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Larysa M. L. Zaleska Onyshkevych, Maria G. Rewakowicz, eds. *Contemporary Ukraine on the Cultural Map of Europe.* Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2009. xxx + 471 pp. $89.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7656-2400-0.

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Through the Looking Glass: Imaginations of Europe in Ukrainian Studies

Notwithstanding a few excellent monographs, Ukraine has been a rather sporadic presence in anthropological literature, often lumped together with others as part of the anthropology of postsocialism. Therefore an edited volume on Ukraine constitutes an excellent opportunity for anthropology students to discover an interesting space for research and comparison, and its possible contributions to wider debates in anthropology. The volume in question, *Contemporary Ukraine on the Cultural Map of Europe*, brings together a wide range of contributions (in no less than twenty-six chapters plus an introduction), from an impressive number of scholars whose work is acknowledged beyond the field of Ukrainian studies. The overall theme of the volume addresses Ukraine's place in Europe, looking at symbolic geographies, imperial legacies, and identity formation in contemporary Ukraine. Or, to put it differently, it treats Ukraine's need for recognition by emphasizing its belonging to Europe, hoping thus to solve its identity-related dilemmas.

The volume opens with a short introduction by the two editors followed by three sections, each dealing with particular aspects of Ukraine's relationship with Europe: "Mapping the Nation: History, Politics and Religion," "Reflecting Identities: The Literary Paradigm," and "Manifesting Culture: Language, Media and the Arts." The combination may seem too broad, even intimidating at first sight given the range of topics and perspectives proposed. The essays in the first section dwell on possible connections between Europe's national histories and its imaginings of the East and Ukraine's political and religious instability today. The opening text by Roman Szporluk situates Ukrainian nationhood in the historical context of European state formation, comparing the development of the Ukrainian national idea with the "classical" German case. Following British historian Lewis Namier (a Polish Jew born and raised in Galicia, as the author remarks [p. 15]), Szporluk takes 1848 as the point of departure for European nation-building projects, "a seed-plot of history" in Namier's own words (p. 4).[1] The post-1848 period sees the rise of various experiments in nation building that try to encompass ethno-religious divisions and adjust to imperial legacies. Szporluk argues that the condition for emerging European nations is a "shared cultural or mental space" with Europe, which shapes the imagined community of the nation (p. 9).

In the following chapter, Mykola Riabchuk questions the trope of the East-West divide, reminding us that Huntingtonian civilizational fault lines are part of shifting symbolic geographies. For him, Ukraine's problem of identity is a matter not of internal divides (East-West, ethno-linguistic, etc.) but of negotiating a shared set of values that might constitute the basis of national and civic mobilization. The point he raises about Ukraine's need to become a strong state to support a coherent national identity (and his implicit assumption that it is a weak state), though essential for the overall theme of the volume, remains unexplored. The question of the "weak state" could be relevant for other contributions too, including those by Andrew Sorokowski and Catherine Wanner, which provide close analyses of Ukrainian legislation, religious pluralism, and the public sphere. While the strained relationship between the socialist state and religion is common fact, contemporary Ukraine offers a more ambiguous picture. The post-1990 religious revival combined with a moderate secularism in state-church relations led to a remarkable religious diversity. Wanner calls this the pluralistic condition of Ukraine, based on a state policy of minimal interference in the religious field and acknowledgment of religion's role as a catalyst of social change. Ukraine's religious condition is thus comparable to the American denominational model rather than the former socialist countries or Western Europe where states favor particular

churches while discriminating others.[2] "Ukrainian denominationalism" also connects the local to the global rather than the nation, undermining the classical unity "religion-nation-state" and generating new forms of religious mobilization and transnational networks.[3]

Oxana Pachlovska's contribution to the debate on religion and Ukrainian identity offers a rather unusual perspective, reinstating the idea of civilizational fault lines dismissed by Riabchuk. The East-West divide becomes "the impassable historical chasm" between Ukrainian and Russian (or Byzantine) Orthodoxies, founded on antagonistic historical and theological conceptions of church (p. 40). The spectrum of Huntingtonian oppositions haunts her argument: Ukrainian Orthodoxy goes with the West, Europe, and its liberal values, while Russian Orthodoxy represents Soviet heritage with all affiliated evils, communism, fundamentalism, neo-Eurasianism, etc. Tracing back the Orthodox fault line all the way from Charlemagne and Genghis Han, through the Kievan Rus church, sixteenth- to seventeenth-century Polish multiculturalism, nineteenth-century Ukrainian romanticism, and the 2004 Ukrainian elections, the author manages to construct an antagonistic portrayal of Russia, which inevitably positions Ukraine on the European side. Beyond its essentialist overtones, Pachlovska's argument offers a controversial historical interpretation of the two Orthodoxies.

