

FOREWORD

The papers we present here were delivered at the international conference that took place two years ago in Greifswald (Germany), hosted by "Alfried Krupp Wissenschaftskolleg". The conference, under the title "Is there a Third Way for Ukraine?", was organized thanks to the financial and logistic support of the "Alfred Krupp Wissenschaftskolleg" and brought together some of the most outstanding scholars from several European and Overseas countries.

The papers deal with issues related to history, literature, social and political life of contemporary Ukraine. References to 19th-20th century historical and cultural events offer a useful background to discuss present-time problems.

Ja. Hrytsak focuses on the possible approaches that may allow a new reading of Ukrainian history, permitting to overcome both narrow nationalistic oriented and imperialistic paradigms, and to present the complex intermingling of ethnic, religious, linguistic and social components as a dynamic but unitary system.

Through a rapid glance to the past of Ukrainian society and culture from the 15th c. up to our time, H. Rothe highlights some of the "turning points" of the history of the Ukrainian lands where the political, social and ecclesiastic elites missed the opportunities of creating an integrated, modern and viable society, capable of gaining visibility among the more structured, politically and culturally unified neighbouring countries. At the end Rothe points out at some positive achievements in recent Ukrainian studies and at *desiderata* for future development.

T. Hundorova tries to interpret the dialectic – sometimes opposed – relationship between high and low literature in Ukrainian tradition of the 19th and 20th centuries through the methodological grids offered by such influential critics as Blum, Toynbee and others. In her view, writers of the youngest generation inspired by post-modern trends offer new opportunities to Ukrainian literature to overcome the traditional gap dividing "popular" and "European", "nationally-oriented" and "westernizing" models of literary self-perception and self-representation.

M. Pavlyshyn, focuses on the "ways of conferring upon Ukraine and Ukraine's culture the benefit of visibility to the world outside Ukraine, and to the rest of Europe above all." Efforts

made by a part of Ukrainian writers to send out literary messages intelligible by the whole of the readers belonging to the set of "civilisational values" defined by the idea of "Europe" indicate a "civilisational choice" aiming at "translability" of one's own culture into the set of values of countries that represent the Western "Other" of Ukraine. Up to which point, however, – the author asks – does a "refocussing" towards a Western vector "involve the choice of a different colonialism, if probably one less debilitating than its predecessor", than "the inertial persistence of [Ukraine's] presence in the Soviet or post-Soviet cultural space"? As a "case study" Pavlyshyn analyses the reasons for success and the dangers of marginality of Ju. Andrukhovych's translations into German.

In A. Kratochvil's contribution the reader may find a description and analyses of some of the most challenging and "disrupting" manifestations of Ukrainian pop-literature, of its impact on culture in Ukraine itself and in the context of Eastern-Central European contemporaneity, and of its "functioning" as a form of entertainment and industry.

O. Myhed offers a bulk of interesting "last news" about "second or third rank very young writers" from Zakarpattja, who attracted attention thanks to literary prizes they won in the last three-four years. The author asks himself to what degree such mostly regionally oriented writers may contribute to the creation of high-level national literature: "At some point, be that earlier or later – the author maintains – the active creativity of some kind of regional myth leads to positive results and forms its own artistic school".

G. Brogi Bercoff points at the difficult situation of Ukrainian studies outside Ukraine, mainly in EU countries, but overseas as well. The paper sheds light on some of the main questions put at stake during the Conference and may be considered as "programmatic" for further development of Ukrainian studies outside Ukraine itself. The author discusses by what means Ukrainian and European institutions might (and should) support this new field of investigation and teaching, in a period when financial support for universities becomes smaller and smaller, while the strategic importance of Ukraine may probably grow in the next years. The author stresses the need of forming young generations of scholars and well trained specialists, who may be able to cope with the problems of European integration and of mutual relationships of EU and other countries. The "Ukrainicum" Summer School founded by the "Alfried Krupp Wissenschaftskolleg" exerts a leading role in this direction, both by offering young Ukrainians the possibility of becoming acquainted with EU and Overseas

specialists and their methodologies in humanities and socio-political studies, and by fostering skills in Ukrainian culture among EU young generations of non-Ukrainian origin.

As an addition to the papers, the reader may find a long review article on the newest publications about H. Skovoroda and reviews of L. Uškalov's book on Skovoroda and O. Horbatsch's seminal work on *Ukrajins'ke argo* (edited by A.-H.- Horbatsch). These three contributions are authored by M.G. Bartolini.

We published the papers in the language, in which they were delivered at the conference or written by the authors. Thus, the reader will find papers in English, German, Italian and Ukrainian. This choice has been made not only because of practical reasons. It responds to a general (programmatic) concept of the publication we offer to the reader and of the Conference where the papers were first presented. Indeed, the organizers were moved by the desire to bring together specialists from Ukraine and from various European and Overseas' countries in an international "forum" where multilingual and multicultural presence should act as the main "detonator" for spreading critical evaluation and knowledge of Ukrainian culture inside and outside Ukraine.

We hope that this first issue of a sort of "European e-journal", devoted to Ukraine and Ukrainian studies, may attract contributions for next issues. We do hope as well, that the analysis and ideas contained in these papers will foster discussion and mutual enrichment among specialists, but also among the broad reading public. Suggestions for future cooperation are welcome. At the top of our wishes remains the desire of promoting a growing and longlasting dialogue between Ukraine and every other country or nation in Europe or in the vast world. A dialogue that should be aimed at making of each inhabitant of each country a free citizen of the world and a worthy representant of the best features of each national or areal specificity.

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