

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

SOURCES OF UKRAINIAN CANADIAN IDENTITY
IN JANICE KULYK KEEFER'S NOVEL *THE GREEN LIBRARY*

BA thesis

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PREFACE

The present thesis discusses the sources of Ukrainian-Canadian identity based on Janice Kulyk Keefer's novel *The Green Library*. The chief aim of the thesis is to try to understand what identity is, how one can identify oneself in terms of culture, and most importantly, what methods are available for this as well as what influences the choice of the methods. *The Green Library* represents the experience of the second generation Ukrainian immigrants who are struggling with their identity formation. The novel has been chosen as a perfect example to explore these identity issues.

The Green Library presents contrasting approaches to the concept of identity. As a result, the main characters of the novel have different strategies of acculturation. These diverse strategies are discussed in greater detail. The thesis shows that identity cannot exist on its own, but it is influenced by various factors and formed in the process of a series of identifications.

The present thesis consists of four parts: the introduction, two chapters and the conclusion. The introduction states the importance of the theme to be discussed. It raises the questions about identity formation and the sources of identity to be answered in this thesis. It also provides information about the author of *The Green Library* and the novel itself.

Chapter 1 is a theoretical one. First, it provides a historical and social background to the Ukrainian immigration to Canada. Then it elaborates on different strategies of acculturation in a host society. Chapter 1 also explains the peculiarities of the second generation immigrants.

Chapter 2 is the empirical part of the thesis. It is dedicated to an analysis of the experience of the two heroines of the novel with a special emphasis on their ways of being ethnic in Canada. It also includes a comparative study of the two heroines' acculturation strategies and their sources for understanding their identities.

The conclusion summarises the main findings of the thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	2
INTRODUCTION.....	4
1. UKRAINIAN IMMIGRATION TO CANADA, IMMIGRANTS’ ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES AND THE SECOND GENERATION.....	6
1.1. Ukrainian immigration to Canada.....	6
1.2. Classification of immigrants’ acculturation strategies.....	8
1.3. Peculiarities of the second generation of immigrants.....	11
2. HEROINES’ ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES IN <i>THE GREEN</i> <i>LIBRARY</i>	13
2.1. Eva’s strategy	13
2.2. Oksanna’s strategy	17
2.3. Comparative analysis of two acculturation strategies.....	20
2.3.1. Environment of the heroines in Canada.....	21
2.3.2. Society’s attitude to the heroines.....	22
2.3.3. Attitude to the Ukrainians in general.....	23
CONCLUSION	25
REFERENCES.....	27
RESÜMEE.....	29

INTRODUCTION

Much emphasis has been recently laid on self-understanding and self-definition as the essentials of human existence. Knowing who we are is the main factor of human consciousness. Understanding of identity influences the way how we see ourselves and the others and how others see us. Issues of ethnicity and mixed identities are perfectly reflected in the Ukrainian-Canadian literature dealing with ethnic subjects. The novel *The Green Library* by Janice Kulyk Keefer is an excellent example of this.

Janice Kulyk Keefer is a Canadian writer of the Ukrainian origin. She is the author of poetic works, short stories, essays and novels. *The Green Library* is one of the most controversial and most famous works which has received publicity in Canada as well as in the Ukraine. I have chosen this novel as a basis for the thesis because the author, herself a second generation Ukrainian immigrant, has very well captured the problems of the second generation of immigrants with identifying themselves.

The novel could be read as a story where the main characters are constantly in search for their identities. Mostly this search is expressed in their internal drama, and as a result, in their behaviour and principles. Yet, the novel is not an oppressive piece of literature, for the reading of which one needs to be in a special kind of mood. Quite on the contrary, this is an adventure story, a work of fiction with the elements of history. This gives the story a special feeling of being a true story, as if the events have really happened. The author herself has named this type of fiction “historiographic ethnofiction” (Kulyk Keefer 1995: 84).

In my thesis I am going to discuss two main heroines of the novel. Their national self-consciousness forms under the impact of cultural and historical discourses of the country of ethnic origin and the country of immigration. The heroines are thus “divided” between these two cultures. *The Green Library* describes this uncertainty and the heroines’ attitudes

to it very clearly. The novel also deals with the heroines' search for their place using their own distinct methods, because the strength of the connection to the country of ancestry totally differs in these two characters despite the fact that they are both representatives of the second generation of Ukrainians in Canada. Due to their ethnic origin, the two protagonists of *The Green Library* encounter several questions about their relation to the dominant society as well as their identity and belonging. These questions include:

What is identity and what it depends on?

How historical and cultural background can influence the formation of identity?

What are the sources of identity and what factors influence the choice of the sources?

In the present thesis I am going to answer these questions by analysing the experience of the two heroines of *The Green Library*.

1. UKRAINIAN IMMIGRATION TO CANADA, IMMIGRANTS' ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES AND THE SECOND GENERATION

In order to better understand the issues that are going to be discussed in this thesis, it is necessary to provide some background information about Ukrainian immigration to Canada. As I am going to discuss the second generation immigrant heroines' approach to Ukrainian identity in the empirical study, I will also give an overview of the different acculturation strategies of immigrants in the host society as well as the peculiarities of the second generation.

1.1. Ukrainian immigration to Canada

According to Wsevolod W. Isajiw (2010: 292), already in 2001 there were over 1 million people of Ukrainian or partly Ukrainian origin living in Canada. Thus, Canada has the largest Ukrainian diaspora in the West which makes Canada the second country in the world after Russia in accommodating Ukrainian population on its territory. Why have Ukrainians left their country of origin? What were the reasons for the destination being so far away? Who were the people making desperate decisions to leave their homeland? In his study of the history of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, Isajiw (2010) identifies four major waves of immigration and provides information about the periods, the number of immigrated people and the reasons for crossing the ocean.

