COLLOQUIA

HUMANISTICA

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Introductory Comments

The sixth volume of *Colloquia Humanistica* is devoted to the borders of civilization, or more precisely, to their image in texts of culture (*The images of the borders of civilization*). It includes both such issues as the borders between faiths, Islamic and Christian, which are discussed here by Filip Jakubowski, who takes for his example medieval Spain and Portugal, and the surprising and, as yet, undescribed in literature on the subject meeting of Polish and Serb travellers with the so-called “contact zone” (the term introduced by Mary Louise Pratt), that is the Northeast China (Manchuria) region. Their descriptions were unusual, because Poles and Serbs represented Russian institutions, as both Poland and Serbia, for slightly different reasons, were not involved in attempts to colonize China (Tomasz Ewartowski). A contrasting perspective on the title issue is presented in John Cox’s article devoted to the late Radomir Konstantinović, an outstanding Serbian philosopher and writer, whose excellent treatise *Filozofija palanke* (Konstantinović, 1969) deals with the category of “palanke”, the Serbian version of a “one horse town” or “backwater”. Cox’s reflections allow us to look, through Konstantinović’s writings at the civilizational boundaries within every national culture, no matter how European or global it tries to be.

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Another aspect of *The images...* is discussed in those articles which consider attempts to invalidate borders, as when describing the status of being “between”, the case of migrants from the Dominican Republic in the United States, Dominican-American writers existing between borders, not belonging in effect to either culture (Karolina Majkowska).

Another, this time “prepared” as it were by the authorities, strategy of invalidating borders, or rather making them friendly, is shown in the article by Paweł Michalak, who describes the shaping of Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations in the first half of the 1930s.

Finally, the matter of forgetting Shoah, blurring the boundaries of responsibility and trying to establish new ones, between good and evil, of which an interesting illustration is the work of the contemporary Serbian writer Filip David and the whole complex context of the present Serbian debate on the Shoah (Sabina Giergiel & Katarzyna Taczyńska).

In the section *Discussion. Presentations. Book Reviews* the readers will find an interesting article by Leo Rafolt devoted to performative art and its specific discussion with the boundaries created by our contemporary, neocapitalist and post-socialist realist world.

In the section *Materials*, as in previous issues, we present an unusual discovery. Its author, Joanna Panasiuk, describes a religious image from the orthodox church built in 2013 in Tataurovo, in Eastern Siberia. The icon from Tataurovo does not belong fully to Byzantine culture as it was influenced by the traditions of the Christian East and West. According to Joanna Panasiuk, the author of the Icon could have been someone coming from the circle of Western Christianity, maybe an exile, whose origin is reflected in the way the icon is ‘written’. The unknown painter may have wished to combine the traditions of the Eastern and Western Churches. Though, at present, determining the origin of the picture is problematic, it is unquestionably a noncanonical painting, transgressing once demarcated boundaries. Joanna Panasiuk tells us, illustrating at the same time with marvelous slides, the story of a cultural hybrid which owes its creation to an “unplanned” transcending of borders.

And so the circle closes, the sixth issue (not just in the Thematic Section) is devoted to the borders of civilization in our memory, in culture, in art, in literature, in the arrangement of political objectives. Both their demarcation and their crossing is a matter of the objectives we can and want to set ourselves in the context of the order that exists and into which we try to fit, transforming it or levelling.

The value of this survey of “images of borders” is its setting in such varied material, owing to which the theoretical speculations gain a representative

illustration and, at the same time, a guarantee of being rooted, even if it is only a “contact zone”.

Jolanta Sujecka,
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