

**“THE CHILDREN OF THE NATURE”.
ON THE POLISH HIGHLANDERS
IN DESCRIPTIONS FROM THE 19TH CENTURY¹**

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Abstract: *Tekst dotyczy kwestii tworzonych na przestrzeni stulecia ludoznawczych opisów i fikcji literackich. Jego celem jest analiza XIX-wiecznych tekstów źródłowych dotyczących Górali tatrzańskich, uwzględniająca kontekst, w którym powstały – ówczesną sytuację historyczną, polityczną (które to czynniki przynajmniej w I połowie XIX wieku pełniły rolę wiodącą), preferencje w zakresie wyboru gatunku literackiego oraz używanego języka. Istotne było zaobserwowanie, jak to, co osobiste, prywatne, indywidualne (jak mogłoby się wydawać) układa się w spójną całość schematu wskazującego, jak należy przeżywać, odczuwać, smakować rzeczywistość. Szczególna uwaga została zwrócona na opisy dotyczące tych elementów kultury Górali, które wzbudzały największe zdziwienie i podziw u “ludzi nizin”. Opisywane były one za pomocą tzw. “opisu flamandzkiego”, którego celem było kopiowanie rzeczywistości. Znaczna część materiałów źródłowych została poświęcona opisom wyglądu i charakteru Górali, które to opisy wynikały najczęściej z fascynacji ówczesnymi prądami myślowymi, np. ideą człowieka naturalnego, frenologią, czy też patognomią.*

Key words: *antropologia interpretatywna, etnografia, mity XIX wieku, Górale Tatrzańscy, mityzacja historii*

Since the 1960s the validity of the ethnological knowledge has been in question, what resulted in the “ethnography of ethnography”, “textual anthropology”, “interpretative anthropology”. It turned out that what previously was assumed to be Truth may only be the substitution of the truth, and that the very knowledge of the analysed subject can sometimes tell more about the investigator. Therefore it was crucial to resign from the conviction about a-diplomacy and a-historicity of the anthropologist’s literary activities. Hence, it has been emphasised that Truth is always immersed in the context of language, politics and history. The Truth cannot be acquired just on the basis of experience. The end of “the certain type of sensitivity” and “the displacement in the ethnological field”, which “could idealise

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the researcher's subject of the dream for a long time, unless the more common feeling of its dryness", caused the necessity to rise questions on the anthropologist agency and the results of his/her researches (Tokarska-Bakir, 1990: 3). The contemporary anthropologist – who learned "the lesson of humility" – does not have to believe that he/she is the omniscient person who can show the mystery of other cultures. Therefore, not the categorical statements of the self-confident anthropologist are perceived as adequate but rather the self-reflections of the work in progress.

The main goal of this stage of the anthropology is, *inter alia*, to analyse of the heritage and achievements of the predecessors and to engage critical perspective of the emerging truth about "thers". The concept of "being there and writing here" is not enough since the end of the belief in established methods about their own activities. It is also important to define and to show the various techniques and ways of knowledge acquisition. The anthropology, treating its own achievements as a large "library of successful stories", caused the return of the ethnography implied as a textual revelation of the cultural reality. The authority of the anthropologist devaluated when it appeared that his/her activity (i.e. the activity of the scientist), has a lot in common with writing and shows the similar influences such as subjectivism of the author's experiences.

The representation of the one possible description of the reality has been questioned. According to Clifford, the descriptions of "the Others", which were created by uncritical anthropological authorities, were merely the fictions and literary creation of the truth (See: Clifford 1994). The emergence of the new meanings of "being there" and the new cultural situation had to be a great experience for the anthropologist, yet he/she as a scientist, had to keep calmness and objectivity in committing his/her own apparent indifference to the research analysis. The description of the cultural phenomena, thanks to the achievements of the textual anthropology, stopped being seen as "an open record" and started to be perceived as a complex construction dependent on many factors, which have also influence on the anthropologist. The anthropology was no more an objective science that could give precise and authentic descriptions of the reality, on contrary it became a fiction which gives the plausible and possible description.

Therefore, the cultural anthropology due to its closely relations with writing has been analysed from the point of the creation of the ethnographic description. The exploration of the literary character of ethnography underline the ways of the anthropological creation and moreover it considers the context of descriptions not just in their political and historical layers but also in author's one.

Is it possible then to relate those rules to the indigenous ethnography and to "the occurrences" that appears in the cross-cutting context of literature and ethnography? If we take into consideration that the descriptions of the folk include (hide?) the quotations, clichés and literary traces, then the answer is "yes". We may even venture to say that it was postmodernism, which increased the interests in the beginnings of ethnography and in the creations of the 19th century ethnographic tales. The different range of the anthropological and ethnographic searches did not disturb the struggle with similar problems – for example both, Zorian Dołęga-Chodakowski and Bronisław Malinowski were coping with the hostile

environment: "I perfectly remember those long visits in particular little villages during the first weeks and the feelings of hopelessness and despair after many persistent yet fruitless endeavours" (Malinowski, 1967: 23-24). Although Chodakowski did not explore the Western Pacific, he experienced similar predicaments and goals "«argonauting» through the steppe and muds of wide Ruthenia" (Witkowska, 1972: 25).

