

American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages

Envisioning Europe: Ruslana's Rhetoric of Identity

Author(s): Marko Pavlyshyn

Source: *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3, Special Forum Issue: Contemporary Ukrainian Literature and National Identity (Fall, 2006), pp. 469-485

Published by: [American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20459314>

Accessed: 30/09/2014 00:26

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Slavic and East European Journal*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

ENVISIONING EUROPE: RUSLANA'S RHETORIC OF IDENTITY*

Marko Pavlyshyn, Monash University, Australia

On May 15, 2004, Ruslana Lyzhychko, a singer from Ukraine, won the 49th Eurovision Song Contest, a globally televised competition among musical acts representing countries whose national broadcasting organizations are members of the European Broadcasting Union ("Rules"). Notwithstanding frequently ironic media commentary concerning the competition's musical standards and the partisanship displayed in some countries' voting behavior, the Eurovision Song Contest is widely popular. The audience in 2004 was estimated to be 100 million, and almost 4.3 million viewers participated in the televoting ("Record Numbers"). The Contest implies an idea of Europe not limited by membership in the European Union, nor even by location within the traditional geographical borders of the European continent: the 36 participants in 2004 included countries that were not on the EU accession timetable (Russia, Ukraine and Belarus), as well as Middle Eastern countries (Turkey and Israel). The contest thus confronts a large number of television viewers with questions of the delimitation of Europe and of the grounds on which a European identity may be claimed.¹

It might be expected that in countries that are newcomers to the European Song Contest participation would trigger debates concerning the newcomer's relationship to Europe, and therefore to other neighbors, partners and interlocutors—debates that are also about the national identity of the new participant. In the case of Ukraine, which was represented in the Contest for the first time in 2003, such a discussion was intensified in 2004 by Ruslana's success.

*The research on which this paper is based was supported by grants from the Ukrainian Studies Support Fund of the Association of Ukrainians in Victoria (Australia) and the Ukrainian Studies Foundation in Australia Ltd.

1. Surprisingly, the question of the role of the Eurovision Song Contest in the evolution of national identities, or a European identity, has attracted little scholarly notice. For highly specialized sociological studies of the voting patterns in Eurovision Song Contests as indices of political affinities between European states, and of power relations between them, see Yair as well as Yair and Maman.

Media commentary and Internet chat speculated at various levels of sophistication on the impact of the Ruslana phenomenon, not only on the prospects for Ukraine's integration into Europe, but also on the nature and strength of the forms of national self-identification among residents of Ukraine. In doing so, these responses to Ruslana took their place in a tradition that includes the debates on the desirability of a Western orientation for a modern Ukrainian culture at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and again in the 1920s. They also echoed the motifs of much Western scholarship on Ukraine, which has sought to choose between models of Ukraine as essentially cohesive or, alternatively, as polarized between two orientations, one Ukrainian and pro-European, the other pro-Russian and Eurasian.²

The following reflections address the Ruslana phenomenon as an implicit intervention in this ongoing discussion. The convenience of adopting a rhetorical perspective for this inquiry lies in the fact that such an approach compels simultaneous attention to the three components of the rhetorical situation: the vehicle of communication (the "speech"—in this case, the verbal and non-verbal components of Ruslana's performance, as well as her subsequent interpretation of it for the media); the "orator," conceived of as seeking to persuade an audience to adopt an attitude favorable to certain interests; and the audience to which the speech is addressed, imagined as a body empowered to determine the issue at stake in a way favorable or otherwise to the interests represented by the speaker.³ In the case of Ruslana's performance at the Eurovision contest, as in most cases where a rhetorical model is superimposed upon a cultural artifact, only the "speech"—the artifact itself—is readily available for analysis. The interests on whose behalf the orator pleads, on the other hand, and the values and predispositions of the implied audience, need to be inferred from the speech. The Ruslana phenomenon, we shall demonstrate, articulates arguments in favor of conferring upon Ukrainian culture the dignity of presence in Europe and the world equally with the cultures of other modern nations. Different aspects of these arguments address the component parts of Ruslana's audience in different ways.

Ruslana's "Wild Dances" performance alluded musically and visually to the folklore of the Hutsuls, indigenes of the Ukrainian part of the Carpathian Mountains. Much of the global reportage of her Eurovision victory interpreted her act as incorporating elements of this ethno-cultural heritage into a contemporary musical and showbiz idiom. But the connection between Ruslana and folklore was not one that she cultivated from the beginning of her

2. Among the scholars whose analyses emphasize an East-West cultural and political polarization of Ukraine are Arel, Wilson, and Shulman. Those who attach less weight to it include Chudowsky and Kuzio.

3. For an exhaustive account of the technical aspects of the rhetorical functioning of literary works, see Lausberg. Studies of the rhetorical dimensions of popular culture include Brummet and Root.

career. Ruslana Lyzhychko, born in Lviv in 1973, attended the school attached to the Lviv Conservatory in the piano class and studied choral conducting at the Lviv State Institute for Higher Musical Education, graduating in 1995. Her success as a popular singer commenced in 1993, when she received a commendation for her performance at the Chervona Ruta festival in Donetsk. She proceeded to collect grand prizes at the Ukrainian television festival "Melodiia-94" and the Slavic Bazaar-96 festival in Vitebsk. In 1994 she co-founded, with her producer and future husband Oleksandr Ksenofontov, the recording studio Luxen that specialized in high-quality advertising for the electronic media. Ruslana embarked on a series of musical projects, some connected to broader cultural agendas. The "Dzvinkyi viter" [Resonant Wind] project (1996–1998) included a concert celebrating 500 years since the European Renaissance. Performed in the Lviv Opera House and at Olesko Castle with a rock group, symphony orchestra and choir, the concert anticipated Ruslana's 1998–1999 project, "Tour of the Castles of Ukraine," proceeds from which supported the restoration of historical monuments. In 1998 Ruslana commenced the "Myt' vesny" [Moment of Spring] project that involved, in addition to the publication of two albums, the production of the video clip "Svitanok" [Dawn] in which Ruslana first invoked the theme of the Carpathians. This was fully developed in the large-budget clip "Znaiu ia" [I know, 2002], with its Carpathian panoramas shot from helicopters and its crowd scenes featuring Hutsuls in folk costume, and in the album that followed, "Dyki tantsi" [Wild Dances].⁴

