РІЧНИК РУСКОЙ БУРСЫ
2025, P. 21, c. 63–95
https://doi.org/10.12797/RRB.21.2025.21.02

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Reading Carpatho-Rusyn Literature: Aleksander Dukhnovych as a Romantic Writer[1]

Резуме

Чытатаи карпаторусиньску літературу. Александер Духнович як романтычный творец

Кєд Елейн Русинко выдала свою книжку *Straddling Borders: Literature and Identity in Subcarpathian Rus'* (2003), описала вельо задач, якы карпаторусиньска література ставлят пред теоретыками літературы. Карпаторусиньска література не была навчана в пілнічноамериканьскых высшых школах, не была узнавана през головны славістычны часописы, возникала в пару языках, не мала власного літературного языка, не зродила «ниякых вызначных ґеніів», была постерігана як «незграбный славяньскій пасерб», а самы Карпаторусине кус ся єй ганьбили. Теоретыкы оцінняли єй як «недостаточну», «неполну», «наслідуючу», «хыбну», «ідіосинкратычну» і «наівну» – была «простором світовой літературы», але не єй частю. В наступных роках вельо ся єднак змінило. Досліджыня над карпаторусиньском літературом не лем наново оцінили естетычны смакы творців, але тіж розвинули ріжного рода методологічны традиції, жебы тото осягнути. Наступный етап розвитя досліджынь над карпаторусиньском літературом буде єднак

[1] I would like to thank the participants of the 2022 Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center Summer Workshop and 2023–2025 Studium Carpatho-Ruthenorum, especially Johna Cook, Izzy Fernando, Stefanie Flom, Tomash Kalynych, Ali Karakaya, Paul Robert Magocsi, Nathan Marks, Brian McHugh, Anna Maślana, Gavin Moulton, Valerii Padiak, Michal Pavlič, Alexandra Plummer, David Powelstock, Maria Silvestri, Michał Szymko, and Marta Watral.

вымагал од дослідників, жебы більшу вагу придали уважному чытаню [*close reading*] поєдных текстів; жебы схоснували компаратыстычны підходы [*comparative approaches*], штобы окрислили своєрідны приметы карпаторусиньского канону; як тіж жебы опанували новы теоретычны рамы [*theoretical frameworks*], што дозволят влучыти дискусиі о карпаторусиньскій літературі в ведены сучасні літературны дебаты.

Жебы зобразувати тот підхід, сеса статя адаптує єдну з семінарий автора посвяченых карпаторусиньскій літературі, опрацуваных в рамах Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center Summer Workshop (2022) в Торонто (Канада) як тіж Studium Carpatho-Ruthenorum (2023–2025) в Пряшові (Словация). Тоты семінариі аналізуют карпаторусиньску літературу в світлі спільных філософічных рам, што вызначают періодизацию інчых європскых традиций – романтызму, реалізму, модернізму і постмодернізму – як тіж в контексті теоретычных підходів, хоснуючы котры західні дослідникы деконструували концепцийны ограничыня нашмарены през народово-патріотычну періодизацию, такых як світова література [*world literature*], менша література [*minor literature*] і транснародова література [*transnational literature*]. Перша з семінарий, омовлена в сесым тексті, викликливі аналізує выбраны ліричны і реліґійны творы а тіж оды Александра Духновича, порівнує іх з репрезентатывныма творами інчых трансатлянтычных романтызмів, як тіж досліджат творчіст Духновича, глядаючы рідной теориі і практыкы лектуры карпаторусиньской літературы.

Ключовы слова: літературна компаратистыка, гыбридніст, ліричный підмет, стара критыка, практыкы лектуры, романтызм

Abstrakt

Czytanie literatury karpackorusińskiej. Aleksander Duchnowicz jako pisarz romantyczny

Kiedy Elaine Rusinko opublikowała swoją książkę *Straddling Borders: Literature and Identity in Subcarpathian Rus'* (2003), opisała liczne wyzwania, jakie literatura karpackorusińska stawiała przed teoretykami literatury. Literatura karpackorusińska nie była nauczana w północnoamerykańskich szkołach wyższych, nie była uznawana przez czołowe czasopisma slawistyczne, powstawała w kilku językach, ale nie posiadała własnego języka literackiego, nie wydała „żadnych uznanych geniuszy", była postrzegana jako „nieudaczny słowiański pasierb", a wśród samych Rusinów Karpackich budziła „zażenowanie". Teoretycy oceniali ją jako „niedostateczną", „niekompletną", „naśladowczą", „wadliwą", „idiosynkratyczną" i „naiwną" – była „terenem literatury światowej", ale nie jej częścią. W kolejnych latach wiele się jednak zmieniło. Badania nad literaturą karpackorusińską nie tylko dokonały

ponownej oceny odczuć estetycznych twórców, lecz także rozwinęły różnorodne tradycje metodologiczne, aby to umożliwić. Następny etap rozwoju badań nad literaturą karpackorusińską będzie jednak wymagał od badaczy położenia nacisku na uważne czytanie [*close reading*] poszczególnych tekstów, zastosowania podejść porównawczych [*comparative approaches*] w celu określenia swoistych cech kanonu karpackorusińskiego oraz biegłości w nowych ramach teoretycznych [*theoretical frameworks*], które pozwolą włączyć dyskusje o literaturze karpackorusińskiej w nurt współczesnych debat literaturoznawczych.

Aby zilustrować to podejście, niniejszy artykuł oparty został na jednym z seminariów autora poświęconych literaturze karpackorusińskiej, opracowanym w ramach Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center Summer Workshop (2022) w Toronto (Kanada) oraz Studium Carpatho-Ruthenorum (2023–2025) w Preszowie (Słowacja). Seminaria te analizują literaturę karpackorusińską w świetle wspólnych ram filozoficznych, które wyznaczają periodyzację innych tradycji europejskich – romantyzmu, realizmu, modernizmu i postmodernizmu – oraz w kontekście podejść teoretycznych, za pomocą których zachodni badacze dekonstruowali ograniczenia koncepcyjne narzucone przez periodyzację narodowo-patriotyczną, takich jak literatura światowa [*world literature*], literatura mniejsza [*minor literature*] i literatura transnarodowa [*transnational literature*]. Pierwsze z tych seminariów, omówione w niniejszym tekście, dokonuje wnikliwej lektury wybranych utworów lirycznych, religijnych i ód Aleksandra Duchnowicza, porównuje je z reprezentatywnymi dziełami innych romantyzmów transatlantyckich oraz bada twórczość Duchnowicza w poszukiwaniu rodzimej teorii i praktyki lektury literatury karpackorusińskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: komparatystyka literacka, hybrydyczność, podmiot liryczny, stara krytyka, praktyki lektury, romantyzm

Keywords: comparative literature, hybridity, lyric subject, old criticism, practices of reading, romanticism

I. The New Carpatho-Rusyn Literary Studies: An Introduction

When Elaine Rusinko published her *Straddling Borders: Literature and Identity in Subcarpathian Rus'* (2003), she described the many challenges that Carpatho-Rusyn literature posed to literary theorists. Carpatho-Rusyn literature was not taught in North American graduate schools, not recognized by the major journals in Slavic studies, written in several languages, lacked

its own literary language, produced "no recognized geniuses," viewed as "an ungainly Slavic stepchild," regarded among Carpatho-Rusyns themselves with "embarrassment," seen by theorists as "deficient," "incomplete," "imitative," "faulty," "idiosyncratic," and "naïve," and positioned on the "terrain of world literature" without fully belonging to it (Rusinko 2003a, 3–21).