1 wave: 1885-till World War I

About 250 000 people immigrated during this period. It was poorly-educated peasants who came to Canada in this wave. Shortage of jobs and land in homeland caused the first Ukrainians to move to Canada.

2 wave: end of World War I-till World War II

About 70 000 immigrants came to Canada during this wave. This wave was influenced by the defeat in the struggle for Ukrainian independence. Ukraine became a part of the USSR. To escape reprisals Ukrainians turned their faces to Canada.

3 wave: 1945-1956

During this period about 37 500 Ukrainians moved to Canada. They were mostly political refugees and forced immigrants or Displaced Persons (DP). These people had a good education compared to the previous waves of immigrants. However, a high level of education did not help them to find a proper job in a host society. These immigrants' connections to the homeland were the strongest. Many of them continued to struggle for independence while being abroad.

4 wave: 1991-till now

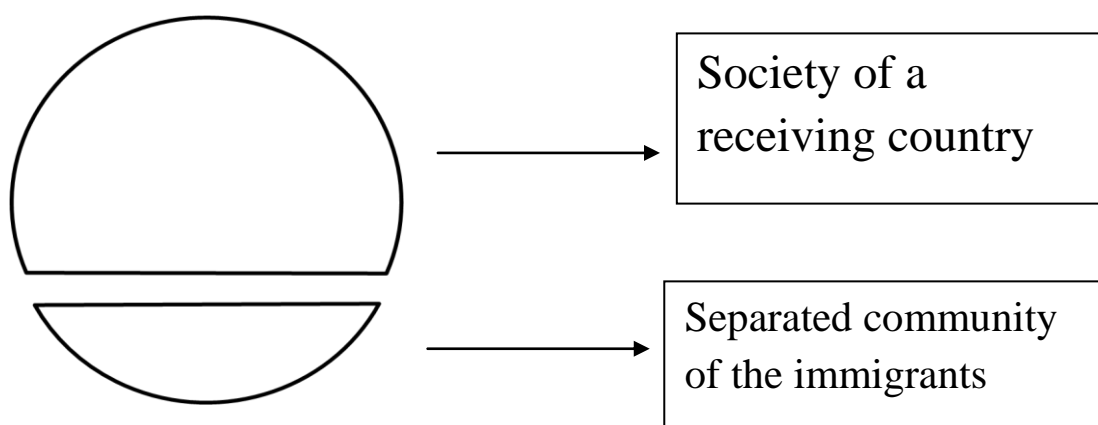
As the USSR collapsed and Ukraine declared independence, immigration to Canada from Ukraine started to accelerate again. From the beginning of this wave till 2007 about 30 000 Ukrainians immigrated to Canada. This migration was caused by economic reasons. These Ukrainians were moving to Canada to strive for a better jobs and living standard. These immigrants have a high level of education. As a rule, the fourth wave immigrants establish their own organisations instead of joining those of the existing diaspora. (Isajiw 2010: 292-295)

While this was a very concise overview of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, history offers a far more complicated version with a vast number of victims and escapes, disasters and happy endings. Nevertheless, it provides the necessary context for the main discussion of the questions of interest.

1.2. Classification of immigrants' acculturation strategies

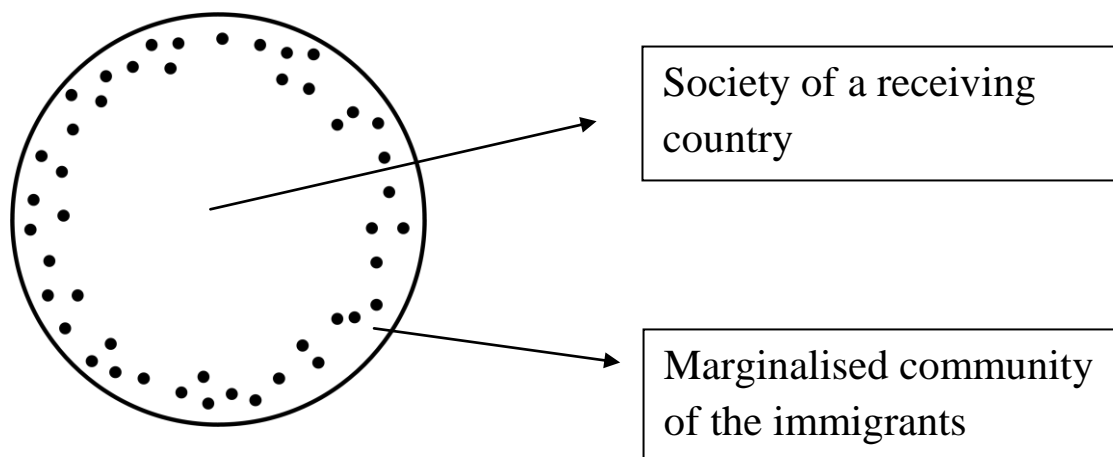
At the core of any immigrant experience is the question of identity. What does the concept of identity mean for those who move to a foreign country? The way how immigrants are going to live in the host society and establish a contact with it plays the main role in the process of identity formation. According to J.W. Berry (2005), there are four ways for immigrants to enter a new society in terms of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation. The most objectionable for both the immigrants and a receiving country are separation and marginalisation. Separation occurs when the new settlers “place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others” (Berry 2005: 32). In this case, immigrants separate themselves from the dominant society, creating their own community, and thus the two exist independent of each other. For example, Andrew Suknaski's poem “West to Tolstoi” describes a separated Ukrainian immigrant who is “imprisoned in his language and ghetto / his name no longer remembered” (1996: 223-224).

