

THREE LANGUAGES FOR THREE CULTURES¹ (Works on Literary Studies and Culturology)

The Vasyl Stefanyk National University in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, has published a volume of the selected scholarly works by Prof. Leonid D. Rudnytzky on the occasion of his 85th birthday². These works reflect a wide range of interests of a person who embraced scholarship as his life's work and built bridges between world literatures.

The collection is not limited to the works of one people, nor is the language exclusively that of one culture – it reflects multiple influences, dynamic creativity, and a wealth of perspectives and ideas. Every essay is a genuine contribution to scholarship, respecting the uniqueness, autonomy and dignity of all languages and literatures. Ukrainian literature has been influenced by a wide variety of external forces: some of these were voluntary; others were coerced, leaving writers and scholars an open field for further discoveries.

Leonid Rudnytzky is Professor Emeritus of Languages and Literatures at La Salle University in Philadelphia and has taught at many institutions throughout the world. He is the recipient of numerous honorary doctorates from various university in the United States and Europe; former rector of the Ukrainian Free University in Munich; and, most importantly, a successful educator of thousands of students for whom he is not only a mentor, but also a model worthy of emulation. This book, a collection of scholarly articles, is a deep source of knowledge for and understanding of literature. Thus the volume's title, «For Three Cultures», is quite fitting and could even be expanded.

The collection is published in three languages, but not only for three cultures: it is intended for peoples around the world, who, as a result of the globalization and rapid development of communication technologies, have the opportunity to know and appreciate one another. Rudnytzky's comparative work analyzes Ukrainian texts and puts them into dialogue with other world literatures. Although the collection is presented as a scholarly study of literature, it goes well beyond that, as the author integrates personal experiences into his research, often elaborating on the personalities about whom he writes.

The style of the book is interesting and compelling, even captivating, Rudnytzky has the rare gift of openly, objectively and without prejudice analyzing literary works, and, in doing so, discovers meanings and motifs not readily evident. We have before us an extensive 428 – page edition, which is

¹ IRYNA KACHANYUK-SPIECH is an instructor of the Ukrainian language at the Ukrainian Free University in Munich and prolific translator of Ukrainian literature into German. This article was translated and abridged from the author's «Трьома мовами для трьох культур». Християнський Голос 23.3075 (December 2021) pp. 23-25.

² Scholarly article reprinted in celebration of the 85th birthday of Prof. Leonid Rudnytzky. Edited Stefan I. Khorob (Ivano-Frankivsk, 2020) 428pp.

divided into three sections (as the little itself indicates): the cover features a photograph of the author against a black background. The scholarly articles are arranged according to the language in which they originally appeared: Ukrainian, English or German. To discuss the book, I will first consider the German section, which is the shortest, though no less important: then I will proceed to the English section and finish with the Ukrainian.

The study of Ivan Franko (1856 – 1916) – man of letters and political social activist – is Rudnytzky's specialty and the subject of his doctoral dissertation. Rudnytzky focuses on Franko's relationship to German literature and refutes some long-held conceptions about this multifaceted and complex figure. He expanded his in-depth studies of Franko's works throughout his career: as a result, articles with references to Franko occur in each of three language sections.

In addition to essays on Franko, the German section includes an article on Henrich Heine's relationship to Ukraine and a preface to the works of Vasyl Barka as a «poet, mystic, visionary». Two articles in this section are of great value to me, personally – one is a preface to my complete translation of Ivan Kotlyarevsky's mock epic «Eneida» into German, where Rudnytzky emphasizes the importance of this work for Ukrainian literature, presenting Kotlyarevsky as a poet who restored the Ukrainian literature language. The second article is a preface to the translation of Dmytro Pavlenko's book «Three Verses», which I completed together with my son, Joseph. Here Rudnytzky paints Pavlenko in vivid colors, representing his personality in the changing conditions of life in the 20th century – during World War II, under Soviet rule, and as ambassador to Slovakia and Poland after the establishment of the Ukrainian independent state.

The English section includes such wide-ranging topics such as the tragedy of the Holodomor, Lessing's relationship to Ukrainian literature, and the perception of Oleksandr Dovzhenko in Germany. It continues with Ukrainian writers Volodymyr Hnatiuk and Petro Andrusiv, as well as three extensive articles on the novelist Oles' Honchar and essays on Ivan Franko. This section concludes with a trenchant study on Taras Shevchenko.

