

**AATSEEL 2021**  
**Conference Program**  
**Presentation Abstracts**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2021**

Session 1: 10:00am-12:00pm
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**1-1. Instructional Practice and Design for the 2020s: Inclusive and High-Impact Approaches to Language, Literature, and Culture**

**Teaching for Liberal Arts Goals in the Literature and Culture in Translation Courses**

Benjamin Rifkin, Hofstra University

In the context of a significant decline in the birth rate in the US that is and will continue to be correlated with reduced numbers of students entering college through at least the year 2030, it is increasingly important for Slavic language and culture programs to redouble efforts to attract and retain students in their classes. Our literature in translation classes will continue to attract students interested in Dostoevsky or Tolstoy, but that may not be enough in some institutions. In this presentation, I will describe how the teaching of Russian literature and culture can be taught in the context of larger liberal arts goals, integrating liberal arts learning tasks into the discussion of Russian cultural and literary history and stylistic analysis.

To that end, my discussion will be informed by the discussion of the essential learning outcomes of the Liberal Education and America's Promise campaign of the Association of American Colleges and Universities ([aacu.org/leap](http://aacu.org/leap)), high-impact practices in higher education (Kuh and Schneider, 2008), the notion of significant learning (Fink, 2013), analysis of student intellectual and personal development during the college years (Patton, Renn, Guido, and Hayes, 2016), and a framework for understanding student retention in college (Tinto, 2015).

I will argue that course design informed by these conceptual frameworks will help increase student interest in and enrollment in courses dedicated to the exploration of Slavic literatures and cultures taught in translation and will help in student retention more broadly, enhancing institutional support for these programs at a time of declining enrollments in higher education nationally.

**Diversity and Inclusion in the Russian Language Classroom?**

Joan Chevalier, United States Naval Academy

Recent events in the United States that have brought about the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement as a powerful force for social and political change have forced educators across a wide array of disciplines to reevaluate who, what, and how they teach. Our field is long

overdue for a critical appraisal of what diversity and inclusion means in our classrooms. There are two fundamental parts to the issue of diversity and inclusion: how we interact with students and course content. This paper focuses on the latter. The traditional approach to our discipline is rooted in the notion that since we are teaching Standard Russian, we should focus exclusively on Russian language and culture. The traditional approach is rooted in a kind of cultural chauvinism which at the very least deprives students of an understanding of what the Russian Federation (RF) is – a multiethnic and multilingual nation. At worst this approach, by ignoring the diverse cultures that speak Russian within the RF, reifies the cultural exclusion routinely experienced by indigenous communities within Russia. There is much to be gained by including non-Russian voices in our language classrooms. Students introduced to the diverse cultures that make up Russia get a more accurate sense of what the RF is. But how do we move discussions of diversity in Russia beyond the juxtaposition of *russkii* and *rossiiskii*? As researcher with several years of experience doing ethnographic research in Siberia, I will argue that a good place to begin is to introduce voices of indigenous youth from Russia. Indigenous youth in recent years have poignantly used music, often with humor, to articulate their identity struggles. What does it mean to be Russian? What does it mean to be ethnically and culturally non-Russian but be a citizen of the RF? Culturally and ethnically diverse youth in the United States are dealing with many of these same issues. By expanding our understanding of *rossiiskii* we can both enrich our students' cultural literacy and expose them to timely cultural and social narratives that might resonate with their own.

### **Think Tank for BIPOC Students**

Amarilis Lugo de Fabritz, Howard University

This paper will talk about the point of inspiration for the US Russian Foundation – Howard University mentorship program, *Diversifying the Russian Studies Field*, which included a research think tank for undergraduate BIPOC students, as well as a cybersecurity simulation. It will also theorize about what shape it might take for its second cycle.