The deliberate use of folk elements within a musical idiom that was not itself based in folklore was no innovation of Ruslana's, but a venerable feature of art music and popular music in general, and in Ukraine in particular.⁵ A directory of Ukrainian popular music from the 1950s to 2004 that listed 315 groups and performers made reference in 46 entries to the musicians' utilization of folk material. The nature of the appropriation varied. Many performers were identified as reproducing folksongs in contemporary arrangements (e.g., Vatra, Trio Marenychi, Medobory, Mariika Burmaka, Rosava), a few as seeking authenticity through imitation of folk sources recorded in the course of field research (Andriivskyi uzviz, Alla Kudlai, Pysanka), some as representing folk rock in at least part of their repertoire (Hodzadva, Berezen, Bunker Io), others as combining folk with jazz rock (Braty Bliuz, Dzhaz eksprompt, Kobza, Enver Izmailov with his Crimean Tatar sources), and others still as producing folk punk (Dzhemiks, Nostalhiia za mezozoiem, Respublika). While these musicians in some instances achieved recognition through

4. This summary of Ruslana's career is based on "Ruslana Lyzhychko: Spivachka. Biohrafia," "Biohrafia: Ruslana Lyzhychko," and "Klub shanuval'nykiv chiau."

5. For historical accounts of the relationship between folk music and professional music of various kinds in Ukraine, see *Istoriia ukrains'koi muzyky* (2: 38–99; 3: 36–87; 4: 78–104 and 124–41).

out Ukraine or in the whole of the Soviet or post-Soviet realm, as well as in the limited market constituted by Ukrainian diaspora communities, none reached an audience that was even comparable to Ruslana's at the time of her Eurovision victory and immediately afterwards.

Ruslana's performance at the Eurovision grand final had a television audience so huge and diverse that it would be difficult to generalize about its reactions. Part of this audience consisted of potential televoters in the participating countries other than Ukraine (Eurovision rules exclude viewers from voting for the act representing the country in which they vote). By participating in the competition, Ruslana undertook to perform for this audience in a way that, in the first instance, would persuade it that her act was worthy of the highest score. At the same time, her performance sustains interpretation as an appeal to this audience to modify its perception of, and attitude toward, the country Ruslana was representing. Non-voting viewers in Ukraine, however, were the most important audience as far as any identity-shaping rhetoric was concerned. The large number of responses to Ruslana's victory in the Ukrainian media and in electronic forums necessarily remains only a sample of the reaction of the domestic audience as a whole. In the absence of systematic opinion research it is not possible to make sustainable statements about the ways in which the Ruslana phenomenon influenced its audience. It is, however, possible to analyze Ruslana's performance in such a way as to clarify the nature of the audience that it presupposes and the ways in which it sets about acting upon that audience.

Every part of Ruslana's Eurovision performance is rhetorically relevant: the music, the dance movements of the singer and her five accompanying dancers, the special effects, and the words of the song, "Wild Dances," quoted below in the bilingual (English and Ukrainian) text as actually performed at the Eurovision grand final:⁶

Just maybe I'm crazy.
The world spins round and round and round.
Shydy-rydy dai, shydy-rydy dana. (2x)

I want you to want me
As I dance round and round.
Shydy-rydy dai, shydy-rydy dana. (2x)

Forever and ever—
Go, go, go, wild dancers!

6. The text follows the bilingual version of "Wild Dances" as presented on the web page "Ruslana: Ukrainian Song 'Wild Dances,'" but reproduces the Ukrainian parts of the text in Cyrillic. The lines that appeared in an English-only version on the Eurovision web site, but were not sung at the contest, have not been included. The division into stanzas and a refrain, and the punctuation, have been added.

Refrain:

Dai-na, dai-na, wanna be loved,
 Dai-na, dai-na, gonna take my wild chances,
 Dai-na, dai-na, freedom above,
 Dai-na, dai-na-da, I'm wild 'n' dancing.

Гей!

Напевно даремно
 Була я надто чемна
 Shydy-rydy dai, shydy-rydy dana. (2x)

Для тебе, для себе
 Застелю ціле небо.

Гей!

Shydy dai, shydy-rydy dana. (2x)

Без жалю запалю.⁷
 Go, go, go, wild dancers!

[Refrain]

Dance forever! Come and be mine!
 Dance together till the end of time!
 Dance together!
 Go, go, go, wild dancers!

Students of pop music disagree over whether the words of a pop song play a major part in the song's overall impact on its listeners (Griffiths 40–41). Given the likelihood that only a small minority of the many Eurovision viewers heard “Wild Dances” more than once or outside of the context of dozens of other competing performances, and given the emphasis in Ruslana's performance on visual and musical effects, it is likely that awareness of the text of the song was not acute among members of the world-wide audience of the Eurovision Song Contest. On the other hand, it is plausible to assume that the audience of fans at home, exposed to intense media repetition of “Wild Dances” in the wake of its Eurovision success, came to be relatively familiar with the text, even though the bulk of it was in English.