As expected, the Ukrainian section includes many items about Ivan Franko: «Revolutionary Figures in the Dramas of Ivan Franko»; «Three Prices on One Throne»; and «Franko in Search of the Ukrainian I». It also addresses Franko's relationship with religion and the Church, in particular Andrey Sheptytsky and Josyf Slipuj. Several articles are devoted to the poetry and dramas of Hryhor Luzhnytsky, as well as autobiographical material on the genesis of his novel «Стріл у ночі» («Shot in the Night»), and his epistolary novel on Sheptytsky. It also includes the following works: «The literary Work of Mykhailo Hrushevsky»: «In the Shadow of his Famous Brother: the Literary Critical Works of Oleksandr Hrushevsky (An Attempted Analysis)»; «The

Poetic World of Vasyl Symonenko»; «Oles' Honchar and the Ukrainian Diaspora».

Two articles in this Ukrainian section, both about Taras Shevchenko, made a deep impression on me: one on «Shevchenko – Culture and Learning», the other «А до того – я не знаю Бога» («And before that – I shall not know God: The Key to Shevchenko's Spiritual World»). The first article presents Shevchenko and his importance not only as an individual and a poet, but also as a phenomenon of national importance, a unifying factor for Ukrainians around the world. In the second article, the scholar focuses on the words of the poem known as «Testament», which are difficult to understand: «And before that – I shall not know God» (taking this line out of context affords various interpretations). Many translators and scholars of Shevchenko's «Testament» avoid this verse. As a translator (from Ukrainian Into German), I focus on the value of each individual word to understand better the poet's thoughts, even the most hidden ones; more importantly, I never lose sight of the whole and do not take phrases out of context in order to interpret them in my own way. Shevchenko was gravely ill when he wrote these words and did not know whether he would live to see tomorrow. He not only expresses a desire to be buried in Ukraine (having been forced to live in Russia), but also to make Ukraine free; only then will his soul be able to «leave everything and soar to God Himself in prayer». And until the moment his soul comes «face to face» with God, that is, until death itself, he «will not know God». No human – no patriarch, no monk, no pope – knows God. We believe in God, but we do not know Him – that is why our religion is called «faith». This is the profound mysticism that we must accept while living in the world, because the human mind is incapable of understanding the mysteries of God. This concept is expressed in very simple words by Shevchenko on the verge of death. Of all the interpretations of the «Testament», Rudnytsky's faithfully adheres to Shevchenko's text and sheds light on these words, calling Shevchenko a Christian poet-mystic.

The section includes, as its penultimate piece. «Literature with a Mission», Rudnytsky's address at Lviv University on the occasion of receiving an honorary doctorate. Here, he analyzes the current developments in Ukrainian literature after the fall of the Soviet Union and argues that today it is undergoing a process of «unification» views can be exchanged freely, works written in exile have become available, and Ukrainian studies are now included in universities throughout the world. Ukraine can now be fully known: this process helped the Ukrainian people to overcome their sense of inferiority, as well as led to the normalization of relations with neighbors, especially Russia and Poland. In the end, Rudnytsky analyzes the Ukrainian language, its frequent use of diminutives, and its sentimental and enduring nature, which do not degrade the language, but rather ennoble it.

This Ukrainian section concludes with a long philosophical article titled «The Return of Eros to the West», co-authored with Graig di Paulo and translated into Ukrainian. The article is a profound study of love in literature, philosophy, human life, and Christianity, and love's various aspects as Eros (Greek) and Caritas (Latin), which in the New Testament is Agape, God's Love.

The collection of scholarly article is scholarly articles is supplemented by 16 page of photographs from the life of the author and his active years of work that reflect his many accomplishments and feature his numerous acquaintances. The section opens with two photographs of the Rudnytzky family: the first, a beautiful family portrait that includes Leonid Rudnytzky's mother, Julia (nee Luzhnytsky) Rudnytzky; the second, Leonid with his wife Irena (nee levins) Rudnytzky. The pages that follow comprise a gallery of photographs of Leonid Rudnytzky with major personalities of our time: Pope John Paul II. His Beatitude Lubomyr Husar and other church dignitaries, and important social and political figures such as the first President of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, along with celebrities in the fields of science, literature and art. The photographs show a highly likeable person whose open temperament lends itself to joint efforts and harmonious collegiality.

«In Three Languages for Three Cultures» – these words can serve as the leitmotif of entire professional life of Leonid Rudnytzky. Life's circumstances cast him from his native Lviv to Germany, and then to the United States, necessitating his mastery of all three languages of these countries, and after receiving an education, he devoted himself entirely to work among the three cultures of these peoples. With undiminished perseverance, he discovered the literatures of the world – Goethe and Schiller are as close to him as Franko and Shevchenko so his collection of works will remain an invaluable source of knowledge for students, scholars and all those interested in literature.

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