

Intimacy Before Sexuality: Genealogy of *Prytula* Custom

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In the preindustrial Ukrainian village, there was a tradition of young people of marriageable age spending the night together. Even though nineteenth-century scholars studied the live tradition almost simultaneously and mainly in the same regions, they provided very different accounts of it. While some saw it as decent entertainment for youth, others pointed to the more intimate or even sexual nature of young people's relations. Drawing on the Foucauldian idea of discourse as power and queer theoretical framework on sexuality, the research explores knowledge production on the tradition of young people spending the night together (also known as *prytula*). The presentation will reveal how the modern concept of sexuality informed scholars' perspectives on the tradition and how their discursive positionality defined their understanding of what they witnessed. Three main discursive perspectives will be identified and scrutinized: national romantic, radical, and feminist approaches. Finally, a queer theoretical perspective on the tradition, which destabilizes the very idea of sex, will be introduced.

Maria Mayerchyk (maria.mayerchyk@uni-greifswald.de) is a Philipp Schwartz Fellow at the University of Greifswald. She teaches courses on queer, gender, feminism, Slavic folklore, and Ukrainian culture in Germany, Canada, and Ukraine. She holds a Candidate of Sciences degree in History specializing in Ethnology. She is a recipient of a number of fellowships and was affiliated with Harvard University (USA), Lund University (Sweden), University of Alberta (Canada), and others. Maria authored/edited seven books and edited collections in English and Ukrainian. Her last monograph, "Erotic Folklore: Overcoming Modern Design of Sexuality," is being translated into English. Mayerchyk is co-founder and joint editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed, open-access journal *Feminist Critique: East European Journal of Feminist and Queer Studies* (<http://feminist.krytyka.com/en>). Her research interests include decolonial option, queer and feminist epistemologies, East European studies, diaspora studies, and critical folklore studies.



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