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ON THE ROAD TO THE WORD

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In *Moral Letters to Lucilius*, Seneca wrote: “It was once more simple because men's sins were on a smaller scale, and could be cured with but slight trouble; in the face, however, of all this moral topsy-turvy men must leave no remedy untried. And would that this pest might so at last be overcome! We are mad, not only individually, but nationally.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

The Roman Stoic, philosopher and writer characterizes philosophy in the above-given passage, but for me it is also associated with philology. While there is a growing tendency to seek detours and shout that philology and philologists are useless, there must be a refuge from this maddening clamor somewhere, a foothold, a comfort zone (call it as you will) which can give you an understanding and confidence that what you are doing is important, useful or necessary, like oxygen or water. Philological journals and books serve as such a refuge for those who have not lost faith in the power and capability of the word.

I do not think things are that bad for philology; I doubt that it is facing a severe crisis; I am not sure everything is as awful as we are led to believe. Rumors will be rumors. As a rule, they have nothing to do with real deeds. The one who talks is too busy to pay attention to reality. Cassandra’s apocalyptic visions always evoke agitation and curiosity, even if they are fake. Hence is the conclusion: there are those who talk about the crisis of philology and those who know nothing about the ones talking about it, being busy with that very philology, which is alleged to be in crisis. As usual, everything is entangled and complicated in the kingdom of the humanities. Thus it might be wiser to give this tangled skein to the Moirae – let them unroll it, and time will select what is most important and preserve the essential for us or for those who will come after us.

It is said that Ukrainian philology is of no use to the world (not philology in general, but Ukrainian philology). The main thing is that it is of use to us – even when all happens in spite of, not due to. It is fairly straightforward: if you do not value yourself, nobody will. You will get nowhere by being fixated on usefulness or uselessness; you will never succeed if you look back in regret; you will not manage to write about the most important thing if you listen to the small voice telling you about the twilight of philology.

There is time for everything and everyone: time to speak and time to write, time to listen and time to interpret, time to touch and time to think… As Pliny the Younger wrote in one of his letters: “Alas! how many learned men there are who are buried out of sight and lost to fame either through their own modesty or their retiring habits. Yet, when we are about to make a speech or give a reading we are nervous only of those who parade their learning, while those who say nothing appear to great advantage just because they show their respect for an important literary work by receiving it in silence.”[[2]](#footnote-2)\*

The existence of high-quality publications by Ukrainian philologists nullifies any attempts to convince us that philology is in decline or even dead. To a certain extent, classical philology was not fully prepared for novel, unclassical, trends; but adapting to new conditions is a question of time.

Yet again, the philological publications available in Ukraine at present are undeniable evidence that Ukrainian philology is alive. Some of these titles can boast a long history and tradition; others are a little younger (but no less important), and their main advantage is that they appeared and developed in independent, no longer Soviet, Ukraine.

One of such journals is *Prykarpatskyi Visnyk NTSh* (*The Precarpathian Bulletin of the Shevchenko Scientific Society*), with one of its series being *Slovo* (*The Word*); apart from this series, there are other immensely interesting and extremely profound series such as *Chyslo* (*The Date*), *Dumka* (*The Thought*), *Puls* (*The Pulse*) – but that’s another story. The journal emerged on the horizon of philology in 2008, with its perennial editor being Stepan Khorob, Doctor of Philology, full professor. It was launched by the Ivano-Frankivsk branch of the Shevchenko Scientific Society, Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Oil and Gas, and Ivano-Frankivsk National Medical University. The editorial board consists of leading researchers from Ukraine and Europe. Some of them are unfortunately no longer with us… However, in the first issues of *Slovo*, one can find their names and their words; in fact, the word lasts longer than a human life, and it is hardier and more resilient; but at the same time it is more fragile and more insecure than the human organism…

The main sections of *Slovo* are *Linguistics, Literary Criticism, Folklore Studies, Journalism,* and *Art History*; there are a number of other sections, for instance *A Nation in the Making* or *Pokuttia Trinity*, which appear in a particular issue depending on its conception. My favorite section (it is present in every issue, which is very important) is *The Tribune for the Young*, where young researchers make their first steps. This section not only provides young researchers with support but also sets the ante for what constitutes high research standards in the humanities. So what do they research? What is their word about? There are a great variety of topics: from ancient literature (unfortunately, such studies are not numerous; I wish there were more because the word which is time-proven sounds especially strong) to the literature of today, which is only developing; from names known to a wide readership to the ones familiar only to a small circle of philologists. Thus in one of the most recent issues, the young researchers discuss the works of Yurii Kosach, Andrii Zhurakivskyi, Vasyl Riabyi, Olha Slonovska, Vsevold Nestaiko, Roman Ivanychuk, Yurii Mushketyk, Dariia Yaroslavska, Iren Rozdobudko.