In order to establish what factors were creating ethnographic narrations in 19th century it is essential to observe "the transformation of ethnography into *volkskundlich* inventions" (Libera, 1995: 137). This sort of perspective seems to be quite graceful assignment, in particular when we take into consideration that the beginning and changes of the idea of the folksiness are related with the belles-lettres that became the basis for the creation of different "folk models". It is precisely in these narrations that we may observe the epoch's models of thinking and the ways of deductions (characteristic for scientific paradigm from those days) that were used to describe the moral reality. In other words, not only the ideas were creating the substance of the mythicized representation, but also the knowledge about the human being and society. As we may presume, the individual narrations, author's visions and experiences constitute the patterns, cliché and models of thinking, consequently influencing the ways of seeing and experiencing the world.

While paying attention to particularly close connections between anthropology and literature we may also notice that the first *Volkskundlich* narrations were not just the expressions of the individuality and personality of the authors (who chose the subject of the researches) but also the expression of the author's society opinions. They followed the recommendation of realism, which had influence not on those narrations (language, titles, ways of presenting the protagonist). The main goal of realism was to present as much as possible information about the main character (his/her appearance, way of talking and behavior, etc.). There was no scientific methodology in the very beginning of *Volkskundlich*, however due to its popularity, the instructions appeared (for example handbooks about how to make a research) which contributed to the easier and schematic way of collecting the ethnographic data.

When we are interpreting the narrations it is very important to define their genre, because they differ in the context of text construction rules, the subject, and the grade of the credibility. In order to be scientific one must followed certain instructions: the text should be objective, descriptive, without excessive amount of poetical expressions (although in portrayed case it was almost impossible). The truthfulness of scientific analyse also dependent on the specific titles which included such a words as: "outline", "draft", "picture", "description".

Consequently, various narrations about "the factual state" of the folk culture and the mythical knowledge about the character of "the natural man" emerged. Interestingly, the latter was treated as a pretext just to make a deduction about preponderant ideas and models dominant in the particular epoch. In short, the researchers, by exaggerating one facts and ignoring the others, were constructing the mythological knowledge about the folk.

The descriptions of the folk were enclosed with the general opinions and the vision of the world and human being, which obviously were not a part of conducted research but rather an individual conviction of the writers. It is precisely *Volkskundlich* and folklore studies (in particular, their romantic beginnings) that created and preserved those imaginations of the folk which, in some cases, exist even today. The science paved the way to the certain forms of thinking about folksiness, which may be seen as “the carriers of ideology behaving differently in various historical situations” (Robotycki, Węglarz, 1983: 4).

We must be aware who those people were. The narrations (especially at the beginning) were not a creation of merely educated experts, who were working according to normalized rules, but also the enthusiasts-amateurs, who were convinced of the uniqueness of their mission and whose main goal was to show the true appearance of the folk. Among those enthusiasts-amateurs were, however, almost exclusively intellectuals and the results of their work illustrates the opinion that ethnographic narrations are, first of all, the description of the descriptive, and not the describable. Therefore, their creativity should be considered not just as an expression of the creative individuality, but initially, as a reflection of the ideas, needs and tendencies of the society.

Volkskundlich, to a large measure, resulted from the need of exotics which could be seen in the landscapes (rural, mountainous) and folk (material and spiritual culture). Moreover it was also a response for the need of the epoch (the 19th century was the period of history domination and documentation of the changes declining in the reality) and the need of the textual evidences of national culture, cohesion and community.

One of the most expressive and emotion-inspiring texts were those about mountains and the Highlanders. The way of their perception went through different periods and developed into different directions. The process of “assimilation” of the Highlanders (and others texts of the culture) is not one-dimensional, homogeneous act, but rather quite complex and diverse.

Since the 19th century the territory, that constituted mythical and attractive land for the painters, poets, travelers and ethnographers, was the Tatra Mountains. Those, who were looking for new impressions, were enchantment both by the beauty of the nature and the beauty of its inhabitants and their affection for freedom. The mountains were a space qualitative different, where the rules predominant in so called “normal world” did not exist. It was probably not a coincidence that romanticists were the ones who “discovered” Tatra Mountains. The beginning of the 19th century was the time of romantic wandering, searching for “the new lands” and the possibilities to discover the unknown impressions. One of the most valuable experiences was the journey to the mountain and obviously the Alps (with the ascent of Mont Blanc) were the most desirable. However also domestic trips, searching for the roots of the homeland, experiencing new places and meeting new people (folk) in whom they discovered the possessor of the most precious elements of the native culture, were very popular.

