



Dear Readers, Colleagues, and Friends!

The thematic focus of this issue on Ukrainian thought in the humanities of the 21st century brings to an end a temporal panorama begun by observing 19th century (and earlier) phenomena, subsequently carried over to the 20th century (with a subtopic that can be understood as “Ukraine in the Eyes of the World”) in our previous issue with a *modus vivendi* of “Ukraine Here and Now.” Of course, having invited analytical and summary studies to show our thinking in the humanities in the new century, we did not expect their full representation. Rather, we have the completion of a logical matrix underlying the last few issues of *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal (KMHJ)*, an objective too difficult too have been achieved in just one issue. And time planes themselves, as we know, do not exist in isolation from one another, but in synchronous unity (as evidenced in the works of Husserl, Bergson, and Heidegger).

We expect to have succeeded. First of all, this means having addressed the theme of the Maidan, the Revolution of Dignity of 2013–2014, which continues to resonate in the minds and souls of Ukrainian scholars. The intensity of this nationwide movement and its deep penetration into the consciousness of society was so profound that even in the current political situation it continues to engender wide-ranging assessments that guarantee its presence at the forefront of scholarly debate, which to our mind is good.

Second, this means reflecting on the liberation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from its forced Russian dependence. Volumes of literature have been dedicated to the “Kyivan Branch of Eastern Orthodoxy,” painstakingly locked into the structure of another Church by a confining discourse that makes it difficult for a Westerner to understand that Kyivan Orthodoxy is a separate spiritual institution with its own language, tradition, and history. The Tomos granted to the Ukrainian church on January 6, 2019 sets matters straight. A fastidious researcher now has the opportunity to find out when and how the Moscow Patriarchate imposed its control over the Ukrainian Church, adding to the falsehoods about a supposedly common history and culture with Russia. The recognition of the historically confirmed subordination of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine to Constantinople is a significant event in the spiritual and religious life of Ukraine, and is reflected upon in some of the analyses presented in this issue.

Reforms in the fields of mass media and education remain a constant topic of polemics in contemporary Ukraine and come into focus in the material presented. The “Reflections” section of *KMHJ* complements the issue’s themes by presenting observations in the fields of opera, literature, and history. The “Reviews” section is designed to in a timely fashion inform about the latest scholarly monographs and collections of articles. Here we see evidence that contemporary Ukrainian thought in the humanities is integrated into a global context, actively reflecting on its new approaches.

In addition to our achievements we must say a few words about what we weren’t able to accomplish and what remains to be done. First, this involves addressing the issue of

our national mentality, which in one way or another underlies the foundations of modern Ukrainian statehood and as such is most affected by non-academic speculation. “Who are we?” Volodymyr Yavorivskyi rhetorically asked from the rostrum of the Ukrainian Parliament at the dawn of our independence. Colleagues from other countries continue to ask who we are in observing the quizzical progress of our country, which forever seems to fluctuate between Russia and the West. It is here, in the plane of clarifying the fundamental question of who we are (in historical, cultural, territorial, linguistic, psychological, and other terms), that lie the foundations of contemporary Ukrainian studies in the humanities. Until our thinking finally rids itself of ominous imperial clichés (especially Russia’s consistent falsehood about “one nation,” wherein so-called “fraternal unity” acts as the logic and instrument for the destruction of everything Ukrainian), our humanities fields will have difficulty meeting the challenges of the future.

To free oneself of such a past, as experience shows, is not that easy. A fearful dependence on Soviet and generally imperialistic stereotypes is time and again displayed in our historical, philosophical, and socio-political thought. Undoubtedly, the latter even produces fundamental, complex works of a strategic type, but at the same time expresses wonder at the unexpectedness of Russia’s aggression in Ukraine. Only one distanced from the historical and psychological essence of our relations with Russia can be surprised by such a turn of events, while a qualified analyst realizes that the present war is the twenty-second in a series with Russia since the 16th century. It is simply another act of Russian aggression that contains nothing unexpected, to the contrary, it is a demonstration of the expected. After all, as Ukraine begins to declare its individuality and defend its own identity, Russia intensifies its discourse of “brotherhood,” promoted by all possible means, military included.

On the last Saturday of each November, Ukraine, in words and symbols of mourning, pays tribute to the innocent victims of the Holodomor, artificially organized by Russia. This was a genocide of the Ukrainian people, in which 7 to 10 million Ukrainians died. Together with the victims of the famines of 1921–1922 (approximately 1 million dead) and 1946–1947 (approximately 2 million dead), and the military and civilian casualties of World War II (approximately 5 million dead), this accounts for over half of Ukraine’s population in 1929 (according to the census of that year—a population of 31 million). Before thinking about the worldview and cultural orientations of modern Ukraine, a Western colleague should understand one simple and terrible thing—being Ukrainian in the USSR in the 1930s–1950s, and subsequently in the “quiet” 1970s, meant perishing. Precisely and only that. Which is why parents sent their children to large cities and encouraged them to receive indoctrination into a foreign faith and culture. Because in a state of profound post-genocidal fear and stress they preferred to see their children alive. It was James Mace who spoke about this most frankly and comprehensively in all of his devoted work on the Ukrainian Holodomor. We are not a post-imperial country and people, we are a post-genocidal country and people, who, unfortunately, have not yet become the subjects of adequate studies in the humanities on our realities in their historical breadth.

We hope that in the coming years our scholars will finally make up for these fundamental shortcomings, as otherwise we will remain yet another “regional addition” to the untruths and myths promulgated about us in Russian studies in the humanities. We, on our part, will make every effort to disseminate their most important and interesting findings to the world without reduction or delay.

We sincerely thank everyone (Nina Averianova, Cyril Hovorun, Archbishop Ihor Isichenko, Archpriest Vitalii Klos, Serhiy Kvit, Michael Moser, Natalya Ryabinska, Natalia Shlikhta, Olha Shumilina, Maryna Varakuta, Roman Veretelnyk, Tetiana Voropaieva, Mychailo Wynnyckyj, Oleksandr Yaroshchuk) who responded to our call and submitted articles for this issue, as we do everyone who submitted reviews (Tetiana Borodina, Ostap Kin, Mariia Kravchenko, Olena Martyniuk, Olena Peleshenko, Oleksandra Sauliak, Mariia Shuvalova, Dmytro Yesypenko, Olga Zaitseva-Herz). We would also like to express a special note of gratitude to the reviewers of this issue of *KMHJ*. And I would like to heartfully thank our sponsors, the Viktoria Gumeniuk and Serhiy Sehedra family, who through their support have enabled the publication of this issue.

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