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**(UNDER)RESEARCHED GALICIAN DISCOURSES.  
GLOSS TO THE “KNOWLEDGE-POWER-PLEASURE. SEXUALITY  
IN POLISH AND UKRAINIAN GALICIAN PROSE AT THE TURN OF THE  
20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY” PROJECT (1)**

The anthropological turn in contemporary literature studies, which resulted in recognizing the literary text as a part of our/others' social, cultural, political, economic discourses, has so far attracted only minimal attention in comparative studies in Polish and Ukrainian literature. This also pertains to texts written in Galicia in the years 1837–1914. The frontier and local character of Galicia, its entanglement in identity ambiguities or the experience of state, social, gender subordination and dominance in Galicia inspire to read them with the use of key anthropological notions such as otherness and identity, particularism and ethnicity, marginalization and transgression, the public and the private, gender and sexuality etc.

In this context, I will try to outline the changes in interpretation paradigms in Polish/Ukrainian Galician narrations in post-WW2 literature studies and prove the value of the anthropological turn in Polish-Ukrainian comparative studies. The paper leaves out research into Galician Jewish, German, Czech and other literatures that provides equally important contexts thus requiring a separate work.

**1. From the “allied nations” approach to borderland ethnocentrism**

Variable interpretation and methodological approaches in Ivan Franko's paper on Adam Mickiewicz's works, “Ein Dichter des Verrates” (“A poet of betrayal”), may exemplify the changes in research of the both Galicia literatures quite well. This text was published in the Vienna “Die Zeit” newspaper in 1897 and became a Polish-Ukrainian bone of contention [16]. The author argued that the leitmotif in Mickiewicz's works was treason and he stressed also that the treacherous character of the romantic poet also mirrors the mentality of the Polish society “fed by the poisoned fruit of Mickiewicz's spirit” [20, 213].

In Ukrainian-Soviet literature studies these sensitive questions were mostly omitted, which may be proven by the fact that this very article did not make it to a 50-volume edition of Franko's work. If any researcher ever ventured an analysis of a text, he or she was usually trying to find an interpretation path conforming with the dominant Marxist methodology. Hryhoriy Verves regarded “Ein Dichter des Verrates” as an allegorical political pamphlet with a camouflaged critique of the Galician bourgeoisie, above all of Kazimierz Badeni, the then emperor's viceroy in Galicia [49, 164-165]. In Polish literature studies Verves' approach was continued by Mikołaj Kuplowski who deemed this articles an “appalling Franko's appearance, traced back to his emotional and health condition, and basically not attacking Mickiewicz himself, but noble conservatist groups and pseudo-democrats vilifying

Franko for his participation in peasant movements and radical social attitude” [42, 30].

After the fall of communism, the image of Polish-Ukrainian literary relations was greatly demythologized in literature studies. Ukrainian researchers started pointing to the so-far left out threads of coexistence of the Polish and Ukrainian early modernism [21], which was earlier pointed to only by emigration researchers in Ukrainian studies [5; 12]. Polish Ukrainian studies in the late 1990s, on the other hand, initiated a series of research in the literature of the Polish-Ukrainian frontier with “Warszawskie Zeszyty Ukrainoznawcze” journal playing an important role [2; 13; 37; 39; 48]. At the same time, analysis of Polish-Ukrainian relations in the light of the so-called Polish Eastern Borderlands was reactivated in the Polish studies; a notion basically absent in the communist period, even though still present in the area of interest of Polish emigration researchers [40; 41].

The reception of “Ein Dichter des Verrates” can serve as an example in this very change in literature studies. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Edward Kasperski proposed an interpretation of Franko’s paper totally different from Verves’ and Kuplowski’s. He perceived it as a manifestation of frustration of an unaccomplished writer, researcher, lover of Polish women, which was supposed to be connected with a feeling of envy for the popularity of Mickiewicz, his imaginary rival. However, above all, he perceived “Ein Dichter des Verrates” as a sign of popularization of nationalist ideas in Galicia: “transition [of the Polishness and Ukrainianness] from coexistence and dialogue to conflict and disintegration” [38, 74]. George Grabowicz presented a completely different analysis of Franko’s paper and with theoretical references he gave a universal character to the Franko-Mickiewicz relationships described there. This researcher proposed to read and interpret “Ein Dichter des Verrates” with Harold Bloom’s concept of “Anxiety of Influence”. According to Grabowicz, Frank’s reception of the works of the Polish poet was a manifestation of a psychological phenomenon, typical for each artist, forcing uniqueness and thus situating him or her in conflict with his or her predecessor or master [3; 4].