It is important to emphasise that the perception of the wild nature as a self-contained value is not a natural state; on the contrary, it is mostly an acquired

disposition. For example, the history shows that in the 15th century the Tatra Mountains were merely a place of ores mines; in the 16th century – according to Jacek Kolbuszewski – they were perceived as “an obstacle in the journey”; namely, in the 18th century the Tatra Mountains became a place for treasure-diggers. Therefore, the mountainous space was constituted in different ways: beginning with the utilitarian meaning, lack of understanding of its delights, romantic need of its existence, and ending with the positivistic need of mountainous achievements. Certainly, the “tourist gaze” – to use John Urry concept – is a category that changes historically. Each epoch creates its own ways of reactions, whilst the social practices exist in comparison to its opposed category (work environment, everyday life). The “gaze” may be defined in the three dichotomies: romantic – collective, authentic – inauthentic, historical – modern (See: Urry, 2007). The romantic gaze, which is important for this paper, emphasises the privacy and the very individual feelings of the observed spaces and objects.

Therefore, the Tatra Mountains were perceived as a qualitative different and very particular space, which was closed for the external and undesirable influences (the belief lasted till the end of the 19th century). It was a “distinct world” with “different atmosphere, different shapes, different colours and different sky” (Matlakowski, 1892: 5)².

It is the folk who became leading hero in those touring narrations; however, they had also another one, a hidden co-hero: “the idea of the folk” idealized by the Romantics. The Romantics (especially those from the first half of the 19th century), while entering the new territory, the pristine area, created the narrations that defined specific characters which in turn influenced further perception of the folk. Significant in this context are the words of Teodor Triplin, who was writing about romantic need of a conquer: “I want to be the first! [...] Mysterious places! I want to sightsee you; I want to be the first man, whose foot will be tread on yours inaccessible places” (Triplin, 1855: 105).

The first “conquers” did not have, as it was mentioned above, serious scientific methods – they need to have a “common sense”, scientific intuition and few information which were useful while creating comparisons between portrayed folk (the Highlanders) and the ones he/she knew earlier. Consequently, the readers of such narrations (based on oppositions and contrasts), could form their own visions of the very folk by using own experiences and notices. Thus, what was already known had been later compared with the unknown. This lack of the scientific plan may be widely seen in the first notes about Highlanders of Tatra Mountains. The notes are mainly short impressions from the journey which include only author’s feelings without even a shadow of scientific objectivity.

² Some fragments of the narrations will be quoted in the original language because of the difficulties with the translation of some words used in the Polish literature from the 19th century. “nie ma tu cudownych zachodów słońca, jakie stanowią przepych i ozdobę równin i morza. Wśród tego odmiennego świata, do niedawna bezdrożami, lasami, potokami, rozbójnictwem odciętego od świata cywilizowanego prawie tak samo, jak dzisiaj wewnątrz Afryki, wytworzył się świat ludzki godzien bliskiego poznania: język, charakter, zwyczaje, ubiór, zasługują na szczegółowe zbadanie i opisanie”. (Matlakowski 1892: 5).

In other words, this kind of first impressions were merely author's observations containing only few ethnographic issues on the appearance, character, local costumes (i.e. the ones that were quite easy to observe). On the other hand, we may find there author's self-reflections about the important necessity to show the readers the unknown world.

In the second half of the 19th century this romantic enthusiasm was replaced by positivistic scrupulousness, precision and concerns about the existence of the rural folk. The articles from daily press were supplemented (but not substituted) by scientific reports, which were the results of the ethnographic fieldwork. Also the theoretical background was necessary to get "the best" description of the cultural facts. Therefore, when the instructions of "how to examine folk properties" were established the fieldwork was more schematic and ordered. Consequently, the questionnaires – as a part of the instructions caused that in second half of the 19th century not only the amateurs were examining the folk's culture, but also the professionals.

It is impossible to reconstruct the believable picture of the Highlander's culture on the base of the material from the 19th century. "The folk searchers" were writing just about those elements of culture which they could see on the first gaze and which had an impact on the imagination. And that can tell us a lot about interests of those days.

The desire to evoke among the readers the impression of the direct participation in portrayed reality found its expression in "the painting through the words" (in the 19th century quite important was the conception of Flemish description). The writers were interested in copying the appearance of the people, places, and objects: they directed their cognitive curiosity "on the moral realities (present and historical), the props of everyday life in different social environment, the products of the material culture, folkloristic and natural peculiarities" (Sławiński, 2000: 252). They wanted to describe the "new world" in such interesting ways that the reader could imagine it. Therefore, the description had to copy the world which was viewed by the authors – people, landscape, objects and their shapes and colors. Accordingly to Tomasz Mann: "the mystery of the narration [...] consists in making interesting what seems to be quite boring" (Mann, 1998: 62).

