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Allocating identity- versus, against, above, in spite of. The Lemko becoming in Galicia.

In the following paper I do not attempt to tackle theoretical challenges. I was inspired by two voices which provoke, in a certain sense, the performative dimension of my reflections and observations concerning presence versus absence.

The first is the voice of Homi Bhabha: „For the critic must attempt to fully realize, and take responsibility for, the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present”¹.

The second is a quote by Kenneth White, who is considered a founder of geopoetics: „we are living in times of profound cultural change. And we need those, who will go further, draw maps from scratch and show new paths.”²

As a long-term researcher of modern minority discourses in the Galician space, I have attempted to find, among many identities whose voices are more or less audible/dominant, the phonic pathway which has never become dominant or sufficiently significant in the polyphony of the Galician and post-Galician area. What makes this pathway even more interesting is that it has never disappeared and it is still searching for a textual and ritual representation to express itself, causing astonishment, surprise, curiosity, and posing a number of question marks.

1. Meanings and denotations

I will explore the Galician times under the slogan of „Lemko” since the mid- XIXth century, when the becoming of identity, which later on will be clearly attributed to this ethnonym, started to be visible and tangible in the texts, which according to my evaluation and classification can be acknowledged as Lemko literature³.

The performative role of texts in the processual becoming of the Lemko ethnos’s identity is not any different from most of the projects of national homelands⁴. Typically for an

¹ Homi Bhabha, *The location of culture*, Routledge, New York, 1994, p.18.

² I quote the frase after: A. Kronenberg, *W stronę delikatniejszego zamieszkiwania Ziemi – geopoetyka Kennetha White’a*, http://faza.univ.rzeszow.pl/teksty_naukowe/KRONENBERGo-geopoetyce%20White%27a-popr.pdf (22.07.2014)

³ Helena Duć-Fajfer, *Literatura lemowska w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX w.*, Kraków . Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2001.

⁴ I will quote here, an excerpt from the statement of prof. Jerzy Jedlicki, which I always have at hand whenever I want to demonstrate unquestionable relations between ethnicity and literature: „The vast majority of contemporary theoreticians and historians have agreed that modern European nations are products of literature

anthropological approach, the first to appear was the identity mirror, that is the act of noticing a certain cultural and geographic area by romantic enthusiasts of folk communities, later called folklorists.

Since at least XVIth century –as confirmed by educational research in Lemkivshchyna⁵ – among the inhabitants of Karpathian villages, especially in the western part of the territory later called Lemkivshchyna, a considerable percentage of peasant children were able to write and read, and some of them were schooled in a higher education system, mainly in seminaries, at university theological faculties, and less frequently others. As a result, in the XIXth century there was a highly interrelated intelligentsia group, which had developed a specific cultural model and was connected by descent, activities and sentimental attachment to an area, which had been assigned by ethnographers and folklorists to the Lemko people⁶. This group, consisting mainly of the Greek Orthodox priests, played the role of elites during a certain stage of development of the society of „a peasant and an Orthodox priest”, acting as national awakeners.

For a long time, Rusynness in Galicia was more a religious and cultural concept with a mythical function, rather than an ethnic category, and it wasn't until the mid-XIXth century when, under the influence of many mirrors and eversions, this category was formulated as a counter-narration in opposition to Polishness, viewed through a national lens⁷. During early stages of this oppositional process of national ascension or coming into existence, the Rusynness, which evolved from being mostly a mythical category into a form of ethnic discourse, played the role of ideological and cultural basis. It was important, though – as it turned out – not fully viable, to gain narrative coherence of this discourse. The split of both identity concepts and national programmes based on them, which took place among Galician Rusyns, was caused by a variety of factors which are not going to be discussed here. Part of the intelligentsia society continued to follow the conservative model of wide Rus, another part

and ideology. Awakeners, seers, prophets, philologists, historians wrote the projects of national homelands using available linguistic, ethnographic and historical material, which they eagerly enriched with mythical imagination, and – if needed – with literary fraud.” (Jerzy Jedlicki, ‘O narodowości kultury’ *Res Publica* nr 2, (1987), pp. 46-56, tu: p. 52)

⁵ Helena Duć-Fajfer, ‘Szkolnictwo na Łemkowszczyźnie’, *Rocznik Ruskiej Bursy 2005* (2005), pp. 51-67.