There are two significant components of the song's textual rhetoric for the “global” listener: the construction of the character of the song's lyrical “I” as attractive and deserving emulation; and the affirmation, thereby, of the human qualities and social attitudes manifested in that character. The “I” of the song is a woman who dances as the words of the song articulate her feelings and thoughts. The dancer's spinning movement causes her to experience alienat-

⁷ Hei! / Surely I was too well behaved / For no good reason. / Shydy-rydy dai, shydy-rydy dana (2x) / For you, for me / I'll make the heavens a bed. / Hei! / Shydy dai, shydy-rydy dana (2x). / I'll set [it] alight with no regrets.

This and all subsequent translations are the author's.

ing psychic sensations (“the world spins round and round and round”) and to entertain doubts about her purchase on reality (“just maybe I’m crazy”). Yet this state of consciousness is not deplored, but approved: “Freedom above,” the dancer exclaims, celebrating her condition by interpreting it as the expression of one of the most revered ideals of the European philosophical and political tradition.

The lyrical “I” also identifies herself as “wild”: her condition is one of pre-civilizational naturalness, perhaps of noble savagery. In this wildness, and especially in its visual equivalent, the female body partly revealed in its “primitive” attire, there is an element of accommodation to what Edward Said in his reflections on Flaubert recognized as the image of the Oriental as feminized and eroticized, and thereby rendered the object of (Western, masculine) desire for sexual domination as *pars pro toto* for colonial domination in general (186–90, 207–8). But Ruslana’s lyrical “I” enacts a refutation of the Orientalist stereotype. By association with the wild beast, she has strength, and it is strength that inflects her attitude toward love. In the English-language part of the text the lyrical “I” runs no risk of becoming vulnerable through dependence on the reciprocal feeling of another. Rather, her wish is to be the object of the other’s sexual desire (“I want you to want me”). It is the potential lover, the “you,” who is to be the dependent party in this asymmetrical love, while the “I” retains freedom and control.

The part of the lyrics that is accessible, because it is in English, to a broad, culturally varied audience, makes an argument affirming civilizational values firmly associated with the European Enlightenment tradition. The song invites its listeners to identify or re-identify with a character who embodies freedom that flows from the autonomy of the subject’s consciousness and expresses itself through control of that subject’s destiny. This emancipatory argument is given a contemporary edge by its superimposition over a feminist grid: the autonomy celebrated here is that of a woman who has outgrown emotional dependence.

Related to the song’s argument about freedom is its celebration, in its English-language sections, of present pleasure. The identity of the lyrical “I” is not revealed to the global Anglophone audience except as participating in the giddy, exciting present of the dance, to the exclusion of considerations of before and after. The argumentation of “Wild Dances” that addresses the general audience, then, fits comfortably with the combination of individualism and hedonism that many would see as paradigmatic for the life-practices of contemporary Western societies. In this respect, Ruslana’s performance at Eurovision is a profession of civilizational faith: for the general listener, “Wild Dances” is a proclamation of solidarity with the prevailing values, beliefs and practices of the civilizationally dominant West. It is a claim to belong to a modern global community conceptualized as Western in its fundamental features.

These claims to membership in a global world are also addressed to Rus-

lana's domestic audience, but the argumentation of "Wild Dances" for listeners attuned to the Ukrainian cultural context contains important additional elements. To start with, the tone of the utterances that the lyrical "I" makes in Ukrainian is different from that of the parts sung in English. Contradicting the triumphal autonomism of the English-language text, the Ukrainian voice introduces the notion of altruistic and mutual passion ("Dlia tebe, dlia sebe / zasteliu tsile nebo [For you, for me / I'll make the heavens a bed]"). Departing from an exclusive focus on present experience, the Ukrainian-language text introduces narrative. There a past comes into view in which the heroine was "nadto chemna [too well-behaved]," suggesting not only an earlier time of innocence and chastity, but also adherence to a code of "chemnist'" [polite behavior] with distinctly old-world, middle-class connotations. Alluding to motifs familiar to the imagination of Romanticism (the grandeur of nature and its capacity to reflect the transcendental; yearning as a consequence of the deferral of happiness), the Ukrainian-speaking lyrical "I" projects the consummation of the love bond into the future and positions it against the sublime background of the firmament.

What rhetorical purpose may be attributed to this invocation in the Ukrainian text of a nostalgic model of femininity, of a Romantic narrative of emancipation from social constraint through idealized erotic fulfillment? Implicit in the difference of this Ukrainian-language discourse from that of the English-language parts of the song is the assumption that the Ukrainophone audience is still accustomed to an essentially Romantic framework for its emotional transactions. Thus, the brash individualism of dominance that is celebrated in the "international" text of the song is inflected for consumption by an audience imagined as more traditionalist and sentimental in its predispositions. Viewed with an eye to its potential persuasive force, "Wild Dances" may be seen to propose to its domestic audience that the assertive and forceful emancipation celebrated by the song as a whole has a predecessor in, and is not so very different from, a Romantic emancipation that is more familiar and therefore acceptable.

The diction of the song alternates between two languages and a third kind of linguistic material: repetitions of variations on the incantation "shydy-rydy dana." For the Ukrainophone audience, these sounds carry associations with the musical culture of the Hutsuls, natives of the Carpathian Mountains who maintained a pre-industrial lifestyle well into the twentieth century. The meaning of these refrains is as obscure to contemporary Ukrainians as it is to the global audience, but the sounds are easily recognized as ethnographic quotations that introduce into the song an element of the archaic and the pre-civilizational, underscoring the positive value of "wildness" as an expression of the natural, on the one hand, and the heady, liberating quality of the dance on the other. All of these connections are emphasized, as we shall presently show, by costume and music.