Session 3: 2:00pm-4:00pm
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### **3-1. Open Seminar with Thomas Garza (University of Texas - Austin): The Myth of «Шире круг»: Addressing Diversity and Intersectionality in the Teaching of Russian**

The venerable Soviet-era notion of the great, all-inclusive «многонациональная» country and culture of the USSR was a central part of the narrative created by a Russian hegemony for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Reflected in the cultural iconography such as civic poster images and popular children's songs that depicted a Russo-centric utopic imaginary of diverse creatures all playing in harmony, the myth of Soviet acceptance of cultures other than Russian belied the actual practices of the period, including in language pedagogy. Most Russian language textbooks reflected a monolithic Russian culture that was white, educated, relatively affluent, and heteronormative. Such a portrait of the Russian reality, which continues to be presented to learners of the language

and culture in the 2000s, not only excludes crucial demographic segments of the Russian population domestically, but also fails to connect with the diverse profiles and identities of learners outside of Russia. The shift in public awareness of pervasive institutional prejudices in the spring of 2020 has provided the impetus to review and change practices in the academy, including in language and culture instruction. From the groundbreaking work of Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) to the recent discussion of Reagan and Osborn (2021) in their search for "the promise of social justice" in world language education, critical pedagogies strive to rupture the institutionalized colonial yoke pervasive in much of world language education. From course curricula to current textbooks to online virtual learning environments, much of the content and delivery of world language classes remains steeped in the ideological and material context of colonial hegemony, creating barriers and obstacles in our courses for learners and instructors alike. This workshop will offer models and practices necessary to reimagine and "decolonize" our Russian language and culture courses. Participants will be asked to engage critically with sample materials and methods of language courses probably already familiar to them, as well as to examine models of new courses in Russian language and culture. The goal of the workshop is to equip participants to review their own modes and materials of language and culture instruction and then recast them into new iterations informed by critical pedagogies, creating curricula and courses that are more inclusive, diverse, and intersectional.

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2021

Session 5: 9:00am-11:00am

### **5-1. Digital Directions in Russian, Eastern European, and Eurasian Studies: Collaboration, Platforms, Visibility**

#### **Digital Humanities, Libraries, and the Global Classroom**

Vlad Beronja and Ian Goodale, University of Texas at Austin

Our paper, "Digital Humanities, Libraries, and the Global Classroom" will focus on the intersection between digital humanities practice and critical global pedagogy in classes taught for undergraduates and graduate students, looking at the ways in which students, librarians, and faculty collaborate in culturally and discipline-specific DH projects within a classroom setting. We will explore how this collaboration between faculty, librarians, and students can become an integral part of class design and global pedagogical practice, as well as how the DH work influences traditional pedagogical methods and reinforces--and challenges--other ways of teaching in the classroom. We will also address questions of how labor contributed by students to DH projects is honored and acknowledged, and how the DH work is designed as a dual pedagogical tool: one that simultaneously reinforces the readings and written assignments of the course and broadens the skillsets of the students by incorporating instruction related to unfamiliar, digital technologies and methodologies. Special focus will be placed on the field of Slavic studies and the ways in which DH assignments can foster specific cultural and regional knowledge within a wider global framework.

## **Digital Archives and Other forms of Digital Research**

Joan Neuberger, University of Texas at Austin

Russian language repositories have been in the forefront of digitizing archival documents and archival finding aids but making the transition to using those archives as a substantial portion of historical and cultural research —a necessity for some, in the era of Covid -- is not always a seamless process. I will discuss the project that the Eisenstein International Network has been working on to make research on Eisenstein-related topics more accessible, and suggest ways these might be useful for researchers in other fields.

## **Re-Imagining Digital Humanities and Russian and East European Studies after 2020**

Marijeta Božović, Yale University

The year 2020 has brought enormous changes to the way all of us research, write, teach, and live. More of our professional and personal lives are remediated online than ever before; and the transformation is both profound and promises/threatens to have lasting effects beyond the current crisis. What do the digital humanities mean in this particular moment -- when all of the humanities are, after all, in some sense now digital? What new opportunities, best practices, increased tolerances, greater expectations might we bring to the intersection of digital humanities and Russian and East European Studies after 2020?