Sources and statistics confirming my theses are presented therein.

⁶ See more information about this group in: Helena Duć-Fajfer, *Literatura lemowska w drugiej połowie XIX* and in Helena. Duć-Fajfer, ‘Udział Łemków w życiu religijnym, umysłowym, kulturalno-umysłowym Galicji w 2. połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku’, in: *Poprzez stulecia – księga pamiątkowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Antoniemu Podrazie w 80. rocznicę Jego urodzin*, ed. Danuta Czarska, Kraków, Towarzystwo Wydawnicze „Historia Jagiellonica”, 2000, pp. 199-212.

⁷ Jan Kieniewicz notices that „Ukraine could elevate to the level of nation only against Poland” (Jan Kieniewicz, *Ekspansja, kolonializm, cywilizacja*, Warszawa, DiG, 2008, p. 216).

began to shape a radical Ukrainian programme and yet another part followed the Russophile direction⁸.

Originated in the area of Lemkivshchyna, where the Rusynness, surrounded by the Western Slavic cultures needed to be especially nurtured and essentialized in order to preserve its distinctiveness, the intelligentsia held on to its archaic, sacral and mythical model. Affiliation with the party of the so called old or hard Rusyns was associated not only with the opposition against the Polishness, but also against the sense of Eastern Ukrainity which was developing fast in Galicia, and which was generally viewed as a separatist programme, aimed at destroying the all-Rusyn mythical unity. When the Ukrainian programme dominated the views of the East Galician intelligentsia (at the end of the XIX century), it was noted that the territories of Carpathian Rus were „falling behind”. As a result, the Ukrainian national activists began an intense „awareness” campaign, run mainly by the Orthodox Greek Catholic Church. By the end of the XIXth century, as one of the Ukrainian authors puts it, „a deliberate and consistent ukrainization of clergy and parishes (...) began in Lemkivshchyna”⁹. This campaign, however, faced strong resistance which was quite explicitly described as the „Russophile haze”¹⁰, and later, as a Polish intrigue. The issue, nevertheless, wasn't that simple. For the Ukrainian radicals (even nowadays) it would be difficult to see, and all the more accept, the development of a new identity, based on a spatial and folkloristic marker, which would initially be expressed via subtle geopoethic discourse, before its emergence as a parallel ethnic programme in the beginning of the XXth century.

2. A place in topographic space as an awareness category

Space division according to groups/communities/nations who inhabit it is underpinned by autochtonism theories together with etiological and ethnogenetic myths. It serves the purpose of space usurpation and gives rise to its cultural/ethnic interpretations. Putting a grid of cultural meanings over geographic space requires continuous textual negotiations, identity validations, competition, exclusion, usurpation, etc. Textual attempts of the Lemko community to negotiate and reflect upon identity and space, which started to gain visibility

⁸ There is a vast historical literature concerning national movements in the Habsburg monarchy and especially in the mid-XIXth century Galicia and earlier, see Helena Duć-Fajfer, *Literatura lemowska*, chapter I, footnotes 50-57, Włodzimierz Osadczy, *Święta Ruś. Rozwój i oddziaływanie idei prawosławia w Galicji*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2007 (bibliography therein), Bernadetta Wójtowicz-Huber, „Ojcowie narodu”. *Duchowieństwo greckokatolickie w ruchu narodowym Rusinów Galicyjskich (1967-1918)*, Warszawa, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego 2008 (bibliography therein).

⁹ Степан Шах, *Між Сяном і Дунаєм. Спомин*. Часть 1, Мюнхен, Видавництво «Християнський голос», 1960, p. 316.

¹⁰ Юліян Гарнович, *Люстрована історія Лемківщини*, Львів, “На Сторожі” 1936.

around the mid-XIXth century, were confronted not only with external discourses, but also – and perhaps most of all– with their own allocations and questions revolving around the change of the permanence field. When the Rusynness, being a strong, essential category thanks to its mythical foundation, lost its power– which earlier gave rise to unreflective identifications– its peripheral areas had to face the necessity of increased reflection, driven by ambiguously directed projections and aspirations. The familiar system, with two centers (the Polish and the Austrian one) was modified in view of a new configuration, with the Ukrainity as the center of the southern, including Galician, Rusynness. The mythical Rusynness did not transform into a political movement, therefore the politically radical Ukrainity was displacing it and formulating modern national endeavors. While becoming stronger and stronger, this political center was called into question by the peripheries, mainly thanks to their borderland potential¹¹.

