Ethno-tourism and social change in south-east Poland[1]

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Analyzing the change of the form and scale of one ethno-revivalist ritual, the paper investigates the way a once proscribed religious-national group can become a commoditized national minority valued by the tourists and the locals for its 'authentic tradition', 'distinctive culture', and 'closeness to nature'. To explore this ethnification process, I examine two consecutive versions of an annual ritual called the Kupaly Night, held in 2004 and 2005, respectively.[2] The adaptation of an ancient, pagan, summer solstice celebration, associated with St John's Day, has become an 'ethno-revivalist' ritual in south-east Poland. As the two versions of the event show, broader political-economic forces related to tourism, heritage preservation, and the roles of the state and the media help to exoticise the Ukrainian religious-national minority in south-east Poland. Ordinary Ukrainians perceive the changes of the ritual with considerable ambivalence.

My ethnographic focus is a specific area of Poland. Formally united under one Catholic Church and holding Polish citizenship, people in Przemyśl, a city in south-east Poland, are divided according to nationality and religious rite. In contrast to the city's earlier, multi-ethnic composition, a history of ethnic cleansings and state policies during and soon after World War II has resulted today in the overwhelming association of its seventy thousand inhabitants with Polish Roman Catholicism. The only minorities are the Greek Catholic community and a tiny group of Orthodox believers, who together number two thousand ethnic Ukrainians. The 'community of memory' I studied in 2003–2004 consisted predominantly of survivors of the state-led ethnic cleansing of 1947, who had been forced to leave their villages, and of their heirs, who have been migrating back to

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[2] I found at least three versions of the name of this ritual - the 'the Night of Iwan' (John) 'Kupal', 'Kupaly', or 'Kupalo', the name supposedly inspired by the pagan god Kupalo. Through the text I call the ritual the Kupaly Night.

south-east Poland, especially Przemyśl, since the late 1950s as 'Ukrainians', most of them practicing Greek Catholicism.

The Kupaly Night 2004

Posada Rybotycka is a village some thirty kilometres south-west of Przemyśl, situated in the Wiar Valley amid the beautiful Przemyśl Hills (Pogórze Przemyskie). The entire Wiar Valley was heavily Ukrainian before 1947. Because of post-war international agreements and ethnic cleansings, most of the original Ukrainian inhabitants of the valley were moved to the area around Tarnopil in contemporary Ukraine, and the rest left during Action Vistula, the ethnic cleansing organized by the People's Republic of Poland against Ukrainians in country's south-east in 1947. The major

Posada is now greatly diminished from its pre-war size. The wooden houses of Ukrainians were buried, and several dispersed cooperative dwellings replaced some of them during the socialist years. Only the ancient *tserkva,* the parish house, and the cemetery reveal the location of the old Greek Catholic village.[3] Nevertheless, some of my Ukrainian friends said that Posada Rybotycka lay exactly in the heart of Zakerzonie, the part of Poland that had always been Ukrainian for them. These 'Ukrainian' mountains, together with the Bieszczady Mountains to the south, represented their homeland, especially because they were 'different from the Polish plains'. One friend explained: 'The Ukrainians in Poland have mountains in their genes. They are depressed if they live in the plains.' In his eyes, this was why so many of them decided to return to their mountainous south-east Poland, regardless of its painful memories.

In the 1950s these sparsely populated hills, with their ruined villages and *tserkvy* and their new settlers, indifferent to the land, became known as the 'wild east'. Today signs of increasing tourism are everywhere. The remains of *tserkvy* and cemeteries are being preserved and information plaques installed next to them. A trainee working for an EU project in cultural heritage preservation said optimistically, 'The Podkarpacie region opted for tourism and history, and we will make a lot of money out of it'. This was to be achieved not only through preservation of the natural environment but also through the

[3] A *tserkva* (or *tserkov* in Ukrainian, pl. *tserkvy*; *cerkiéw* in Polish,) is a building of worship of eastern-rite churches.

rich 'multicultural' heritage of the region. I was told several times by Ukrainian friends that the EU would 'demand adherence to minority rights' in south-east Poland and this EU-driven multiculturalism will prevent the possible recovery of the ethnic hatred.