Two other contributions dealing with historical memory in present-day Ukraine complement well the main topics raised in this section. Myroslava Antonovych discusses the possibility of reassessing the communist past of Ukraine in legal terms, especially regarding accountability for human rights violations. She notices Ukraine's difficulties in accounting for the violence exercised by the Soviet state (religious persecution, Holodomor, Chernobyl) based on current international legislation and the feeble attempts of the state to investigate and hold accountable those responsible. For pragmatic and political reasons, Ukrainians seem more keen to deal with their past in symbolic rather than legal terms. In a similar tone, Marian Rubchak focuses on the matriarchal myth of Ukraine (*berehynia*, guardian) as an important constituent of national cultural memory today. Ukraine rediscovered and cultivated this myth in political and public culture in spite of the efforts of the emerging feminist movement to promote ideas of gender equality.

Section 2 ("Reflecting Identities") consists of literary reflections on national identity, which tend to play with the mirror/window metaphor proposed in the introduction. The opening chapter by Maria Zubrytska offers an excellent entry point, showing how national literature can be a useful key for addressing questions of identity. Literature is a field for experimenting with identity issues; for imagining Ukraine (in Europe); and for combining past, present, and future, as well as East and West in creative ways. It is both a mirror to Ukraine's own history and culture and a window into the future or toward the Other (Europe/West). Here we are finally presented with the meaning of Ukraine's return (*povernennia*) to Europe, understood as "a return to Ukraine's true identity,… enlightened Europe and Ukraine's European roots" (p. 159).

Contributions are mixed, alternating between surveys of particular cultural fields (Maria G. Rewakowicz's chapter on feminist literature or Michael M. Naydan's on avant-garde poetry), in-depth literary criticism of particular writers and literary works (Maxim Tarnawsky, Marko Pavlyshyn, and Marko R. Stech), and more sociological analysis (Lydia Stefanowska on nostalgia in Galicia). They look at the attempts of Ukrainian cultural elites to explore Ukraine in and of itself, searching for the Other within. Emerging from Soviet/Russian colonialism, contemporary Ukrainian literature tries to find its "authentic" voice between European culture and Ukrainian tradition. This led to original experiments and the refusal of established literary forms, be it Ukrainian romanticism, socialist realism, or underground samizdat. But it also led to fissions, fusions, and various attempts to legitimization in the 1990s, between nativists-traditionalists (*narodnyky*) and westernizers-modernizers-postmodernists (Ola Hnatiuk points out that traditionalists managed to marginalize both reformers together with and Ukrainian culture, but the other contributors do not share her pessimism). In spite of the differences between the main literary schools, they seem united in their search for national identity is a common theme (Stech). Their works often take the form of a quest, personal or collective, in which *losing oneself* in order to find a new self becomes the root metaphor for postsocialist transformations. Contemporary writers prove to be at home with Western culture; they criticize post-Soviet Ukrainian realities, deconstruct Russian heroes, and recover Ukrainian heroes instead. Yet they are not at ease with the recovery of Ukraine's traumatic past, unveiling critical moments (Holodomor, Holocaust, or Chernobyl) or asking inconvenient questions about collective or individual responsibility (Larysa M. L. Zaleska Onyshkevych).

This section is more homogenous in terms of topics and approaches, introducing not only recent liter-

ary paradigms but also the most important representatives of contemporary Ukrainian literature: Yuri Andrukhovych, Olexander Irvanets, Viktor Neborak, Oles Honchar, Sergii Zhadan, etc. Several chapters provide substantial literary analyses of their works, discussing pervasive motives and archetypical characters that embody the (postsocialist) spirit of change, and the struggles and transformations that come with it. The section as a whole would have benefited from more background information–e.g., mapping the Ukrainian literary field with short biographical references in footnotes. More explanations about the symbolic geography of this cultural revival and its various movements, including issues of language use (all authors discussed are writing in Ukrainian!), would have provided a useful addition to the literary criticism. In spite of that, these essays show convincingly how in times of change art becomes one of the most creative means for reflection, debate, and imaginations of space and time and one's own place in them.

The third section ("Manifesting Culture") provides a heterogeneous image of Ukrainian culture and its various facets, including language, media, cinema, music, and the Internet. The first three contributions remind us about the importance of language for a nation, and particularly so in the case of Ukraine. Thus Serhii Vakulenko offers a close analysis of the making and remaking of the Ukrainian language standard in twentieth-century Ukraine looking at language policies in the context of state formation. He notices confusions in the use of the attribute "Europeanness" in relation to different conceptions of language: diasporic, Galician, Soviet, etc. Several opposing trends (reformist, nationalist, pro-Western, and pro-Russian) emerged in the postindependence period, but their influence was balanced by the existing linguistic marketplace, aptly discussed in Laada Bilaniuk's contribution. Her chapter echoes her excellent monograph on language politics in Ukraine, *Contested Tongues: Language Politics and Cultural Correction in Ukraine* (2005), mapping the arena in which different language ideologies compete but also the salience of linguistic hierarchies (also shown in Michael Moser's evaluation of online users' attitudes to "Galician Ukrainian"). Bilaniuk approaches language through observations of everyday acts of criticism and linguistic judgments, showing how they reproduce linguistic ideologies. Basing her study on a survey of language use in western, central, and eastern Ukraine in the 1990s, she shows how the ideological choice of "native" language is always linked to symbolic power–Russian in eastern Ukraine, Ukrainian in the western region. The "national language" ideology still shapes the public debate about language in Ukraine, forging the connection between idealized Russian/Ukrainian and ethnic/national identity. Showing how *surzhyk* varieties (various mixes of Ukrainian-Russian variants) are still stigmatized as "low culture" in reference to the idealized standards, the author argues for bilingualism as a solution to the politicization of language.