We have, thus, come to a point, where the becoming of awareness, based on a symbolically filled, real space must have been effectuated by interpenetration of competing, ambivalent, compact contents and cultural trends, which took a form of locative discourse versus, in opposition to, beyond, against all that had attempted to seize this territory using its own system of symbols.

3. Strategies of fitting into space

The basic ambivalence, which extracted and defined the proto-Lemko discourse was the tension between the desire to hold on to the old/permanent cultural and mental order, and the changes in progress. The reduction of the category of Rus', its hybridization and transformation, provoked its defenders to follow the “salvation” imperative. The idea of Lemko Rus' encompassed sentimental, ethnographic, historical and spatial factors which were grouped in an anti-centric configuration, obtained in a number of ways.

1. Polemical (unassigned, anti-colonial, appropriating)
2. Ironizing (distancing, contesting, abrogative)
3. Mimetic (questioning uniqueness, creating a new subject)

The third way would relate to the idea of Lemovyna, which evolved from Lemko Rus' during the on-going process of emancipation. It emerged through the establishment of the first

¹¹ Pogranicze rozumiem tu najprościej jako przenikanie się na pewnym terytorium różnych, konkurencyjnych wobec siebie wartości kulturowych, z czego powstaje nowa jakość kulturowa.

Lemko journal in 1911 called „Lemko”¹². The act of its foundation was motivated by the distinctness of Lemkovyna from the other areas of Galician Rus'¹³.

I will focus here on the process of identity idea spatial allocation, ethnic space conceptualization, creation of cultural places (places of memory¹⁴/ethnic places¹⁵) as well as boundary formation seen as certain textual constructing and constituting strategies.

To position oneself versus-against

An important starting point for textual representation of ethnicized space were numerous historical and geographic essays as well as linguistic descriptions¹⁶, whose development was driven by the need to specify the particularity of one's group, to recognize oneself v e r s u s. Versus what?

Firstly and basically – versus other groups and their historical identity narration, within their own counter-narration, which uses the spatial-locative factor to create the vision of autochtonism (versus, for instance, the work by a Polish historian Waław Aleksander Maciejowski *The original history of Poland and Lithuania*, 1846 – concerning Rusyn settlement in Muszyński and Jasielki district, which had only begun in the times of Kazimierz the Great¹⁷). In the process of developing the Cyril- and- Methodius- mission concept among the inhabitants of the Beskids along both sides of the Carpathian Mountains (in view of the Bapism of Poland and the Bapism of Rus, which occurred almost a hundred years later). In quoting/producing the founding legends of localities (especially the towns of Tylicz and Muszyna), situated in the northern and southern parts of the Carpathian Mountains, in the

¹² Initially a bi-weekly, overtime it became a Lemko-centered weekly, published in Lemko language between 1911 and 1914 (first in Lvov, then in Nowy Sącz and Gorlice)

¹³ It was explicitly expressed in editorial notes, included in the first issue of the journal.

¹⁴ In Pierre Nora's understanding, that is as „any material or ideal signifying unit which, by the will of people or the work of time, has been converted in a symbolic part of heritage, remembered by a community” (*Le lieux de mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora, v. I-IV, Paris, Gallimard, 1984-1992, tu: v.II, p. 2226, quoted after: Kornelia Kończal, ‘Bliskie spotkania z historią drugiego stopnia’, in *Pamięć zbiorowa jako czynnik integracji i źródło konfliktów*, ed. Andrzej Szpociński, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2009, pp. 207-226, herein: p. 211.

¹⁵ Ethnic place are understood as “[...] not so much geographic frameworks for the activities of ethnic communities, but rather as a spatial context for various types of regulations and practices of collective identity construction” (‘Wprowadzenie’, in *Spoleczne tworzenie miejsc. Globalizacja, etniczność, władza*, ed. Andrzej Bukowski, Marcin Lubaś, Jacek Nowak, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2010, p. 27.