Increasingly since the 1980s, Posada Rybotycka and the surrounding area have become tourist destinations, particularly for middle-class people from Przemyśl. Walking trails crisscross the area, and bicyclists like to ride there because traffic is light on the barely repaired roads. Two Przemyśl Ukrainians bought the old cooperative building, opened a pub in it, and offered accommodation to tourists. Another rented the former Greek Catholic presbytery and turned it into a tourist hostel. These people, active members of the Przemyśl Ukrainian community, have been involved in reviving the village ritual called the Kupaly Night. Together with young Ukrainians from Przemyśl and the Przemyśl branch of the Association of Ukrainians, they have since 2000 organized this annual event on the weekend before or after St John's (Ivan's) name day according to the Julian calendar (the day of St John the Baptist, according to the Greek Catholic calendar). In 2004 it took place on the weekend after 7 July – on Saturday and Sunday, 10 and 11 July.[4]

On Saturday morning the participants began arriving. A stage and amplifiers were set up for the bands and other entertainers. Near the creek, benches arranged under a large tent awaited the guests, and next to it, a caravan offered fast food and beer. The bar in the former cooperative building was also open, serving beer, soft drinks, and ice-cream. Teenage girls from the Ukrainian school in Przemyśl, who would be the main actors in the night ritual, collected wildflowers and practiced singing and dancing for their performance. Young men cut additional wood, drank, and sang folksongs nearby.

Besides the local Ukrainians and a few young Poles, a group of men with TV equipment walked around and chatted. They had come from Kraków regional television to film the event for the TV magazine Ethnic Climates (*Etniczne klimaty*), a monthly program for and about the national minorities and ethnic groups in Poland. Among the journalists was the dark-skinned moderator of the program, Brian Scott. He described

[4] The ritual takes place at down and involves the singing of folk songs and dancing of folk dances around the bonfires which end with bathing in the creek (the term Kupaly is derived from the Slavic word for 'bathing').

himself by saying, ‘I am the only black Polish journalist. I have done a lot for the coloured people in this country. I am their guy in the Polish media.’

Scott had come to Poland twenty years earlier from one of the African countries friendly to socialism. He studied journalism in Kraków, married a Polish woman and stayed. Before jumping into public television, he said, he had been a pioneer in commercial radio in Poland after 1989. Since 2000 he had been a freelance journalist. He produced *Ethnic Climates* together with the initiator of the series, the experienced journalist Waldek Janda, whom he characterized as ‘an engine of ethnic programs in the public media and of programs about minority and ethnic groups in Poland’. These programs, transmitted throughout Poland as well as regionally, were about ‘Slovaks, Kashubs, Bielorusyns, and other minorities and ethnic groups’. As Scott stressed, he and his colleagues worked to help minorities keep

> their identities, their culture, their religion, cultural events, sport, etc. [We are interested in] young people, old people, places of tradition, maybe their past. [We focus on] things like monuments, cemeteries, [and] schools. [We want to know] in what ways the national minorities in Poland are keeping their identity. Who is helping them? Is the Polish state doing enough for them? And the local authorities, municipalities … what do they do for them?

The journalists saw their role in the program about the Kupaly Night in a similarly ‘ethnographic’ way, as Brian Scott put it. This time it was the Ukrainian minority they were going to ‘do a lot for’. For the rest of the day, everything that happened in connection with the Kupaly celebration was adjusted to the wishes of the journalists. While the participants continued their preparations, Scott and Janda interviewed some of them. One was a professional restaurateur from Przemyśl, age thirty-eight, who explained her view of ‘culture’:

> I come from Podlasie, and we all have eastern roots there. I am a woman of the east … My husband is Tartar and Muslim, our son is a Pole, but he was baptized in a *tserkva.* He likes *tserkvy* very much, but churches too. With me it is the same.

> I am a conglomerate of cultures and I am enjoying it. Because of this I have a different perception of the world. I feel that I have a different sensitivity. I have nothing against 'otherness' … On the border there are two types of people, those who see 'otherness' as an obstacle and those who draw an advantage and inspiration from it. I belong to the second category. I draw from other cultures the best they can offer. It is a source of inspiration for me.

