

American man versus Rusyn man in Carpatho-Rusyn emigrant literature in the USA. Issues of hegemony and traditionalism

The Carpatho-Rusyns¹ are a people without a state of their own, for centuries inhabiting the slopes of the Carpathian Mountains, a territory called Carpathian Rus. The territory in question currently straddles the border between Poland (the Lemko region), Slovakia (the Presov region), Ukraine (today's Transcarpathian region, historically known as Podkarpatska Rus) and Romania. This thesis discusses the Carpatho-Rusyn emigrants as inhabitants of historical Carpathian Rus, who at the time of the largest wave of emigration to America were inhabitants of the then Austro-Hungarian Empire. In addition to the USA, many emigrants from Europe also found themselves in Canada or Argentina, but in this paper we will focus on the Carpatho-Rusyn diaspora and its literature in the USA.

Carpatho-Rusyn emigrant literature in the United States developed as a dynamic literary phenomenon that responded to the historical and social circumstances of the emigration of Rusyns to America. Archival documents suggest that Carpatho-Rusyns emigrated to America as early as the mid-19th century. The center of Carpatho-Rusyn cultural and social life was the church, together with fraternities and brotherhoods that were established before the first churches were built. Among the first was the organization *Sojedinenije greko-katoličeskych russkich bratstv*² founded in Wilkes Barre (Pennsylvania) in 1892. Another large organization founded in McKeesport (Pennsylvania) was the *Sobrjanije greko-katoličeskych cerkovnych bratstv*³. Although these brotherhoods were secular in origin, they were closely affiliated with the Greek Catholic Church, as evidenced by their name. These and other brotherhoods published Rusyn newspapers and annual collections. The newspaper *Amerikansky Russky Vestnik* (1892-1952, Homestead, Pennsylvania) was the oldest and largest newspaper (in terms of circulation) published by the *Sojedinenije*. Until 1926 it was published in both Cyrillic and Latin scripts. It reached its peak in the 1920s when it was published three times a week with a circulation of about 40 000 copies. Original literary works by Rusyn authors appeared in nearly sixty newspapers and other periodicals published for the Rusyn-American community in the United States. In addition, Rusyn literature of the USA was published in almanacs published annually by fraternal organizations. In addition to prose and poetry, their contents included biographies of famous Rusyns, articles on Rusyn history, and a monthly calendar (Rusinko, 2011).

Many works by emigrant authors explore the tension between the need to integrate into a new culture and the desire to preserve one's own identity and cultural heritage. The image of the family as the basic unit of society often appears in emigrant works. The family becomes a space where traditional values are maintained, but also a place of conflict between older and younger generations who have different perspectives on integration into a new culture. In this sense, émigré literature depicts processes of identity negotiation in which a balance is struck between nostalgia for home and adaptation to new living conditions.

The hegemony of the majority culture is reflected in many multicultural but also transcultural situations in the works of Carpatho-Rusyn emigrant literature of the USA. The balancing between the old identity of the Rusyn man and the new identity of the American man is presented in several examples of the drama of the Greek Catholic parish priest Valentine Gorzo, *Fedorišinovy*. Even, the author states in the introduction of the work that he wrote it based on a true event.

¹ in the literature the name *Ruthenians* is also mentioned

² known today as the *Greek Catholic Union of the USA*

³ known today as the *United Societies of Greek Catholic Brotherhoods*

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