Separation can be schematically presented as follows:



Marginalisation is another strategy, when “there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination)” (Berry 2005: 32).

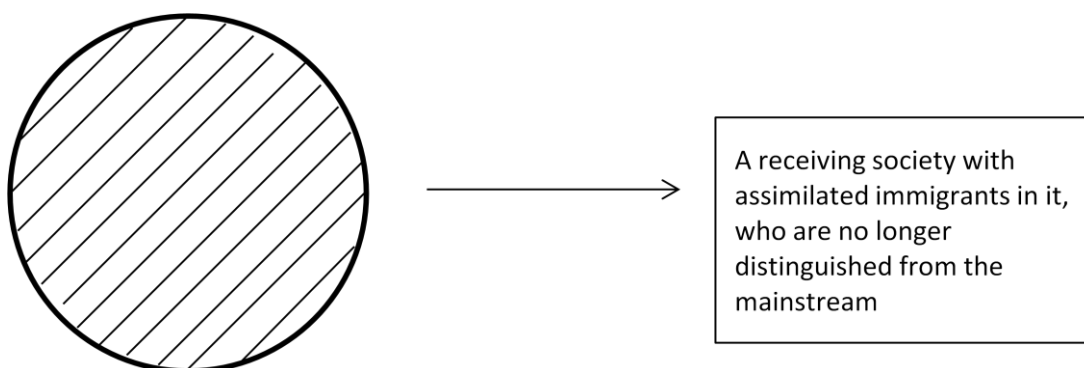
Marginalisation appears when people are banned from social services and educational benefits. As a result, they get far less paid jobs and they cannot participate in the political life of the society. Visualizing this concept, it could be shown as follows:



In both cases the society lacks unity.

The Green Library does not touch upon the concepts of separation and marginalisation. However, the novel definitely acquaints us with ideas of integration and assimilation.

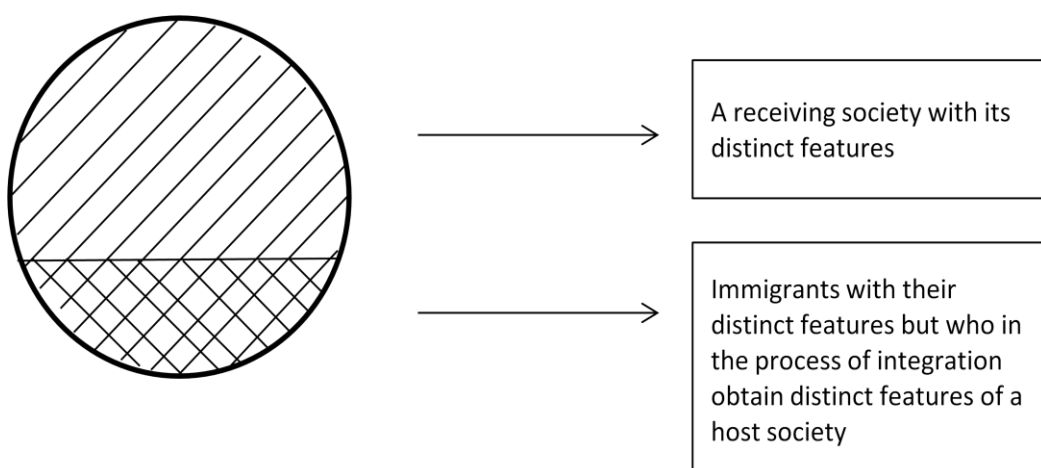
According to Berry, assimilation strategy means that “individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural heritage and seek interaction with other cultures” (2005: 32). James W. Vander Zanden explains the phenomenon of assimilation as “the process in which one group relinquishes its own beliefs and behaviour patterns and takes over the culture of another” (1963: 269). Thus, assimilation is opposite concept of separation. The non-dominant group dissolves in the majority, the differences thus disappear and the minority is no longer visible and the society is like one group with common distinct features. This concept can be depicted in the following way:



The fourth strategy of acculturation is integration. Berry defines it as a situation

When there is an interest in both maintaining one's original culture, while in daily interactions with other groups, integration is option; here, there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time they seek, as a member of a cultural group, to participate as an integral part of the larger society (2005: 32).