Later that afternoon one of my Ukrainian friends, age twenty-three, also talked about being 'other' in Poland. 'It is fine to be different,' she said. 'You have more possibilities, you speak another language, know another culture. It is an advantage.' These were the sorts of replies Scott usually got to his question about what it was like to live in 'two cultures'.

While the journalists and I discussed 'Ukrainianness', two middle-aged women in folk dresses put the finishing touches on an exhibition of Ukrainian folk dishes, and some folk artists set up tables near the creek where they would sell folk dresses and hand-made artefacts of straw and wood. Some men helped to herd some goats from a van into the middle of the field, where, together with some chickens and dogs, they were supposed to be the living part of the folk exhibit. People who were not engaged in the preparations enjoyed their drinks, and I noticed some singing of partisan songs from the time of World War II. Other people, some of them in folk costumes, played games in the water with the children. More and more people, Poles and Ukrainians alike, were arriving from the city. People sang folksongs near the creek. Old and young ate and drank together.

The presentation of Ukrainian food started with a butter-making competition. A woman of around forty then introduced the national cuisine. Another woman asked two men to help prepare the Ukrainian soup *barscz.* A microphone and camera followed the presenter as she cooked and commented on how to prepare the dish:

> Now we will show how to prepare Ukrainian *barscz*, the basic dish cooked in Ukraine since the old times. The basis is fermented beet or rye juice. On feast days the *barscz* was boiled in the broth; on work days it was cooked with fried

> bacon with onions. In addition, it can be combined with cabbage, beans, or peas. The soup is supposed to be dense, and the spoon should stand up in it.

She further explained: ‘The fermented juice [in *barscz*] is as important in our cuisine and tradition as lard [*salo*]...’

When the *barcsz* was ready, the crowd waited in a queue for Brian Scott to arrive. The food was left untouched until, smiling into the camera, he began to eat. People generally perceived this part of the event to have been made for a television audience.

As evening approached, the crowd grew larger. People came by car, bus, or bicycle. Many of them pitched tents, planning to stay until Sunday. Local journalists from both the print media and the regional TV Rzesów stood ready to do their jobs. After sunset, everything was ready for the Kupaly ritual, and several hundred people awaited the performance.

The signal came when the young men participating in the ritual lit bonfires on the banks of the creek. Once the bonfires were burning, the young women performers, standing on the opposite side of the creek, began singing songs about love and nature. They wore folk dresses and had garlands made of wildflowers on their heads and chests. Camera flashes began to light up the dark valley. One girl appeared from the dark and sang, and the others answered. Holding hands, they made a queue and moved closer to the water, leaving a space for the girl coming out of the dark. She walked to the middle of the circle the girls made after approaching the creek, and all the girls danced slowly into the water.

As enacted in 2004, the ritual took between thirty minutes and an hour. Near the end, the girls threw their garlands into the water, and the boys were supposed to collect them as they flowed along the creek. Instead, the boys playfully attacked the girls and pushed them into the water. The observers smiled, made joking comments, and began to leave as the ritual fell apart. The journalists ran to their offices to prepare the news, and most people went home to Przemyśl. Those who stayed continued to sing and drink.

The next day, Sunday, was St John’s Day, which was celebrated with a religious service in Posada’s old stone-walled *tserkva*, dating to the fifteenth century. After the service, people chatted in front of the *tserkva.* Music sounded from the veranda of the

parish house, where the journalists from Kraków shot additional footage for their documentary after filming in the *tserkva.* Music also came from the field near the Wiar, and people walked back and forth between the two places. Onstage at the field, the cultural program was starting, with performances by the music bands. From inside the pub one could hear the 'Wild Dances' song of the Ukrainian pop star Ruslana, winner of the 2004 Eurovision song contest. Many families held picnics; men drank beer and vodka. In the late afternoon people slowly left the village.

Oleg, the forty-year-old activist, journalist, and poet was one of the main initiators of Kupaly Night celebrations in the Przemyśl area. He expressed a view of innate human nature that fed into an 'organic' narrative about the revitalization of the Kupaly ceremony:

> The greatest number of problems in eastern Europe appear in the borderlands … There is nothing to be studied: it is clear – it is about the human psyche – people need to hate someone … People cannot learn not to, it is naturally inside them – they need to hate, even though they know each other very well and are neighbours. Learning about tolerance is a naïve enterprise and an obsession of Western scholarship.