The common feature of these writings was a romantic reaction to the beauty of the nature which influenced the shape of relations and the memory of the authors. The most important was however the direct contact with the folk – the authors could be proud that they by themselves could experience the places unknown for the others.

To underline the difference between inhabitants of particular parts of Poland and to create quite easy to imagine picture of the folk they presented detailed description of the appearance which almost always favored the Highlanders and depreciated the folk from the lowlands. In the 19th century there was an important belief in causative power of the nature. People resembled the places where they lived in. According to this belief, people who lived on the uplands were in better situation than, for example, the inhabitants of Polesie's swamps. The peasants were "humble, withdrawn, convicted and therefore they accepted a monotonous

and colorless life” (Chrzanowski, 1973: 34). In comparison to “polite highlander race” all “peasants and even craftsmen doing their monotonous and narrow work, are ill-mannered boor” (Buls, 1882: 34). According to Miski: “the inhabitants of the lowlands always have on their faces the impenetrable expression of quiet sadness, which in some cases can even switch to melancholic gloom” (Miski, 1864: 354). The inhabitants of the Polesie were living in the nature which could not “inspire them with gladness” so their look is quite “gloomy”; the folk from Podlasie have on the other hand “the body of medi.

We may say that in the close distant to Kraków the invention of the primordial Highlanders occurred and was then contrasted with the higher culture perceived as a phenomenon without tradition and clear vision of the world. In the 19th century there was a fever of searching pra-Polish roots, which were found in highlander’s villages. Everything what was folk was the element of fascination, in particular – its “spiritual culture”, world view and folklore. The latter one was important not only because of the artistic values, but also as an important historical source of the oldest Slavs traces.

The opinions about the folksiness had mainly syncretic nature and were enmeshed “continually in the estimative and non-analytical procedures; also in science they happens to be the variety of the sacral thinking” (Sulima, 1982: 78). The aspect of presenting specific imaginations of the Highlanders had some motivations, which consisted in to two important myths – the myth of the primitive man and myth of the folk-nation (See: Wojnowska 1974). Those myths reassured the identity of the nation, built the vision of the Arcadian future which was especially important for Poland in the times without independence. The mythisation (as well as the mechanism of the exaggeration) was in this case related to glorification.

The Romantics invented a new Slavic place, where “live good, simple, kind people, where healthy customs rule. They love peace and loathe the war [...] They are not however the primitive people. The art is important for them and they know how to use natural goods” (Witkowska, 1972: 35). The starting point of the mythisation the process of the Highlanders is related to the idea, that they possess the distinct tribal features, which were regarded as a representative features for the whole Poles. According to Antoni Kroh, the fact, that the Highlanders became the candidates to the honorable role of the representatives of the whole country can raise the amusement. “Poland, as we know, is the lowland, the mountains are just a minimal percentage of the area, and the pastoral-agricultural type of the farming, which is distinctive for them (the Highlanders – J. R.) and which determines their culture is something exotic for us” (Kroh, 2000: 133).

The romantic narrations about Tatra Mountains were equal to the origins of the national culture. According to this point of view, it is a truly Polish region without any foreign influences. The myth of Slavs was the “new religion” the effect of the sense of common origins and belief in common culture. The myth was embedded in the “illusory opinion about allegedly happy period of the primitive Slavs history, with such features as pristine and mildness of the agricultural life, moral virtue, life in peace, harmony and agreement with neighbors” (Burszta, 1985: 157).

According to “the believers” of this religion, the folk was the only representative of the Slavs and Polish tradition, while the upper class culture contain foreign influences. Obviously, it must be underline that the Slavs myth has nothing in common with the history. Nevertheless, this idea was present from the very beginning of ethnographic research. The initial “reports from the field” contained the lists of instructions and demands which aim was to make from readers the conscious patriots.

In the 19th century we may observe the stories about “actual state” of folk culture and knowledge about “natural man” who, as it was mentioned was solely used as a pretext to divagate about the ideas and patterns of the epoch. The researchers – exaggerating some facts and completely ignoring the others – were contributing to the creation of this folk mythical knowledge. The image of “the natural man” resembled the desire of the epoch and the idea to perceive the folk (in particular the Highlanders) as the most true and primordial element of the society that have never been touched by civilization and who preserved the most precious Polish, Slavs features – the authenticity and the invariability.

The human addiction to his/her environment and nature was in this case much stronger than the influence of geographical determinism. The mountainous space became the area where “the strong type of people” lived, therefore in romantic imagination it became also a heroic space that “generates” the people who could deal with the hard living conditions.

