



We have the pleasure of inviting you to the lecture:

Contact Zone vs. Postcolonial Condition
On the Relevance of a Concept from Latin American Studies
for Research on Ukraine



On Friday, March 2, 2018, at 18h00
New Europe College (Plantelor 21)

given by

Dr Ulrich SCHMID

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Ever since Marko Pavlyshyn's seminal paper „Post-colonial features in Contemporary Ukrainian Culture“ (1992), the concept of the post-colonial condition has been vastly applied to the study of contemporary Ukrainian culture. Pavlyshyn constructed a Hegelian pyramid with the notions „colonial“, „anticolonial“ and „postcolonial“. The colonial refers to the self-marginalization of Ukrainian culture as it famously was represented in Gogol's Ukrainian Tales. The anticolonial encompasses the revolt and protest against the perceived colonial situation in Ukraine. Finally, the postcolonial addresses a constellation, in which the presence of both the colonial and the anticolonial is acknowledged and playfully transposed into an ambivalent text. Pavlyshyn's conception aptly describes the postcolonial condition of Ukrainian culture since the demise of the Soviet Union.

However, it remains centered around an understanding of „coloniality“, which stems from a paradigm with quite different features. The most important thinkers derive their concept of „coloniality“ from the British empire – the most prominent case being colonial India. Apart from obvious parallels, there are significant differences between the postcolonial situation of India and Ukraine. The hegemonial culture was in the British example completely different from the marginalized colonial traditions. On the contrary, Ukrainian culture developed in close proximity to and sometimes even in dominance of Russian culture.

Ulrich Schmid proposes to complement the postcolonial discourse about contemporary with an analytical concept from Latin American Studies. Mary Louise Pratt introduced the notion of cultural "contact zones" in 1991 to describe the encounter between indigenous people in Peru and the Spanish conquerors in early modern times. Neither states nor nations lie at the heart of Pratt's conception. Rather, she draws attention to phenomena like auto-ethnography, transculturation, collaboration, hybridity, bilingualism, mediation, parody, imaginary dialogue, and vernacular expression. The simple enumeration of these analytical models illustrates how fruitful her concept is, not only in a colonial or post-colonial context but also in a heterogeneous space such as contemporary Ukrainian culture.



Ulrich SCHMID is professor of Russian Studies at the University of St. Gallen.

His research interests include nationalism, popular culture and the media in Eastern Europe. He studied German and Slavic literature at the Universities of Zürich, Heidelberg, and Leningrad. He held academic positions in Basel, Bern, Bochum and was visiting researcher in Harvard and in Oslo.

Publications: *De profundis. The Failure of the Russian Revolution* (2017). *Technologies of the Soul. The Production of Truth in Contemporary Russian Culture* (2015), *Sword, Eagle and Cross. The Aesthetics of the Nationalist Discourse in Interwar Poland* (2013), *Tolstoi as a Theological Thinker and a Critic of the Church* (2013, with Martin George, Jens Herlth, Christian Münch), *Lev Tolstoi* (2010), *Literary Theories of the 20th Century* (2010), *Russian Media Theories* (2005), *Russian Religious Philosophers of the 20th Century* (2003), *The Designed Self. Russian Autobiographies between Avvakum and Herzen* (2000).

This event is organized within the Revisiting the Nation. Transcultural Contact Zones in Eastern Europe Winter Academy by Prisma Ukraïna Research Network Eastern Europe at Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin and The Center for Governance and Culture in Europe, St. Gallen, in cooperation with New Europe College.