Kasperski’s interpretation is very characteristic for the borderland discourse in Polish literature studies based on a nostalgic vision of the Polish-Ukrainian past and a crash in frontier coexistence with the emergence of nationalist ideas. Disponents of the borderland discourse [33] put forward a hypothesis on the harmonious coexistence of the nations, exchange of traditions and cultural polyphony at the borderland of the Commonwealth of Poland. They left out the fact that this very infiltration, even though actually taking place, did not necessarily pertain to equal partners but was rather connected with the politically motivated dependency of the Ukrainian culture on the Polish culture i.e. that the Polish “golden age” resulted in minimizing development opportunities for non-Polish cultures. The then understanding of Polishness as *antemurale christianitatis* was equivalent to negation of the Eastern branch of Christianity, and the so-called Polish civilization mission to Eastern Europe excluded the very sense of existence of Byzantine civilization in Ukraine. Borderland literature researchers did not accept the ahead of Daniel

Beauvois, a French historian, that “there was never harmonious multiculturalism” in the borderland area [24, 94].

Despite the intensification of research into the cultural heritage of the frontier, Ukrainian narrations from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Galician almost never made it to the interest areas of contemporary literature researchers. No Ukrainian ever spoke in the Polish literature studies, thus remaining subordinate to the monological borderland discourse. Similarly, the issue of Galician Polishness never made it to mainstream Ukrainian literature studies. There were inspiring proposals concerning the creation of multicultural history of Galician literatures [7], but they still remain in the reign of postulates.

In this light, Danuta Sosnowska’s “Inna Galicja” (“Another perspective on Galicia”) [46] provides one of the few positive examples of comparative interpretations of 19<sup>th</sup> century cultural discourses from Galicia. The Slavicist presented the relationships between various identity narrations, including literary ones. Moreover, for the analysis of Polish and Ukrainian text, she used the little known Czech context and texts. The monograph presents cultural relationships unknown to Polish research, mostly the influence of Czech nationalist ideas on Ukrainian elites in Galicia. Despite this, the researcher, in her very original interpretation triangle, was not able to go beyond the polocentric perspective and in some places she did not escape reproducing stereotypical images of national cultures as pointed by Michael Moser [17].

Katarzyna Kotyńska, another researcher, in her book entitled “Lwów. O odczytaniu miasta na nowo” [11] (“Lviv, on reading the city anew”) analysed the representations of the Eastern Galician capital in Polish, Ukrainian and Jewish (as a background) narrations of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The researcher was interested in parallels and differences in national mappings of Lviv as well as the role of this city in creating identity discourses and historical memories. Kotyńska’s book provides an important point of departure for key transcultural interpretations of the Galician space.

## **2. Fear of theories**

German Ritz established that the common feature of contemporary studies in the literature of Polish-Ukrainian frontier includes a lack of solid theoretical foundations [43, 119]. Despite the fact that Galician source materials, because of its entanglement in various dependencies (Austria-Hungary, Polish autonomy in Galicia, women in the face of patriarchy, social subordination of the peasantry), deserve an analysis in the context of contemporary theories, there are little similar attempts or they do not go beyond the postulate zone.

This issue gives rise to a question on (non)existence of postcolonialism in Galician literature studies. Authors of papers published in “Historyka” annual, entitled “Galicja postkolonialnie. Możliwości i granice” (“Post-colonial Galicia. Possibilities and limits”) have shown the interpretative potential in post-colonial reading of the Habsburgian Austria. As Klemens Kaps and Jan Surman have both stressed, Galicia plainly “demands its postcoloniality free from its own myths and

national ‘Piedmontisations’, but at the same time preserving its own diversity and the conflicts related to it” [36, 8]. Kaps’s and Surman’s claims correspond to an earlier proposal of selected Polish literature researches, including Maria Janion [34], Bogusław Bakula [22], Maria Borkowska [26], who pointed to the possibility of post-colonial deconstruction of the frontier description of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland. (2)

What post-colonial interpretation of “Ein Dichter des Verrates” may bring about? In “Historyka” column, Stefan Simonek, an Austrian Slavicist, focusing on the role of language in keeping cultural dominance of the Habsburg Monarchy, presented Franko’s text, written in German, as a manifestation of subalternation within the understanding of *subaltern studies*. A Ukrainian writer, as subaltern, would not have been able to get across with his or her ideas to a wider audience of the Danube monarchy using his or her native Ukrainian language. Therefore, he or she was forced to switch to the language of the monarchy to get to the centre of the empire. As Simonek stressed: “these were the discursive powers of the German language in general that allowed for fierce polemics between Franko and the meaning of treachery in Mickiewicz’s works, from the subordinate position of the Ukrainian language such an attack on the Polish poet would be hardly imaginable” [44, 155]. This researcher perceived the critique of not necessarily Mickiewicz himself, but his cult imposed to the Ukrainian youth by the Polish education system, as an instance of Franko’s negation of the Polish cultural supremacy in Galicia [44, 156].