In the two decades that have followed, much has changed. Carpatho-Rusyn literary studies has not only expanded its canon of texts and writers, but has also developed divergent methodological traditions to do so. There is a *bibliographic* or *biographical tradition* of scholarship that interprets literary production as an expression of the identity, influences, and life experience of individual authors, most notably embodied by the work of Liubytsia Babota (Бабота 1994), Bogdan Horbal (2010), and Valerii Padiak (Падяк 2010, 2015, 2018). The *ethnonational* or *historical tradition* of literary scholarship is represented in the work of Paul Robert Magocsi ([1974] 1999, 1976, 2015, 2023; Magocsi, Pop 2002), who searches for literary expressions of the national identity of the Carpatho-Rusyn people. Helena Duć-Fajfer's work can be characterized as representative of a *structuralist tradition*, for she approaches Lemko literature as an enclosed system that manifests itself in specific genres and modes of writing (Duć-Fajfer 2001, 2023). An *ethnographic tradition* can be found in the work of Patricia A. Krafcik, who engages with literature as a repository of Carpatho-Rusyn beliefs, customs, and rites (Hiryak 2015; Krafcik 2024). Rusinko notably developed a *postcolonial* and *postmodernist tradition* that treats literature as a space to explore in-between, multiple, hybrid identities (Rusinko 1996, 1999, 2003a, 2011). Yet, a sustained tradition of *close reading* in Carpatho-Rusyn studies has not yet emerged, which means that the analysis of the canon—however disjointed, fragmented, and incomplete it may be—not only lacks a discussion of aesthetics or poetics but also has not developed frameworks to compare it to the movements of other regional or global traditions, let alone use critical or cultural theories to illuminate issues within its corpus.

These lacunae in Carpatho-Rusyn literary studies have a number of unfortunate effects. Firstly, there is still little understanding of what makes Carpatho-Rusyn writing beautiful, inspiring, or meaningful, which means that these texts' aesthetic, social, or philosophical impact remains largely ignored. Secondly, most scholarship has not placed Carpatho-Rusyn literature into meaningful dialogue with other literatures, which means that we do not yet have a clear sense of how Carpatho-Rusyn writers are part of or diverge from

the prominent movements of the modern age: classicism, romanticism, realism, modernism, and postmodernism. Even though the theory boom of the 20th century is long behind us, only a small number of works of scholarship show any evidence of a theory of literature—whether formalism, New Criticism, semiotics, structuralism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, narratology, post-structuralism, deconstruction, reader-response theory, reception theory, feminist theory, cultural studies, or ecocriticism. Of course, Carpatho-Rusyn literary studies should not merely ape the methods of other critical traditions: surely the reading and analysis of a Central European minor literature will call for its own approaches calibrated to the cultural needs of Carpathian Rus'. On the other hand, Carpatho-Rusyn studies has made great strides in the last three decades—thanks in no small part to the pioneering work of the first generation of scholars to emerge in post-Communist Europe. Therefore, it is now time for the discipline to continue to harmonize its interpretive tools with Western literary studies and chart a way forward for the generation of scholars whose training is taking place entirely in a free Europe and is no longer constrained by Cold War methodologies.

For these reasons, the new Carpatho-Rusyn literary studies should aspire to be three things: *interpretive*, *comparative*, and *theoretical*. Both West and East European literary studies have long established as a core principle the imperative of close reading, hermeneutics, and interpretive criticism, that is, determining the *meaning* of a text based on its intrinsic features. With origins in German hermeneutics, French *explication de texte*, Russian formalism, Czech structuralism, and British or American New Criticism, *interpretive* criticism does not merely describe a text but makes an argument about its significance, often beyond the intention of the author, or what Friedrich Schleiermacher called understanding "the utterance at first just as well and then better than its author" (Schleiermacher [1838] 1998, 23). At the same time, it has long been necessary for Carpatho-Rusyn literary studies to adopt the methods of comparative literature, for a *comparative* analysis of the canon will allow scholars to better understand what makes Carpatho-Rusyn writers distinctive. Emerging out of the fields of comparative anatomy and comparative philology, comparative literature for over a century has recognized that authors do not write in isolation: they read widely, beyond and across linguistic, spatial, and temporal borders. Therefore, scholars must not only track down the individuals and works that influenced a text, but also place the text within global comparative frameworks. By doing so, we hopefully will discover the ways

that Carpatho-Rusyn texts speak to perhaps unexpected peoples and traditions beyond the Carpathians. Also, in a field as small as Carpatho-Rusyn literary studies is, we must aspire to better read, respond to, polemicize with, and transform the work of scholars active in the field: often only a fleeting bibliographic reference to the existence of a work without any evidence that the author has read or thought about its arguments passes for a literature review. Lastly, we must be conscious of how we read both closely and distantly, which means that the new Carpatho-Rusyn literary studies should strive to engage and position its arguments using the theoretical debates that drive cultural and literary studies as a discipline. In many ways, this puts Carpatho-Rusyn scholars in a bind, torn between attending to the needs of Carpatho-Rusyn communities, who largely will not have much use for the intellectual frameworks of transatlantic academia, and the expectations of comparative literature, which calls upon the practitioners of minor literatures to be increasingly fluent in the state of the discipline and debates about its futures (Heise 2017). Yet, as Carpatho-Rusyn studies becomes an ever more global phenomenon, we must find a balance between mountain villages and the global village in the digital age (Kupensky 2024a, 213–219). Plus, it is not as if we do not already have a model for this type of scholar: Paul Robert Magocsi has long harmonized being a historian of an international caliber and a man of the people (Kupensky 2025, ix).

In many ways, there is nothing new about the new Carpatho-Rusyn literary studies. In some ways, it is also an exercise in the "old criticism," a mode of reading that George Steiner argues comes from a "debt of love" rooted in the passionate fascination with biography, history, humanism, philosophy, politics, and theology (Steiner [1959] 1996, 1–6). In responding to the professionalization of criticism in the 1950s, Steiner notes that modern literary scholarship tends "to bury" literature beneath its needlessly scientific methods (Steiner [1959] 1996, 4). Likewise, in the attempt to establish the parameters of a canon, many Carpatho-Rusyn literary scholars often kill the vitality of their source texts with a barrage of arcane bibliographic, biographic, linguistic, and historical tedium. Again, we have a model to emulate, for Rusinko's work for nearly three decades has been exemplary for its closeness to the text, nuanced knowledge of multiple traditions, and theoretical sophistication: to move forward, the second wave of Carpatho-Rusyn literary studies should turn to her for guidance on how to be interpretive, comparative, and theoretical in analytical, joyful, precise prose (Rusinko 2003a, 2003b, 2009, 2011). Duć-Fajfer's

recent work is also noteworthy for its creative, fearless incorporation of theories from *autobiography*, *cultural studies*, *memory studies*, and *place studies* (Дуць-Файфер 2017a, 2017b, 2020, 2021). In fact, this journal, *Ruska Bursa Annual* (*Річник Рускої Бурсы*), has begun to publish Lemko translations of foundational texts in critical and cultural theory—such as excerpts from Yi-Fu Tuan's *Space and Place* (Туан [1977] 2021) and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *What is a Minor Literature?* (Делез, Ґуатарі [1975] 2019)—which not only domesticates leading international scholarship in Carpathian Rus' but, in doing so, transforms Lemko Rusyn into a language of critical theory in the first place.

Encouragingly, the next generation is already starting to take steps towards the production of modern literary scholarship. Nicholas Kyle Kupensky's work on the Carpatho-Rusyn American writer Emil Kubek draws on *cultural studies*, *digital and public humanities*, *transnational studies*, and *working-class studies* (Kupensky 2015, 2016, 2022, 2024a, 2024b). Focusing on contemporary literature in Slovakia, Michal Pavlič uses *ecocriticism* to investigate Daniela Kapraliova's representation of nature and analyzes Liudmila Shandalova's *prayer poetry* as a literary genre (Павліч 2019a, 2019b, 2021). Adriana Amir focuses on relations between Carpatho-Rusyns and Jews in the work of Aleksander Dukhnovych, Aleksander Pavlovych, Anatolii Kralyts'kŷi, and Mykhailo Shmaida (Amir 2022a, 2022b, 2024; Амір 2023). Iaroslav Kovalchuk explores how the Soviet literary theorist Petro Lintur and writer Petro Sova developed *hybrid* identities in postwar Transcarpathia that negotiated between Russophilism and Ukrainophilism (Kovalchuk 2021). Marta Watral theorizes paradigms of awakening using theories of *performance* and *self-fashioning* among canonical Carpatho-Rusyn writers, Aleksander Dukhnovych, Vladymir Khŷliak, and Petro Trokhanovskii (Watral 2023). Dominika Novotná is developing a theory of *transculturalism* to illuminate Carpatho-Rusyn immigrant literature (Новотна 2023, 2024). And Tomash Kalynych discusses the Lemko-American writer Dymytrii Vyslotskii's politics through the prism of *national indifference* (Kalynych 2024).