Referring to the Kupaly ceremony, Oleg said that it had been known from ancient times 'in our westernmost Ukrainian lands, and the ceremony had survived, especially in its most natural sites – along the river San.' The ceremony had died out after World War II, he said, but not for long. In 2000 it took place in Posada Rybotycka for the first time since 1947. As he wrote in a leaflet describing and promoting the ritual, it appeared 'in the same form and style as in ancient times … The return of Kupalo [the old pagad god] was natural and pleasant. The love ceremony of the Ukrainian ancestors was warmly welcomed by contemporary Ukrainians, and they sang to Kupalo with love!'

Oleg's style may be uniquely poetic, but his description sheds light on the narratives that underpin the construction of Ukrainian identity in south-east Poland. This construction is full of rural features, unbounded wilderness, natural virility, and an authentic 'culture' relying on ancient tradition.

Oleg also offered a less metaphorical interpretation of the Kupaly ritual:

> It is an attempt to return to the ancient traditions that were present in these areas. It is not an activity against polonization, it is an attempt to exist, to continue being as we once used to be … Everything was mutated after Action Vistula. We try to remember if we can. There are still people who took part in Kupaly Nights before 1947, and they say everything we do here is fine; they commemorate that time with us … We keep in touch with the old rhythms of nature. This is a nice event; the young people do not need to be addicted to a consumption life-style but celebrate their beauty in the rhythm of great old traditions … The event is open, as the entire cosmos is open … In Poland and in Ukraine in recent years the Kupaly traditions have been revived. Something is in them … They give something to us … Only the girls change [each year]; the ritual remains the same … It is the same time, the same tradition, and the same rhythms across the ages.

The revival of ritual was supposed to link Ukrainians with their tradition. Another friend of mine, a forty-year-old co-organizer of Kupaly Night, made clearer how this old tradition was being rediscovered:

> There are certain centers such as schools and *tserkvy* that take care of one's nationality. But there are also informal activities like this one in Posada. I myself have observed that even people who did not grow up aware of their Ukrainian origin, who were not taught by their parents about their Ukrainian history, now search for it themselves … Most of the people here come from the Przemyśl region, but gradually people from all of Poland learn about this event … This is not a national ghetto. We want to show outsiders how rich Ukrainian culture was and what its range was and in this way break some stereotypes.

A twenty-three-year-old male student of Ukraine philology at Jagełłonian University in Kraków contributed a similar thought: 'We live in Poland, among Poles, in their culture. At the same time that we are Polish citizens, we are Ukrainians. We create our own

culture, keep our own old traditions. We have fun, drink beer, dance with girls seemingly in the same way as Poles do, but a bit differently.'

During and after the Kupaly ritual in Posada in 2004, many of my friends characterized it as 'the end of romantic times'. They were referring particularly to the increasing commercialization and 'media-ization' of the event. Although people wanted to show their rich Ukrainian culture to a Polish audience and welcomed journalists to the festival, at the same time many felt offended by the publicity and noted a loss of 'authenticity' in the once intimate community celebration. One participant, age thirty-six, commented:

> I take part in Kupaly every year. I like to go there. I liked it most at the beginning, when everything was fresh; the emotions were authentic … I liked that it was not an artificial resurrection of folklore but an authentic experience and a kind of fun with that folklore … After a couple of years, however, I grew to like the event [*impreza*] less – the routine, schematic activities, the tape players as the basis for the girls' singing, and so on. Also, a lot of beer showed up … But I still go there. It is one of the few [Ukrainian] events also attended by Poles … They go there because they really want to go; it is interesting for them, and I like that they integrate with us, even if only to have a beer with us. Apart from that, there are the beautiful natural surroundings. Activities like this should be organized in such post-Ukrainian places.

