

Contents

Introduction	9
<i>Alois Woldan</i> Polyphony in Galicia: Voices, Perspectives and Contexts	15
I. Narrated Spaces	
<i>Jerzy Jarzębski</i> The Map of Galicia	29
<i>Shoshana Ronen</i> A Decline of a Town: Buczacz in <i>A Guest for the Night</i> by S.Y. Agnon	40
<i>Olga Derkachova</i> The Topos of the City in Texts about Ivano-Frankivsk (on the Basis of Anthologies <i>Літературний StanislawIF</i> [<i>Literary StanislawIF</i>] and <i>Франківськ, місто янголів</i> [<i>Frankivsk, the City of Angels</i>])	55
<i>Hanna Gosk</i> Together but Separately in Galicia – Two Geo-political/poetic Narratives about Life in Galicia: The Case of Sambor and the Vicinity in the Writings by Andrzej Kuśniewicz and Artur Sandauer	63
<i>Andrzej Zieniewicz</i> The Already-non-existence as a Category of Autobiographical Memory: Galician Places of Timelessness in the Prose of Bruno Schulz, Artur Sandauer, and Julian Strykowski	81
<i>Paulina Urbańska</i> A Czech Look at Galicia (Jaroslav Hašek's Small Proses)	92
<i>Tomasz Wójcik</i> The Twilight of Galicia: Georg Trakl, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Polish Poets	100

II. Negotiations of Identities

Danuta Sosnowska

Narration made Concrete: Overcoming Alienation of Belonging
to Intelligentsia in the Case of Mychajlo Zubrycki 117

Marianna Barchuk

Halychanizmy in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century: a Cultural View 126

Helena Duć-Fajfer

Allocating identity – versus, against, above, in spite of:
The Lemko Becoming in Galicia 137

Lajos Pálfalvi

The “Hungarian Singer” on the Carpathian Hasidim. 157

Elvira Grözinger

Voices of Galicia: Yiddish Folk Songs as Documents
of the Annihilated Jewish Culture. 166

Krzysztof Krasuski

Odyssey from Galicia to Galilee. 188

Laura Quercioli-Mincer

In the Prisons of Lviv: Aleksander Morgenbesser and Julian Strykowski 197

Maria Antosik-Piela

The Galician Triangle in Polish Oil Novel. 207

Stanisław Obirek

The Gift of Wings, or on Stanisław Vincenz’s Longing
for the Sunken Atlantis 217

Andrzej Stanisław Kowalczyk

Vinzenz of Lviv 229

Lilia Parylak

Hutsul Dialectal Lexemes as Indicators of Carpathian Highlanders
Identity in the Novel by Stanisław Vincenz *Na wysokiej poloninie/*
Ha високій полонині [On the High Uplands] 238

III. Concepts of Galicia: Myths and their Deconstructions

Noémi Kertész

- Encyclopaedia, Baedeker or a Last Monument? The Polish Dimension
of Galicia in the *Kronprinzenwerk* 253

Natalia Tkachyk

- The Myth of Galicia in the Works of Yuri Andrukhovych 273

Olha Voznyuk

- The Creation of Galician Identity at the Beginning
of the Nineteenth Century 286

Alina Molisak

- Bloody Galicia: Pogroms in the Early Twentieth Century (An-ski) 299

Małgorzata Domagalska

- Diabolical Instigation: Galician Hell of Józef Rogosz 312

Jagoda Wierzejska

- “Idealized Land of Harmony and Happiness”? Remarks on the Polish
discourse on Galicia 323

Mykoła Riabchuk

- Reinventing Galicia: From Imperial Imagination
to Post-imperial Mythmaking 345

- Index 361

Introduction

The area called Galicia that existed between 1772 and 1918 as a geopolitical entity was associated with the dominance of the Habsburg Empire, which, with Russia and Prussia/Germany, was one of the main powers in Central Europe. In the interwar period (i.e., after its actual erasure from the map of Europe) it still constituted one of the most multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-faith territories. After World War II, and precisely after the Holocaust of Galician Jews, after the division of the former province between Poland and the Soviet Ukraine, and the resettlement of the population, the last residua of Galicianness and of the world to which they belonged have disappeared from the face of the earth. Today, the area of Galicia now divided between Poland and Ukraine and despite its absence for nearly a century still arouses interest

Galicia became the subject of many valuable studies, not only among Polish scholars. Most of this research, however, manifested an approach that involved the reconstruction of the subject, the theme, or – particularly – the myth of Galicia in literature and culture. In the meantime, the horizon of studies on the former Habsburg province that have been undertaken in the context of the publication *Galician Polyphony: Places and Voices* is defined by such research perspectives as memorological, post-dependence, and above all – geopoetrological studies. The application of these methodologies to Galician subject matter led to an approach centered around poetological and political aspects of the representation of space, the issues of negotiating individual and collective identity in the space of coexistence and struggle of different cultures, as well as the various ideological conceptualizations of Galicia, subject to critical reflection in the presented texts.