The *Linguistics* Section presents studies by renowned scholars who explore topical issues in linguistics. Here are a few of them: *Movno-estetychni parametry novostyliu v prozovykh tekstakh ukrainskykh pysmennyts* (*The* *Linguistic and Aesthetic Parameters of Novostyl’ in the Prose of Ukrainian Female Writers*) by V. I. Kononenko; *Vasyl Nimchuk – doslidnyk “Leksykona slovenoroskoho” Pamvy Beryndy* (*Vasyl Nimchuk – Explorer of Pamvo Berynda’s “The Lexicon of Church Slavonic”*) by V. V. Greshchuk; *Ukrainskyi chas: hramatychna interpretatsiia* (*Ukrainian Tense: a Grammatical Interpretation)*, *Kulturolohichnyi aspekt etnolinhvistyky (A Culturological Aspect of Ethnolinguistics)* by V. M. Barchuk; *Hramatychna omonimiia chastok ON, OS, OT, OTSE* (*The Grammatical Homonymy of the Particles ОН, ОСЬ, ОТ, ОЦЕ)* by І. F. Dzhochka; *Frazeolohichni “vidsvity” hovirky sela Tiudiv Kosivskoho raionu (The Phraseological “Glow” of the Vernacular Spoken in Tiudiv Village, Kosiv District)* by М. І. Holianych; *Slovotvir u “Narysakh ukrainskoi movy" Oleksy Syniavskoho* (*Word Formation in Oleksa Syniavskyi’s “Sketches of the Ukrainian Language”)* by L. І. Pena.

In the *Literary Criticism* Section, the reader will find papers on the literature of various periods: *Svoieridnist novelistychnoi maisternosti Valeriana Pidmohylnoho* (The Originality of *Valerian Pidmohylnyi as a Master of the Novella*) by N. V. Maftyn; *Funktsionalnist symvoliv satyrychnoho tekstu* (*The Functionality of Symbols in a Satirical Text*) by H. І. Marchuk; *Ukrainofilski zoseredzhennia Mykhaila Drahomanova* (*The Ukrainophilic Preoccupations of Mykhailo Drahomanov)* by R. В. Pikhmanets; *Intermedialnist: termin, kontseptsiia, metodolohiia (Intermediality: Term, Conception, Methodology)* by N. D. Mocherniuk; *Osoblyvosti zhanrovoi systemy suchasnoi ukrainskoi prozy dlia ditei ta yunatstva* (*The Characteristics of the Genre of the Modern Ukrainian Prose for Children and Adolescents)* by Т. B. Kachak; *Zhanrova eklektyka retro-detektyviv Bohdana Kolomiichuka* (*The Eclecticism of Genre in Bohdan Kolomiichuk’s Retro Detectives)* by А. V. Zemlianska and A. M. Zemlianskyi; *Khudozhnia interpretatsiia ideolohichnoho mifu v povisti Zirky Menzatiuk “Yak ya ruinuvala imperiiu”* (*An Artistic Interpretation of the Ideological Myth in the Novelette by Zirka Menzatiuk “How I Ruined the Empire”)* by S. Е. Ushnevych; *Kontseptsiia zghanblenoi* *nevoleiu Vitchyzny v ukrainskii poetychnii istoriosofii* (*The Conception of a Homeland Disgraced by Captivity in Ukrainian Poetic Historiosophy)* by R. B. Golod.

Another sectionworthy of attention is that of *Folklore Studies*, which extends beyond the frameworks of the testamentary rustic discourse: *Buzh i Dovbush: folklorno-mifolohichnyi aspekt* (*Buzh and Dovbush: a Folkloric and Mythological Perspective)* by S. H. Pushyk, *Mifolohichna paradyhmatyka arkhetypnoi krytyky: suchasni poshuky i pidkhody* (*The Mythological Paradigm of* *Archetypal Criticism: Modern Explorations and Approaches)* by О. V. Slonovska, *Osoblyvosti khudozhnioho vidtvorennia opryshkivstva u pershii redaktsii povisti Hnata Khotkevycha “Kaminna Dusha”: folklornyi zriz* (*A Fictional Representation of the Opryshky Movement in the First Edition of the Novelette “The Stone Soul” by Hnat Khotkevych: a Folkloric Snapshot)* by М. М. Vasylchuk, *Ornitomorfnyi obraz-symvol “orel” u literaturnii ta folklornii poezii: brytansko-ukrainskyi kontekst* (*The Ornithological Image and Symbol of an Eagle in Literary and Folkloric Poetry: British and Ukrainian Context)* by О. V. Karbashevska, *Literaturno-folklorna hotyka: obrazno-siuzhetna paradyhma* (*Literary and Folkloric Gothicism: A Paradigm for Imagery and Storyline)* by І. V. Hrosevych.