My neighbour in Przemyśl also remembered Kupaly Night as the 'feast of love, a kind of combination of pagan-Christian tradition … when youths jumped over the fire'. Now everything seemed less authentic to him. Many young Ukrainians said that Poles attended the ritual only because it was 'an attraction'. Ola, age twenty-three, remarked that it was 'an artificial party [*impreza*] now; everybody is filming it just because it looks exotic'. Many other people commented that each year the event had become more commercialized. Food, drinks, and folk artefacts had begun to be offered for sale, and the

event was now advertised and covered in the media.[5] As the Kupaly ceremony in 2005 reveals, many actors in the ritual were aware of its commercial development and attempted to change it.

Kupaly Nihgt 2005

On 2 July 2005, Kupaly Night was organized near Przemyśl's city center, next to the city's best-known hotel and near camping facilities and a sports stadium. In the afternoon, Przemyśl's new 'Swejk's tourist path' was officially opened. A part of 'Swejk's Maneuvers' (the open-air festival), it was intended to serve as a reminder of the old Austrian times and to become a magnet for tourists. The Kupaly ritual, performed by a student folklore ensemble from Ukraine, took place in the evening around a bonfire in a large field in the San floodplain. A covered stage with lights and technical equipment was erected next to the hotel and was surrounded by kiosks offering folk crafts, folk dishes, and books. Farther in the background were two fast-food tents. The hotel sold beer and hosted an icon-painting school for children.

This year the newly elected leadership of the Przemyśl branch of the Association of Ukrainians had managed to get organizational and financial support from the Przemyśl city council. The mayor himself opened the festival, stressing the need for Christian understanding of St John's Day instead of the pagan holiday. The program was moderated by a local journalist and the new head of the Przemyśl Association of Ukrainians. Unlike in 2004, the main language of the event was Polish, though Ukrainian was also used. Several thousand people were present at the climax of the ritual. The crowd was so large that only a few dozen people were actually able to observe the performance around the bonfire and in the river.

Before the nighttime ritual, as a choir performed artistically arranged Ukrainian folksongs onstage, I asked one friend, an immigrant from Russia who had lived in the city for several years, why he thought the Kupaly celebration had been moved from Posada to Przemyśl that year. He replied:

[5] An older, bigger, and better-known event, the Lemko bonfire (*Lemkivska vatra*) – the twin of Kupaly Night – corroborates the observation that popular ethnic festivities are becoming increasingly commoditized in Poland. The annual Lemko festival, held since the 1980s at the end of July in the village of Zdynia in the Carpathians, attracts sponsorships – big breweries compete over the monopoly for selling beer at the festival, for example – and is also financed by the state.

> It is the fashion today; Ukraine is in the headlines … The city council gave money for it, [whereas] before they did not. If there had been no Orange Revolution [the change of regime in Ukraine in 2004–2005], they [local Ukrainians] would have been sitting in Posada all the time. They were there among their own [*wsistci swoji*]; nobody intervened in what they did. Here, you know that they [local Ukrainians] want to show up … They might wish to include it [Kupaly Night] in the Galician Festival next time, and then it will move quickly, you will see!

Later I met two young women from Sanok, wearing folk dresses and waiting to go onstage. They criticized the performance given by students from the Przemyśl Ukrainian school, which they saw as artificial and lacking authenticity because it included folk music from a synthesizer, percussion from loudspeakers, and well-prepared choreography. They told me the students had performed dances from 'the steppe', that is, from eastern Ukraine. The two women said that they themselves sang proper Carpathian songs in an authentic form and without electronic instruments.

At that moment the moderator introduced two national dances that were about to be performed, clearly differentiating between the Polish polonaise and the Ukrainian *kopak.* One of the women commented that the event had seemed much more 'alive' and natural the previous year in Posada. What we were observing seemed to her more like a folklore festival. Meanwhile, students from the Ukrainian school began dancing onstage, watched carefully by their choreographer, who was from Ukraine. After this performance, the icon paintings made by the children in the icon-painting school were auctioned off, the money earmarked for charity. The highest bids were made by a local entrepreneur and a visitor from Canada who, like many hundreds of other Canadian Ukrainians every summer, had come to see his homeland.