The use of the post-colonial instrument in the analysis of narrative colonial and anticolonial practices in Central-Eastern Europe provides an opportunity for accentuating previously left-out, marginalized or denied cultural threads. In literature studies dealing with Polish and Ukrainian texts of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these would pertain to the political dependency of the Polish culture on Austria-Hungary, Prussia and the Russian Empire and the consequences of dominance of the Polish noble over the Ukrainian culture. The “double-edged” colonialism was an attempt to avoid methodological schematization. It points to the peculiar character of cultural relations in this part of Europe where hegemony and subversion discourses intertwined.

It needs to be stressed that postcolonialism as a research method revisits discourses that determine the relationships between the dominant and the subordinate in binary oppositions and resists to attempts of a comprehensive, finite description of inter-ethnicity or interstate relationships. This theory makes it clear that the issue of subordination and exclusion was present not only in the relationships between ethnic cultures but also within each of them [25, 185; 30, 11]. Therefore, to understand the intricacies of relationships in multicultural space, it is important to understand the peculiarities of the Polish-Ukrainian discourses not only in the context of nationality but various intertwining components of identity, such as sexuality, family, gender, social status, etc. [35, 158].

### **3. Towards the discourse of sexuality**

Galician narrations constituted a form of a culture where Polish and Ukrainian writers represented scenarios for dealing with contrasting social and national interests. The discourse of our/other sexuality was a significant component. According to Michel Foucault, in the European culture construction of an individual depends on taming sexuality i.e. acquiring cultural norm supervising and disciplining this sexuality [28, 71–117]. Thanks to this taming, not only does the individual get control of him- or herself but also of the “others” as mastering one’s own desires designates the zones of social relations. Therefore, in the process of construing communities for Galician elites, it was important to control one’s own and other’s sexuality not only from the national but also social and sexual perspectives. Analysis of the sexuality discourse can thus help to understand the formation of the then social and national identities.

In my interpretation, I distinguish a couple of methods of discoursivation of sexuality. Prose of the authors acquiring the perspective of the interests and outlooks of the Polish noble and patriarchal culture (e.g. Stanisław Grudziński, “Półpanek”, 1879 [32]; Kajetan Abgarowicz, “Nie ma metryki!”, 1894 [45]) presented such a deployment (3) of sexuality that would guarantee keeping political and economic supremacy of the nobility in Galicia. Within this discourse, Ruthenian peasants, who were assigned an extraordinary tendency towards debauchery (often subconscious) or sexual violence, should be subordinate for their own and nobility’s good. Deployment of the sexuality of the Ruthenians in such a way that they do not exceed the economic benefits of the landlord allowed for keeping post-corrée status quo for the noble estate. Creation of literary knowledge of sexuality of the Ruthenian peasant legitimized the supremacy of the Polish nobility.

Text authored by Old Ruthenian and Ukrainian prose writers were the face of these representations. It needs to be stressed that the heritage of the so-called Old Ruthenian (Russian conservatists) is absent from the contemporary national histories of Galician literatures. However, their works mirror the attitudes of the elites dominant in Ruthenian culture and politics until the 1980s mostly composed of Greek Catholic clergy. In the novels of Old Ruthenians (e.g. Fylymon Kalytovskiy, “Zamin”, 1867 [8]; Volodymyr Khylyak, “Shybenychnyy verkh”, 1882 [1]) it was the Greek Catholic Church and the parsonage that was at the very centre of deployment of sexuality. These institutions construed knowledge and power concerning both the own, i.e. Ruthenian, and others, i.e. Polish, sexuality. Moral principles and Greek Catholic traditions, including lack of celibacy, exerted a lot of influence of the image Ruthenian elites had on love, eroticism, courtship, marriage, and family. The dominance of clergy families in the Ruthenian culture gave a special position to the very institution of family that was treated as a kind of *axis mundi*, a sacral point of reference for identity and foundation of morality. Priest’s marriage became the synecdoche for the autonomy of Ruthenian culture from the Polish one, and in a broader perspective, autonomy of the Eastern culture from the Latin one. Its persistence provided an argument in favour of the supremacy of own traditional values such as family, public and personal morality, life for the community, that were

juxtaposed to features considered right for the Polish Roman Catholic culture i.e. celibacy, amorality, careerism, and egocentrism [6].