As another step in this direction, this article adapts the approach I used in my seminars at the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center Summer Workshop (2022) and Studium Carpatho-Ruthenorum (2023–2025), which conceptualize Carpatho-Rusyn literature using the common philosophical frameworks that periodize other European traditions—*romanticism*, *realism*, *modernism*, *postmodernism*—and theoretical categories that test the limits of these broad

narratives: *world*, *minor*, and *transnational literature*. In doing so, I aimed to sketch out the parameters of new readings of the canon and, at the same time, interrogate the effectiveness of these approaches for conceptualizing what makes Carpatho-Rusyn literature unique in the first place. My seminars were designed to answer for myself the type of questions—however outmoded they may be—that I asked when I first began to read Carpatho-Rusyn literature. Who is the Carpatho-Rusyn Shakespeare? Or Pushkin? Or Whitman? Is there a great Carpatho-Rusyn novel? Is there a Carpatho-Rusyn *écriture féminine*? Are there modernists—or even postmodernists? Are these appropriate questions, or am I demanding in vain of the Carpathians to "show me the Zulu Tolstoy," an imperative the writer Saul Bellow used to raise similar questions about non-Western classics (Foster 2001)? By reading closely, comparatively, and theoretically, I strove to explore with the participants what makes the Carpatho-Rusyn tradition special, encourage emerging scholars of Carpatho-Rusyn literature to think about texts beyond the Carpathians, and give scholars of world literatures some insight into how they might be able to incorporate the Carpatho-Rusyn literary experience into their own fields. The following text adapts and expands the first summer seminar on the features of Carpatho-Rusyn Romanticism. To do so, I chose texts that I felt were aesthetically successful, distinctive of the canon, representative of the author's oeuvre, and perhaps surprising to an educated but non-specialist reader. By discussing Carpatho-Rusyn literature in a dialogic, seminar-style format—that is, not through monologic lectures—I sought to transfer the right to interpret from the professor's podium to the rising generation empowered to read closely, comparatively, and theoretically, an approach that I hope will lay the foundations for a new Carpatho-Rusyn literary studies.

II. Romanticism and the Carpatho-Rusyns

While there is 18th- and early 19th-century writing in Carpathian Rus', we can speak of Carpatho-Rusyn literature as a nationally conscious phenomenon of an aesthetic value only from the mid-19th century with the emergence of the first Carpatho-Rusyn national awakening (1848–1867).[2] Undoubtedly its

[2] If the first Carpatho-Rusyn Renaissance was belated compared with the German, British, French, Polish, Czech, or Russian Romanticism, it is contemporaneous with other Central European Romantic traditions (Hungarian, Slovak, Ukrainian) and the so-called American Renaissance

most important figure is Aleksander Dukhnovych, whose poetry, prose, and drama helped establish the future trajectory of Carpatho-Rusyn writing. That Dukhnovych is known as the Carpatho-Rusyn national awakener associates him with Romanticism, the broad artistic movement that treated literature as the expression of the author's inner world and a field for creativity and imagination. But is Aleksander Dukhnovych a Romantic? If so, in what sense? This was the research question and test case for my first seminar.

Romanticism first emerged in the late 18th century as a reaction against the aesthetic and philosophical rigidity of Classicism and the Enlightenment. Romantic writers tended to reject the idea that the mind, logic, and reason were sources of absolute knowledge or that truth was necessarily rational or universal. Instead, they turned to the body, emotions, and feelings, exploring the potentials of the irrational and spiritual. Quoting William Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams argues that, for English Romantics, poetry was viewed to be the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Abrams 1953, 21). Romantic writers often developed a cult of creativity, genius, and originality with a focus on the exploration of the—primarily male—lyrical subject. "I celebrate myself, and sing myself," Walt Whitman begins his *Song of Myself* (Whitman [1855] 2008, 1). Aleksandr Pushkin in "I Raised a Monument to Myself Not Made by Hands" (Пушкин [1836] 1948, 424) compares his verse to divine creation and makes it more powerful than earthly, imperial authorities: "With its head unconquered it has risen higher / Than the Alexandrine column." However, women writers, such as Dorothy Wordsworth, cultivated what Anne Mellor calls a "model of affiliation," which prioritizes connection with one's community rather than a male "model of individual achievement" (Mellor 1993, 166). In either case, Romanticism highly valued aesthetics and viewed beauty as a source of justice, knowledge, and truth. As John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1819) explains, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know" (Keats [1819] 1991, 283).

As a result, Romantic poets often experienced profound alienation from the city, crowd, society, or state, none of which could appreciate their aesthetic achievements nor aspired to their higher ideals. For this reason, Mikhail Lermontov's lyrical subject "goes out on the road alone" (Лермонтов [1841] 1989, 421), and loneliness, as David Powelstock argues, became one of the markers

(Matthiessen 1941). In the Lemko tradition, Helena Duć-Fajfer calls this the age of Lemko classics (Duć-Fajfer 2023). I have suggested the term "the Golden Age of Lemko literature" (Kupensky 2024c).

of Romantic individualism (Powelstock 2005, 3–26). To overcome their alienation, many search for—and fail to achieve—an intersubjective union with nature. This estrangement makes Romantic poets especially sensitive to other outsiders, whether economic or social (hermits, peasants, workers), ethnic or national (Circassians, Gypsies, Tatars, Ukrainians), or racial (African Americans, Native Americans), among others. By rejecting earthly, political authorities, Romantic writers often developed a revolutionary spirit, fought for liberty and freedom, and rebelled against injustice and oppression. The Romantic hero came to signify a deviant or outlaw who flouts political or social conventions and is at once egotistical, melancholic, and proud. For this reason, Percy Bysshe Shelley famously claimed that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world" (Shelley [1821] 2009, 676). Some Romantic writers even sacrificed their lives for their nations or causes and endured exile or imprisonment, suffered torture, faced execution, or died in battle, including Lord Byron, Victor Hugo, Adam Mickiewicz, Sándor Petőfi, Kondratii Ryleev, or Taras Shevchenko.

III. Dukhnovych as a Lyric Poet

How does Aleksander Dukhnovych fit into the tradition of transatlantic Romanticism? Born in 1803, Dukhnovych enrolled in 1824 in the Theological Seminary in Uzhhorod, where he began to write poetry—first in Hungarian and then in Rusyn. After being ordained a Greek Catholic priest, he was sent in 1833 for the next five years to the remote villages of Chmeľová and Beloveža, where he began to develop his talents as a lyric poet in Rusyn.

Among his earliest verses is the lyric "Solitude" (*Самотность*, 1834), written in Beloveža, which expresses the typical Romantic alienation from one's surroundings. In the village, Dukhnovych's lyrical subject is "without a friend, and without his sweet one," which causes him to "walk alone through the fields" with "a weary soul." Even though flowers are blooming, he does not take pleasure in the verdant fields of the Carpathians: "I pick a flower, / And in my thoughts I say, / For whom will I weave a garland? / To whom will I give it?" In his isolation, the lyrical subject comes to realize that his first desire is for community and connection: "Now I plainly see it: / Without a friend there's no joy, / I find no rest, no peace, / All is bitter, all a sin and void." And the lyric concludes with what we perhaps could call Dukhnovych's "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," for the subject declares: "I howl like a wretched

prisoner, / I sob over my solitude, / I weep, I cry, I curse / the freedom that has abandoned me" (Духнович 1968, 181). What is important to register about Dukhnovych's early verse is the deep estrangement he feels from the Carpatho-Rusyn village itself: before Aleksander Dukhnovych the village priest became Aleksander Dukhnovych the national awakener, he cultivated a lyrical subject that was at odds with the culture and lifestyle of Carpatho-Rusyn rural spaces. Moreover, in doing so, he draws upon the poetic and rhetorical conventions of Romantic poetry, which allows him to compare himself to a "prisoner" (*пленник*) who "curses / the freedom that has abandoned" him (*проклинаю / убігшу свободность*), which evokes other canonical prisoners in Russian Romantic literature. In Aleksandr Pushkin's epic *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* (*Кавказский пленник*, 1822), a young Russian officer, disillusioned with state and society in the imperial capital, travels to the Caucasus Mountains in search of meaning but is captured by the Circassians, who imprison him in a remote mountain village; however, during his captivity, he falls in love with a Circassian girl, who helps him escape but, when he desires to return to the life that he abandoned, commits suicide rather than follow him into the alien world of the Russian Empire (Пушкин [1822] 1937).

