

able and sober, which is not universally the case in environmental history.

**Siegfried Ulbrecht / Helena Ulbrechtová (Hrsg.): Die Ost-West-Problematik in den europäischen Kulturen und Literaturen. Ausgewählte Aspekte / Problematika Východ – Západ v evropských kulturách a literaturách. Vybrané aspekty (Arbeiten des Slavischen Instituts. Neue Reihe, Bd. 25), Prag / Dresden: Slovanský ústav AV ČR / Neisse Verlag 2009, 794 S.**

Rezensiert  
von Markéta Křížová, Prag

The publication focuses on the mutual relationships of European cultures and literatures (with accent laid on the binary opposition of “Slavic” and “non-Slavic” cultural phenomena). The voluminous collection (798 pp.) of articles written by authors of diverse nationalities and institutional affiliations represents one of the first results of work of the new Department of the history of Slavic studies and Slavic literatures, established in 2003 within the Slavic Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. As is stated in the introduction of the editors, Siegfried Ulbrecht and Hana Ulbrechtová, the project arose out of the need, perceived acutely by the members of the Department, “to follow up with the heritage of the Czech comparative literary studies and at the same time to respond actively to the present-day develop-

ment of literary and cultural studies in Europe”. Thus the traditional accent on the problems of history of various Slavic languages and literatures (with special attention devoted to the problem of Russian literature) is being enriched by confrontation of the Slavic cultural systems with cultural manifestations from other European regions. “This method, so common in European Slavic studies, is only marginally realized in the Czech milieu, due to the strong fixation of researchers to Czech-Slavic context,” stated the editors. (p. 13) Thus, the dichotomy East-West in great majority of articles overlaps with the dichotomy Slavic-German, with attention dedicated also to the specific posing of Central Europe between these two great cultural complexes.

This binar opposition of Slavic vs. German, born out of the nineteenth-century struggle for national independization of Czech face to face the German “threat”, represents one of the conservative traits of the volume. Equally traditional view embodies the fact that “culture” in the preponderant majority of articles means strictly “high culture”, and above all, literature. In fact, the two words are used almost synonymously, even though Hana Ulbrechtová in her opening article (mentioned in greater detail below) repeatedly stated that “the “East-West” concept cannot in any case be reduced to the subject of research of a comparative examination of literatures.” (p. 39) However, the truth is that most of the contributors tried to embed the literature in the broader context of culture and politics.

Last but not least, national state and national culture (literature) are considered as basic reference points of historical as well as cultural studies of the volume.

However, if we accept this – rather “old-fashioned” delineation of the scope and focus of research, many articles as well as the book as a whole are greatly inspiring. The dichotomy based on language (Slavic vs. German) offers a provocative alternative to the the strongly politicized historical analyses of the divisions between Eastern and Western Europe, and enables to locate it much further back into the past. The more so, because of the accentuation of the position of Russia and Russian culture on the threshold of wider “East” and “West”, namely, the European vs. Asian cultural complexes. “We might go as far as to say that Russian culture and literature are themselves an example of the East-West dialogue at various levels,” reminds us Ulbrechtová (p. 41).

Even though the volume consists of 30 studies, it is not heterogeneous, but rather compact, thanks to the unequivocal and well-argued theoretical chapter that opens it. Hana Ulbrechtová delineated clearly several basic methodological approaches and concepts (cultural transfer; historical comparatistics, imagology, Eurasianism etc.) To these concepts, the authors of case studies refer and develop them along the line of their proper research.