Specific issues that are considered in this publication are:

- a) The category of collective and cultural memory, and geopoetry in relation to the functioning of Galicia in the literatures of the different languages of the region;
- b) Issues related to the relationship of places and language/languages and their correlation with individual and collective identity in Galicia;

- c) Question: *who is listening to whom?*, referring to what varieties of identity and linguistic diversity can be found in the reading of texts devoted to the existence of the Central European Galicia?;
- d) Question: *who does not listen to whom/who does not hear whom?*, related the way the “map” of the missing narratives looks, who imposes the dominant narrative in Galicia?;
- e) Scientific discourse dedicated to Galicia: its functioning in the culture of different countries of the region, its openness or explicit/implicit closeness to the narrative of the Other.

The book is divided into three parts. The first one, called “Narrated Spaces,” refers to the various ways of representation of the Galician territory from three different perspectives: the residents, the visitors, and those who left Galicia but decided to return to it.

Jerzy Jarzębski, looking at the map of Galicia, focused his attention on the ideological dimension of the visual aspects and the different flavors of cartographic language constituting the space. He pointed to the peculiar “seasonality” of the region’s existence, contributed to with the changing of names, associated with the instability of the political system. Shoshana Ronen analysed the novel *A Guest for the Night. A Novel by Shmuel Yosef Agnon*, an Israeli Nobel Prize winner, born in Buchach. In Ronen’s view, the record of the fall of the city becomes a way to express the aporeticity of returning to Galicia. The next three articles are related to specific points in the Galician urban sphere. Olga Derkachova, based on the example of two literary anthologies *Літературний StanislawIФ [Literary Stanislawiv]* and *Франківськ, місто янголів [Frankivsk, the City of Angels]*, described a specific area of the city of (at least) double Polish-Ukrainian identity. Hanna Gosk, analyzing the literary narratives of Andrzej Kuśniewicz and Artur Sandauer, drew attention to the everyday functioning of common memory, often involuntary, about Sambir; and Andrzej Zieniewicz considered Galicia as a specifically understood no-place, referring, in particular, to the Jewish areas (Drohobych, Stryi, Sambir, Zamość) and their Polish-language representations. Paulina Urbańska studied the observations of Jaroslav Hašek resulting from a trip to Galicia and gathered in the volume *O Podhalu, Galicji i... Piłsudskim. Szkice nieznane [About Podhale, Galicia and... Piłsudski: Unknown Sketches]*, focusing on the Czech perception of the spatial and social dimension of the region. Tomasz Wójcik analyzed poetic texts; he pointed to the decline of Galicia, as seen by Georg Trakl, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Tadeusz Różewicz. At the same time he reconstructed Galician episodes in their biographies (mutually entangled) and the Polish dialogue with their experiences, especially pointing to the phantasm of disappearing Galicia.

The second part of *Galician Polyphony* is a multi-layered story about the attempts to negotiate individual and collective identity in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious environment of the former Habsburg territories. Danuta Sosnowska, discussing the activities of Mykhailo Zubrytsky, described the problem of “the lost Ukrainian elite” and noted how hard the process of Polonization and Russification affected the mutual perceptions of the residents of this common space. In opposition to the elitist Ivan Franko, Zubrytsky proposed the expansion of the group of “those who speak,” so that the group of “those who can hear” their own and other people’s national narrative also expands. Marianna Barczuk, in turn, looking from the linguistic-cultural perspective, discussed Gallicisms functioning in the mid-nineteenth century, in the era of the formation of the literary Ukrainian language, which was to be the foundation of the modern national identity of Ukrainians.

Helen Duć-Fajfer devoted her article to the projects of Lemkos’ ethnic homeland and their identification, which formed within the framework of negotiations with strong external discourses – Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian. Lemkos were forced to specify and place their identity categories in the presence of, and at the same time against, over, contrary to the dominant voices; using strategies based on parody and irony, typical of subordinated discourses, such as “abrogation,” “appropriation,” and “hybridization.”

The history of one of the key religious movements in Galicia – Hasidism – in the Hungarian variation was presented by Lajos Pálfavi. In his analysis, the Great Hungarian Plain, which was described by, among others, Dezső Schön, belonging to the great generation of Hungarian Jewish literature, was the site of the construction of new sources of identity and – at the same time – a space of apostasy. Elvira Gröezinger analyzed several phenomena of the Yiddish folklore from Galicia which became a respectable part of Jewish culture before the Jewish life and culture in Eastern Europe was ultimately annihilated in the Shoah. According to Gröezinger, the Yiddish folksongs from Galicia – some of which are discussed in the article – have survived as documents of this uniquely prolific era and area. Krzysztof Krasuski, based on the example of a memoir text by Anna Federbusch-Ophir *Od Galicji do Galilei* [*From Galicia to Galilee*], showed a peculiar idealization of the narrative of childhood and youth years in the province, constructed after the Holocaust.