Another of Dukhnovych's early verses—"A Song to My Beloved" (*Пѣснь к любезнѣй*, 1834)—is an investigation of love and desire. Dukhnovych's lyrical subject opens by addressing a young woman: "Your little gray eye, / My dear, is my bliss, / For when I see myself in it, / I desire only you, / And judge myself" (Духнович 1968, 182). In the first stanza, Dukhnovych expresses his admiration for the woman, but his attraction is surprisingly complex: he desires her only after he sees a reflection of himself in her eye. Here, the woman's body becomes a screen onto which Dukhnovych's subject discovers, explores, and projects his consciousness. As Jonathan Culler has argued, the core concern of the lyric, first enunciated by Hegel, is the "centrality of subjectivity coming to consciousness of itself through experience and reflection" (Culler 2015, 2). Dukhnovych's early lyrics illustrate this thesis well.

As Dukhnovych's subject explores the other, he continues to reveal the nature of his desires. He imagines that her body transforms into a chaste, prelapsarian garden that provides safety and satisfaction: "I find a gentle paradise in your depths, / Sweet honey upon your lips." Yet, the poet insists that his passion is spiritual, not physical: "You alone do I love from my heart." Recognizing that his self is now invested in his beloved's subjectivity, he begins to feel the boundaries between self and other disappear: "Through you, I lose myself, / And will

be lost." Indeed, the poet is aware that his love threatens the stability of his self, which may even lead to oblivion or death. Eros, as Freud describes, often transforms into Thanatos. Yet, when confronted with the absence of his beloved, the feeling of lack provokes the desire to master, possess, and then, surprisingly, to self-empty: "I wish to be with you always, / To love you until the grave. / To you, I give all my thoughts, / And my spirit upon your breast— / I will lay."

Here, we can detect the early contours of a lyrical subject in Carpatho-Rusyn literature, though perhaps not yet a Carpatho-Rusyn lyrical subject. Dukhnovych uses the lyric to express romantic—if not, in a coded manner, sexual—desire, while registering that his longing for the beloved is primarily an exploration of the self: to perceive it, scrutinize it, escape it, overcome it, evacuate it. Most importantly, the poem does not have any explicit references to Dukhnovych's identity as a priest, nationality as a Carpatho-Rusyn, or religion as Greek Catholic, which illustrates one of the functions of Dukhnovych's lyric in embryonic form: the expression of desire as a revelatory force that both constitutes the self and aspires to offer it as a gift, merge it with the other, or sacrifice it for something greater. While the lyric genre is not prominently represented in his later corpus, we nonetheless can trace the evolution and maturation of this lyrical subject across his poetic oeuvre as it searches for and posits an origin of the self.

IV. Dukhnovych as a Pastoral Poet

As his pastoral work in Chmeľová and Beloveža continued, Dukhnovych seems to have overcome his initial lyrical alienation from his surroundings and begun to take an interest in the cultural and material lives of the Carpatho-Rusyn peasantry. Even after he returned to the urban centers of Carpathian Rus'—first to Uzhhorod in 1838 and then to Prešov in 1843—he worked to ensure that the Carpatho-Rusyn villagers could learn how to read and write. To this end, he published *A Primer for Beginners* (*Книжиця читальная для начинающихъ*, 1847), a didactic text designed to improve literacy among the common people. At the conclusion of the *Primer*, he included a pastoral poem, "The Life of a Rusyn" (*Жизнь Русина*, 1847), which represents an entirely different approach to village life, for it offers an idealized portrait of a simple Carpatho-Rusyn living in the prelapsarian Eden of Carpathian Rus'. In doing so, Dukhnovych drew upon Pavel Šafárik and Ján Kollár's auto-ethnography

of the Slavs, which, as Rusinko has shown, characterized them by "piety, diligence, innocent merriness, love of their language, and tolerance towards other nations" (Rusinko 2003a, 125). At the same time, Dukhnovych engages the idyll or pastoral as a mode—a major concern of Romantic poetry.

"The Life of a Rusyn" begins by focusing on a "peaceful, God-fearing Rusyn," who lives in material "poverty" in the mountains; however, the abundance of his inner riches—"his pure blessed heart"—means that he does not covet what he does not have and is not envious of those who live in the "high palaces" (Духновичъ 1847, 98). He eats and drinks what nature gives him—"oats and barley," "water from the stream"—rather than the typical Austrian and Hungarian delicacies of "coffee and wine." Self-satisfied with his native land, he does not "travel by the seas" nor wear "fancy, ornamental clothes." Furthermore, since his labor is not alienated (Marx [1844] 1975, 322–334) and his desires do not need to be sublimated (Freud [1930] 1961, 30), he "doesn't like industry," "doesn't trade," and "only likes to work the land," which brings him meaning, pleasure, and sustenance: "the earth gives him bread, / The river gives him water, / He doesn't desire anything more" (Духновичъ 1847, 99). Likewise, his contentment with his station in life and place in creation also means that he is not a philosophical or political revolutionary: "He loves God, honors / the Emperor, and all things higher." For this reason, Dukhnovych ends the poem with a prayer for God to "watch over" and "have mercy" on the Rusyn peasant and ensure that he remains "pious," "honest," "healthy," and "strong"—qualities that allow him to live a life in harmony with the natural world (Духновичъ 1847, 101–103).

Although linguistically and metrically simplistic, "The Life of a Rusyn" draws upon the conventions of pastoral poetry, which has its origins in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (c. 700 BCE), Theocritus' *Idylls* (c. 270s BCE), or Virgil's *Eclogues* (44–38 BCE) but continued as a mode in the Romantic period, though often inverted or parodic in major literary traditions. As Renato Poggioli writes, "the psychological root of the pastoral is a double longing after innocence and happiness," which typically takes place during a "retreat from the world" (Poggioli 1975, 1). However, Dukhnovych's pastoral functions differently. Less of a retreat from the world and more a refusal to engage with it in the first place, Dukhnovych's pastoral becomes a heuristic that not only imagines Carpathian Rus' as an untouched Eden and the Carpatho-Rusyn farmer as a new Adam but also strives to instill pride in the native virtues of the people.

If Greek and Roman poets longed to escape the *polis* and empire in the natural world, the Carpatho-Rusyns, in Dukhnovych's vision, are already living

the ideals that Jean-Jacques Rousseau celebrated as exemplary of a natural man (*homme naturel*). Just as the writers of the American Renaissance such as James Fenimore Cooper or Henry Wadsworth Longfellow were drawn to the "primitive" cultures of Native Americans, British Romantics such as William Wordsworth and Lord Byron fetishized the lower classes (hermits, peasants) and the Orient (Arabs, Muslims, Persians, Turks), and Russian poets such as Aleksandr Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov were attracted to Circassians, Cossacks, Crimean Tatars, Georgians, or Gypsies, Dukhnovych's pastoral reveals that the Carpatho-Rusyns themselves are already the object of Romantic primitivist and orientalist fantasies. When the Harvard-educated American philosopher Henry David Thoreau left his comfortable home in Concord, Massachusetts, to experiment with whether it was possible to live a life of simplicity in nature, he explained in *Walden* (1854) that "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived" (Thoreau [1854] 1971, 81–98). If Thoreau felt that the only place where he could encounter an authentic life was in the woods, for Dukhnovych, the Carpatho-Rusyns need not seek out the pastoral at all; instead, in his vision, they already embody its ideals.

