykh [Some Facts About Some Young Ones]. In: Kurjer Kryvbasu 179-181 (2004), p. 215

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid., p. 216.

61 Andrukhovych 2005.

62 Izdryk, Yuri: »Denni« Refleksii V Sutinkah [»Daily« Reflections in Twilights]. In: Kinets' Kintsem 1999, p. 73-74, here p. 73.

63 Ibid., p. 74.

idea and space of Galicia, claims Andrukhovych, is nothing else but a 150-year-old invention of some Austrian ministers who were obsessed with the chimerical idea of expanding Europe to the East. Andrukhovych continues that no Europe ever came out of that land; what did emerge was a buffer space, a sort of sanitary zone.[64] Like any invention, Galicia dreams of and lives with the dreams of becoming a part of its inventor. The talks of Europe, Europeanization, joining Europe and being a part of Europe dominate Galician after-dinner talks, reinforcing Galician provincialism and reproducing its strenuous efforts to plagiarize the European project, which is long dead.[65] Central Europe turned out to be a »geographical ghost«;[66] an invention by Konrad and Kundera,[67] that Ukraine had once believed in. However, Andrukhovych remarks that the final end of the Central European idea will be reached as soon as the Slovaks, Czechs, Poles, and Hungarians have joined NATO and the EU.

In his *Suchasne Mystetstvo Ukrainy? Suchasne Mystetstvo Skhidnoji Evropy i Ukraina?*,[68] Andrukhovych suggests that we are witnessing the disintegration of the concept of Eastern Europe. He remarks that for the first time since the dissolution of the USSR, Europe stopped being split into Eastern and Western, and has started transforming into something unified. Unfortunately, the author remarks, this transformation does not include Ukraine, which is left off board as some post-Soviet space or, rather, a part of the »renovated Soviet federation.«[69] Despite the official orientation toward western liberal democratic values, the country was slipping into a state that Andrukhovych characterizes as a »post-totalitarianism« constantly bordering on »neototalitarianism.«[70]

It is important to understand the meaning of Andrukhovych's bitterness, for he draws it from reasons much deeper and credible than a simple sadness at being left behind in European unification. Given its geographical and political location, it is still impossible for Ukraine to remain a strong independent entity; its alliances strongly shape its inner politics, economy and culture. Andrukhovych's main disappointment lies in the fact, that instead of supporting Ukraine in its striving to join Europe, the Central European countries preferred in the late 1990s and early 2000s to choose to abandon the Central European project altogether, focusing their efforts on trying to gain EU accession individually and as soon as possible. Bohdan Pankevych in his article on the prospects of a Ukrainian integration into the EU reinforces that due to the EU's »latent fear« »to accept a country which is potentially a strong leader in Central Europe.« Ukraine seriously faces the threat of a »new iron curtain«, this time initiated by Europe itself. Pankevych remarks that

> this new »curtain«, unlike the previous one, established by Soviet authoritarianism as a barrier to democracy and market economy, will be created to protect Europe from the victims of the communist system.[71]

A similar evaluation of the situation allowed Andrukhovych to speak of Ukraine as being left to the newly forming »Slav federation« which would not hesitate to close its western borders and appoint »old border-guards« accompanied by »young ambitious German shepherds wearing no muzzles« to guard the borders.[72]

Conclusions

As discussed above, *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s construction of national identity in post-Soviet Ukraine was most dominantly influenced by the Central European debate and the desire to secure Ukraine's position in Europe. According to the *Stanislav Phenomenon* artists this required an ideological and cultural separation from the Soviet past and a reinforcement of the common European past, geography, culture, and values. Multiculturalism and decentralized identity served as the main hallmarks characterizing European values. The reconstruction of a lost multicultural tolerance was perceived as being able to help Ukraine to merge easily into post-modern[73] Europe without losing the individual features of Ukrainian culture. A dispersed and decentralized national identity could also solve the issue of the east-west divide in Ukrainian history and could help to unite all Ukrainian cultural experiences despite their differences.

The second half of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s were characterized by a lack of progress of reforms and general apathy among the Ukrainian population, where people consciously divorced themselves from politics as a means to improve the situation in the country and sought to survive on their own via the shadow economy or labour migration.

64 Andrukhovych 1999, p. 118.

65 Ibid., p. 119.

66 Ibid., p. 120.

67 Ibid.

68 Andrukhovych, Yuri: Suchasne Mystetstvo Ukrainy? Suchasne Mystetstvo Skhidnoji Evropy I Ukraina? [Ukrainian Modern Art? East-European Modern Art and Ukraine?]. In: Kinets' Kintsem 1999, pp. 29-33, here p. 29.

69 Ibid.

70 Andrukhovych 1999 [Chas], p. 120.

71 Pankevych, Bogdan: Ukraine and the Idea of European Integration. In: Ji 14 (1999), pp. 40-47, here p. 41.

72 Andrukhovych 1999 [Chas], p. 120.

73 Here *post-modern* stands for the period chronologically following modernity as opposed to postmodernism as a period that has postmodern features, such as, for instance, undermining everything habitual, the denial of ideals, etc.

Compared to the late 1980s and early 1990s, years of great political and social resurgence, the second half of the 1990s truly was ›the end of the carnival‹, characterized by the consolidation of social and economic groups. For *Stanislav Phenomenon* such a consolidation was too restrictive and contributed to its dissolution.