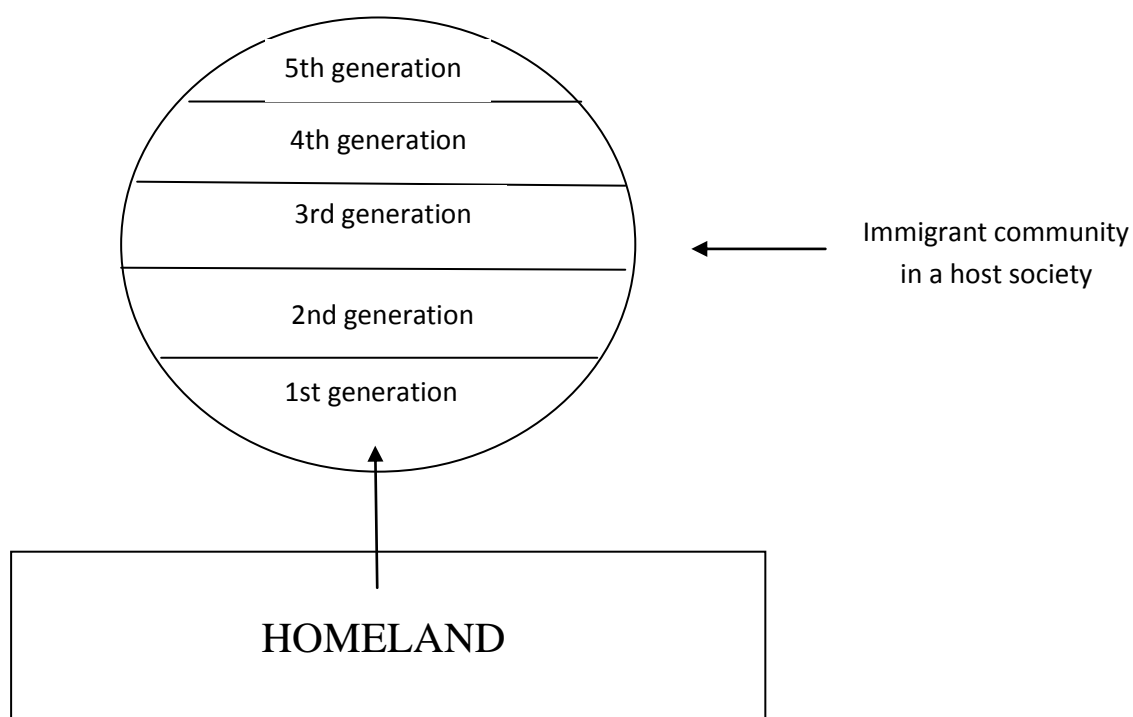
Consequently, it is a perfect balance between the culture of the host society and the culture of the immigrants, when all the members of the mixed society are treated equally, their rights are not restrained, and nobody feels an infringement of their interests. It can be represented as follows:



Having discussed the four ways of acculturation in a host society, I will now proceed with a discussion of the peculiarities of the second generation.

1.3. Peculiarities of the second generation of immigrants

The second generation consists of those whose parents have immigrated to another country. Thus these people are already born to a host society or brought there by the first generation. As a result, the second generation immigrants are more likely to have difficulties with self-definition and finding themselves. Schematically, it could be shown as follows:



As it can be seen, the first generation has the tightest connection with a homeland. Often these people do not doubt their ethnic identity. They feel that they are a part of their country of origin. They are the immigrants who successfully preserve their cultural heritage while living in another country. Each following generation moves further away from their heritage culture, thus having less and less in common with their ancestors' ethnicity. Raimond Breton et al have pointed out two major issues concerning the ethnicity

of immigrants: “persistence of ethnicity over time and through generations” and “the incorporation of members of ethnic collectivities in society as a whole” (1990: 3). The second generation is considered to be more confused by finding the right balance between these two issues. As Isajiw points out (2010: 297), one of the basic premises for identity retention is the relationship with the ancestral homeland. Often the second generation has no relationship with the homeland. Thus, their ethnic belonging is not supported physically. These people just know about their native roots, but they cannot feel to be fully participating in this culture. Besides, the second generation is involved in the culture of the host society much more than the first generation. They attend local schools, communicate more with members of the host society, and marry to people beyond the community. In this way, they become incorporated into the society as a whole. On the other hand, they are still heavily influenced by the first generation who insists on their preserving the ethnic roots. According to a survey that Isajiw conducted in Canada among Ukrainian diaspora immigrants, a very high percentage of the second generation “ate Ukrainian traditional food on holidays or other occasions and possessed Ukrainian artistic articles /.../ knew their ethnic language as mother tongue, practised Ukrainian ethnic customs” (2010: 300). In this way, the second generation retains their ethnic identity as well as traditions and cultural practices handed down by the ancestors.

It is obvious that the immigrants of the second generation have the most difficult task of balancing between the ethnic and the dominant group cultures. The most frequent danger awaiting them is when this balance breaks and either the ethnic or the host society culture obtains a predominant position, thus causing an identity crisis, loss of self-confidence, emotional suffering, and a failure to find a place in a society. These are the main problems that the second generation Ukrainian Canadian immigrants experience in *The Green Library* to be analysed in the following chapter.

2. HEROINES' ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES IN *THE GREEN LIBRARY*

The knowledge of the historical background and the theoretical aspects of the second generation immigrant experience have established a basis for the following analysis of *The Green Library*, as the novel deals mainly with the questions of ethnicity and belonging. There are several characters in the novel who are questioning their identities. However, I will focus on two of them: Eva Chown and Oksanna Moroz. Their experiences are the most striking ones and at the same time also the most different. They represent divergent approaches to the perception of their own identity which has made the characters a focus of the study. In the following I will analyse the acculturation strategies of the two heroines in detail.

2.1. Eva's strategy

Eva Chown is a middle-aged woman who lives in Canada. One day she finds an old photograph in her mailbox. The photograph features an unknown woman and a boy, who is very much alike Eva's son. Understanding that the picture has the Ukrainian origin, Eva addresses the only Ukrainians in Canada whom she knows: the Moroz family, who in Eva's childhood were the servants in the house of Eva's parents. The family consisted of the first generation immigrants Olya and her husband, and their children Oksanna and Alex, or Oleksa. The father of the children returned to Ukraine with Oleksa and Olya with Oksanna stayed in Canada. With Olya's help, Eva gets to know that the woman from in the photograph is Eva's Ukrainian grandmother. The boy in the picture is the main heroine's father. That is why he resembles Eva's son so much. At the instigation of Olya, Eva undertakes a journey to her father's native land where she meets with Oleksa. Coming back to Canada, Eva finds her Ukrainian father.

Eva Chown, having learned that she is half-Ukrainian, is confused: her identity, which has till the unexpected development been unquestionably a Canadian one, conflicts with her new views on the ethnic stereotypes. At first she even denies her belonging to the Ukrainian ethnic group. She cannot understand and take this fact. She reacts strongly to the notion about her half-Ukrainian origin: “Eva gets prickly – she doesn’t want this; she hasn’t permitted this” (Kulyk Keefer 1996: 112).