V. Dukhnovych as a Spiritual Poet

Dukhnovych, though, is no Transcendentalist. If the American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay *Nature* (1836) felt as if "the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me" in the natural world, an experience that made him feel as if he is a "part or particle of God," a "transparent eyeball" that can "see all" (Emerson [1836] 1971, 10), we find no such revelation in Dukhnovych's poetry, especially after he became the eparchial canon in Prešov in 1843. While Dukhnovych uses the lyric to explore the human subject and the pastoral to give dignity to the Carpatho-Rusyn people, his break with the traditional genres and modes of Romanticism can be seen most clearly in his odes, where he posits an entirely different relationship between the self-conscious human subject, the state, and God's creation.[3]

[3] Dukhnovych's earliest extant poems are in fact ceremonial odes in imitation of 18th-century Russian poets (Духнович 1968, 171–176).

A genre traditionally associated with Classicism, the ode is typically used to praise elevated subjects, such as God or nature, the empire or the emperor, or a beautiful or powerful idea, such as freedom or joy. Often drawing upon the language and rhetoric of the Psalms, 18th-century Russian poets, such as Mikhail Lomonosov, Vasily Trediakovsky, and Gavriil Derzhavin, distinguished between the ceremonial ode (*torzhestvennaia oda*) and the sacred or spiritual ode (*dukhovnaia oda*), which were reserved for political, imperial and cosmic, religious subjects respectively, and came with their own stanzaic and rhyming conventions. As Harsha Ram observes, "the psychic premise of both the ode and the psalm is subjection: the poet submits to the greater will of God or emperor, who occupy a potentially analogous place of omnipotence" (Ram 2003, 56–57), which made it an especially useful mode in the age of European empires.

For Dukhnovych, the ode as a genre allows him to compare the human and the divine, and his sacred ode "A Meditation about God" (*Мысль о Бозѣ*, 1850) positions the Carpatho-Rusyn subject near the bottom of the Great Chain of Being. It opens with a catalogue of imperatives that contrast God's grandeur with human insignificance, for Dukhnovych's lyrical subject commands his readers to "know the strength of the all-mighty, / Know your poverty. […] Be amazed by God's glory, / Look at your insignificance" (Духновичъ 1850, 15). If early Dukhnovych used the lyric as a laboratory for the exploration of the human subject, his odes conclude that the self is not a subject worthy of praise if it is separated from, or aspires to be equal to, the divine. Thus, Dukhnovych writes, "Remember God's majesty, / Be ashamed of yourself. […] He is the giver of everything good, / I do not have anything of my own." As if delivering his remarks from the pulpit, Dukhnovych preaches that his readers should "recognize your humility, / And dutifully say: / God is the Most Holy, and I am sinful" (Духновичъ 1850, 15–16). This line of argumentation reaches its apotheosis when Dukhnovych represents humanity's insignificance by comparing it to a worm: "I am a weak worm, you are all powerful, / I am ash, clay, and dust" (Духновичъ 1850, 17).

While didactic in nature, what is most interesting about "Meditation about God" is how Dukhnovych's worm topos fits into a complex poetic genealogy with roots in Biblical, English, and Russian poetry. The figure first emerges in the Hebrew Bible, primarily in Psalm 22, a lament that begins "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" and expresses the agony, dehumanization, and humiliation experienced by a believer who struggles to understand why

he has been abandoned by God: "I am a worm, and not a human, / scorned by others, and despised by the people. / All who see me mock me; / they make mouths at me, they shake their heads" (Psalm 22:6–7, NRSV). Yet, as he suffers and is ridiculed by an unbelieving public, the psalmist goes on to feel God's presence in the world and ends with a celebration and praise of God's faithfulness to Israel and dominion over his creation. The narrative arc of the lament—from the injustice of suffering and the meaninglessness of existence to faith in God's goodness and thanksgiving in his righteousness—serves as an important component of the odic form: can the human subject find solace in its place in creation and under what conditions? The worm topos is also used throughout the Book of Job to emphasize the limits of human knowledge to understand God's will. During Bildad's speech, he scolds Job for questioning God's justice: "How much less a mortal, who is a maggot, and a human being, who is a worm!" (Job 25:6, NRSV). Here, the image of the human as worm is used to stress that humanity cannot rely upon its own reason to make judgments about God's will.

In the 18th century, the worm topos was picked up by the English Graveyard Poets, such as Edward Young, whose long poem *The Complaint, or Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (1742) used it to reflect upon human mortality after the death of his wife: "Helpless immortal! insect infinite! / A worm! A god!—I tremble at myself, / And in myself am lost!" (Young 1742, 6). For Young, the human subject at first is frail, insignificant, and meaningless compared to the majesty and mystery of the divine: the collision between the human ("A worm!") and the divine ("A god!") leads to a terrifying revelation about his smallness. This initial conclusion was also shared by the Russian poet Mikhail Lomonosov, whose sacred ode "Evening Meditation on God's Grandeur" (*Вечернее размышление о божием величестве*, 1743) represents a lyrical subject that expresses awe at the greatness of God's creation by using a series of metaphors in which a finite element is mathematically and physically insignificant compared with God's size and force: "A speck of sand in the sea waves, / Like a small spark in eternal ice, / Like a thin ash in a strong gale, / Like a feather in a raging fire, / So am I, sunk in this abyss / I lose myself, distressed by thoughts!" (Ломоносов [1743] 1986, 120–121). Lomonosov's metaphors express what Immanuel Kant defines in *Critique of Judgment* (1790) as the *dynamical sublime*, the experience of awe and fear provoked by an object of great *might*, or "that which is superior to great hindrances" (Kant [1790] 1951, 99). Thus, his ode comes to the conclusion that while the conscious human subject

can rationally contemplate the idea of God's transcendence, God's power is still infinitely greater than any feeble human attempts to understand Him or his creation.

Similarly, Gavriil Derzhavin's ode "God" (*Бог*, 1784) also redeploys and reworks the worm topos from Young and the smallness-largeness topos from Lomonosov, but it departs from their examples by positing a metonymic relationship between the human and the divine, or what Kant calls the *mathematical sublime*, a response to an object of great *magnitude*, or "that in comparison with which everything else is small" (Kant [1790] 1951, 88). Derzhavin's lyrical subject echoes Lomonosov by comparing the world to "a drop of water" in the sea of God's creation but alters the nature of his smallness-largeness images: "Like a drop cast into the sea, / Is all the firmament before you. / […] When I dare compare with you, / Only will be a single point; / And I before You am nothing" (Державинъ [1784] 1851, 3). Yet, the ode proceeds to unveil a co-creative and intersubjective relationship between the sublime object and the human subject when the lyrical subject realizes that he nonetheless is a part of the grandeur of God's creation. The finite element (a drop of water, a point) can be separated from the infinite element (the sea, the cosmos) semantically but is both *a part of* and *contributes to* the greater whole: "Nothing! But you shine in me / With all the grandeur of your virtues; / You represent yourself in me / Like a sun inside a tiny drop of water." The lyrical subject, now confident in his connection with the sublime object, celebrates his divinely inspired insight: "You exist—and I am already not nothing! / I am a part of the whole universe / I command thunderbolts with my mind / I'm a tsar—I'm a slave—I'm a worm—I'm God!" Here, Derzhavin changes the valency of the image of the worm, for the metaphor is a temporary descent into the dynamically sublime humility topos before he ecstatically ascends, on the basis of a mathematically sublime metonymy, to call himself God.