After the introduction follow still more general studies focused on Europe as a space of cultural communication. Moritz Csáky dedicated his attention to the transitional space of Central Europe and its “unintentional unity” (quoting M. Kundera), overarching the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural heterogeneity; a “laboratory”, in which there could be “detected, already in the past, processes that have grown to be universally relevant in the century of globalisation”. (p. 75) An extremely inter-

esting text by Ulrike Goldwascher, written from the perspective of history and cultural history, rather than from the narrow perspective of literary and cultural science, analyses in detail the problems of „space“ (Raum) and „Frontier“ (Grenze), as well as various approaches to Central Europe in history „Mitteleuropa als Argument der Grossmachtpolitik“; “Mitteleuropa als Integrationsbegriff”; “Mitteleuropa aus östlicher Perspektive“. Especially the last one (that is, Central Europe viewed from Russia as a outpost of Western Europe) offers a valuable contribution to the discussion on the topic of the ambiguous character of the concepts central to the book as a whole: the “East” and “West”.

To this discussion contributed also Anna Zelenková by her article summarizing the opinions of the prominent representative of the Czech comparative studies F. Wollman. The text again perceives Central Europe as a “bridge”, “mediator” or “crossroad”, but on a more narrow scale – as mediator between Germany and Russia, between Slavic and non-Slavic milieu, instead of the “West” and “East” in a general sense.

The rest of the authors present case studies from various time periods and regions, but the majority of texts represent comparative literary studies, focused mainly on Russian-German, but also Russian-French relations. Completely omitted was the problem of English culture, “Europe” is in the whole volume reduced to its continental past.

The concluding block of articles again returns to the more general approach and presents the various representations of East-West problem in philosophy and philosophical texts. The introductory

study by Miroslav Mikulášek outlines the common roots of the Classical heritage in Russian and Western-European philosophy and identifies their importance for literary studies. The concluding study by Alexander Höllwerth, on the other hand, presents the pseudo-philosophical theories of Alexander Dugin, representative of the „Neo-Euroasiansm“, and their relation to the values of Western civilization.

Only few readers would be able to read the book as a whole given the linguistic heterogeneity, which is a pity considering its relative compactness. This “confusion of tongues” probably reflects the uncertainty of editors considering the target group of readers. The Czech and Slovak texts probably aim to introduce the basic concepts and theses to the Czech public, students and fellow-researchers; the Russian texts and summaries aspire to draw in the numerous group of Russian students of Slavic and comparative literature studies; the English and German, on the other hand, present the state-of-the-art in this area to those Western European scholars unfamiliar with Slavic languages. Ambitious as these varied goals are, it can be stated that the editors and authors at least partly fulfilled each of them.

**Siegfried Mattl / Gerhard Botz /  
Stefan Karner / Helmut Konrad  
(Hrsg.): Krieg. Erinnerung. Ge-  
schichtswissenschaft (= Veröffentli-  
chungen des Clusters Geschichte der  
Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft, Bd.  
1). Wien: Böhlau Verlag 2009, 380 S.**

Rezensiert von  
Christian Koller, Bangor

Der anzuzeigende Band ist aus einer Tagung im Jahre 2007 entstanden, die von dem Cluster Geschichte der Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft organisiert wurde, welches 2005 von den LBIs für Geschichte und Gesellschaft, für Gesellschafts- und Kulturgeschichte, für Historische Sozialwissenschaft und für Kriegsfolgenforschung gebildet wurde. Er gibt einen Einblick in die Aktivitäten und Pläne dieses Forschungsverbundes und zugleich, zumindest zwischen den Zeilen, in die Fährnisse, mit denen sich die zeithistorische Forschung auch in Österreich im Zeichen der Mittelknappheit konfrontiert sieht.

Der erste Teil befasst sich mit Erwartung, Erfahrung und Erinnerung des Ersten Weltkrieges. Zunächst breitet Helmut Konrad die wesentlichen Hypothesen und Fragestellungen eines zwischen der dem Band zugrunde liegenden Tagung und der Drucklegung bedauerlicherweise abgelehnten Projektantrags für einen transdisziplinären Spezialforschungsbereich zu Österreich im Ersten Weltkrieg aus, der sich um die Themenfelder „Religion und Weltanschauung“, „Kunst, Bildung und