As the novel unfolds, Eva gradually permits her soul to accept her origin. Janus, the Roman god with two faces looking in the opposite directions, the symbol that the author refers to at the very beginning of her novel, is not mentioned accidentally. In this way the author figuratively describes Eva, who, like this god, opens her soul in different directions for two the cultures. A newly discovered ethnicity leads Eva to explore her roots.

First of all, Eva investigates the history of her ancestors. Eva gives to the Ukraine of her thoughts some shape by listening to the stories of Olya and reading materials in a library. Thus, this country becomes closer and more familiar to her. It is not a myth any more, but it is real. Reading the “books [that] contain potted histories of the Second World War” (Kulyk Keefer 1996: 74), Eva revalues the widespread stereotypes that are fixed to bohunk¹ ethnicity in the Canadian society. She begins to understand, how these immigrants suffered in Canadian exile. For the first time she thinks of the Ukrainian immigrants as of the people with complicated destiny, with broken lives and hearts after the concentration camps. Eva starts to feel this new culture and to share these people’s misery.

Knowing the history of one’s own family helps one to become even closer to the ethnic roots. So, the next step that Eva undertakes is studying her relatives’ past. Now, the people in the photograph are not just a beautiful woman and her son, phony greetings from the

¹ a derogatory term used to refer to Ukrainians

past ages, as they were before, but the images of Eva's grandmother and father, who have a real place in Eva's past.

Eva's strategy of search for her identity includes also one of the strongest devices – the native language. The author of *The Green Library* merges the main heroine into the new culture with the help of the Ukrainian language. Language is shown as one of the ethnicity indices, like a bridge that links the newly-invented representative of an ethnic minority with her roots. It is an interesting challenge that Kulyk Keefer has courage to introduce into her book. Ukrainian words used from time to time throughout the book offer difficulty in understanding not only for Eva, who does not speak a word of her ancestors' language, but for a reader as well. It brings the readers, into a contact with the culture that we are not part of. Understanding how foreign this culture seems for us, we can imagine how distant it seems for Eva at that point. At first, Ukrainian words are for the main heroine nothing more than an empty sound, behind which there is no significance or meaning. We can observe this when Eva meets Olya Pavlenko, who proclaims with astonishment some words in Ukrainian: "Bozhe miy." And a whole flow of words Eva makes no attempt to halt, never mind to understand" (Kulyk Keefer 1996: 93). All that Eva experiences at that moment hearing the Ukrainians words is a feeling of foreignness and difference; she is the stranger. However, her later encounters with the Ukrainian language offer her already something familiar; the sounds are not so sharp to her ears any more. Eva still does not understand this language, but she identifies herself with this culture that does not frighten her any more, but attracts her soul and mind and calls for association with it.

Reading Ukrainian literature is another source for the understanding an ethnic identity. Eva's grandmother, the woman in the photograph, was a poetess and wrote her poems in Ukrainian. Olya promises to translate one of them for Eva: "it will tell you what you need to know" (Kulyk Keefer 1996: 103). Reading her grandmother's poem makes Eva

understand her grandmother's identity, as well as assists her in finding her own place in the world of Ukrainian ethnicity.

The main step that Eva takes towards her ancestry culture is her real trip to Ukraine, Kiev. The main purpose of her trip is to find her grandmother's grave, to "give her back her name, her past; honour her" (Kulyk Keefer 1996: 103). In Ukraine Eva meets Oleksa Moroz, her first love, in whose bed she spends her nights in Kiev. Eva gets acquainted with her ancestral world through the walks that Alex arranges for her. Visiting Babi Yar, a place of a series of massacres during the Second World War, where Eva's grandmother was killed, presents to Eva the strongest emotion of connection to this land. This visit gives Eva a possibility not only to feel the emotional turmoil, but she could touch the grave of her ancestors, that gave her a sense of physical connection to this land. The land that was once only a myth, is now Eva's strongest evident of her belonging to it. Thus the return to the country of origin helps Eva to understand her identity, to give it some shape, to explain herself who she is, and to determine her place in Canada that was her home all this time but for a moment lost its status. As Joseph Pivato points out (1992: 257-258), a trip to a country of ancestors helps immigrant descendants to realize the role of family in the movement towards comprehension of identity, as well as changes their attitude to the Canadian society. Moreover, such trips to a native land inspire her to revalue the historical events by giving an opportunity to examine them from another point of view.

Another example of connection to the Ukrainian culture and still another one of the powerful methods to be part of this culture is a contact with the native people of Ukraine. It includes a physical touching of a Ukrainian child and a sexual contact with Oleksa. Eva's touching of the child is described as follows: "Eva picks the child up in her arms, kissing her before handing her back to her parents. It makes her absurdly happy, this small gesture of connection; suddenly she feels so much less of a stranger in this city" (Kulyk Keefer

1996: 187). As it can be seen, the physical contact describes again the physical belonging to the country. Oleksa is also a representative of the Ukrainian culture. In some sense Eva uses this man. Making love with him gives her a feeling of unity with her ethnicity.

In order to gain the posed aim, to become a part of her ethnic heritage, Eva uses all the methods she can afford: studying the history of her ancestors' country, investigating her family's past, reading the Ukrainian literature, learning the Ukrainian language, visiting the native land, and contacting the native people. The most important thing here is that the heroine lets the new culture inside, where it finds a place in her heart, in her identity, in her history. To sum up Eva's approach I would like to quote Daisy Whitney, whose concept of identity is so much in unison with Eva's experience: "We are what we love. We are the things, the people, the ideas we spend our days with. They center us, they drive us, they define us to our very core" (2012: 196).