Dukhnovych, responding to and rewriting Derzhavin's poem, restores the image to its Psalmic poetic valence, for the logic of the ode fundamentally rejects the idea that the human subject can participate in God's creation. Dukhnovych's lyrical subject is not God: he is less than human, an animal—"a weak worm"—and, even worse, inanimate matter: "ash, clay, and dust." Dukhnovych also echoes the logic of the Book of Job, for he questions the ability of human reason to make sense of God's plan: "Do I, poor and sinful, know / Which hour will be my last? / Do I know when I will be summoned / By the heavenly voice of the Lord?" In many ways, Dukhnovych's ode does not follow the standard

narrative arc from alienation to uplift, for even at its conclusion, the lyrical subject's philosophical attempts to find solace in God's magnificence ring hollow compared with his emotional expressions of his insignificance: "Why am I poor and ardent / Before you?—Destitute, wretched, / I cannot control myself, / You are my strength, You are my God!" (Духновичъ 1850, 18). Here, the human is wretched (*убогъ*), not divine (*Богъ*). But then, Dukhnovych closes his ode by appropriating the pivotal moment in Derzhavin's poem where the lyrical subject is forlorn by his nothingness but realizes that he is nonetheless part of God's creation. Derzhavin writes: "I before You am nothing. / Nothing!—but You shine within me." The final line of Dukhnovych's ode takes this line from Derzhavin but reworks its syntax and thus its philosophical dominant: "Oh God, my creator, / You alone command me, / Have mercy on me, Ruler, / For I am nothing before You" (Духновичъ 1850, 18). If Derzhavin's line places the emphasis on the *nothingness* of the human subject (I before You am *nothing* / *я передъ Тобою – ничто*), Dukhnovych's moves the lyrical I out of the syntactical position of privilege and replaces it with *God* (I am nothing before *You* / *я ничь предъ Тобою*). In other words, Dukhnovych places an even more radical separation between the human and the divine than his Biblical, English, and Russian predecessors: for him, the human subject must merely submit to God's power and forever remember its insignificance and sinfulness. For this reason, Rusinko argues that Dukhnovych's "thoughts of God are distinctively Rusyn in their humble acquiescence to God's will" (Rusinko 2003a, 153). What's more: they are much more closely aligned with 18th-century Classicist views on the Great Chain of Being than with Romantic or Transcendentalist ones.

VI. Dukhnovych as a Ceremonial Poet

Dukhnovych, however, did not only write sacred odes. As a poet of the Austrian Empire, he also turned to the ceremonial ode to posit a relationship between Carpatho-Rusyn subjects and their Habsburg sovereign. With its origins with the Greek poet Pindar, who used the ode to praise victors in athletic competitions, the genre gained prominence in the 16th century with the French Pléiade poets Pierre de Ronsard and François de Malherbe, who strove to revive in Renaissance France the literary forms and ideals of the Ancients. The genre was then imported to the Kingdom of Prussia, where German court

poets used the ceremonial ode to commemorate the court life of Friedrich I. In the early years of the Russian empire, both Lomonosov and Trediakovsky developed the ceremonial ode into the genre *par excellence* to praise the might and magnitude of the Russian empire and its emperors and empresses (Ram 2003, 40–46). Indeed, as James von Geldern argues, the ode became primarily a "performative genre" in 18th-century Russia, where poets transferred its logic "from the church to the court" to celebrate, elevate, and immortalize state power (von Geldern 1991, 927, 931). In 19th-century Carpathian Rus', Dukhnovych's work draws upon all of these traditions: the Greek appreciation for athletic or physical excellence, the French sense of elevation and rebirth, and the Germanic and Russian imperative that poetry ought to support the state.

In the wake of the 1848–1849 Springtime of Nations, Carpatho-Rusyns found themselves in a precarious position: they were caught between *enthusiasm* and *hope* for national liberation and Slavic unity, *disappointment* in the failures of the Hungarian Revolution and *fears* that Hungarian nationalism could jeopardize their own aspirations for greater autonomy within the Austrian Empire, *inspiration* at the power of the Russian army as it crossed the Carpathians to quell the Hungarian revolutionaries, and *gratitude* to the Habsburgs for implementing the full emancipation of serfdom, which released many Carpatho-Rusyn peasants from their exploitative landlords (Magocsi 2015, 120–128; Rusinko 2003a, 127–132). In 1849, Dukhnovych founded the Prešov Literary Society on the model of the other Slavic *maticas* and began to publish a yearly almanac *Greetings to the Rusyns* (*Поздравленіе Русинов*, 1850, 1851, 1852) that published poetry and prose.

The ceremonial ode plays an important role in Dukhnovych's poetic oeuvre in the 1850s, and while his odes in form have their antecedents in the 18th-century Russian imperial tradition, he uses them to cultivate a uniquely Carpatho-Rusyn relationship to their Habsburg rulers. These odes typically have long ceremonial titles that are designed to be elevated, a feature that von Geldern notes was a crucial compositional element of the genre: "Odes written during the reigns of Anna Ioannovna and Elizaveta Petrovna seem burdened (to the modern reader) with lengthy titles. Yet such a title as Mikhail Lomonosov's *Oda Ee Imperatorskomu Velichestu, Vsepresveteishei Derzhavneishei Velikoi Gosudarnye Imperatritse Elisaveta Petrovne, Samoderzhitse Vserossisskoi, na presvetlyi i torzhestvennyi prazdnik rozhdeniia Ee Velichestva i dlia vseradostnogo rozhdeniia Gosudarnyi Velikoi Kniazhny Anny Petrovna, ponesennaia ot Imperatorskoi Akademiia Nauk dekabria 18 dnia 1757 goda*

[*Ода Ее Императорскому Величеству Всепресветлейшей Державнейшей Великой Государыне Императрице Елисавете Петровне, Самодержице Всероссийской, на пресветлый и торжественный праздник рождения Ее Величества и для всерадостного рождения Государыни Великой Княжны Анны Петровны, поднесенная от Императорской Академии Наук декабря 18 дня 1757 года*] conformed to ceremonial conventions and included relevant information" (von Geldern 1991, 927–928).

Adhering to the Russian naming conventions that included the "full ceremonial title of the sovereign," "the occasion for the reading," and the "date of performance, not the date of writing" (von Geldern 1991, 928), Dukhnovych turns to the ceremonial ode to wish Franz Joseph a happy birthday in his "Welcoming Verses to His Majesty the All-Merciful Tsar, Franz Joseph I, on the Day of His Glorious Birth from the Rusyns of Upper Spish Delivered on the Wings of the Tatra Eagle on 6 (18) August 1850" (*Привѣтствователныи стихи Его Величеству Всемилостивѣйшему Царю Францъ Іосифу Первому на день Славнаго Рождества отъ Русиновъ Вышняго Спижа на крылахъ Орла Татранскаго принесенный дня 6/18 серпня 1850 года*). In it, Dukhnovych addresses a "Tatra eagle" and calls upon him to "fly to the sun" and "greet the Tsar among the stars / with Rusyn songs," seemingly before the emperor's own conception, for the Carpatho-Rusyns recognize that he will "protect nations and the glorious faith" (Духновичъ 1850, 53). At the moment of Franz Joseph's birth, Dukhnovych commands his eagle to fly to Vienna, "bow before Him," bring him "Rusyn gifts" as part of the procession of nobles, princes, and rulers from across Europe, and ask Franz Joseph to "give freedom and blessings" to his faithful Carpatho-Rusyn subjects. Meanwhile, the Carpatho-Rusyns at home will go to church to pray for the "Father of the Rusyn people" (Духновичъ 1850, 54–56). Here, the Carpatho-Rusyns' relationship to power is a complex one: while the people themselves are humble, poor, and provincial compared to the other nations sending birthday greetings, their loyalty to the emperor and their faith in God give them a privileged place among Habsburg subjects.

In another ceremonial ode "A Sincere Greeting to His Imperial and Royal Majesty Franz Joseph, by the Grace of God, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, Most Gracious Visitor of the Royal Free City of Prešov, from the Carpatho-Rusyn People on 27 July / 8 August 1852" (*Праводушноє привітствованіє єго Кесарьско-царьскаго Величества Франца Іосифа, б. б. Кесаря Австрійскаго и Царя Угорскаго, к. ц. с. город Пряшов всемилостиво*

посітившаго, от Карпато-Рускаго народа. 27 іюлія / 8 авґуста 1852), Dukhnovych greets Franz Joseph and registers that the Carpatho-Rusyn national awakening was made possible by his reign. As Dukhnovych describes, the Carpatho-Rusyns view him to be "the People's Savior," the bearer of "peace, grace, and virtue," a national liberator who "healed centuries-old wounds, / Freed us from heavy chains— / and made all equal in right," and, as such, the reason why a Renaissance is taking place: "through Him the poor Rusyn / has now seen the light. / A new nation has been awakened" (Духнович 2023, 89–90).

