

di scrittori, per i quali si rende necessario invece il passaggio a una visione “stereoscopica” (Marilyn Gaddis-Rose), in cui gli orizzonti culturali entrino in contatto per restituirci la loro unica (non “dissociabile”!) identità translingue.

Lorenzo Costantino

A. Kratochvil, *Aufbruch und Rückkehr. Ukrainische und tschechische Prosa im Zeichen der Postmoderne*, Kulturverlag Kadmos, Berlin 2013, pp. 311.

This book represents a first basic guide to the most recent fiction in Ukraine and the Czech Republic, a useful tool for the knowledge of the last developments in literatures which are usually discussed shortly and only partially in academic journals.

In this perspective *Aufbruch und Rückkehr* by A. Kratochvil deserves all the more praise. The German expert on Ukrainian and Czech cultures is currently a Purkyně-Fellow at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague and has published a series of significant articles concerning language policy and postmodern Ukrainian and Czech fiction. In his book Kratochvil starts at the point, where every other current history of literature ends: in the 1990s. So far only a few literary scholars, such as T. Hundorova, M. Andryczyk, V. Chernetsky, M. Pavlyshyn, V. Novotný, K. Piorecký, A. Hamann and S. Simonek have dealt with the topic of postmodernist Ukrainian or Czech fiction and have mainly explored only partial aspects of postmodernism. In *Aufbruch und Rückkehr*, by contrast, the A. examines the whole period after the collapse of the Soviet Union and approaches various aspects of post-Soviet Ukrainian and Czech cultures, such as the postmodern and postcolonial discourses, the search for identity, the de- and reconstruction of national history and collective memory, and the mission and structures of the relevant fiction: “These constellations [are] examined in detail by analyzing studies on literature and culture, with special attention to the post-totalitarian and post-colonial momentum and their implications for a postmodern responsible esthetics (*Verantwortungsästhetik*). This will particularly bring up the following literary specifications: post-carnival, the post-90s-generation or pop literature, the postmodern historical meta-fiction as well as post-colonial problems” (p. 287).

Kratochvil considers postmodernism as an era and a sociocultural constellation to be distinguished from post-structuralism and continued modernism. He presents the current state of research and discourse, including the respective national traditions and characteristics. Following I. Hassan’s approach (the synopsis of artistic techniques and society’s commemorative culture) Kratochvil defines some distinctive features of Eastern European postmodernism: While in Western countries it emerged in the 1960s, Eastern European postmodernism evolved at an accelerated pace in the 1990s, an era of social, economic and cultural change, a period of “simultaneity of the non-simultaneous”, when pre-Soviet, exile and underground literatures as well as the post-Soviet writers and literary trends were discovered at the same time. Being part of the globalization and technical revolution, Eastern European postmodernism is a pluralistic and postcolonial phenomenon which contributes to the reconstruction of values and collective memories and alters identities, especially those of formerly marginalized cultures.

In the third chapter, the A. discusses carnivalization as a post-totalitarian phenomenon of the 1990s, which broke taboos and canceled the boundaries between classical and pulp fiction. It is neither affirmative nor confrontational, but addressed against traditionalism as well as imperialism. The following post-90s-generation's pop literature intended to open fiction to mainstream and entertainment, adapting international strategies of sale, thus undermining the traditional notion of literature and author. The concepts of hybridity, alterity and transgression are also discussed in this context.

Kratochvil pays deep attention to Ukrainian specificities: the so-called "spiritual Čornobyl'" (which became a symbol of the collapse of the Soviet Union, of the belief in progress and the impoverishment of the Ukrainian language and culture), the conflict between the literary generations of the 1960s and the 1990s (the former relied on the Ukrainian language and literature to stimulate and promote national and social independence, and had an isolationist and purist, traditional approach, while the latter pioneered the liberation and reinvention of the language). The fiction of the post-90s-generation (such as S. Pyrkalo's *Zelena Marharyta*) deals with youth and subcultures, the gangs they fight, the brands they prefer, using slang and intertextual references as global codes. These authors often exaggerate their affirmative attitude towards consumption in order to create an ironic distance. While simultaneously embracing and rejecting commercial culture, they search for a new identity.

A special chapter turns attention to the postmodernist contribution of historical fiction to the reconstruction of memory. Instead of an "end of history", Eastern Europe experiences a very dynamic development, in the course of which the history of a culture marginalized under Russian and Soviet rule is being rewritten. The construction of memory and history by different ideologies is disclosed in order to demonstrate the absence of a single historic truth. According to Kratochvil, the novels by V. Koželjanko, O. Irvaneč, M. Urban, O. Zabužko, O. Hončar and P. Zahrebel'nyj serve to come to terms with the past. They co-construct a new collective memory, based on individual memories and traumas, in order to legitimate a national identity, mainly by stories adopting the key-word "What if...".