An additional dimension of the rhetoric of Ruslana's song that addresses the Ukrainophone audience concerns the issue of language choice. Decisions by speakers in various life situations to speak one language in preference to another are known to have considerable social meaning. Particular language choices may reproduce or challenge prevailing power arrangements (Berger xiv–xv), empowering or disempowering their speakers (Survilla 202). For Ukrainian audiences, the alternation between three language codes in “Wild Dances” constructs a cluster of arguments about identity. Switching between languages is common in songs sung at the Eurovision contest (as are performances in English only or the singer's native language only). In the case of “Wild Dances,” the use of both English and Ukrainian functions as a demonstration of the singer's loyalty to her native language, on the one hand, and of global cultural competence, on the other. The song demonstrates its capacity to participate in an international event according to the event's expectations and rules, even though Ruslana herself, as distinct from her performer persona, was not a speaker of English. That the argument embodied in using the two languages was understood and approved by many in Ruslana's domestic audience is suggested by numerous contributions to a pre-Eurovision forum dedicated to the issue of “the language of the song” on Ruslana's web site. “National specificity” was so important for one discussant that he felt that “singing in English only would be wrong,” while conceding a few days later that “English is an international language, it's an opening to Europe—a window, if you will” (“Ruslana Forums”). Ruslana herself claimed that she included Ukrainian text in her Eurovision performance “as a matter of principle” (Lyzhychko), linking her use of Ukrainian to the rhetoric of authenticity that her public relations apparatus utilized—her web site, for example, proclaimed in 2004 that “Ruslana is not an artificially created image. She is real” (“Biohrafii”). But, for all that Ruslana stressed the primacy of her Ukrainian identity in media interviews at home and abroad, her Eurovision song enacted the possibility that a cultural artifact, and therefore its maker and its recipients, might function at several cultural levels simultaneously: the global, the national, and the regional.

Given this *de facto* creed of cultural pluralism, it is significant that “Wild Dances,” like Ruslana's oeuvre as a whole, pays no regard to bilingualism and cultural polycentricity as they actually exist in early twenty-first century Ukraine, where the phenomenon of Russian-Ukrainian bilingualism is widespread, Russian-language print and electronic media outweigh their Ukrainian-language counterparts, and Ukrainian-language popular music competes with a dominant Russian-language music scene based in part in the Russian Federation, and in part in Ukraine itself. The absence of Russian from the otherwise polyvalent sphere of culturally relevant activity as projected by Ruslana is, of course, an argument. It shows the audience that not only the Ukrainian language, but even obscure incantations associated with a region of

Ukraine, can function successfully within the system of contemporary international culture, while offering no judgment about the role that Russian might play.

The politics of such silence is subtle. It avoids confrontation, the definition of in-groups and out-groups, and the division of the cultural world into friends and enemies. In this respect Ruslana's implicit political rhetoric differed markedly from that of the protest rock of the late 1980s, which challenged its audiences to defend Ukrainian culture just as emphatically as it excoriated the Soviet regime.⁸ Because of its *ressentiment* toward the cultural practices of large numbers of Ukrainians whom it saw as victims of cultural Russification, Ukrainian protest rock appealed in the main to those who were already committed to Ukrainian culture. Ruslana, on the other hand, dealt tactfully in her public statements with the question of her relationship to Russian culture and Russia itself, taking pains to show that she considered the Russian Federation to be another European country, no more and no less: "we are working hard to prepare for a major European concert tour, which will include cities in Russia" (Kapustin). She formulated her reasons for touring the northern neighbor, not in terms of the mythological topoi of brotherly peoples and common Slavic roots, but of a businesslike desire to respond to the wishes of an audience: "I know for a fact that in Russia people are very fond of Ukrainian songs" (Chmylikova). In short, Ruslana avoided affirming old colonial hierarchies in her utterances concerning things Russian, but placed no political obstacles in the way of appreciation of her music by the Russo-phone section of her potential audience, thus allowing it the opportunity of initiating or deepening an identification with Ukrainian culture.

In Ruslana's invocation of the culture of the Hutsuls, the role of words is surpassed by that of music, dance and costume. The choreography of "Wild Dances" used dance steps derived from Hutsul dance. The *trembita*, a Hutsul folk wind instrument, featured prominently at the opening of the routine. *Kuhykannia*, a Hutsul method of throwing the voice to carry long distances in the mountains, played a role in the musical structure. Without diminishing the contemporary quality of "Wild Dances" as a musical and popular culture event, these motifs invoked old folkloric traditions associated with the Carpathian Mountains and argued for the archaic and therefore authentic quality of the sources from which Ruslana's performance was said to derive its inspiration. In this combination of the contemporary with the archaic lies the nub of the song's argument concerning the nature of human identity. According to this argument, human beings can and do exist simultaneously in several contexts, some of which might be particular and local, others global; some might emphasize presence in the contemporary world, others in a temporal con-

8. For accounts of Ukrainian popular music of the late 1980s and early 1990s, see Bahry and Wanner.

tinuum that embraces both the archaic and the modern. Competence within the context of global popular culture by no means contradicts participation in the context of Hutsul culture. Presence in the global context is evidence of the vitality and contemporary relevance of the unique life ways of the Carpathians, while the capacity of ancient Hutsul ways to be incorporated into a cultural form responding to present-day tastes and interests serves to remind the viewer that contemporary culture is nothing if not eclectic and hybrid. The audience for Ruslana's "Wild Dances" is enticed to recognize modern human identity as multi-polar, associating the sense of self with not one but many contexts and communities, including universal humanity, on the one hand, and the particular national community defined by culture, on the other.