What's more, even going further than his birthday ode, Dukhnovych posits a co-creative, intersubjective relationship between the Carpatho-Rusyns, who are loyal subjects of the emperor, and Franz Joseph, who consciously includes them within the Empire. Dukhnovych notes that Franz Joseph is "our lawful Emperor" who has "chosen us," perhaps for their loyalty, piety, and purity. Thus, Dukhnovych writes: "We are Yours; You are ours" (*Мы – Твої, Ты – наш*). Here, unlike in his sacred odes, Dukhnovych does posit a metonymic relationship between finite (Carpatho-Rusyn) and infinite (Empire) elements. Compared to the majesty and magnitude of the emperor and the Empire, the Carpatho-Rusyns are humble, simple, and poor; nevertheless, they are part of and contribute to the magnificence of the multiconfessional, multiethnic, multilingual Empire. For this reason, the Carpatho-Rusyns, as loyal subjects, vow to protect and defend their sovereign: "This is a faithful Carpathian people, / And strong Rusyn hearts / shall be your shield" (Духнович 2023, 91). The poem closes with the Carpatho-Rusyns pledging to give their lives if necessary for their state: "A newly created nation / is ready for You, / ready to rise even against Hell, / to lay down life without regret, / And to shed its blood" (Духнович 2023, 91). That the Carpatho-Rusyns are prepared to give their lives and shed their blood for the Empire reveals the contours of Dukhnovych's cosmos. If God remains distant, other, transcendent, the emperor does not: in fact, the Carpatho-Rusyns are a crucial element in the Empire, whose aesthetic and moral qualities are reflected in and shared by the Carpatho-Rusyns as well.

Not all of Dukhnovych's odes are necessarily laudatory in nature, for Rusinko has analyzed the subversive elements in his odic discourse. "In Dukhnovych's praise of the emperor, an ironic tension is felt between the words' referential meaning and the local context into which they are placed by the poet," she writes: "He describes Franz Joseph in a folk metaphor as 'young as a little berry.' While warm in feeling, it undermines the subsequent praise of the emperor's wisdom" (Rusinko 1999, 10–11). However, these ironic elements, while

present, do not predominate. In fact, what is unusual—and thus distinctive—about the poetry of the first Carpatho-Rusyn Renaissance is its obsequiousness before the state and sovereign, especially compared to the revolutionary traditions of its Hungarian, Polish, and Ukrainian neighbors.

One of the earliest Romantic battle cries, "La Marseillaise" (1792)—the French song written by Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle after Austria declared war on the First French Republic and eventual French national anthem—celebrates the bloody overthrow of kings and tyrants: "Let's march! Let's march! So that an impure blood waters our furrows!" (Rouget de Lisle 1792). The Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko, in his "Testament" (*Заповіт*, 1845), also encourages his readers to "bury me, then rise up, / break your chains, / and with the enemy's wicked blood / water the freedom" that they hope to gain (Шевченко [1845] 2003, 371). Sándor Petőfi's "National Song" (*Nemzeti dal*, 1848), distributed in a pamphlet form and recited at the Hungarian Museum in Budapest, inspired Hungarians to take up arms against the Habsburgs during the revolution. "To the God of the Hungarians, / We swear / We swear that slaves / We will no longer be!" reads the refrain (Petőfi [1848] 1956, 444). We find nothing of the sort in Carpatho-Rusyn Romanticism.

To further emphasize the point, we can see the pacifist ethic in Aleksander Pavlovych's "The Joy of Freedom" (*Радость о свободѣ*, 1850), which appeared alongside a series of verses about freedom in Dukhnovych's almanac *Greeting to the Rusyns* (1850). In a lyric that celebrates the emancipation of the peasantry, Pavlovych writes: "Oh, rejoice / Free Rusyn, / Your enemies are defeated / The evil force is rotting: / Franz Joseph gives / Each people / Blessed freedom! / Stand up and greet it!" (Павловичъ 1850, 31). Whereas other Romantic revolutionaries call upon their people to "rise up" against tyrants, Dukhnovych and Pavlovych call upon the Carpatho-Rusyns to "stand up" to greet their emperor and thank him for their liberty, a sentiment unique to Carpatho-Rusyn Romanticism.

VII. Dukhnovych as a National Poet

While Dukhnovych's intersubjective relationship with the Habsburg Empire sets him apart from other national-patriotic traditions, the figures and images that he uses to do so also animate his relationship to the Carpatho-Rusyn people. And if there is one work of literature that Carpatho-Rusyns at home and

abroad know by heart, it is Dukhnovych's lyric "A Dedication" (*Вручаніе*, 1850). It is difficult to overstate the importance of this verse to Carpatho-Rusyn literature. Rusinko writes that it has "achieved scriptural status for Rusyns," especially after becoming the *de facto* national anthem. The opening lines—"I was, am, and will be a Rusyn"—have "appeared on the mastheads of newspapers," are "carved in stone on numerous pedestals and monuments," and have "been quoted reverentially in poetry, prose, polemics, and scholarship, and appear as the inevitable epigraph to almost any work that deals with Rusyn culture" (Rusinko 2003a, 111). Padiak points out that only with "A Dedication" does Carpatho-Rusyn "literature cease to be an example of 'chamber art' or art for the chosen aesthetes" (Падяк 2015, 21–24). However, for a poem so thoroughly celebrated today, it originally was not given a privileged position in the almanac *Greetings to the Rusyns* (Духновичъ 1850, 69–70). In fact, the most structurally significant poetic work in Carpatho-Rusyn almanacs was the New Year's greeting (*pozdravlenie*), which often played a ceremonial role in marking the ritual of parting with the old and welcoming the new, much like the singing of Robert Burns' poem "Auld Lang Syne" (1788) has become the New Year's ritual in the Anglophone world (Burns [1788] 1903, 208). In the 1850 almanac, Dukhnovych's "A Greeting" (*Поздравленіе*), a work that adapts the conventions of both the ceremonial ode and sermon while developing an extended metaphor about the mortality of time (the old) and the eternity of hope (the new), necessarily came first (Духновичъ 1850, 3–8).

After Dukhnovych published New Year's greetings in his 1849, 1850, and 1851 almanacs, it became customary for Carpatho-Rusyn writers to publish their own *pozdravlenie* in sacred and secular almanacs alike well into the 20th century. In this sense, the almanac (*kalendar*) and New Year's greeting (*pozdravlenie*) are the quintessential medium and genre of Carpatho-Rusyn literature: the almanac was the perfect type of text for the transmission of literature to the common people, and the greeting was the poetic form best suited to bring them into the world of *belles-lettres*. Thus, even after the Springtime of Nations, Dukhnovych in many ways was more inclined towards odic forms than lyrical ones, which makes "A Dedication" exemplary among his mature work.

Carpatho-Rusyns have been drawn to Dukhnovych's "Dedication" not only because it proudly announces and creates a Carpatho-Rusyn subject, but also because of the distinctively collective quality that this subject has in the first place. The poem famously opens by proclaiming that its lyrical subject is Carpatho-Rusyn:

I was, am, and will be Rusyn,
I was born a Rusyn,
My honorable lineage I will not forget,
And I will remain its son.

My father and mother were Rusyn,
My whole family is Rusyn,
My brothers and sisters are Rusyns,
And my wide circle of friends.

My nation is great and important,
Modern and worldly,
Glorious in spirit and strength,
Agreeable to all peoples (Духновичъ 1850, 69).

What is significant about the first line is that Dukhnovych draws upon sacred language to construct the Carpatho-Rusyn self, for his use of the Church Slavonic "am" (*есмь*) and past-present-future formulation mark his declaration of Carpatho-Rusyn identity as a philosophical, if not theological, claim and not merely an act of national self-identification. What makes Dukhnovych's subject Carpatho-Rusyn? As the poem unfolds, it elaborates and develops this idea. Firstly, he was born to Carpatho-Rusyn parents, who themselves were part of a "lineage" (*родъ*) of Carpatho-Rusyns. Dukhnovych's frame of reference expands as he moves from the self (I) to family (mother, father, brothers, sisters) to tribe (friends) to nation (people), which is large enough that it forces the poet to recognize that the Carpatho-Rusyns are, perhaps, an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983, 6) and, as such, "glorious" (*славный*), "great" (*великій*), "important" (*главный*), "modern" (*современній*), and "agreeable" (*пріемный*) to everyone, qualities that make the poet proud of his people.

Being Carpatho-Rusyn is partly a question of inheritance or patrimony; however, Carpatho-Rusyns are not only born, but also shaped by their environment.