Therefore, the idea of “the heroic nature” assumes the existence of close connection between the human and his/her environment. The symbiosis of the Highlanders and the nature was not only in the type of theirs farming but also in the appearance and the behavior. The Highlanders – “the children of the surrounding nature” – were as beautiful as nature itself. “their physical features almost always beautiful [...] and regular have an expression of some kind dignity and seriousness; on the open forehead the mind is depicting; in the blue eyes there is a shining brightness, humor, openness and sincerity” (Steczowska, 1872: 41)³. In short, the appearance of the Highlanders was “beautiful and impressive” (Goszczyński, 1835: 369)⁴, the expression of their faces was full of intelligence (Zejszner, 1849: 8)⁵, and the Highlander was the real king and the master of the mountain (Steczowska, 1872: 43)⁶.

³ “Góral od pierwszego wejrzenia uderza nas postawą. W rysach twarzy ogólnie prawie pięknych, ściągłych i regularnych, mają pospolicie wyraz pewnej szlachetności i powagi, rozum maluje się na otwartym czole; łagodność, a obok tego bystrość i dowcip, jaśnieje w oczach najczęściej błękitnych otwartość, szczerłość”. (Steczowska 1871: 41).

⁴ The appearance was usually described as: “piękna i okazała, odpowiednia przedmiotom ziemi, wśród której żyją, rysy szlachetne i ściągłe, wzrost wysmukły, ruch szczupłych, ale wybujałych członków żywy i zręczny”. (Goszczyński 1835: 369).

⁵ The expression of their faces: “pełen inteligencji każe powątpiewać, że to nie prości górale zrodzeni pod tymi niebotycznymi halami; ale jest to czysty błąd. Są to dzieci tych gór, tak dorodne jak ich kwiaty, odznaczające się żywością barwy i niepospolitymi postaciami”. (Zejszner 1849: 8).

⁶ “[Góral] urodzony wśród gór, przyzwyczajony od dzieciństwa do wdzierania się na skały i przebywania najprzykrzejszych miejsc [...] nabiera tej giętkości w postawie, tej lekkości i zręczności w ruchach, jakiej na próżno szukalibyśmy u mieszkańców równin. Nic piękniejszego nad widok

It must be admitted that if the narrations about the male Highlanders were quite homogeneous (deprived of opposite opinions), the narrations about women were characterised by contradictions. According to one of the authors: "they have a round shape, cheeks are sticking out, the nose is short and thick, they walk barefoot with confident step" (Buls, 1882: 35). Comparing to men "they don't have such a prominent character" (Zejszner, 1851: 535). In turn, according to others authors: "they are aware of their charm and carefully carry about it" (Goszczyński, 1853: 121-122). In that case, apart from individual aesthetic preferences of the authors, we may find the important tendencies of the belles-lettres. In the 19th century the presence of the erotic was clearly noticeable, and with the growing meaning of the romance genre, the expansion of the narrations that emphasise the appearance and the character emerged. In the so called higher literature these parts of the body which exaggeratedly underlined the gender of the main character were usually omitted, however in the case of female Highlanders we may notice quite bold images of them⁷.

In the 19th century the opinion about the distinct isolation of Tatra Mountains from the external world was very popular. Therefore, it had an impact on the Highlanders' nature they could, as it was imagined, preserve the oldest Polish culture⁸. They were described as heroes living in a happy land where the very existence had a sense and value. They were strong people, full of the specific energy, which did not exist in the places that were "destroyed" by civilization. Consequently, they could be an useful vehicle for the rest of the society (we may see here the influence of Jean Jacques Rousseau who wrote that the civilization does not make people happy). The nature was a synonym of the order and signified the existence in "the state of innocence". In those narrations we may notice the dichotomy (civilization – nature), which indicates that in the urban style of life there are the roots of the whole evil.

górala wśród skał, przepaści, urwisk, na oko zdaje się, że chyba kozom dzikim przystępnym. Tu on prawdziwym panem i królem. Z całą swobodą i pewnością przeskakuje z kamienia na kamień, czepia się gładkiej, pochyłej opoki, nieustraszonym okiem zagląda w bezdenną przepaść, a czoło jego promienieje dumą i radością, bo on tu jest w swoim żywiole. Ta dzika natura jest prawdziwą matką jego, on jej synem nieodrodnym, kochającym ją całą miłością pocziwego serca". (Steczowska 1872: 43).

⁷ "Podhalanki godne obok Podhalan zajmują miejsce. Powszechną cechą jest u góralek szlachetność rysów: są one zazwyczaj ś ciągłe, drobne, proporcjonalne, ożywione okiem ciemnym, pełnym, pomiernej wielkości, o cienionych brwiami kształtnie i wyraźnie zakreślonymi, z włosiem bujnym, najczęściej ciemnym. Pięknej twarzy odpowiada również piękna cała budowa, rzadko zbyt wybujała, a smukła, harmonijna we wszystkich swoich częściach, z nogą i ręką małą. Są pomiędzy nimi piękności pierwszego rzędu, które stosownie przystrojone mogłyby jaśnieć na najpierwszych salonach, a które nawet w swoim prostym stroju nęcą jakimś wdziękiem niewysłowionym". (Tatomir 1868: 90).

