

# Modernists, Marxists, and the Nation: The Ukrainian Literary Discussion of the 1920s

Myroslav Shkandrij

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The Literary Discussion of the 1920s was a pivotal event in Ukrainian intellectual history, one whose significance reaches far beyond issues of literary form and style. An expression of cultural self-assertion, it produced a vigorous debate on issues fundamental to Ukraine's future as a modern nation: its right to exist, its relationship to Russia and Europe, and its sense of identity.

The present book is the first comprehensive monograph on the subject. It explores the historical and political context underlying the explosion of polemical writing; analyzes the course of events; and discusses the main theoretical issues.

The study also broaches several questions of wider compass, which makes it of interest to students of cultural studies. It provides a synthetic treatment of an avant-garde movement from its heroic early years to its co-optation by Stalinism; presents a case study of a cultural intelligentsia dealing with a society in the throes of revolutionary change; and offers a description of the explosive growth of cultural nationalism in inter-war Europe. Drawing on government policy, public debates, émigré accounts, and recent discussions in Ukraine, the narrative is rich in implications for contemporary events. Indeed, the attitude of newly independent Ukraine towards Europe and the crucial Russo-Ukrainian relationship can only be understood against the background of the "great debate" of the twenties, which mapped out the country's fundamental cultural dilemmas and elicited responses from its most prominent activists and intellectuals.



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