¹⁶ See Helena Duć-Fajfer, ‘Szkice historyczno-etnograficzne, opisy językoznawcze, korespondencje lokalne i inne prace wskazujące na dążność do sprecyzowania specyfiki własnej grupy’, in Eadem, *Literatura lemowska*, pp. 75-97.

¹⁷ It is an opposition from the essay: Михаїл Крыницькій, ‘Историческое состояніе Намьстничества Мушынского въ взглядѣ фізично-политичномъ, моральномъ, и религіѣномъ оть основанія 54 хъ тутъ существующихъ чисто-рускихъ сѣль и двохъ городковъ: Мушина и Тыличь, списанное Михаиломъ Крыницькимъ приходникомъ рускимъ въ Тыличи, въ окружѣ Сандецкомъ 1852 года’, *Отечественный Сборникъ повѣстокъ, сказокъ, историческихъ воспоминаній, господарскихъ и иныхъ общепользныхъ вѣстей и пр. и пр.*”, (Вѣдень), nr 15-20 (1853).

Beskids. When pointing to the traces of Orthodox churches in various localities which neighbored Ruthenian villages, where, at that time (in the XIXth century) churches could be found¹⁸ (versus the dominant Polish legendary, historical and spatial narration).

This is how „one’s own space” is created, and through positioning itself „versus” (which often means „against” other ethnic indicators), it bears the mark of ethnic space, according to a basic rule of communicating differences. Its name and the name of its inhabitants is being gradually clarified. Beginning with geographic and administrative names such as: the Muszyna deanery, the Muszyna state, the Beskid Sądecki and Jasielski regions, as well as terms such as „тутейшо-гôrскій рускій нарôдь Сандецкого округа”¹⁹ (the local-mountain Rusyn people of the Sądecki district), which appear in the above-mentioned essay of Mychail Krynycki, and ending with the ethnonym „Lemko-Rusyns”, used by Alexij Toronski (in the essay by the same title – see footnote 21). The territory will be referred to as Lemko Rus', Lemkivshchyna (later on Lemkovyna), as, for instance, in numerous essays by Vladimir Khiliak²⁰, often signed with his nickname- „Lemko”. Matwij Astriab, a history student at Kyiv University at that time (already in 1871), consistently uses the name „Lemkos” to call his countrymen. His work *Кôлька слôвъ о лемковскôй бесѣдѣ*²¹, (*A few words on the Lemko language*) is a manifestation of contemporary awareness and a radical ethnic approach.

Positioning oneself versus and against is one of the simplest and the most basic strategies of its kind. Obviously, we can use a set of tools here, a language, figures of speech, forms of discourse and theories, taken from the ones we position ourselves versus or against. It is enough to provide them with their own signs, meanings, symbolic systems, which often result in creation of the negative. It is a binary and essentializing relation. It is, thus, much more difficult to position oneself a b o v e.

To reintegrate the ethnos vertically – above

¹⁸ In particular, such narrations can be found in the essay by Mychail Krynycki but they also occur in almost all Lemko ethnographic and historical essays which were written in the second half of the XIXth century.

¹⁹ Михаїл Крыницькій, op. cit., s. 82.

²⁰ For example: В. Хилякъ (Лемко Семко), ‘Изъ крайне-западной Руси. (Рады – Nil novi sub solo)’, *Слово*, nr 1, (1869); idem (Лемко), ‘Отъ Сандецкихъ горъ.(Вопросъ о употребленіи русскаго языка въ урядѣ)’, *Ibidem*, nr 68; idem, ‘Свадебныи звычаи у Лемковъ’, *Литературный сборникъ издаваемый Галицко-Русскою Матицею* (1871), pp. 4-29; idem (Лемко), ‘Изъ лемківскаго села (Пансіонъ для лемковскихъ дѣвушекъ)’, „Слово”, nr 101 (1872); idem, ‘Юморъ у Лемковъ (Этнографическій эскизъ В. Неляха)’, *Родимый Листокъ* (1880), nr 12, p. 188-190, nr 13, p. 203-205, nr 14, p. 219-221; idem (Лемко), ‘Изъ Лемковщины’, *Червоня Русь*, nr 18 (1889); idem (Лемко), ‘Воды в Выссовой’, *Ibidem*, nr 55; idem (Лемко), ‘Пещера конфедератовъ’, *Ibidem*, nr 173; idem (Лемко), ‘Зъ Лемкôщины (Тихо и глухо вщ Лемкôвщинѣ)’, *Батькôвщина*, nr 14 (1890); idem (Лемко), ‘Зъ Лемкôщины (Про порядки въ Устю рускôмь)’, *Ibidem*, nr 19.