⁸ "Góral oderwany górami od reszty świata, zostawiony zupełnie naturze, pod jej rządem stoi, jej prawa wykonuje i jej się całkiem poddaje. A jako taki musi być Góral dobrym, bo wszystko w pierwotnym, naturalnym stanie jest dobre. Natura nic złego nie wydaje. On jest żywym jej obrazem. Wszystkie jego czynności i mowy są proste i otwarte, bo też i natura nic umyślnie skrycie nie działa". (G., J. 1840: 359).

The image of the Highlanders from the 19th century owes a lot to the romantic fascination of physiognomy. The Romantics saw in Lavater's theory of superiority of the spiritual element over the material ones, the very core of the relations between the spirit and the human body. It was the physiognomy that provided the conclusions about the character, feelings and the mind based on the external features. In short, the authors assumed the close connection of the human's appearance with his/her spiritual attributes. Hipolit Taine and the French naturalists paid a great attention to the racial and biological factors in the human's personality. The determinants of the race were: the appearance, temperament, character and some hereditary features. Interestingly, the notion of race was applied just with the reference to few representatives of the folk – "a person from the populace, except of the Highlander from Podhale or eventually the Hutsul, could at the best become «a type», eventually «a delicious type», if the painter noticed him/her" (Kroh, 2000: 148).

In order to depict the image of a person, the Romantics mainly considered (according to Lavater's map of the face) the appearance of the forehead, eyebrow, eyes, lips and nose. The forehead, therefore, resembled the reasons, the eyes sincerity, candidness and clever mind; namely the smile unveiled the sincerity. "It is a lovely folk, strongly and beautifully built, with the expressive features and slender high" (Jaskółka, 1870: 140); "the glance is nice, sight bold and sharp" (Sutor, 1876: 45).

In 1877, the first anthropological researches were conducted. Majer and Kropiwnicki did research among men (from 20 to 25 years old) and it appeared that the height of the Highlanders oscillated between 153,9 – 164,5, whilst the height of the inhabitants of the plain was between 159,5 to 165,0 (See: Gustawicz, 1881: 692). Additionally, it appeared that in Podhale (and in the others parts of Poland) there are the disabled and "crippled" people who had never been the subject of previous narrations⁹.

It must be admitted that the Romantics did not notice the factual state: low level of hygiene, bad nutrition, alcoholism, tough working conditions and long-standing compulsory military service that could have caused the disabilities.

The authors, who thought that "the Highlander's race" is something unique and that there are no "minuses" of their living conditions, were in particular those, who spent only few days in Zakopane. It must be underlined that especially at the beginning of the 19th century they had a contact with quite limited group of the Highlanders. The authors, who spent i.e. on the pasture land just few days, could not observe the life of the shepherds who were there for the whole summer. Obviously, they emphasised the tough conditions, however, at the same time they asserted that the love for the nature is a sufficient reward for all the discomforts.

⁹ "Po przebadaniu 431 mieszkań i po zsumowaniu ilości osobników fizycznie nienormalnych okazywało się, że jest tam matołków 13, wolowatych 67, ślepych 13, głuchych, niemych i głuchoniemych 14, przy tym jeden obłąkany i dwóch nałogowych pijaków, otrzymalibyśmy po-każną cyfrę 110 osób. Ponieważ jednak w tej liczbie znajduje się 11 osobników zaliczonych jednocześnie do paru kategorii kalectw [...], po odtrąceniu więc tej ilości pozostanie około 100 osobników nienormalnych, co względem do ogółu zapisanych stanowi blisko 5%". (D., B. 1899: 3).

The writers paid attention to the “absolute freedom” of the shepherds who from their perspective lived a poetic life in the outdoors¹⁰. The romantic imagination created the image of the Highlanders as a “children of the nature”, ipso facto, idealising them, since “the Highlander [...] like a child knows nothing about evil and how to be evil” (G., J., 1840: 359).

Therefore, the main part in these specific ethnographic stories has been played by the Highlanders who were intrinsically connected with the surrounding space. Their appearance, character and close connection with the nature “drowned out” a factual extreme poverty in their lives¹¹.

In the narrations from the beginning of the 19th century, in which the romantic surprise dominated over the exotic, and where there was no place for such prosaic problems like poverty, it is very hard to find any information about hard situation in Galicia. However, according to the report from 1888, the Galicia population did not have the minimal amount of the food necessary to provide with strength and health (Szczepanowski 1888: 25). If there was an anxiety about their life there was simultaneously a belief that their special disposition will overcome all inconveniences. The Highlander was yet “often happier than sad, hardened with cold and shortage” (Sulinierski, Chlebowski, Walewski (ed.), 1881: 695).

