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OF THE AUTHENTIC AND THE DYSTOPIAN-UTOPIAN

*This essay written in the tradition of Michel de Montaigne develops further the topic of post-communist culture and literature started in the essay “Of the Third Sophistic” published in the previous issue of this journal. Here six problems are discussed, and the two central ones are the character of the dystopian-utopian and the need of contemporary literary studies led not by ideology, but focused on existential issues. The dystopian-utopian is defined as a two-part continuum, which is an aesthetic counterpart of the operation of Continental critical philosophy: the dystopian creates a productive crisis questioning a norm, whereas the utopian offers an emancipating alternative. The dystopian-utopian is different from the literary genres of dystopia and utopia. Contemporary literary studies of modernism and postmodernism are all too often ideologically driven, whether they admit it or not. The essay pleads for a new type of studies that underscore the existential. As an example of such studies the essay hypothesizes that Western rationalism based on bivalent logic creates novelistic plots based on a love triangle. Some writers such as Dostoevsky or Chekhov oppose rationalism by reworking the triangle plot along the lines of polyvalent logic. The essay also shows that in their works Aleko Konstantinov and Nikola Vaptsarov deconstruct the simulacrum of modern-day Sophistic, and offer truthful and ethical alternatives.*