²¹ М. Астриабъ, ‘Кôлька слôвъ о лемковскôй бесѣдѣ’, *Учитель*, nr 43-52 (1871), Львовъ.

I understand this type of ethnic space development as a necessity to build ideologically, conceptually, above a certain ground, a core or a basis, which can be easily defined in its visually-factual dimension, taken for granted as natural equipment and connected to the land. This ground is usually delimited by a certain type of landscape and topography, but also the location of villages and a specific character of the folk culture, strictly associated with living and farming conditions. On the level of discourse, these factors are used to formulate the categories of endemism and nativeness and have great negotiative significance, especially in case of communities who are denied the right to have a history.

The foreign folklorists' descriptions filled this nativeness with all the necessary parameters to establish *terra nostra*. These parameters were ready to be used in one's own narration, in accordance with a well-known rhetoric, found in the romantic repertoire of „national repository”. One should bear in mind, though, that what was appealing to the nobility— because it was seen from a privileged position in the upper reaches of society, with all its historical and mental supply of a „natural” class distance— was a much more complex process for a member of intelligentsia who was moving up the social ladder. He had to explore and narratively confirm this foundation as his own identity capital, (or symbolic capital, as put by Bordieu) and he needed to seal up the fissures, perform reevaluations and overcome a series of aporias and ambiguities.

As representatives of the Galician-Rusyn intelligentsia (which was the only coherent self-definition during the Galician period), they could take part in a wider „we”, external to Polishness, which generally did not cause ambivalence, was simple to label and to support a we/they division²². However, the exteriority in relations to Ukrainity demanded much narrowing down, or, to put it more graphically, sharpening the „we” category.

The idea of wide Rus' or all- Rus' could not be the basis for excluding the Ukrainity, because it originated in Rusynnes and referred to it. Sharpening of ones' own identity references could occur only on the basis of a core, which, by the right of ownership/exclusivity, would exclude the others from the ownership. Nevertheless, in relation to this core, this folk and rural cultural base, a member of the Galician-Rusyn intelligentsia – even if he originated from the area which was delineated by it – still located himself on the outside.

²² Although, obviously there are also many works of Lemko literature dedicated to complex relations between family, friends and neighbors in the situation where the Ruthenian patriotism was associated with excluding isolation, seen as the only way to liberate oneself from the Polish domination. See Амвросій Полянскій, 'Двѣ силы', in Idem, *Избраннѣя сочиненія*, Москва, Прогрессивное издательство А. С. Дзюбенко, 1916, pp. 121-167.

This is where the ideological construction of „above” began. The XIXth century Lemko literary texts attest to discursive difficulty of the integration into a symbolic „we” –which would have an oppositional power in relation to already shaped, and more or less powerful subjectivities – this, what could constitute the essence of identity, through an appropriate interpretation, sign attribution, and ethnical meaning. We observe the next steps, which could be defined as a strategy to reduce the foreignness.

Aleksij Toronsky’s famous essay *Русины-Лемкы* reflects the game of acknowledgement, played to determine who these Lemko people – native of the Beskids, living in an admirable way, creating a specific, rich culture – are in relation to „us” (the Galician- Rusyn intelligentsia). They get to be denominated „народъ по вѣрѣ, обычаямъ и бесѣдѣ намъ соплемянный, о которомъ мы однакъ весьма мало знаємъ”²³ („the people who are our fellow tribesmen in faith, customs and speech, but of whom we know very little about”). The whole essay is characterized by a number of classification ambivalences. They are alike all the other Rusyns: „Лемки, якъ весь народъ рускій, суть весьма пѣвчіи”²⁴ („The Lemkos, alike the whole Rusyn nation, have a gift for music) but their language is a „spoiled Rusyn speech” („Беседа Лемкѣвъ єсть испорчена руска”)²⁵. On the other hand, they differ from the other Rusyn groups, they appear as a separate people „Лемки, оуже якъ горняки, должны своимъ короткимъ, легкимъ одѣніємъ отъ Подолянъ розличатися; но они отъ прочихъ горнякѣвъ одеждою розличаютъ ся”²⁶ (The Lemkos, as mountain people, should differ from the inhabitants of Podole because of their short, light clothing, but their clothes make them stand out even among other mountain peoples).

