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Chair of Old Polish Literature
Faculty of Polish Studies
Jagiellonian University
Gołębia 16 (entrance from Gołębia 18), room 54

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Cultural History of Love Discourse ***– from the Ancient Times till Romantic Crisis***

Overview

The main point of our interest will be put on topics and styles of medieval and early modern literature (especially Italian, French and Polish), but in a wide perspective: from the ancient sources of European love poetry to the “point of destination” i.e. Romanticism, when the whole tradition is gathered, cumulated, exhausted and finally distracted.

A thorough analysis of poetic texts directed towards finding out the origins of love topics largely known from 19th- and 20th-century literature aims at acquainting students with the conventions of erotic poetry, and also it should help them to improve their skills in interpreting poetic texts (a close reading method) using a wide literary context. The other aim is to show how a competent, profound philological analysis could contribute to cultural studies and anthropology of literature. Furthermore, the exploration of long lasting , and changing motives, conventions, styles and functions of poetic speaking of love should on the one hand, picture – the continuity of European culture, and on the other, indicate the most important turning points in this culture, which determined its internal metamorphosis.

It will not be a regular course of the history of literature, but we will follow the motives, *topoi* (topics) and typical styles of poetic love discourse through the ages, such as: “anacreontic”; elegiac; pastoral; chivalrous; petrarchian; antipetrarchian; libertine; sentimental; rococo; romantic. Several topics should be described with poetic examples – from ancient Greek and Roman literature, then medieval (mainly Provençal and Italian), humanistic Neo-Latin (from Italy, France, Poland, Netherlands, England etc), to Renaissance and Baroque vernacular European literatures, sometimes also classicistic and Romantic (especially English and French 18th and 19th-century literature based on Italian Renaissance topics). Such a structure of lectures and programme is invented also to show a place of Polish early modern literature in Europe.

Students usually will get the text in the original language with an English translation, and, if possible, also in Polish to have the opportunity to compare. Having parallel versions in various languages is also very useful in learning foreign languages.

As the most of poetic texts are hardly available the instructor will put them on a website or send by e-mail approximately two weeks before the class, in order to enable students to be prepared for it. The

curriculum of poetic texts could be modified in co-operation with the students, who, having known the programme and having read the earlier poems prepared by the instructor, could propose also other texts, e.g. from their own national literatures, provided that they fit to the subject (this will be decided by the instructor) and provided that there will be an English translation found or made by a student.

Some of lectures will be illustrated with music, architecture, sculpture and paintings, which can be useful in comprehending general culture problems together with particular poetic examples.

Main issues:

1. Introduction. *Imitation and emulation in literature – coming to early modern times* (with an illustration of changes in classicistic style in architecture).
2. Status of erotic poetry – *recusatio* motive (refuse for “high” heroic poetry in favour of writing about love).
3. Sappho – the beginning of personal lyric; *pathography* of love.
4. Roman love elegy and its restoration in humanism (invention of the cycle and “history” of love affection, hero and heroin, *servitium amoris*, *militia amoris* etc).
5. *Paraklausithyron* (lover behind the door motive) of antiquity and humanism in relation to medieval and renaissance serenade.
6. Rose motive (impermanence of beauty).
7. *Amour courtois* – troubadours’ and trouveres’ lyric.
8. Chivalrous love in romantic poetry and in 20th century.
9. Beginnings of Italian lyric: *scuola siciliana*, *dolce stil novo*.
10. Petrarch.
11. Petrarchian and anti-petrarchian poetry of 15th and 16th centuries.
12. Neo-Platonic doctrine of love (Marcilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola).
13. Kiss motive. *Quinque lineae amoris* – scholastic five steps to love.
14. Love in Arcadia, i.e. erotics in pastoral poetry.
15. Love dream motive.
16. *Amor coniugalis*: 15th-century family love to wife and children (Italy and Poland).
17. Sacred love – erotic poetry’s language in service of religion (Horace and M.K. Sarbiewski).

Course Requirements

1. Reading (and understanding) poetic texts prepared by the instructor before class and in-class reading and then an **active participation** in class discussion is required. Students are expected also to find before class some other literary examples on the topics discussed. Preparation to the class, answering open questions, putting new questions and problems to solve, taking part in discussion, individual and group work, thoughts formulation etc. will be estimated for each class, based on a 0-5 scale (0 – absent from class; 1 – unprepared and not participating in the discussion,

3-5 depends on the level of participation and preparation). The attendance and class participation will constitute an important part of final grade. Grade value: 40%.

2. Final paper – an **essay** (approximately 4-5 pages) on a subject chosen from the list or invented by students and verified by the instructor. It should be a **critical analysis** of one poem/novel/drama concerning love (or an output of one author) or, better, **comparative analysis** of love motives, topics, literary filiations in literatures of two nations, similar texts in two languages etc. The time period of the analyzed text in question is up to the choice of the student (ancient, Renaissance, Romantic, Modern) – the most important requirement from the student is to set the paper **within literary traditions** known from our class and others. The most important work for a student will be to find out how the chosen author uses the tradition, and how the tradition is transformed according to contemporary mode, poetics etc. Both the subject and work on the essay in progress **should be consulted** with the instructor, as well as bibliography. You need to use one of the standard footnoting and bibliography formats. Grade value: 60%.

3. A regular attendance class is necessary for understanding the discussed topics. Students may have up to **one** unexcused absence. The only justifications for absences that can be respected are the medical leave issued by your doctor, events of *force majeure* and religious holidays. Further absences will result in an appropriate reduction in your final grade. Two unexcused absence will fail the course.