Further on Kratochvil looks into different theories of postcolonialism. The Soviet Union may be viewed as an intracontinental colonial power, leaving Ukraine with a non-fully-functional language and a folklore culture. The anticolonial 1960s, by contrast, enabled resistance to Russian influences. Postcolonial according to Kratochvil deconstructs the monologism and simplification of colonial and anticolonial ideologies.

The liberation of the Ukrainian language from ideology and from both "responsible esthetics" and purist mission of preserving a sclerotic standard language parallels the evolution of postmodern and postcolonial fiction. Free and informal use of slang, jargon, *surzhyk* and colloquial language was fundamental for the recreation and dynamic development of the Ukrainian language (as e.g. in Ju. Andrušovyč's *Rekreaciji*).

"*Aufbruch und Rückkehr* – the A. concludes – does not in the least mean 'back to the future' (to continue the incomplete / unfinished project of modernism, or to avoid post-history), but is more a 'forward into the past' in terms of the past being remembered in a new constellation." (p. 291).

Unfortunately, less space is given to Czech postmodernism probably also because carnivalization, post-colonialism and the language issue do not apply to Czech literature. Postmodernism has its national specificities: "The current post-colonial writing strategies in Ukrainian literary texts and their absence in Czech literature are good examples of the diversity and pluralistic disposition of postmodernism in its historic and national conflicts of interest." (p. 291).

The third part of *Aufbruch und Rückkehr* is rather eclectic. Kratochvil outlines several central problems and aspects, but does not treat them exhaustively with all the needed details and examples of actual fiction. Gender and female writing in postmodernism, the phenomenon of literary performances and the boom of poetry or the influence of new media remain to be properly investigated. This only shows that there still are many gaps to be filled by future studies.

In the scientific tradition of the United States, Kratochvil presents his results in an ambitious, but entertaining way. As an expert of Ukrainian and Czech cultures Kratochvil does not indulge in details, but offers a broad and well constructed framework for the interpretation of various aspects of the most recent Ukrainian and Czech literature, his merits are great and are more evident just before a new development is due to arrive. After Majdan and the ongoing war, Ukrainian culture, literature, language and identity will definitely take a new turn. Kratochvil's book is a foundation stone and a valuable step forward in the research on the most recent Ukrainian and Czech literary development.

Jutta Lindekugel

M. Sapper, V. Weichsel (a cura di), *Zerreißprobe. Die Ukraine: Konflikt, Krise, Krieg*, BWV, Berlin 2014 (= "Osteuropa", LXIV, 5-6), pp. 351.

Gli avvenimenti in Ucraina continuano ad avere ampio spazio in notiziari o pagine d'informazione di varia tipologia e impostazione. Non sempre essi presentano la dovuta capacità di analisi e di approfondimento, per cui mi sembra utile e doveroso segnalare questo ultimo volume della ben nota rivista "Osteuropa".

Il primo numero della rivista apparve nel 1925 a Berlino. Dopo un'interruzione forzata nel 1939 riprese la sua attività nel 1951, continuata poi fino ad oggi. Il mensile pubblicato dalla DGO (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Osteuropakunde*) ha carattere interdisciplinare e rappresenta uno dei punti nevralgici del dialogo e del dibattito politico, storico e socioculturale Est-Ovest in Europa.

Il volume monotematico di quest'anno si prefigge l'ambizioso obiettivo di dare inusitata ampiezza e profondità di informazioni in un settore che solitamente offre commenti di breve respiro, non supportati dalla necessaria quantità di dati e di materiali, non sempre sufficientemente chiari neppure per gli specialisti. Scorrendo i titoli dell'indice si evidenzia subito l'abbondanza e varietà dei contributi in esso contenuti: 17 articoli per un totale di oltre 300 pagine dedicate al solo tema principale (l'indice completo è in: <www.osteuropa.dgo-online.org>).

Grazie alla diversità degli ambiti disciplinari degli autori e al carattere poliedrico delle loro analisi il risultato finale si rivela particolarmente felice, apprezzabile da chiunque sia interessato a sapere di più su questi temi. Arricchiscono il volume numerose foto; due prospetti cronologici degli avvenimenti; due inserti documentari; otto carte geografiche a colori (tre sulle elezioni presidenziali del 2014, tre sulle manifestazioni e due sugli edifici che sono stati teatro dei principali eventi in tutto il paese).

I contributi sono tutti in tedesco (circa un terzo tradotti dal russo, dall'inglese e dall'ucraino). Il carattere della raccolta è fondamentalmente fattuale ed informativo: gli articoli compongono un ampio ed aggiornato mosaico delle varie questioni e prospettive piuttosto che offrire un dibattito o un'occasione di confronto fra varie posizioni o tesi.