Toronsky wrote about the Lemkos with a great deal of affection and admiration for their individual and social character traits, claiming that he had lived the happiest moments among them and emphasizing that „и она малая вѣтвь народа руского не чуждавшаяся никогда своего кореня, оуваженія достойна”²⁷ (This small branch of the Rusyn nation, which has never renounced its roots, is also noteworthy). Nevertheless, his thesis concerning a worse/spoiled Rusynnes of the Lemko people became the basis for the evaluation of his essay.

The hybridity, which characterized the culture of Lemkos, and which gave rise to Toronsky’s thesis, was gradually increasing and generating concepts of „spoiled language and culture”, confronted with an imaginary model of „pure”, central Rusynnes. The biographic-emotional declaration of the author-narrator changed the configuration of these distances and

²³ А Тороньскій, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 404.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 423.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 418.

judgments, as the textual representation drew closer to the folk core. The essay *Колька слѡвь о лемковскѡй бесѣдѣ*, written as a polemic against Tornsky's theses, is still based on a distance between a member of intelligentsia (the one who put on leg pants, dresses) and a peasant (a ploughman). This critique, however, weakens the position of the former for the benefit of the latter. The echoes of the Narodnik Movement, the peasant mania tell Astriab to see and declare the Rusyn nativeness instantaneously, here, where „locals/our people/Rusyns” live:

It seems to me that we, who wear dresses, should value our peasant ploughmen more than we do: we shouldn't disgrace them for their customs and language, instead, we should be grateful to them for, although they have always worked more for others than for themselves, they have never forgotten their fathers' thatched roofs and their mother tongue, they kept on doing their work well and honestly, they were good and honest Rusyns and they have never disgraced their good and honest Rusyn name²⁸.

Toronsky's questioning of the quality of the most significant (as it was believed by the XIXth century national homeland's constructors, who followed Herder's line of thought) expression of the national spirit –the language– gained axiological hyperbolization. It is noteworthy that, when confronted with the already acknowledged Rusyn languages –the lesser – and the greater Rusyn, the Lemko *besida* (speech, language) has an independent status with a surplus of antiquity, hence, with primordality and long-lastingness – the qualities which are so important for cultural evaluation.

Reducing distance between a member of intelligentsia and a peasant moves on to the next stages in the autobiographical texts of Mykolai Malyniak, an author who came from a poor, peasant family from Kamianna. He reminisces about his childhood, spent in a poor peasant hut, and all the other consequences of his peasant descent, in a very open and direct way. He points out that the best days of his life were spent in this hut, and that his suffering began when he went to school, where he was mocked and humiliated because of his origins. Not only does he criticize the intelligentsia, and especially clergy, but also the religious institutions as well as morality, injustice and hypocrisy of the high church officials.

As a result of these textual approximations, there are two parallel terms in the ethnonymic nomenclature: *Rusyn* (Galician) and *Lemko*. Both of them can refer to a member of intelligentsia as well as a peasant. The territory defined in texts as the Lemko Rus/Lemkivshchyna is realistically filled by a society composed by peasants, a clergy man and his family, a deacon, a teacher-deacon or a teacher, an innkeeper (usually a Jew) and a few Gypsy families. It is structured and bound by community ties and it recognizes itself in a specific symbolic universe. Such space – resulting from a vertical identity construction, taking

²⁷ Ibidem, s. 428.

²⁸ Матвій Астрябъ, 'Колька слѡвь о лемковскѡй бесѣдѣ', пг 51, s. 202.

place above the ground – appears especially clearly, marked symptomatically by the ethnic places' specificity, in the novels of Vladymir Chylak, Aleksij Toronsky, Petro Polanski.