Such a rhetoric is not new. It is reminiscent of the earliest form of cultural nationalism as articulated in the 1780s by Johann Gottfried von Herder. Herder retreated from the radical atomism of the Enlightenment and, in particular, from the view that the essence of humanity resides solely in the autonomy of the individual, expressed in that individual's capacity independently to exercise the power of reason. Herder pressed his contemporaries to recognize the importance of interpersonal relations to the constitution of the human, in particular of the communication of knowledge that societies accumulated and that generations transmitted to each other through tradition. Parallel to Herder's recognition and celebration of the unity of humanity was his vision of this universal humanity as a system of discrete but interrelated and intercommunicating cultures, differentiated from each other, for "everywhere [...] we find human beings possessing and exercising the right to form themselves into the kind of humanity that they themselves have recognized" (29: 218; pt. 3, bk. 15, I). The vocation of humankind Herder conceived of as a quest for "humanity and happiness in this particular place, to this particular degree, as this particular link, and no other, of the chain of development that stretches through the whole human race" (28: 349; pt. 2, bk. 9, I). The "links" in the chain of humanity in Herder's model were individuals, but also peoples—groups that derived their sense of identity and coherence through their association with the place where they lived and the way in which they lived. Herder's was no nostalgic project extolling the archaic or idealizing the pre-modern or the parochial. His plea was for the progress of the whole of humanity, achieved through the progress of all of its component peoples, each in its own way dignified, and each contributing to humanity its particular experience and genius.

Broadly speaking, the Ruslana phenomenon two centuries later constituted an argument that was not dissimilar to Herder's. Its goal could be perceived as the generation of a new sense of cohesion for a cultural community, and the justification, by demonstrating the dignity of that community, of its claim to an equal place in the broader community of humanity, to which it can make unique and valuable contributions. The context in which, according to Rus-

lana, the Ukrainian cultural community was to secure its development, was Europe. Participation in the Eurovision contest was in itself the exercise of a right to figure in the European context. Repeatedly, Ruslana claimed that she saw herself as deliberately asserting that right, pushing her way into Europe while maintaining intact and authentic the culture with which she associated herself. "We tried to carry our idea into Europe while protecting as much as possible the color of the Ukrainian text," she told an interviewer (Koskin). Yet the incursion into Europe was not to be imagined as undertaken empty-handed. Ruslana effectively promoted the image of her songs as supplying an old and exhausted Europe with new energy, originality, recovered archaic authenticity, vitality, and even eros. The respected Ukrainian weekly *Dzerkalo tyzhnia* observed in an article titled "'Wild Dances': New Strength for Old Europe" the detail of such argumentation as practiced by Ruslana on the eve of the Eurovision final:

In the process of promoting ["Wild Dances"] Ruslana was at her best. She managed to remain sincere and enthusiastic to the end—and that, you'll agree, is infectious. Choking with excitement, she told romantic stories about going alone into the mountains, into remote villages where to this day television is unknown (I can imagine the astonishment of the European who discovered that such a wilderness exists in the very center of Europe), where the truly archaic has survived, where they work leather by hand and craft quaint trinkets over the long winter evenings, where there is an abandoned observatory—the very one where she set up her mobile studio and composed the album. There it is, the "life as art" that Grandma Europe has long been sighing for. There it is, real enthusiasm and naturalness, a primeval closeness to the earth and no less primeval a mysticism. This is where it springs from—this wildness, this energy, this strength. (Shchotkina)

Ruslana herself was no less eloquent, interpreting her cultural role as analogous to that of enthusiastic Romantic collectors and transmitters of the treasures of folklore. According to her account, the Lviv-born singer's first visit to the Carpathians was revelatory: "my enthusiasm for this culture began to sparkle like a waterfall in the sun. I was so absorbed by it that it became my own. That's why I've been able to communicate this culture: I'm fantastically in love with it [...]. I think it gives me strength and vitality—there's something unique and special preserved in those mountains, something we can't explain, but only apprehend with our hearts" (Koskin).

For all of Ruslana's invocation of the archaic and primordial qualities of the culture she aimed to share with the rest of Europe, her system of argument contained no reference to history, that staple of Romantic cultural identity-building. The reason for this may be seen as related to her much-reported discontent with Ukraine being associated in the mind of the West chiefly with the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Ruslana avoided seeking identity in history, because this would almost inevitably mean grounding identity in experiences of suffering and victimhood, and running the risk of contaminating collective identity with *ressentiment* toward the historical perpetrators and their contem-

porary heirs. The cultural community for whom Ruslana made herself an advocate had no room for images of the Other as enemy. Its object was to grow through inclusiveness, welcoming all who were attracted to it.

More explicit than Ruslana's refusal of history was her rejection of the Soviet model of folklore. Ruslana promoted ethnos as a vibrant and productive component of the multi-faceted cultural reality of the present, contradicting Soviet-era identification of ethnicity and its symbols with pre-modernity. Among the vehicles of cultural homogenization and control in the Soviet Union and its European satellites was the professionalization of ethnicity through the creation of privileged cultural enclaves in which traditional music, dance, arts and crafts and even national literatures were allegedly cultivated, but in fact controlled by the state, refashioned through an overlay of Soviet ideology and nineteenth-century aesthetics, and consigned to slow extinction through loss of connection to the cultural needs of an increasingly urban and modern society (Kurkela 94–96). In such an environment it became difficult to use folk material without parody or condescension, and without making a connection between folklore and cultural backwardness. The Ukrainian term *sharovarshchyna*, derived from the name of the broad and brightly colored trousers favored by the Zaporozhian Cossacks, came to be applied to forms of cultural production where folklore was exploited in a coarse, exaggerated or superficial way, confirming the prevailing stereotype of the ethnically specific as outdated and quaint. *Sharovarshchyna* embodies an attitude toward cultural roots that Ruslana emphatically rejected: "We turned to ethnos, not to *sharovarshchyna* [...]. I am a contemporary singer with ethnic interests who has seen [ethnic material] through fresh eyes. There may well be traditional views of Hutsul culture that are dear to some highland officials. But we've done something innovative—something bold and unforeseen" (Koskin).