2.2. Oksanna's strategy

Oksanna Moroz is a second generation Ukrainian immigrant of middle age. She was brought to Canada in her childhood. Oksanna's mother has two university degrees but in Canada she had to be a cleaning woman in Eva's rich parents' house because of her ethnic origin. Oksanna went to the local Canadian school and spoke perfect English, but she was different. The children in school did not like her and often called her names. The situation became even worse when the children in the school got know what job Oksanna's mother performs. In the narrative present of the novel Oksanna is described as a successful doctor.

The personage of Oksanna is presented as a not less interesting one than Eva's. Oksanna has also her own strategy in the process of formation of her identity. In contrast to Eva, she is not confused by the questions of identity. She knows what she wants and moves to her goal without any doubt. But she has a very different goal: she attempts to become fully

Canadian rejecting her Ukrainian ethnicity. As sad as it is, this is what she wanted with all her heart: not to be a part of the Ukrainian culture, to abandon all the relations with Ukraine, erase all the memories, and exclude Ukrainian ethnicity from her life. As well as Eva, Oksanna finds her own sources to carry out this plan.

First of all, Oksanna Moroz changes her name and becomes Susan Frost. Name is one of the strongest connections with ancestry. Name is given by parents and thus brings in it the parents' soul, a surname tells the family history. It is the bridge between the past and the present. By changing her name, Oksanna removed her person from the family-tree. She is not a part of this family anymore and no longer a carrier of its history. With this total denial of her roots, Oksanna deprives herself of individuality and originality. There is nothing left from Oksanna Moroz, but we see Susan Frost, whose charactonym speaks for her. Kulyk Keefer has noted in her short story "Nach Unten" about the people with their names changed to the local style: "Their English names seem as familiar to them now as the shape of their hands or the shoes on their feet" (1996: 369). Frost is now much more familiar for Oksanna's ear.

Secondly, Oksanna refused speaking her mother tongue. She does not speak Ukrainian at all, even being *tete-à-tete* with her Ukrainian mother. She speaks only the English language and this makes her closer to the Canadian culture. The source of language helped Eva to be closer to a culture of her ancestors. Here it helps Oksanna to be farther from it. Antonio D'Alfonso words could be used here to describe Oksanna's attitude to her mother tongue: "The language you speak as a child, flushed down the toilet bowl" (1996: 413).

It is not the only method that the two women have in common but for different purposes. They both use the source of knowing their family history. Eva desired to know her family history; Oksanna on the contrary, just erased it from her memory. She avoids any communication with her Ukrainian relatives; she even refuses to keep in touch with

her brother Oleksa, who moved back to Ukraine: “Eva can tell without asking that, for his sister, Alex doesn’t exist. Has been made not to exist. Oksanna has cut her memory short” (Kulyk Keefer 1996: 90).

Visiting Oksanna’s home, which is situated in a district where only Canadians live, Eva is amazed by the sterility and characterlessness of her house: “the room itself is so blindingly clear of colour, clutter, anything that could tell a story about its occupant” (Kulyk Keefer 1996: 90). Oksanna erased not only her name, her memories and family history, but she removed any single physical evidence, which could give out her Ukrainian origin or remind her of her native land. There is not even a souvenir from Ukraine, because Oksanna prohibited herself to turn back, to remember. Lisa Grekul offers Ukrainian-Canadians to reinvent their identity: “We have the chance to write ourselves out of existing shadows and leave new ones, we just need to take it” (2005: 204). Oksanna did not use her existing shadow to write out her identity, she started from a sterilely white page. This is also the source for her new identity: to surround herself with such an environment, in which there is no place for her ethnicity. The basis for her new identity is not her past, but the imaginary picture of a successful indefinite Canadian woman, some collective image, which brings no historical value for the heroine.

In addition, Oksanna has cut her hair. Once 30 years ago, when she was a daughter of Ukrainian immigrant, she had long beautiful hair and this was what distinguished her from others. Changing her appearance to look like a Canadian woman is another method of hers to hide her ethnic origin. Often in Ukrainian national stories, fairytales, and legends a woman is represented as having long plaits. It became a symbol of national Ukrainian identity. For example, Nikolai Gogol, the writer of the Ukrainian origin, has always described the heroines of his books as having long hair: „ Будто хороши мои черные

косы? ... Нет, хороша я! Ах, как хороша! Чудо!“ (2009: 54). Cutting her hair Oksanna symbolically cuts her roots.

In her article on immigrant experience Kulyk Keefer has written: “You can never go home again, we’ve been told – or if you do go home, it will only be to find out that ‘home’ has shifted ground, relocated itself neither there or here, in old or new country, but somewhere maddeningly in-between” (1998: 104). Oksanna’s rebellion against her home land, national culture, the Ukrainian language, and even her name helps her to avoid double standards, gives her an opportunity of being the second generation immigrant to escape the situation of hanging “somewhere maddeningly in-between” in Kulyk Keefer’s terms (1998: 104) and prevent the condition of split personality. But the big question is, whether the price she has paid makes her happy? Oksanna Moroz does not feel herself a complete person. Oksanna is represented in the novel as Eva’s exact antithesis. Eva is trying to obtain her discovered heritage characteristics; Oksanna, on the contrary, is trying to lose them all. Eva is using all possible sources of the Ukrainian identity in order to reconstruct her own, Oksanna finds methods for making her Canadian identity. Why these two women with the same ethnic origin are acting so differently? What is it that makes them to have different attitudes to their roots?