Marta Dyczok provides another Bourdesian analysis of media as a field of cultural production shaped by power relations. Her chapter builds on the tension between the postsocialist resurgence of nations and global institutions (such as media) that defy state boundaries. The bulk of her analysis, however, is on Ukrainian television as an emerging cultural field. Looking at a series of TV events from 2007, Dyczok takes media as a barometer of society rather than a factor shaping the public sphere–somehow against the grain of Pierre Bourdieu's own take on television but also of the role (global) media and especially the Internet played in the recent color revolutions. Pavlyshyn's second contribution to the volume offers a sharp analysis of "the Ruslana phenomenon," the Ukrainian singer who won Eurovision 2004. By showing Europe a lively, authentic, untamed Ukraine and reminding Ukraine of its authentic traditions and romantic femininity, Ruslana's song, "Wild Dances," functioned as a mirror/window to both Europe and Ukraine. Her success at home, however, is a symptom of emerging populist nationalisms in Ukraine and all over Central-Eastern Europe. Here one clearly sees the relevance of the orientalist paradigm in a context that is essentially marked by the colonial-postcolonial imagination of the Other (see also Moser and Yuri Shevchuk).

This volume brings together scholars from North America, Europe, Australia, and Ukraine showing the breath and scope of Ukrainian studies. The overarching theme, Ukraine's (cultural) connection to Europe, proves once more that Europe is essential for Ukraine in its attempt to part with the recent past (and Russia). Ukraine's postcolonial condition prompted numerous attempts to recover its place in history and scholarship, and this volume seems to be one of them too. And yet the almost exclusive emphasis on Ukraine's relationship to Europe is extremely narrow in scope and method. Even though it acknowledges the dialogical (self-Other) construction of identity, the book offers only a monologue about Ukrainian identity in relation to Europe. This is already indicated in the programmatic title *Contemporary Ukraine on the Cultural Map of Europe* and made evident in several contributions. The archetypal Others, Europe, and Russia (though essential for Ukraine's identity-related dilemmas, there is scarcely any mention

of Jews, Poles, or the Ukrainian Diaspora) are present only as reflected through the mirror of Ukrainian culture and sometimes purposefully vilified (Russia); but they rarely get a voice of their own (with the exception of Giulia Lami's and Virko Baley's contributions). Even if common to the postcolonial condition, this attitude of the colonial subject speaking back is not necessarily the most productive. One almost feels obliged to ask how an imaginary dialogue with "Europe" could make Ukraine more European. Contributors refer to "Europe" as they imagine it, a Europe that rarely gets concrete forms. They give little consideration to Europe's own problems of identity and geopolitical positioning, to global processes, and to emerging symbolic geographies. What does Europe mean today and how relevant it is to talk about a European identity, which is still debated and even contested from within? To what extent can current conceptualizations of the global enhance our understanding of Ukraine (and Europe)? But also how do Ukraine's socialist-postsocialist developments contribute to regional and global reconfigurations (Wanner's chapter is an excellent example in this sense)? The book leaves these questions unanswered. It also takes "culture" in a narrow sense, without any reference to the political, economic, or sociological dimensions that shape Ukraine's current position in Europe. With few exceptions, it offers no systematic analysis of how the state as well as private and public actors in Ukraine and abroad shape the cultural field. And it hardly attempts any meaningful comparisons with other postsocialist or postcolonial contexts to show in what ways Ukraine is unique (or not). In fact in most cases it takes Ukraine's singularity for granted.

While the volume obviously constitutes a resource for scholars of Ukraine, its appeal beyond this sphere remains questionable. Its strength lays in the individual chapters, whose diverse approaches and rich empirical findings repay any reader. The general impression, however, is one of closure, an occasion for Ukrainian scholarship to look into oneself, rather than open toward broader issues. To use the same metaphor proposed by the editors, the volume acts as a mirror onto Ukrainian studies rather than a window to the world.

Notes

[1]. Lewis Namier, "1848: Seed-Plot of History," *Vanished Supremacies: Essays on European History, 1812-1918* (New York and Evanston: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), 21-30.

[2]. This idea was originally advanced by Jose Casanova, "Ethno-Linguistic and Religious Pluralism and Democratic Constructions in Ukraine," in *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building*, ed. B. R. Rubin and J. Snyder (London: Routledge, 1998), 81-103.

[3]. This topic is more extensively explored in Catherine Wanner's recent book *Communities of the Converted: Ukrainians and Global Evangelism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

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