The appearance of the describable people was closely related to their character, therefore, to portray automatically meant to give the opinion about the character. The romantic need to create the ideal (liable to the social memory) reconstruction of the character led to the process of vanishing the border between that what was real and what was the effect of the literary creation. The narrations of the character did not consider the individual cases, but rather generalise and make schemes.

One of the main features of the Highlanders was the exceptional hospitality¹², but how Witkiewicz (as one of few) lucidly realised it resulted not just from a simple need to entertain the visitors, but also from the fact that the visitors will pay for their visits...¹³. It was also the clever, thrifty, bright, and adventurous of

¹⁰ The shepherds “otoczeni najpiękniejszymi obrazami wdzięcznej przyrody, oddychając wonnym i lekkim powietrzem, nie troszcząc się o nic w świecie, a przy tym pełni czerstwego zdrowia i sił, mają umysł swobodny, więc wesoły” (Sutor 1876: 53).

¹¹ It was not a single case – in seven Oskar Kolberg’s volumes dedicated to the Masovia 84% is about joyful country life and there are not many observations about real, not always favorable situation of the Polish country in the 19th century (poverty, starvation, drunkenness, criminality). (Stomma 1986: 236).

¹² “«Witajcie, Witajcie!, a siadźcie, wypocznijcie», pierwsze jest przyjęcie owych pełnych serdeczności ludzi. Potem przynoszą, co mają najlepszego; to skopki żętycy słodkiej i kwaśnej, to mleka, dalej sery, świeże i skiszone lub oszczepki; proszą, aby nie gardzić tym, co podają; wszystko to odbywa się z niewymowną uprzejmością, z największą gościnnością [...]. Swoją chętną usłużnością, szybkością wykonania żądań jedną sobie odwiedzającego; a kiedy się oświadczy, że się chce u nich przemocować, wtedy nie ma granic radości. Znajduje wtedy pod-różny wszystko, co tylko jest najwygodniejszego w szałasie; ścielą na ławie cetyne, czyli gałązki świerczyny, oddają swoje gunie, całą noc pali się ogień” (Zejszner 1844: 128).

¹³ “Panowie zostawiają zwykle trochę dudków za serki, za żętycę, częstują swymi zapasami i przynoszą cygara, które dla Górala są «szpecjałem». Ma on wprawdzie swoją blaszaną fajeczkę, którą nabija habryką zmieszaną ze ślinami i zapiekłszy w ogniu, przez cały dzień cały nie wypuszcza z zębów ? jednak mile mu pachnie błękitny dymek papierosa lub virginii. [...] Nie

the folk, as well as their great intelligence and the sense of the aesthetic (Anczyc, 1874: 41). Among other features typical for the Highlanders was also, on the one hand their devotion and deep religiosity (in authors perspective: since the Highlanders were surrounded by wonders of the nature they could easily connect with God¹⁴); on the other hand, they were promiscuous (in particular women), because of the keen air and loneliness¹⁵. The women's behavior (quite coquettish and cheerful¹⁶) surprised the people from the lowlands and it was explained by their specific style of life – girls and boys were all alone on the pastures during the summer¹⁷.

Although positivistic anti-romanticism was not always clear and unambiguous we cannot ignore the influence of the history which resides in the narrations from the second half of the 19th century. A new model of the personality with the domination of the intellect over the feelings emerged and resulted in the notions of hard-work, activity and resourcefulness (Markiewicz, 1978: 42-46). Consequently, the Highlanders attitudes towards work and education, or their reading and writing abilities, became more significant for the narrations. Stories for children and the youth, important in the context of didactic, were filled with the references to the Highlanders. For example, in the book "The adventures of young traveler in Tatra Mountain" we may find out that "The Highlanders are extremely kind and obliging. They talk in a very sensible way and almost everyone can read" (Zaleska, 1908: 19). It is safe to say that the Highlanders had some advantage over the others peasants, but very popular statement from 1872 that "all youngest, and especially

mówiąc już o tym, że młodzi panowie są nadzwyczaj uprzejmi dla juhasek o spalonych twarzach, wesołych oczach, patrzących spod pomarańczowej chustki; silnych i zręcznych, których pierś przeziiera spod białej koszuli lub rozpina pętlice ciasnego serdaka..." (Witkiewicz 1978: 109).

¹⁴ "Łatwo się wznoszą do pojęcia wszechmocności Boga. Niebotyczne góry głośniejsze do ich serc przemawiają i jaśniej im moc Stwórcy okazują, niż obszerne pole dziedzicowi nizin, bo tamte zmysłem obfite źródło działania przedstawiają". (G. J. 1840: 350). "[Natura] usposabia lud ten do wiary i pobożności szczerzej, która u nich wyraża się nie tylko w zamiłowaniu modlitwy, w spełnianiu wszystkich przepisów kościoła, ale w czystości obyczajów, w szanowaniu cudzej własności, w chętnym niesieniu rady, pomocy i pociechy potrzebującemu, we wzajemnej miłości, w poważaniu starszych i w wielkim przywiązaniu do swoich siedzib, a w końcu w tej wesołości i swobodzie ducha, który położywszy całą ufność Opatrzności z nią najsilniej złączony, wokół siebie rozlewa miłość, życzliwość i szczęście". (Rzecznowski 1869: 188).