2.3. Comparative analysis of two acculturation strategies

The above analysis has shown that the two women of the same age with the same ethnicity have very different approaches to their ethnic origin. The methods they use for gaining their purpose have been also elaborated on. In the following, I would like to discuss why Eva and Oksanna so differ in their attitude to Ukrainian roots? What is it that makes them choose diametrically opposite ways? As Breton et al have noticed: “The impact of ethnicity varies depending upon current conditions and the experiences of

individuals /.../ in relation to the members /.../ of the larger society” (1990: 6). Consequently, the heroines’ strategies can be explained by answering the following questions:

In what environment were the heroines were Canada?

What was the society’s attitude to the heroines?

What was the attitude to the Ukrainians as a whole?

2.3.1. Environment of the heroines in Canada

The environment in which the heroines were raised can easily explain the contrast in their acceptance of Ukrainian roots. Oksanna immigrated to Canada not because she wanted to, but being the first generation immigrant’s daughter, she had to do this. They immigrated in third wave just after the WW II. As I have mentioned before, the second generation immigrants are more likely to have difficulties because of hopelessness of the situation, they just have to follow somebody else’s will. This situation, when one has to immigrate not by one’s own wish, often evokes the negative emotions towards the country of immigration and hostile reaction to its society. Moreover, at that time when Oksanna immigrated, Canada was not recognised as a multicultural country yet. Official multiculturalism was implemented much later. It supposes that the DPs of the third wave had no such opportunities for saving their identity as had the immigrants of the later waves. So, Oksanna finds herself in an unknown hostile Canada where she feels unsafe being Ukrainian. Oksanna started to try to adapt to the environment she got into. Isajiw has described this type of phenomenon as follows: “Locating oneself in relation to a community and society is not only a psychological phenomenon, but also a social phenomenon in the sense that the internal psychological states express themselves

objectively in external behaviour patterns” (1990: 35). Oksanna’s usual behaviour started to change, because her feelings and thoughts about how she should behave changed.

Eva’s situation is much easier. She just did not know about her ethnicity. She is born in Canada and raised in Canadian family. Canada is her home, and she feels safe and comfortable here. The family where Eva is raised is tolerant towards Ukrainian immigrants, who work in their house. Moreover, Eva’s love towards Alex Moroz and Oksanna’s impudence make Eva see Ukrainians as romantic, and at the same time unattainable personas. All this gives Eva a chance in future, when she perceives her recently discovered ethnicity not like something she should discard, but something enigmatic, exotic and extraordinary. At the time when Eva discovers her identity, the pattern of Canadian society differs considerably from what it was some 30 years before. Canada is a multicultural society and this society treats the immigrants and their ethnic origin with much greater tolerance. Residents of Canadian society “recognize the reality of a multilingual, multicultural earth as well as the coming together of people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds” (Mukherjee 1998: 167). Thus the environment in which Eva discovers her identity does not prevent her from exploring her Ukrainian origin. In case of Oksanna, the environment forces her to forget her ethnicity as soon as possible. This explains the differences in the heroines’ perceptions of their ethnic roots.

2.3.2. Society’s attitude to the heroines

The way how the heroines were treated by the society played its role in how the heroines perceived their ethnic origin. As it has been stated above, when Oksanna came to Canada, she was different and her ethnicity was visible. Her appearance let the children in school jeer at her. Often, children do not have tact towards somebody who is different in some sense. That is why it is very difficult to resist their pressure. Thus, children’s

prejudice and established norms set the pattern and the frames for Oksanna's behaviour and initiated the dramatic changes that led to losing her Ukrainian identity. Isajiw defines it as follows: "Behaviour according to cultural patterns is thus an expression of identity" (1990: 36). Oksanna behaves as Canadian thus becoming Canadian and rejecting Ukrainian identity. Peter Li refers to an analytical approach that compares immigrants with the native-born Canadians. Considering the fact that with time immigrants became similar to the native-born Canadians, this approach supposes assimilation and integration of immigrants into the Canadian society "despite the popular belief that official multiculturalism has enabled immigrants to preserve their cultural distinctiveness in the process of becoming Canadians" (2004: 192). The example of Oksanna just proves Li's assumption.

When Eva discovers her ethnicity, she is grown woman, who is confident enough to defend her views. She has a huge house, a child and a lover, she has work. She is not from a lower social class. All this makes her to be perceived by the society as an established person, who knows what she wants. Moreover, Eva has something that Oksanna did not have – a support of the society that manifests itself in Olya's "ethnic solidarity" in the terms of Breton et al (1990: 6). Thus, Olya is a strong supporter of Eva in her exploration of Ukrainian identity. It gives Eva a sense of confidence that Oksanna lacked. Consequently, the social attitudes to the heroines play an important role in the process of the formation of their identity.

2.3.3. Attitude to the Ukrainians in general

As it can be concluded from the use of the derogatory term of bohunk to refer to the Ukrainian immigrants who came to Canada soon after the WW II, the Canadian society at that time was not ready yet to welcome Ukrainian immigrants. They were seen as

unintelligent, unskilled displaced persons. As it has been noted, “vocational and professional qualifications and achievements are established markers of class belonging and, of course, of class perception and visibility” (Paci 2014: 247). Oksanna’s mother having two higher education degrees has to be the servant and belong to a lower class. These are the ignominious terms in which Oksanna’s identity formation develops. This situation explains why Oksanna considers her origin as something unpleasant. For her, there is just nothing to be proud of. Being Ukrainian meant at that time to belong to a lower class, and as a result to suffer from the corresponding attitude of society. It shows us why she desired so much to get rid of her Ukrainian ethnicity: “she enters the Canadian mainstream out of class rancour” in Paci’s terms (2014: 247).