My Ukrainian friends observed that more Poles attended the event than in 2004. They appreciated this, arguing that it helped to strengthen mutual sympathies between the two nations. Olga, age thirty-five, said that in this way, 'reconciliation is actually coming'. Nevertheless, some of my friends also remembered the intimate atmosphere of Kupaly Nights from previous years. In Posada they used to bring their own sausages and

grill them and drink their own beer and vodka. Here, food and drink were for sale, and the event seemed impersonal. Oleg attributed the lack of intimacy to the fact that the stage was distanced from the people. Olga suggested that the best thing would be to organize two Kupaly Night celebrations – an official one in Przemyśl and a private one in Posada. One elderly man remarked simply that in Posada the atmosphere was better, but he believed that most Ukrainians saw the event in Przemyśl as successful. They particularly liked the public presentation of their 'Ukrainianness' in a city that, owing to its nationalist tensions, had not long before been called a 'dark fortress' (*ciemnogród*).

In 2 July around 10 pm in Posada, where I drove after the ceremony in Przemyśl ended, the atmosphere was depressed. The grass had been cut in just a small area, and only about twenty young people were gathered around a fast-food caravan. The old wooden stage from previous years was half-covered by a tent, and music sounded from a tape-recorder. The entire night was a drinking session, and no performance took place. On Sunday morning people shared food and the remaining drinks, and during the day they bathed in the creek. These people called their event the 'alternative' Kupaly. Anka, age twenty-two, explained: 'I can have fun in Przemyśl every day. Here there is fresh air and nature. What can you do in the center of the city? I hope next year Kupaly Night comes back to Posada.' Aska, age twenty-five, added:

> Posada is itself a magnet. In Przemyśl there is nothing to be attracted by, and after 10 PM one must remain quiet. Two or three women in the Association of Ukrainians decided in favour of Przemyśl because in their opinion everybody wants just to get drunk in Posada.

People had got used to Posada, she said, and every year more and more people had attended the event there.

Around noon on Sunday, two friends from Przemyśl arrived by bus and joined the group. They brought the news that an excellent party had been held in Przemyśl, but the atmosphere of Posada was missing. Andryi was the only one of the original Kupaly Night organizers who decided to hold the event in Posada that year. He said his friends had betrayed him when they agreed to hold the ritual in Przemyśl. He still hoped that the

following year he would be able to bring Kupaly Night back to Posada: 'They [the new leadership of the Ukrainian Association] were saying that people just drink here. But it is a pagan festival – people have to drink! It turned out so well last year – two thousand people attended. The old inhabitants of Posada from Ukraine were planning to come this year, but they could not [because of the change of venue].'

To Andryi it was unfair to move the event to Przemyśl. He remembered that in 2000 the Kupaly celebration had been a voluntary event, and no one asked for a salary. Today, professional organizers and professional ensembles were hired. A company even contracted to supply toilets, he said. In Posada, one of his friends from a nearby village had come to cut the grass with a tractor, and Andryi had bought food and beer to sell at his small hostel in the former parish house at almost no markup. He lost not only his illusions about the intimacy of Kupaly Night, he remarked, but also some modest earnings and possible publicity for his hostel.

Andryi and some of the others believed that the Kupaly celebration had moved permanently to Przemyśl, 'the emotional centre for Ukrainians'.[6] Business in Posada seemed to be over and would never come back. One of the two people who had turned the former cooperative dwelling into a hostel was planning to sell out his share, and the two had closed their pub. I heard some gossip that Ukrainians with economic interests had caused the Kupaly location to be changed, but Andryi did not want to talk about it.

It seemed certain that in future, the costs of advertising and subsidizing the event would grow. The city would contribute to the costs, as would the central office of the state-sponsored Association of Ukrainians in Poland, which included Kupaly on its official calendar of activities. Kupaly Night was no longer a spontaneous, voluntary, local ceremony but an ethno-festival organized by professionals. Many individual Ukrainians felt ambivalent about this kind of development. They were annoyed and disturbed by the growing ethno-business, the activities of the media, and the way their rustic tradition attracted Poles. In this sense, as Jon Mitchell (2002) observed for Malta, the Kupaly ritual expresses and accommodates the dilemmas and ambiguities inherent in modernity itself.

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[6] In 2006 the event took place in Przemyśl, but still, ten to fifteen friends met in Andryi's hostel in Posada the night before.

