

Ulisse Spinnato Vega

## Address by the New Director of «AvtobiografiЯ»

It might be unoriginal to affirm and one might not need to resort to Hegel, but while an eminent person's life is like a scratch on the smooth face of a collective body, the story of a 'common' individual often changes the course of the great universal History. A life that turns into biography, then, is history that reflects on itself. Maybe, as asserted by Thomas Carlyle, a sum of illustrious biographies is not enough to do the History of the world. From at least a couple of centuries, i.e. from the French Revolution onwards, the people broke into History and became its agent, its engine.

In spite of that fact, biographies tell and determine the paradigmatic perception (and self-perception) that a cultural system has of itself or of other cultural systems. The literary biographies, in particular, become in some way meta-historiography when they tell the lives of those who turned storytelling into a profession.

That is how that scratch takes depth and gives meaning to the entire face.

As a simple (and frequent) reader of Russian masterpieces

and as an economic and political reporter who has to deal especially with contemporary Russia, I have the honour of joining the path of this brilliant journal. I will do so as a humble and admiring witness, who has everything to learn and nothing to teach.

I find the contents of this issue of «AvtobiografiЯ» useful, as it reflects on the value of literary biographies in one of the great homelands of the modern novel. This acquires further interest considering that "all biography is ultimately fiction", as "there is no life that can be recaptured wholly", as Bernard Malamud maintains.

I would like to thank the authors, contributors, academics and editors for the great opportunity of cultural growth that has been offered to me. My greetings go to my predecessor, Daniele Tagliavia, who proved to be kind when passing the torch onto me. And thank you to Claudia Criveller and Andrea Gullotta, true editorial souls of this periodical.

In orthodox Russia, in accordance to the Julian calendar, Christmas is celebrated on Jan-

uary the 7th, as children are waiting impatiently for the New Year's Eve to open the gifts. Thus, in the last days of 2016, even I have been waiting eager-

ly for the new issue of « AvtobiografiЯ ». Unwrapped now as a precious gift.