According to the novel’s plot, Eva’s search for identity happens in 1990s, about two decades after Canada declared itself a multicultural country. During this time the Canadian society’s attitude to Ukrainian ethnic minorities has changed. The author enters the Ukrainian words into her narration not accidentally. Thus Kulyk Keefer distinguishes the presence of Ukrainian minority in Canada. The Ukrainian immigrants’ voices are heard now, they do not afraid to reveal their ethnicity. Eva is lucky to explore her roots when the society’s tolerance permits the display of ethnicity. It explains the reasons why Eva is not afraid to declare herself half-Ukrainian. It does not bring about exclusion from the society or humiliation, as it was the case with Oksanna and her family.

I have analysed the ways of being the heroines have chosen for their identity and the main reasons that influenced their choice. Social attitudes to the individuals and to the Ukrainians as a whole and the environment in which the heroines find themselves played the main roles in the process of their identity formation. This analysis has helped to understand the women’s behaviour and their different perspectives of their roots.

CONCLUSION

Despite their locations, the modern societies are in the constant condition of uncertainty and vagueness. They strive to create a uniform society with common social politics that would be free of racial and ethnic prejudice. Nevertheless, such processes erase the ethnic elements, and, as a result, give birth to the problems with determination of ethnic identities. I think that in the contemporary world an analysis of such a piece of historiographic ethnofiction that is dealing with the themes of identity loss, search and reconstruction is very topical. Janice Kulyk Keefer's *The Green Library* presents many characters who try to define themselves through different sources in one way or another.

I have analysed the experience of the two second generation women, Eva Chown and Oksanna Moroz, with a very different background. They follow their own aims and use their own sources of identity for their own reasons. The examples of these two heroines of the novel show that the second generation immigrants are not a homogenous group. Also, their acculturation strategies can be very different and complicated. The novel can be seen as a vivid example of how much the search for identity depends on the time and circumstances when the two protagonists are dealing with the aspect of the Ukrainian ethnicity in their identity.

With the characters of Eva and Oksanna *The Green Library* shows very clearly how one should act, what methods and sources one should use in order to achieve success in a posed task. However, the author does not create a fairytale. On the contrary, she demonstrates both sides of the coin. Being a member of an ethnic group can be both wonderful and painful at the same time. As Kulyk Keefer comments on the concept of ethnicity:

Ethnicity – that lived experience of otherness, of difference from the “given” or imposed sociocultural norm – has been for me both positive and negative: otherness can be a matter of addition as well as subtraction – a gift rather than a theft. Likewise, difference can be a source of imaginative richness, as well as of anxiety and humiliation. And ethnicity /.../ can become a complementary sphere of identity and belonging that confers meaning and dignity upon who and what and why one is. (2000:5)

On the whole, the novel suggests that there is hope and opportunity for a happy ending for the characters who stayed half-way from certainty. Kulyk Keefer's novel can be summarised with a quote of Lisa Grekul: "*The Green Library* leaves no questions unanswered, no mysteries unsolved, and it articulates, in the end, a relatively straightforward and conventional understanding of both ethnicity and history" (2005: 140).

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RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Yana Kapitonova

Sources of Ukrainian-Canadian Identity in Janice Kulyk Keefer's Novel *The Green Library*

Kanada ukrainlaste identiteedi allikad Janice Kulyk Keefer'i romaanis *The Green Library*

Bakalaureusetöö

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Annotatsioon:

Antud töö peamiseks eesmärgiks on püüda mõista, mis on identiteet, kuidas saab inimene oma identiteeti luua ja kõige tähtsam – milliseid allikaid saab ta selleks kasutada. Töö näitab, et arusaam identiteedist ei saa eksisteerida iseeneses, vaid inimene loob enda identiteedi, leides selleks vajalikud ressursid.

Sissejuhatuses on esitatud töö taust ja välja toodud uuritava teema olulisus. Samuti annab sissejuhatus informatsiooni romaani *The Green Library* autori Janice Kulyk Keeferi ja teose kohta. Siin on ka püstitatud uurimisküsimused, kuidas ajalooline ja kultuuriline taust mõjutavad identiteedi kujunemist ning millistele allikatele saavad teose kaks naispeategelast toetuda oma identiteediloomes ning mis on nende valikute põhjused.

Esimene peatükk on töö teoreetiline osa. See keskendub ukraina immigrantide ajaloolisele ja sotsiaalsele taustale ning erinevatele akulturatsioonistrateegiatele vastuvõtvast ühiskonnas. Peatükk käsitleb ka teise põlvkonna immigrantide eripärasid ja raskusi oma identiteedi loomisel.

Teine peatükk on töö empiiriline osa. See on pühendatud romaani teise põlvkonna esindajatest kangelannadele ja nende Kanada ukrainlaseks olemise viiside analüüsile. Peatükk sisaldab samuti kahe kangelanna identiteediloomestrateegiate ja nende allikate võrdlevat analüüsi.

Kokkuvõtteks võib öelda, et kuigi peategelased Eva Chown ja Oksanna Moroz on samasse vanusegruppi kuuluvad teise põlvkonna ukraina juurtega immigrantid, on nende kogemused ja identiteet väga erinevad. Uurimus näitab, kui suurel määral mõjutavad peategelaste identiteeti aeg ja ühiskondlikud olud Kanadas kui vastuvõtvast ühiskonnas ning suhtumine immigrantidesse.

Märksõnad: Kanada ukrainlased, teine põlvkond, etniline identiteet

Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks

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(sünnikuupäev: 28.01.1985)

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