However, the major ›blow‹ for *Stanislav Phenomenon*'s identity construction was the disappointment with the Central European project. Its dissolution due to the individual countries efforts to EU accession, made it apparent that none of the CE countries cared about the fate of Ukraine. Instead, seeing Ukraine as a major freeway for a non-European, post-Soviet influence and a seat of economically poorer masses of cheap labour, Ukraine's western neighbours preferred to reinforce the borders, visa regimes, etc., in order to isolate themselves from anything that could delay their access to ›proper Europe‹, i.e., the EU.

Ukraine, whose accession to the EU is not expected in the nearest future, was therefore left to face the strengthened Russian influence and interest in the country. For *Stanislav Phenomenon*, who had placed so many hopes in the Central European project, the reserved appreciation European countries showed for Ukraine caused a disillusionment with Europe in general, which has surfaced clearly in various essays by Andrukhovych and Izdryk from c. 1997 onwards. In this context, the whole Ukraine – Central European debate became practically non-existent, an »archaic, [...] the-day-before-yesterday debate.«[74] What was left was Galicia, a »province in the very heart of Europe,«[75] remembering its European past but not really able to see its European future.

Despite the significant consolidation and attempts to popularize a new post-independence version of Ukrainian mega-history, many intellectuals participated in numerous identity discourses – *Stanislav Phenomenon* and the above mentioned magazine *Ji* being just two of them –, constantly stressing the significant variations within national identifications among the Ukrainian people. Such a diversity of identities was, however, represented either in intellectual debates or on the level of people's individual self-identification, but not so much in the public discourse of state mass media or education. The interest in this debate subsided largely due to the people's disappointment with the economic and social conditions and their lack of participation in the decision-making processes of the country.

The debate about Ukrainian alternatives in Europe was revitalized practically overnight with the 2004/5 presidential elections. Public discourse within the country and even more so abroad presented the Ukrainian presidential choice as the people's choice between east and west or the country's choice between a pro-Russian or pro-European orientation. A Ukrainian European identity again gained new salience in the new, updated, more relevant political version.

Yuri Andrukhovych, like many writers and intellectuals from Ukraine, responded to these events by reinforcing the importance of the European context in Ukraine and emphasizing the significance of the Ukrainian events for Europe. This representation put Ukraine and Europe into a common sphere, binding their destinies together. Thus, in his essay *About Russia and Hope* Andrukhovych refers to the Ukrainian presidential elections as a »European celebration of life.«[76] In his speech to the European Parliament about the Orange Revolution, Andrukhovych pronounced a Ukrainian-European connection by saying that

> Europe has become bigger by the sum of the Ukrainian regions where Viktor Yushchenko won. [...] It is in these people that I see what one can underscore as the European future of Ukraine. And the future has already begun.

Moreover, Andrukhovych encouraged the European community to show their recognition and to make steps towards Ukraine so that the effort would not be just one-sided:

> I want to distinctly hear from Europe that [...] Europe is waiting for us, that it cannot endure without us, that Europe will not continue to be in all its fullness without Ukraine.[77]

The main ›manifesto‹ on the return of the debate about the place of Ukraine in Europe can be considered Andrukhovych's recent poem *Stas Perfets'kyj povertajetsja v Ukrajinu!* (*Stas Perfets'kyj Returns to Ukraine!*).[78] The choice of character is not accidental; Stas Perfetsikyj re-emerges after his presumed suicide in Venice, which had been ›documented‹ in Andrukhovych's 1997 novel *Perversion*. This novel had been the author's last novel of fascination and glorification of Europe before his disillusionment with the European prospects for Ukraine. It is not by chance

74 Andrukhovych 1999 [Suchasne], p. 29.

75 Andrukhovych 1999 [Chas], p. 121.

76 Andrukhovych, Yuri: About Russia and Hope. In: Ukrayinska Pravda fr. 08.02.2005, av.at.: http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2005/2/8/1515.htm [l.v. 29.05.2005].

77 Andrukhovych, Yuri: Speech Delivered to the European Parliament. Transl. by Michael Naydan. Av. at: http://www.ukrweekly.com/Archive/2004/520422.shtml [l.v.: 29.05.05].

78 Andrukhovych, Yuri: Stas Perfets'kyj Povertajetsja V Ukrajinu! [Stas Perfets'kyj Returns to Ukraine!]. In: Potyah 76 (2005). Av. at. http://www.potyah76.org.ua/potyah/?t=76 [l.v.: 28.05.2005].

that after all these years Perfets'kyj re-emerges from that fiery carnival novel about Europe, reading his most recent poem:

Anyhow, you will not be able to distance yourself from our love!
And no matter how technologically high the wall you have erected may be,
no matter how sterile-cold and asexual
this stupid European project of yours may be,
we will still love you
and will infect you with our love.

Але вам все одно не вдасться відгородитися від нашої любові!
І якою б високо технологічною не була споруджувана вами стіна,
яким би стерильно-холодним і асексуальним не був цей ваш дурнуватий проект Європи,
ми все одно будемо вас любити
і будемо інфікувати вас своєю любов'ю.

Perfets'kyj's symbolic return to Ukraine manifests the return of the debate about Ukraine in the European context. Similarly to Andrukhovych's speech to the European Parliament, the poem reinforces Ukraine's significance for Europe. Returning back Stas Perfets'kyj has changed his point of view on Europe and his relationship to it from a mere fascination with Europe, so visible in Perversion, to an active poclamiation of Europe's incompleteness without Ukraine. In this sense, Perfets'kyj (along with his author) has undergone a visible change from his own self of the *Stanislav Phenomenon* times. Perfets'kyj is not looking at Europe from the outside but rather from within Europe. Having this perspective, Perfets'kyj enourages Europe to recognize what for him is a fact: the Ukrainian and European past and present are so intertwined that they will share a common future.

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