Multiculturalism and Tourism

Virtually all my Ukrainian friends appreciated the political side of the event in Przemyśl, the presence of numerous Poles, and the city council's interest in co-organizing it. Unlike Andryi and a few of his friends, the vast majority of Ukrainians I talked to wanted to keep the event in Przemyśl and show their 'rich Ukrainian tradition' to a wider Polish audience. They believed that more consumers and tourists would attend the festival in Przemyśl and that more politicians, who would be deciding on subsidies for national minorities, would notice it there. Kupaly Night in Przemyśl indicated not only the consolidation of Polish-Ukrainian relations but also the growing importance of the ethno-business and heritage industry. As a friend reminded me, people in the villages of south-east Poland nowadays thought differently from the way they used to: 'There is a lack of *tserkvy,* and it would be nice to have some more, to show them to tourists.' The commodification of tradition and ethnicity offered a means to achieve greater rural prosperity.

The return or revaluation of tradition in Europe is connected to the decentralization of policy-making and the increasing role of regionalism and cultural policies (Boissevain 1992) as parts of the 'People's Europe' model promoted by the European Union (Shore 1993). The revival of ethnic rituals is explained as a response to various social-structural changes in European societies. Among these are tourism, people's reactions to new cultural models introduced from above, commercialization, liturgical changes after the Second Vatican Council, and the growth of the electronic media (Boissevain 1992: 16, 1996). South-east Poland intends to build its modern European future on tourism, for which a distinctive regional culture is particularly valuable. Increasing numbers of new members of the 'cultural intelligentsia' are being produced in high schools and universities in Poland where Ukrainian philology and regional studies (*regionalistyka*), for example, have been introduced, and these people will care about culture. Although they are seen as necessary for assisting in the growing commerce between Poland and Ukraine, many of them will certainly end up in tourism, one magnet of which will be 'exotic' Ukrainian culture.

I heard many times, from Poles as well as Ukrainians, that eastern Christianity represented continuity and a return to tradition, to an original, 'natural' Christianity

characterized by purity, authenticity, and archaism. Throughout the postsocialist world, people are enchanted with forms of spirituality (Potrata 2004), and in south-east Poland this enchantment manifests itself in the special popularity of eastern Christian images, narratives, and practices, something that Jonathan Friedman attributed to traditionalism (Friedman 1994). As Friedman wrote (1994: 243), 'traditionalism is expressed in the desire for roots, the ethnification of the world, and the rise of the "fourth world", the return to religion and stable values'. This search for identity in the face of rapid social change might have been behind the growing political significance of religious-nationalist festivities in postsocialist Przemyśl. Nowadays, non-religious festivals such as Kupaly Night are also gaining popularity in south-east Poland. They reflect the way 'modernity is now generating the pressures that give rise to play' (Boissevain 1992: 15), and their traditionalism is dispersed within ideas and practices of fashionable multiculturalism.

On the one hand, this multiculturalism incorporates a traditional narrative of Ukrainian existence in south-east Poland that is complementary to the narrative driven by religious professionals and religiously committed intellectuals. In this vein the celebration reflects a move away from religious-supervised national rituals and towards more popular ones, outside of the religious domain in south-east Poland. On the other hand, the church remains involved in the business of ethno-revivalism, directly through its ongoing supervision of the nation and indirectly through its architectural artefacts and 'exotic' eastern practices, which attract tourism. The common ground between these two sides of the Ukrainian ethno-revivalist movement is a narrative based on exclusive tradition, deep spirituality, bounded culture, and closeness to nature. Writing about south-east Poland, Chris Hann (2002a) commented on the 'totalitarian usage' of culture, which relies on a conflation of culture, ethnicity, and identity and is closely linked to nationalist projects. This is similar to what Elizabeth Rata (2003, 2005), writing about the shift from class-based politics to identity politics under neo-liberal capitalism among the Maoris of New Zealand, labeled bi-culturalism and neo-traditionalism. The revival of tradition in south-east Poland is nurtured by Europe-wide and nation-state policies and discourses on 'culture' and national minorities, as well as by demands from the growing ethno-business and tourism sector.

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