I first saw the light beneath the Beskyds,
I first breathed Rusyn air,
And I was raised on Rusyn bread,
A Rusyn sang me lullabies.

When I opened my mouth for the first time,
I spoke a Rusyn word,
I first labored over the alphabet
And sweat flowed from my young brow.

Later I was raised as a Rusyn,
As a Rusyn I went out
Into the wide world; but I did not forget
To acknowledge my nation. —

And now, who nourishes me?
Who feeds me? Who supports me?
The same Rusyn tribe
Maintains my respectability (Духновичъ 1850, 69–70).

Here, the Carpatho-Rusyn lyrical subject recognizes that he comes into being because of his somatic relationship with Carpathian Rus', and the fourth stanza focuses on intake. Carpathian *light* enters his eyes. Carpathian *air* enters his lungs. Carpathian *bread* enters his mouth. And Carpathian *sounds* enter his ears. Quite literally, his environment becomes part of his body, nourishes it, and helps him grow. The fifth stanza then turns to output. As a son of Carpathian Rus', he *speaks* Rusyn, *reads* Rusyn, *writes* Rusyn, and even *sweats* Rusyn, for world, self, and body are fluid, intermingled, intersubjective. After he is formed, Dukhnovych's subject goes out "into the wide world" (*въ широкій свѣтъ*) beyond his homeland and, in doing so, finds himself among other nations and peoples. Had Dukhnovych retained traces of the Romantic individualism he expressed in "Solitude" (1834), this could have been an opportunity for alienation, ennui, or loneliness; however, Dukhnovych's lyrical subject comes to recognize that he can go through the world with dignity and self-respect thanks to the help and support of his fellow Carpatho-Rusyns, who continue to "nourish" (*питаетъ*), "feed" (*кормитъ*), "support" (*держитъ*), and "maintain [his] respectability" (*мою годность содержитъ*) when he is far from home.

It is at this point when we come to realize why the poem is titled "A Dedication" (*Вручаніе*), a form of address typically used to express gratitude towards someone or something that helped inspire the author. Common dedications are devotional (God), elegiac (the deceased), epistolary (friends or family), financial (a patron), or textual (historical, literary, philosophical) in form. So to whom

does Dukhnovych dedicate his poetry? Who was the one that formed him and made him who he is? It is, of course, the Carpatho-Rusyns:

> Therefore, to you, my nation,
> I bow down before the living God,
> For your sorrowful toil and labor
> I am forever indebted. —
>
> I will give back as much as I can,
> Accept this sincere present,
> Accept this small book,
> And this written verse (Духновичъ 1850, 70).

The poet honors those who came before him, for it is their "sorrowful toil and labor" (*печальный потъ и трудъ*) that allowed Dukhnovych to blaze his own trail. Even if he did not receive the type of financial support that other national poets did from their own wealthy patrons, Dukhnovych acknowledges his moral and spiritual debt to the Carpatho-Rusyn people. Naturally, he recognizes that he cannot repay this debt monetarily; instead, he must do it in verse, for Dukhnovych's "small book" (*маленьку книгу*)—that is, his almanac *Greetings to the Rusyns*—and his "little written verse" (*писменный рядокъ*) are the most "sincere present" (*щирый дарокъ*) that he can offer. This realization has the power to be radically transformative, for it forces us, in the most extreme interpretation, to reassess *all* of Dukhnovych's literary production as a lifelong pursuit of restitution to his Carpatho-Rusyn patrons. The structure of "A Dedication" echoes this conclusion as well. While dedications typically are placed before a work of literature, Dukhnovych places his at the end of the poem, which inverts the lyric's inner logic. Rather than the patron helping the poet become a subject—who will go on to develop his own self after the dedication—the poet comes to discover traces of his patrons within his self, hence the dedication is at the conclusion.

In the final stanza, Dukhnovych closes by vowing to dedicate his craft and sacrifice his self for his people:

> I will never forget the rest,
> The sorrow of my heart
> I will sacrifice; — I will be yours,
> And will be your friend until I die (Духновичъ 1850, 70).

If the Carpatho-Rusyns literally became part of his body in his youth, Dukhnovych now acknowledges that he will forever belong to them until his death: "I will be yours" (*я твой буду*). Following the poem's inner logic, we come to realize at its conclusion that the *reading* of the poem—as well as the *singing* of it today—sets into motion the same process that made Dukhnovych a Carpatho-Rusyn: His words—through sight or sound—corporeally enter his readers and, as he suggests, become part of their bodies and selves as well. Thus, we can see why Carpatho-Rusyn literature is often synonymous with "A Dedication": both by writing it and by reading it, "A Dedication" creates a unique model of Carpatho-Rusyn subjectivity that is collective or communal in nature, endlessly gracious and thankful, faithful to God and loyal to the state, humble yet aspirational, intersubjective and not alienated from others, rooted in place, and proud of itself but not to the exclusion of others.

VIII. Dukhnovych as a Romantic Poet

So can we call Aleksander Dukhnovych a Romantic poet? Yes, but with some caveats and qualifications. What is unique about Dukhnovych's work is that it strives to balance the *rus'ka vira* with elements of Classicism and Romanticism. His poetry harmonizes mind, body, and spirit, for his lyrical subjects have confidence in the order of God's creation and its hierarchies. For this reason, the trope of the poet as genius is muted or entirely absent: since beauty is viewed to be a manifestation of God's knowledge, order, and truth, no individual has privileged access to it. As a result, the work of literature itself tends to have didactic, performative, or social functions rather than strictly aesthetic ones. Since the dissemination of literature largely took place through the primer and the almanac, it led to the development of a uniquely Carpatho-Rusyn genre—the New Year's greeting (*pozdravlenie*)—a poetic form that interpellates a specific type of lyrical subject who is called upon to perform the ritual of commemorating the new year and does so while addressing the nation. This is not to say that the lyric was not an important genre for the exploration of the self, but it often was forced to compete with the ode, whose generic conventions demand that the human subject be represented as hierarchically inferior to the people, state, or cosmos. For this reason, Dukhnovych's Romanticism is much more reminiscent of the "feminine" Romanticisms of the Anglophone world in their emphasis on affiliation rather than individualism.

Indeed, Dukhnovych's mature lyrical subjects are almost always successfully integrated into their communities. Likewise, his Carpatho-Rusyn subjects are not alienated from society, which eliminates the need for them to seek refuge in nature. In fact, Dukhnovych's pastoral poetry represents the Carpatho-Rusyns as living in prelapsarian harmony with the natural world, which means that Carpatho-Rusyn Romantics do not have to go far to find a downtrodden, oppressed other in need of cultural, economic, or moral support. Paradoxically, these political conditions did not provoke revolutionary sentiments. In Dukhnovych's verse—especially his ceremonial odes—Carpatho-Rusyns are loyal subjects of the Habsburg Empire and proudly express an imperial, not freedom-fighting, spirit. Nonetheless, Dukhnovych's lyrical subjects are continually in search of ways to dedicate, give, or sacrifice themselves for others, whether beloved, nation, emperor, or God. As he writes at the end of "A Dedication," "I will be yours" (*я твой будy*)—that is, if you read his verse, it will corporeally become part of you—which also comes with its logical, implied corollary: "You are already mine." Thus, Dukhnovych's readers play a role in making his verse—and therefore his nation—"great" and "worldly," which is what inspired him to be a poet and moved him to dedicate his work to his people in the first place. In this sense, his most famous poem perhaps contains within it a distinctive practice of reading, a unique Carpatho-Rusyn theory of literature in an embryonic form. Not strictly an act of *hermeneutics* or *interpretation* (as in New Criticism, Formalism, or Structuralism), not a diagnostic search for repressed economic or psychic *symptoms* (as in Marxism or Psychoanalysis), certainly not *deconstruction*, *intervention*, or *play* (as in Post-Structuralism, Postcolonialism, or Postmodernism), it is the search for the self in the other—and finding the other in oneself—what Steiner called feeling the "debt of love"—that, for Dukhnovych, is the most natural way of *reading Carpatho-Rusyn literature*.

Public Release

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force Academy, the Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government. PA Number: USAFA-DF-2024-748.

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