*Art History* has an impressive research scheme – from theatre to music, from music to the word expressed with a brush. To illustrate, let us consider the most recent issue of *Slovo*: *Tvorennia kinosvitu yak khudozhnii protses (na materiali filmiv ukrainskoho “poetychnoho kino”)* (*Creating a Cinematic World as an Artistic Process (based on the films of the Ukrainian “Poetic Cinema”)*) by S. І. Khorob, *Transformatsiia yevanhelskoho suizhetu v piesakh “Na poli krovi” Lesi Ukrainky ta “Holhota – Strasti, Smert i Voskresinnia Hospoda nashoho Isusa Khrysta” Hryhora Luzhnytskoho* (*The Transformation of the Evangelical Storyline in Lesia Ukrainka’s “In the Field of Blood” and Hryhir Luzhnytskyi’s “Holhota – Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ”*) by N. М. Vivcharyk, *Vershnyk neba*: *Vasyl Barka* – *zhyvopysets* (*The Sky Rider: Vasyl Barka – a Painter)* by H. О. Parovatkina.

*Journalism* frequently focuses on communicative aspects, the role of a journalist in the modern world, the characteristics of opinion journalism, gender issues in the mass media. To illustrate, Issue No. 47 discusses *Fakhova inmutatsiia zhurnalistiv: spetsifika identifikatsii* (*Professional Immutation in Journalists: Identification Specifics)* by О. М. Kholod, *Genderna problematyka informatsiinoho rynku Ivano-Frankivska* (*Gender Issues in the Ivano-Frankivsk Information Market)* by І. М. Kopystynska and І. V. Boichuk; in Issue No. 54 one can discover *Zharhonizmy v roli zasobiv intymizatsii v publitsystychnykh tekstakh (Jargonisms as Means of Adding Intimacy to Journalistic Texts)* by І. М. Dumchak, *Leksyko-semantychni osoblyvosti polskomovnoho reklamnoho tekstu pochatku ХХ stolittia* (*The Lexical and Semantic Characteristics of the Early 20th-Century Polish Advertisements)* by О. М. Pelekhata.

Another interesting section is *Reviews, Overviews,* which will familiarize us with the latest books on the humanities; it is a must-read for philologists and art historians, and it serves as a tool for navigating through art and culture.

A research publication can be a success provided there is a winning combination of tradition and novelty. Everything stems from tradition: it serves as fertile soil from which something new and different springs into existence; it is a foothold which helps to displace what seemed impossible to displace; it is evidence that we are not alone lonely and are engaged in important processes. *Slovo* is a vivid example of combining tradition and novelty, respect for what we have and a search for what we must discover or have. In this context, great significance is attached to the sections entitled *Jubilees* and *Anniversaries*, which give a leisured description of the achievements of Ukrainian philologists and supporters of the Ukrainian cultural movement so that we know and remember that the word is bigger and deeper than any of us is.

Even a brief overview such as this can reveal the versatility of *Slovo*, the kaleidoscopic nature and depth of its papers, the geographic diversity of its authors, though most of them are Precarpathian researchers. I do not think further details are necessary; after all, as the following Greek epigram goes, “What is too much becomes out of place; hence, as our forefathers said, even too much honey has the bitterness of gall”.[[3]](#footnote-3)\*

As can be seen, *Slovo* contains numerous materials to suit various tastes, so it can be of interest not only to philologists, art historians, or journalists, but also to readers concerned with the Ukrainian humanities. Are you interested in children’s literature? The development of the Ukrainian theatre? Opinion journalism? Topical issues in syntax? The mysteries of folkloric heritage? In *Slovo,* everyone will discover their word, as if it were uttered especially for them; and someone will find a word about them. Capturing epochs and moments, what is transient and what will never end. No time to read all the materials? There are thorough and exhaustive abstracts as well as detailed lists of sources given after every paper, which will help you to orient yourself in the research area.

All in all, there are 54 issues of *Prykarpatskyi Visnyk NTSh*. Who knows, perhaps when this article is published, there will be another, 55th, issue. Its word will be traditional and novel, expected and unexpected, resolute and not-quite-yet resolute, conventional and groundbreaking. The main thing is that it will be there…

The only thing to advise is more accessible communication, so that *Slovo* will be closer to both the reader and the potential author (for instance through a page on Facebook or Instagram), so that it will come into existence in the virtual world; after all – if communicative space is so important, why not fill it with the word?

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1. Given as translated by Richard M. Gummere (Seneca L. A. The Complete Moral Letters to Lucilius/ translated byRichard M. Gummere. Stoici Civitas Press, Ottawa, 2013. p.378). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. \* Given as translated by John B. Firth (*The Letters of the Younger Pliny* / translated by John B. Firth: Second Series. Walter Scott Publishing Co., London, 1905. p.92). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. \* Given as translated by Niall Rudd (*The Latin poems* / translated and edited by Niall Rudd. Bucknell University Press, 2005. P.114). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)