According to Foucault, the revelation of the intimate truth of oneself influences the revealing party who discovers the self as an object of desire, morality, and cognition. But it is the listener who is the dominant figure, sanctioning the “truth” about the “self” of the revealing party [28, 56–61]. It was the priest and the pan-optic parsonage that were the guardians of truth. They disciplined the body of the follower, construed his or her soul for this soul to manage the sexuality of both the individual and the parish community. Therefore, authors of Ruthenian novels stressed the moral right of the clergy to deploy sexuality in the villages of Galicia. In their discourse of opposition towards the dominant Polish noble culture they usually used parallel sexual rhetoric as the Polish writers, but they switched the roles: sexual violence towards a Ruthenian (mostly peasant) woman became an attribute of the noble culture. The reduction of the Polish nobility to the libido sphere was intended to discredit the “masters” and support the argument that the nobility lacks cultural and moral legitimation for their political power.

Analogue imaging techniques in the Polish and Old Ruthenian literature prove the fact that the same discourses can be used to strengthen contrasting strategies or that a single strategy includes many contradictory discourses. For example, the above-mentioned motive of sexual violence of the nobleman towards peasant women paradoxically proves a certain community of desires of the conservative Ruthenian and Polish elites. Old Ruthenian authors wished to preserve the post-corr vee social hierarchy. Their plans were projected with a literary substitution of the nobility for rightful, noble Ruthenian “guardians” of the peasantry. Incidentally, the Old Ruthenians, as mentioned by Filip  wistun, a historian, “(...) with fondness remembered the times where Ruthenia had their boyars and dukes, and from the political perspective they were eager to support any absolutism” [47, 261].

Lack of control of the Polish noble over their own sexual drive and the control of sexuality of the Ruthenian protagonists gave the latter the right to power in the Galician setting. Similar motives can be found in the prose of progressive Ukrainian writers (e.g. Ivan Franko, “Osnovy suspilnosti”, 1894 [19]; Les’ Marovych, “Zabobon”, 1911 [15]). The difference lies in the fact that ideological sources of their motives can be traced back to the democratic idea of equality.

Ukrainian writers educated between their own minority culture and the dominant Polish culture could not avoid references to the products of the latter one, even if in the methods of criticising its status and values. The Ukrainian self was trying to negate the dependency of its identity on the Polish other. This gave birth to the ambivalent motive of passionate love of a Ukrainian man to a Polish woman that conceals a socio-nationalist imperative of taming and denial of this love (e.g. Ivan Franko, “Ne spytavshy brodu”, ca. 1886 [18]).

Please note that in the confrontation of the Ruthenian/Ukrainian discourse with the Polish discourse the Ukrainian women were excluded. Symbolically, the women got their voice back in the texts of Ukrainian female writers. As far as

masculine frontier narrations created a strong androcentric voice, female narrations provided an opportunity for success of the Ukrainian national project in the form of an emancipated, socially and nationally, Ukrainian woman. Female writers getting self-presentation powers initiated the construction of their own projects of the Galician maze of sexual knowledge and practice. Transgression of the sexuality taboo, followed by the revelation of the self and one's own needs were the images appearing in female identity narrations (e.g. Natalya Kobrynska, "Yadzya i Katrusya", 1893, [9]; Olha Kobylanska, "Tsarivna", 1896 [10]).

The sexuality discourse was an important component of the Polish and Ukrainian literary identity narrations. Thus, the analysis of the representation of sexuality in literatures should bring an answer to the question on which political and moral factors formed and disciplined these representations, and what these representations can tell us on the scenarios construed by the Galician male and female writers for forming the relationships between the socio-cultural groups of the cultural borderland. Pointing to sexuality and its connections with knowledge and power can help to understand one of the essential elements in construing Ukrainian and Polish identity in Galicia and beyond.

Comparative research in Polish and Ukrainian literature from the perspective of the contemporary theoretical proposal can bring about new and important interpretations. Change of the polocentric and ukrainocentric approach dominant till today could allow for filling the blank pages in comparative studies. This is even more so that for thirty years after liberating literature studies from Marxist influences, comparative studies in frontier literatures still exclude representations of the then erotic models, gender roles, dominant family relations, conservative endogamy or progressive transformation of the public and private sphere.

#### Footnotes

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(2) The state of post-colonial research in Poland and Central-Eastern Europe analysed by Ewa Domańska [27] and Bogusław Bakuła [23].

(3) Deployment of sexuality is a mechanism of diffusion of power and knowledge on sexuality in the society i.e. creation of a network of relations between sexual knowledge and practice, and political, economic, gender relationships etc. [28, 71-117].

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