Visually, Ruslana went to considerable lengths to distance herself and her group of performers from symptoms of *sharovarshchyna*. Indeed, the general appearance of the costumes used in "Wild Dances" scarcely alluded to Ukrainian ethnographic realities at all, and it is doubtful that the international media, which univocally reported on the Carpathian look of the performance, would have done so without prompting. The costumes were in various shades of black, with capes, leather, furs, whips, tattoos and metal studs much in evidence, not to mention bare flesh exposed at midriff and knee. The relationship to the traditional clothes of the Hutsuls, where wool and sheepskin predominate, and white and red are the main colors, was not immediately apparent. Traditionally dressed Hutsuls had appeared in some of Ruslana's clips, but in the case of "Wild Dances," an act largely intended for the international audience of the Eurovision contest, costume served to render the performance more familiar by invoking well-known popular-culture images. In a somewhat sarcastic report *The Independent* recognized Ruslana's allusions to the television serial "Xena the Warrior Princess" and commented on the

eroticized tone of the performance, referring to Ruslana's "post-operative trans-sexual dancers" (Gold). The *Times* was alert to the sado-masochistic dimensions of the performance, coyly remarking on its use of leather, fur and whips ("Ukrainian Singer Ruslana"). At the simplest level, then, the costumery of the Ruslana ensemble signalled participation in one of the most widespread practices of contemporary global popular culture: the sexualization of cultural products in the interests of enhancing their market appeal. The costumes joined the other strategies deployed by Ruslana to assert presence in the cultural mainstream.

But the costumes also contributed to the song's arguments about emancipation and power. The invocation of the contemporary popular-culture figure of the "tough girl" (Inness 4–5) reinforced the image of the lyrical "I" as forceful and dominant, and asserted distance from the stereotypes of woman as victim, mother or protectress familiar in Ukrainian culture. "In these clothes," Ruslana confided, "we felt ourselves to be true Amazons—at once sexual and warlike" (Lyzychko). As for the sado-masochistic attributes with which the costumes were replete, these may be read as serving the argument of presenting as object of identification a self defined by power and by rejection of the status of victim. After all, "escape from both the practice and legacies of hierarchy" (Simon 132) has been regarded as one of the significant functions of sado-masochism.

At home such a radical revision of cherished ethnographic symbols caused controversy. Not all Ukrainian commentators were as forgiving as the reader of *Lvivska hazeta* who wished Ruslana success in spite of detecting in her dancers "a hybrid of the Hutsul, the Cossack and the sado-masochist with his whip" ("Ievrobachennia"). Addressing a Ukrainian cultural system imagined as more conservative than that of the international audience, Ruslana's publicity promoted the visuals of "Wild Dances" as reflecting the values of Romantic ethnographism. Just as the music of "Wild Dances" was publicized as the fruit of Ruslana's own ethnomusicological research in the Carpathians (Piatochkin), so the costumes were explained as the outcomes of the meticulous collection and study of ethnographic data: "With the help of ethnographers we analyzed the materials gathered during my expeditions to the Carpathians—photographs of Hutsul ornaments, jewelry and weapons. The results were creations unique down to the last button. The television image will never convey such a plethora of minute original details, attributes and decorations" (Lyzychko). Evidently, the ploy was successful: many Internet discussants conversant with Ukrainian culture noted in passing the connection of Ruslana's imagery to global popular culture, but gave considerable weight to the Romantic homage they believed Ruslana paid in "Wild Dances" to primordial native cultural sources. One eloquent exegete believed "Wild Dances" to be "an attempt to touch the soul of the people, which has always been in harmony with the universe. Consciously or not, Ruslana has brought

to life a deep, strange layer of genetic memory [...] that is able, ultimately, to explode with revelation: yes, I am a Ukrainian, these are my land, my mountains, my people” (Koval’).

All in all, a number of the persuasive mechanisms in the argumentative system of the Ruslana phenomenon were directed toward convincing the audience, both domestic and general, that “Wild Dances” was the consequence of a deliberate fusion of modern music and imagery, but also values and world-views, on the one hand, and inspiration from authentic ethnic sources, on the other. The strategy involved the rescue of the ethnographic from the embrace of *sharovarshchyna* and the re-legitimation of cultural distinctiveness as a viable feature of the modern, culturally plural, globalized world. It sought to persuade those viewers of Eurovision who were less than familiar with Ukraine to recognize the country as a vibrant, energetic, untrammelled place at the frontier of Europe, yet within it. Moreover, it sought to postulate Ukraine, not as a grateful recipient of European high culture, but as a generous giver to a flagging Old Europe of new stimuli and energies. As far as the Ukrainian audience was concerned, on the other hand, the Ruslana phenomenon was a challenge to regard as natural the participation of Ukraine in Europe; to re-imagine the national self not as a victim or passive object of the processes driving the continent, but as a positive contributor to an open and multifarious contemporary European culture; and to recognize that there is no contradiction between participation in the modern global world and emphatic national self-identification. Ruslana’s victory in Eurovision 2004 added greatly to the persuasive force of these arguments. One commentator, evidently convinced, discovered in Ruslana’s victory nothing less than an antidote to what he called the “national inferiority complex” and a pointer toward a “new Ukrainian dream” (Kniazhyts’kyi).