¹⁵ "Między kobietami [była duża rozwiązłość], do czego przyczynia się nie mało ostre powietrze, samotność, wykluczenie wieści od spraw ważniejszych i ciągle zatrudnienie mężczyzn; nie jest to rzeczą wcale dziwną i niemoralną na Podhalu, jeżeli parobek w nocy ? podobnie jak w Szwajcarii lub Tyrolu ? dziewczynę przez okno odwiedza w jej komorze i z nią sypia: dziewczka nawet mająca przed ślubem potomka może być pewną zamężcia, gdyż potomek takowy stanowi pewien rodzaj posagu, używają go bowiem skoro dorosnie do posług". (Pauli 1899: 122).

¹⁶ "[Zamężne kobiety] nie są obojętne na zabiegi parobczaków, a ci są nadzwyczaj zalotni. Zdarza się często, że żona potajemnie przed mężem karmi gacha i zaopatruje go w bieliznę, co tu stanowi wielki prezent. W zeszłym roku wydarzyło się, że góralka mająca gacha więziła męża w komorze, biła go i nie dawała mu jeść". (Anczyc 1874: 40).

¹⁷ "Chłopcy i dziewczęta przez całe lato są zgromadzeni na halach i bez żadnego pozostają dozoru. Pomimo całej lekkości młodego wieku, podhalanki dobrymi są żonami i cieszą się wielkim szacunkiem swoich mężów, na co najzupełniej zasługują pracowitością i uczciwością". (Wrześniowski 1881: 233).

women can read” (Steczowska, 1872: 65) is an exaggeration when comparing it with the facts. In 1900’s Zakopane there were 1623 illiterates, 3675 could read, even though at the end of century in every village there was a primary school and in Zakopane there was the Open University (Majda, 1979: 26).

In the Positivism there was a popularity of G. Ch. Lichtenberg’s pathognomic which studied the influence of experiences on the character and also on physiognomy. In case of the Highlanders this experience was the necessity to adapt to new rules, to new style of life. The influx of the tourists as well as the new ways of earning had an impact on the way the Highlanders were perceived. On the one hand, the main reproach was the inability to hard work (seen as a ennobling value), on the other – the stories underlined the resourcefulness connected with the character.

Therefore, it was the time when in flattering narrations the negative opinions began to appear. It must be admitted that the authors were still describing the Highlanders as a beautiful and free folk, however the opinions about their existence and the lack of understanding the rules of the modern life, gradually started to be a subject of concern. Capitalistic changes in Zakopane caused that “the idea of work for Highlanders was not anymore a value itself, but it became an ordinary and slavish one. The work was then defined in terms of haste, the need of junk and the pursuit of money” (Kurczab, 1973: 47). The Highlanders experienced a new style of life represented by the tourists and began to lose their traditional system of the values. Consequently, in narrations we may observe the division between those, who accepted their life without any reservations and those, who acknowledged their defects but were justifying them as results of fatal influence of the civilization and tourists.

In the 19th century literature the clear and legible image of the Tatra Highlanders appeared the image which was dependent on the necessities and preferences of the author’s society. Philosophy of life, ideology and temperament of the researcher are those factors, which effect we cannot rule out. In short, literary activity should be put in terms of agency – it is never a-political and a-historical.

In this case, surprisingly we may observe the coherent image of Tatra Highlanders in the common knowledge. However, the very image changes simultaneously with the authors’ world view. It must be also admitted that this image (set by romantic observers) was not prone to extreme and categorical changes. Even positivistic attempts to eliminate one’s own literary contexts did not bring any results.

The narrations about the folk did not fulfill the conditions of positivistic science because they contained subjective opinions and were never neutral. The question, however, is whether the ethnological or historical descriptions may be objective? The initial choice of the subject already contains the element of arbitrary and it is the researcher who decides which elements of the culture are worth to describe and therefore to remember. The historical sources cannot be treated in the terms of truth, because they are charged by rhetoric and persuasions. “Even when the author individually observed the reality, he/she observed it by the prism of his/her

knowledge and his/her values. What he/she observed is expressed by the author's language and linguistic convention" (Topolski, 1994: 38).

The nature of ethnographic description is grounded in the particular context and the relations to literature are irrefutable. The context, rhetoric, institutions, genre, politics and the history are the determinants that influence the process of texts creation. The anthropologist (the interpreter) brings into the text his/her own historicity with all its consequences. One cannot escape from it even though one creates the reality by describing it.

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