Laura Quercioli-Mincer took the (para)autobiographical narratives of two authors: Alexander Morgenbesser and Julian Strykowski. A comparative analysis of representations of the prison reality in Lviv brought out the differences in the perception of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity, as well as the behavior of inmates and prison staff in the analyzed prose.

Maria Antosik-Piela drew attention to the oil novel, a current of industrial prose established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, closely related

to the contemporary economic realities of Galicia. She presented the environment of oilmen, an industrial and social experiment of transforming “mud into gold,” and also took under consideration the hypothesis according to which both the oil fields themselves and the discourse devoted to them had the potential to generate a “third space” common for the multi-ethnic community of the region.

This part of the book is closed by three articles devoted to the presence of Stanislaw Vincenz in the Galician area, his work, and its various readings. Stanislaw Obirek pointed to the *Na wysokiej połoninie* [*On the High Uplands*] author’s understanding of the category of national identity as a cultural community. Andrzej Stanisław Kowalczyk decided to analyze the attitude of Vincenz, presented consistently by the artist, even during the Polish-Ukrainian conflict, consisting in the search for what was common and discarding contrasts. A separate proposal for the construction of ethnic identity was presented by Lilia Parylak, who analyzed Hutsul words appearing in Vincenz’s work (word formative dialecticisms, ethnographicisms, idioms).

The third and final section is a polylogue of researchers observing different ideological conceptions of the region, especially the creations of the myth of Galicia, typologically related the *Austria Felix* myth. Particular attention of the authors of the articles that have been gathered here was focused on the deconstruction of stereotypical forms of presentation of the region and its inhabitants uncritically copied in the discourse of Galicia.

Noémi Kertész presented the structure of the image of the province, which found its place in the popular, multi-volume series, initiated by the Archduke Rudolf, *Die Österreichisch-ungarische Monarchien in Wort und Bild* [*The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Word and Picture*]. Olha Voznyuk also reached for the nineteenth century sources, this time both Ukrainian and Polish. On their basis, the researcher has presented the beginnings of formation of the specific construct of “Galician identity,” so capacious that it could combine contradictory elements, such as Polish and Ukrainian identification. Natalia Tkaczyk, in turn, analyzed the work of Yurii Andruchowycz, pointing to the specifically re-created myth of Galicia, which constitutes the basis for one of the varieties of contemporary Ukrainian mentality.

Three articles that summarize this part of the book are examples of critical analysis of mythologizing and idealizing forms of presentation of the province. The article by Alina Molisak was devoted to the records related to pogroms in Galicia. The author primarily analyzed reportage texts that were written between 1914–1918, by the hand of one of the most prominent Yiddish writers – An-sky *Der Judiszer hurbn fun Pojlen, Galicje un Bukowina* [*The Enemy at His Pleasure: A Journey Through the Jewish Pale of Settlement During World War I*] and the documents presented to the Polish authorities by the press office of the Zionist

organization *Materjały w sprawie żydowskiej w Polsce* [*Materials on the Jewish Issue in Poland*]. Małgorzata Domagalska took up the work of Józef Rogosz, a late nineteenth and early twentieth century writer. She proved that although Rogosz hears the Galician polyphony, he evaluates it negatively. In his works he clearly indicates that the “poly” version should change into “mono,” and one of the languages should be eliminated from the Galician space. Its users should go away with it. At that time it was an unreal vision, hence at least in the dimension of literary fiction, Rogosz excludes the Jews speaking “the devil’s tongue” from the human world. Jagoda Wierzejska studied different images of “idealistic land of harmony and happiness,” which are present in the historical discourse of Galicia proposed by some researchers. The author accurately pointed to the consolidation and continuation of set patterns of the province description and interpretation of the phenomena characteristic for it at the level of meta-language.

The deliberations of two prominent experts on Galician issues – Alois Woldan and Mykola Ryabchuk – constitute a frame for all those texts. The initial article of the Austrian researcher presents a historical and phantasmal phenomenon, which Galicia was, as a kind of meta-text, in which – according to *Bakhtinian* categories – equality of voices was possible. Woldan paid particular attention not only to multilingualism but also to the polyphony present in the area of Galicia, which creates an opportunity for the analysis of cultural hybridity. The text by Mykola Ryabchuk, which closes the volume, poses a fundamental question about the productivity of the Galician myth and the cause of its – despite various revisions – long duration in Polish and Ukrainian culture in at least two dimensions: sacred and socio-political.

* * *

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*Alina Molisak
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