Some commentators recognized in the Ruslana phenomenon a new opportunity for the development of a robust national identity for Ukraine. As one parliamentarian put it, “The new nation has acquired new symbols that embody its success on the international arena: [the footballer] Andry Shevchenko, Ruslana Lyzhychko, [boxing champions] the Klychko brothers. It does not matter what language they speak, where they were born or where they currently work. What is important is that they identify themselves as Ukrainian” (Fel’dman). The invocation of a triad of popular cultural heroes is not accidental in the Ukrainian context, given the central role, actual and symbolic, that three poets and writers, Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko and Lesia Ukrainka, had played in the evolution of Ukrainian national identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The earlier triad had manifested the role of high culture in imagining and promoting the idea of Ukraine as a modern nation—an idea that, once accepted by a national elite, could be generalized downward into mass society through education and national mobilization. Central to the national identity associated with Shevchenko, Franko

and Lesia Ukrainka was the motif of struggle against injustice generally, and the injustice of colonialism in particular. This identity was asserted against the will of rulers conceived of as foreign and illegitimate, and against the inertia of the yet-to-be-converted. It was the identity of selfless devotees committed to the onerous task of constructing a nation in their own image. Perhaps inevitably, therefore, it was defensive, combative, and jealously protective of its symbols, the first among which was the Ukrainian language. By contrast, Andry Shevchenko, Ruslana, and the Klychko brothers embodied not collective striving for a distant goal, but success already achieved and recognized outside the national community. The members of the old cultural trinity were unthinkable except through their connection to the Ukrainian language and high literary culture; the new triad represented the opportunity for a collective identity that was culturally polymorph (the Klychko brothers, for all their emphatic identification with Ukraine, speak Russian more readily than Ukrainian) and potentially more inclusive.

The rhetoric of Ruslana, then, is one of several systems of messages that circulate in the Ukrainian information space, advocating the construction of a new kind of national identity, based not on the possession of cultural attributes whose acquisition may not come easily to all, but on the wish to belong to a community that cherishes a cultural heritage and confidently assumes a right to equal presence with others in the culturally heterogeneous contemporary world.

REFERENCES

- Arel, Dominique. "Ukraine: The Temptation of the Nationalizing State." *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. Ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1995. 157–88.
- Bahry, Romana. "Rock Culture and Rock Music in Ukraine." *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*. Ed. Sabrina Pedra Ramet. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994. 243–96.
- Berger, Harris M. "The Politics and Aesthetics of Language Choice and Dialect in Popular Music." Introduction. *Global Pop, Local Language*. Ed. Harris M. Berger and Michael Thomas Carrol. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2003. ix–xvii.
- "Biohrafia." *Ruslana*. <http://www.ruslana.com.ua/main_ukr.html>. Accessed Sept. 22, 2004.
- "Biohrafia: Ruslana Lyzhychko." *Ukrains'kyi fan-sait Ruslany*. <<http://ruslana-fan.net/ruslana.php>>. Accessed Feb. 4, 2006.
- Brummet, Barry. *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 1991.
- Cheremshyna: Istoriia ukrains'koï estrady*. <<http://www.kmstudio.com.ua/>>. Accessed Jan. 30, 2006.
- Chmylikova, Oksana. "Ruslana Lyzhichko zhazhdet 'zazhygat' publiku v Rossii." *Pravda.Ru*. July 19, 2004. <http://www.culture.pravda.ru/culture/2004/4/70/200/17574_rulsana.html>. Accessed Oct. 4, 2004.
- Chudowsky, Victor. "The Ukrainian Party System." *State and Nation-Building in East Central Europe: Contemporary Perspectives*. Ed. John Micgiel. New York: Institute for East Central Europe, Columbia U, 1996. 305–21.