To get one's own way– allocating against

Perhaps the most symptomatic and successively significant, is the way to allocate identity, *a g a i n s t*, which by its own semantics, communicates that something has violated the existing order and that it has occurred regardless of, and paying no attention to the status quo, in spite of something. The impetus of the binary counterstrike (easy to weaken by the self-evidence of the ability to master the borrowed tools), inner consolidation and ethnic space construction are necessary and essentializing steps. These steps, however, were not decisive in determining audibility/non-audibility, endurance, continuity and a singular persistence of the Lemko voice. This peculiar evasive discourse– resulting from, and influencing the process of allocating **against**– creates a weak and strained, but persistent and lasting modality which will be the basis for the Lemko ethos of endurance dominating this community's literature. As pointed out very clearly by Homi Bhabha, hybridity has a significant strategic potential.

Hybridity represents that ambivalent 'turn' of the discriminated subject into the terrifying, exorbitant object of paranoid classification – a disturbing questioning of the images and presences of authority²⁹.

In this strategy, which I consequently define as allocating against, the hybridity allows for a colonized subject to obtain „self-knowledge, including his own status in the colonialist process”³⁰. The XIXth century Lemko writers, and especially, the most prominent one among them Vladimir Khiliak, participated „humbly” in the game of domination markings, in order to shift the meanings to create ruptures, allowing laughter, irony and sometimes mockery to sneak in easily. They did so with great awareness which entailed potential for parody.

Let us quote here a characteristic excerpt from Khiliak's narration, which attempts to allocate the representation of Lemkones (apparently ethnographic or spatial– that is the one which is acceptable) in the field of Ukrainity-dominated Rusynnes. Nevertheless, through identity reflection, it gains the value of an ethnic place. The essay *Свадебные звычаи у Лемковъ* (*The wedding customs of Lemkos*) is an excellent example. Already at the beginning, the author accuses himself of being tacky because of documenting and publishing such poor quality materials, as the above mentioned wedding customs of the Lemkos.

²⁹ Homi Bhabha, op. cit, s. 112.

³⁰ Dariusz Skurczewski, 'Hybrydy w polsko-ukraińskim tyglu', in Idem, *Teoria – literatura – dyskurs. Pejzaż postkolonialny*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo KUL, 2013, pp. 247-287, tu: p. 267.

Persuaded by a friend, he decides to publish them after all, even though he realizes that they lack the dramatic quality of the weddings by the Bug river, the poetic atmosphere, cherished by „the daughters of Ukraine”, that not only does the Lemko folk genius despise the rules of poetics, but it is forced to borrow rhythm and expressions from the neighbouring Slovak people, and that the Beskid speech sounds ugly and unpleasant because of the accent as well as incorrect grammatical structure.

The author falls in with dominant, derogatory opinions which consistently view the Lemko space as worse:

I also know that, because of the above mentioned flaws, reading „The wedding customs of Lemkos” will be extremely difficult, but I have already prepared myself to face all possible criticism and signs of discontent with stolid indifference³¹.

It is a perfect illustration of the „against”. Against poor quality I still introduce my subjectivity into the very discourse which attempts to exclude it as inferior. Khiliak can be considered as a master of this game of mimicry, simulation, and hence, the shifting of meanings. The goal is to question the authority which is seemingly acknowledged, but the act of fissural ironizing frees the subordinate from its power, and hence, opens the possibility to become independently or to become „against”.

The Lemko world from Khiliak’s work is a world of humiliation paradox, which has a value of elevation. It is its weakness and its power. One cannot question, negate or enslave a world which adjusts to these positions itself, that is, becomes hybrid (ambivalent/self-contradicting) and thereby free of its own will. A quote, this time from the number one position from the canon of Lemko classics - *Gallows hill* (*Шыбеничний Верхъ*³²). In an introduction, the author/narrator talks with the reader (a member of the Galician-Russian intelligentsia, characterized by a „higher taste”, situated somewhere in the „Podolian marshes”) and falls in with his taste and evaluation:

“You, dear reader, have surely not been to the Beskid land. It does not surprise me, because if this corner of the Rusyn land was exceptional for its outstanding natural beauty and remarkable environmental peculiarities, it would certainly not hide from the leer of a gloomy Englishman – and you, while reading a panegyric in a foreign journal, would not resist to pay homage to the nature-embellished Rusyn land, along with other foreigners. Unfortunately, it is not so.