- Fel'dman, Oleksandr. "Vid derzhavy do natsii." *Den'* 168. Sept. 21, 2004. <<http://www.day.kiev.ua/124094/>>. Accessed Oct. 4, 2004.
- Gold, Tanya. "Europe in All Its Tacky Caterwauling Glory." *The Independent*, May 17, 2004. 31.
- Griffiths, Dai. "From Lyric to Anti-Lyric: Analysing the Words in Pop Song." *Analysing Popular Music*. Ed. Allan F. Moore. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 39–59.
- Herder, Johann Gottfried von. *Ideen zur [Philosophie der] Geschichte der Menschheit*. 1784–91. *Sämtliche Werke in vierzig Bänden*. Vols. 28–30. Stuttgart: Cotta, 1853.
- "Ievrobachennia' ie dlia mene spravzhnim trampolinom." *L'vivs'ka hazeta*, May 13, 2004. <<http://www.gazeta.lviv.ua/2004/05/14/NewspaperArticle.2004-05-13.0229/>>. Accessed Sept. 23, 2004.
- Innes, Sherric A. *Tough Girls: Women Warriors and Wonder Women in Popular Culture*. Philadelphia: U of Philadelphia P, 1999.
- Istoriia ukrains'koï muzyky v shesty tomakh*. Ed. M. M. Hordiichuk et al. Vols. 1–4. Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1989–1992.
- Kapustina, Andrei. "Ruslana Lyzhychko: 'Ia za politikov ne poiū.'" *Novye izvestiia*, Sept. 1, 2004. <<http://www.newizv.ru/news/>>. Accessed Feb. 14, 2005.
- "Klub shanival'nykiv chiau." *Cheremshyna: Istoriia ukrains'koï estrady*. <<http://www.kmstudio.com.ua/index.htm?http://www.kmstudio.com.ua/cheremshyna/kshch.htm>>. Accessed Feb. 2, 2006.
- Kniazhyts'kyi, Mykola. "Stezhkamy seredn'ovichnoï kazky." *Dzerkalo tyzhnia* 20 (495). May 22–28, 2004. <<http://www.zn.kiev.ua/ie/show/495/46509/>>. Accessed Oct. 4, 2004.
- Koskin, Vladimir. "Pokorivshaia Evropu." *Stolichnye novosti* 18 (309), May 18–24, 2004. <<http://www.cn.com.ua/N309/faces/triumph/triumph.html>>. Accessed Oct. 4, 2004.
- Koval', Volodymyr. "Dyki tantsi' iak spadok 'Slova.'" *2000*, June 11, 2004. <<http://www.2000.net.ua/print/aspekty/diktancyakspadokslova.html>>. Accessed Feb. 15, 2005.
- Kurkela, Vesa. "Deregulation of Popular Music in the European Post-Communist Countries: Business, Identity and Cultural Collage." *The World of Music* 35.3 (1993): 80–106.
- Kuzio, Taras. "Identity and Nation Building in Ukraine: Defining the 'Other.'" *Ethnicities* 1.2 (2001): 234–55.
- Lausberg, Heinrich. *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft*. 2 vols. München: Hueber, 1960.
- Lyzhychko, Ruslana. "Interv'iu—21 travnia 2004 r." *Vidkryta Ukraina*, Feb. 14, 2005. <http://www.lyzhichko.openua.net/bio_extra.plhtml>.
- Piatochkin, Petryk. "Ruslana: ia vidpochyvaiu, myiuchy posud." *Muzon.com*. May 14, 2004. <http://muzon.com/view_post.php?post_id=277>. Accessed Feb. 16, 2005.
- "Record numbers for the 2004 Eurovision Song Contest." *Eurovision Song Contest Kiev 2005*. <<http://www.eurovision.tv/english/1182.htm>>. Accessed Feb. 13, 2004.
- Root, Robert L., Jr. *The Rhetorics of Popular Culture: Advertising, Advocacy, and Entertainment*. New York: Greenwood, 1987.
- "Rules of the 2004 Eurovision Song Contest." *Eurovision Song Contest Istanbul 2004*. <<http://www.eurovision.tv/ebu/rules.htm>>. Accessed Oct. 4, 2004.
- "Ruslana Forums: Mova pisni." *Ruslana*. <<http://www.ruslana.com.ua/forum>>. Sept. 30, 2004.
- "Ruslana Lyzhychko: Spivachka. Biohrafia." *Vidkryta Ukraina*. <<http://www.lyzhichko.openua.net/bio.plhtml>>. Accessed Feb. 4, 2006.
- "Ruslana: Ukrainian Song 'Wild Dances' Performed by Ruslana at Eurovision 2004." *ArtUkraine.com*. <http://www.artukraine.com/cultsites/rus_evr3.htm>. Accessed Feb. 13, 2005.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon, 1978.
- Shchotkina, Kateryna. "'Dyki tantsi': Nova syla dlia staroi Ievropy." *Dzerkalo tyzhnia* 20 (495), May 22–28, 2004. <<http://www.zn.kiev.ua/nn/show/495/46507/>>. Accessed Oct. 4, 2004.

- Shulman, Stephen. "The Cultural Foundations of Ukrainian National Identity." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22.6 (1999): 1011–36.
- Simon, William. *Postmodern Sexualities*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Survilla, Maria Paula. "'Ordinary Words': Sound, Symbolism, and Meaning in Belarusian-Language Rock Music." *Global Pop, Local Language*. Ed. Harris M. Berger and Michael Thomas Carrol. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2003. 187–206.
- "Ukrainian Singer Ruslana." *Times*, May 22, 2004: 16.
- Wanner, Catherine. "Nationalism on Stage: Music and Change in Soviet Ukraine." *Retuning Culture: Musical Changes in Central and Eastern Europe*. Ed. Mark Slobin. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1996. 136–55.
- Wilson, Andrew. *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Yair, Gad. "'Unite Unite Europe': The Political and Cultural Structures of Europe as Reflected in the Eurovision Song Contest." *Social Networks* 17 (1995): 147–61.
- Yair, Gad, and Daniel Maman. "The Persistent Structure of Hegemony in the Eurovision Song Contest." *Acta Sociologica* 39 (1996): 310–25.

Резюме

Марко Павлишин

Бачення Європи: Риторика ідентичності в Руслани

2004 р. співачка з України Руслана Лижичко стала переможцем у міжнародному музичному конкурсі «Євробачення». У межах понятійних рамок риторики, стаття аналізує пісню Руслани «Дикі танці» як виступ, спрямований рівночасно до двох публік: глобальної та української. Основні елементи аргументації «Диких танців», що реалізуються щодо загальної публіки—апологія свободи як відсутності обмежень; коректура уявлення, забарвленого орієнталізмом, про позаєвропейський «схід», як фемінізований і тому пасивний; заява самоствердної та самодостатньої жіночності; і оголошення про участь співачки (а з нею і культури, яку вона в контексті Євробачення представляє) у загально-глобальній сучасній культурі, про що свідчить і схвалення цінностей індивідуалізму та гедонізму.

Для публіки української, натомість, риторичне повідомлення «Диких танців» включає передовсім твердження про природність та необхідність національної специфіки в культурній системі глобалізованого світу. Відлунюючи роздуми Гердера у вісімнадцятому столітті, україномовні частини «Диких танців» та посилання на гуцульський фольклор формують аргумент про життєвість «своєї» культури та її здатність не тільки заявляти про свою присутність серед інших культур, а й своєю оригінальністю робити внесок в загальнолюдську культуру. Людська ідентичність, яку пропонує виступ Руслани як відповідну для сьогодення, без напруги поєднує компоненти автентично національні, пов'язані з конкретними місцями та історіями, та глобальні, пов'язані з переконаннями та прагненнями, притаманними для модерних секуляризованих суспільств.