Poor Lemkovyna cannot offer anything appealing that could lure a tourist. The area is trivial, with mountains and forests, forests and mountains everywhere, all looking alike. And the villages, situated in between, are indistinguishable. The same cottages everywhere scattered along the stream, small, wooden Orthodox churches with three domes, flat soil, thin oat, poor looking potatoes, sparse

³¹ Лемко Семко, ‘Свадебный звычай у Лемковъ’, s. 5.

³² Геронимъ Анонимъ (Владиір Хилиакъ), ‘Шыбеничний Верхъ’, in idem, *Повѣсти и рассказы*. vol. I, Львовъ, Ставропигійській Институтъ, 1882.

meadows... You can understand dear reader, that it is awfully boring to travel such a land alone and I'd be happy to have a companion. Therefore, please don't hold it against me, my most esteemed reader, if I humbly invite you to accompany me on this journey"³³.

Once more, against all said, or repeated after the dominant discourse, the author/narrator draws this discourse (thinking with a right to be voiced) into the world which is undoubtedly his, and which, after such introduction – causing (self) mediocrity and (self) degradation – can face any „haughtiness” without any consequences and without causing concerns about forcible destruction. Thus, the abolished authority frees the space from the usurpation, domination of the outer center.

Other textual strategies of becoming against, are used by Petro Polanski, especially in his *Carpathian short stories* (*Карпатські Новели*³⁴). His short stories can be considered an exemplary fulfillment of the postcolonial demand to abolish the colonizer's dominance, which should avoid ostentatious slogans, use simple categories, explanatory myths and explicit historical narrations³⁵. Translated into a few Western European languages, Polanski's *Short stories* describe the Carpathian cultural space as embedded in a peculiar ahistoricism, timelessness, without the use of ethnic, ethnographic, national terms. Such an approach makes it impossible to question this unclassified space. The only spatially-cultural term used is the term „Carpathian” which also means native to the author:

„By handing over to the reader these short stories depicting the life of the Carpathian nation, I, who was born in the Carpathians, must stress one phenomenon, which has always remained desirable, namely the fact that this nation has preserved up until now a charm of its still intact typical distinctiveness, unlike the nationalist typicality which is disappearing among other nations, while still taking the nation-related thread, or any of its layers, as the most significant basis for the short-story writing. To this nation, I dedicate the novellas and novelettes comprised consecutively within these two volumes”³⁶.

Ivan Franko, in his attempt to question the voice which expresses the community self in a non- classificatory way, has written the following about Polansky

„His ignorance in regard to the Carpathians, their towns and inhabitants is phenomenal, as he hilariously blends Lemko, Hugarian and Romanian elements together, while depicting e.g a Hutsul village”³⁷.

³³ Ibidem, p. 1.

³⁴ Петро Полянській, *Карпатські Новели*, vol. I-II, Leipzig, Wolfgang Gerhard, 1988.

³⁵ Марко Павлишин, ‘Що перетворюється у «Рекреація» Юрія Андруховича’, *Сучасність*, nr 12 (1993), p. 115-128 (in particular 116-117).

³⁶ *Предисловіє* in Петро Полянській, *Карпатські Новели*, vol. I, introductory page, not numbered.

³⁷ Іван Франко, *Нарис історії українсько-руської літератури до 1890 р.*, Львів, Накладом Українсько-Руської Видавничої Спілки, 1910, p. 312.

Paradoxically, this allegation refers to the fact that the novellas lack elements which make such questioning possible.

4. New maps?

To sum up, I would like to ask whether the Lemko narration, noticeable in literary discourse, can be considered to be „the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present?”

I think that, in regard to this fundamental issue, the hybridity thesis can be played out well. The Lemko discourse which is inherently hybrid, has not been/is not a silence or a lack of representation. It has had its representative continuity since the mid-XIXth century up until now. Nevertheless, it was/is inaudible to a large extent. This hybridity, escaping the power of the dominant voices, at the same time evoked the inability to hear what has not been qualified properly. It takes sensitive ears to capture sounds which are located beyond the acknowledged register of meanings, ears tuned to polyphony. The meeting of these ears with the Lemko „against” may result in „drawing new maps”, not geopolitical, but the geopoetic ones of course.