## **Machine Learning and Human Expertise in the Slavic Digital Humanities**

Andrew Janco, Haverford College

This paper details several current projects that engage humanities scholars in the study of Russian textual and visual materials using machine learning. While recent advances in artificial intelligence are remarkable, AI still requires the domain knowledge of humanities scholars to be useful in academic research. Multiple projects have emerged in our field that engages the knowledge and skills of scholars in the fine-tuning of computer vision and natural language processing (NLP) models to “see” and “read” in ways that provide new knowledge. In this work, machine learning demands introspection and the explicit declaration of our methods. We must clearly identify the concepts we expect the machine to learn, and the basis for reasoning about research materials. Rather than automating our work, machine learning requires an in-depth and critical evaluation of the most elemental skills, knowledge, and methods that inform our research. With that knowledge, we can then delegate the most basic tasks to automation and conduct research at a scale impossible for an individual human scholar alone.

## **5-2. Tackling Russian Grammar**

### **Причастия и деепричастия: An Easy Way to Approach Hard Verbal Categories**

Irina Six, University of Kansas

This presentation will address teaching Russian verbal adjectives/participles and verbal adverbs/gerunds that are perceived as one of the most complicated categories in L2

methodology. It is generally understood that all participles in Modern and Old Russian are loans from Old Church Slavonic. The input of Russian verbal adverbs and participles in traditionally expected sequence does not take place prior to students reaching advanced level of proficiency even though they encounter these forms in written and oral non-adapted original texts (like, video clips, newspaper articles) much earlier. The commonly accepted way of the participles' explanation through the subordinate clauses with «который» provides some but insufficient help neither in translation nor in production of these forms.

The presentation outlines a less complicated way for imputing of both verbal adverbs/gerunds (деепричастия) and verbal participles (причастия). It offers a simplified but yet illustrative way of explanation. It starts with teaching the students to identify two most important factors for these forms: the suffix connotation and the syntactic role. The new approach proposes teaching the meaning by requesting students to: 1) identify the verbal suffix, 2) determine the form's role in the sentence, 3) find a "matching" action (in case of verbal adverbs), a "matching" object (noun/pronoun in case of full verbal adjective), or the subject of the sentence (in case of short verbal adjective). The simplified "one chart for all verbal forms" summarizing all these principles and the drills addressing the stress patterns in short participles (passive predicates) and the corresponding conjugated forms (active predicates) will be displayed during the presentation.

### **Facilitating Case Inflection Production among Ab-initio Learners of Russian**

Natalia V. Parker, University of Leeds

Having attracted a lot of research interest (e.g., Comer & deBenedette, 2011; Kemp & Brooks, 2008), case inflection is one of the most challenging aspects of Russian language learning. The current study investigates ways of facilitating case inflection production in beginners' speech, proposing and testing an innovative cognitive-based approach to teaching Russian cases, which addresses proceduralization of case endings by making the instruction more processable. The proposed framework is underpinned by the Spiral Curriculum principles, first put forward by Bruner (1960), and refined by recent findings in grammar processing (e.g.: Newman et al, 2010). Building on previous investigations into case inflection in laboratory conditions, the current study reports quantitative and qualitative data from a longitudinal teaching intervention conducted in a standard classroom environment. Three groups of beginner learners of Russian (27 participants in total), who were L1 English speakers recruited from a UK university, were taught the Prepositional and Accusative case within the last 10 sessions of the instruction period. The results of three rounds of speaking tests demonstrate that the experimental participants produced the required case endings in unprepared speech considerably more consistently than students in the comparator group. This allows us to infer that the application of the proposed approach can reduce the variability of case inflection within learner groups, thus contributing to more effective inflection production.

References:

Bruner, J. S. (2009/1960). *The process of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Comer, W. J., & deBenedette, L. (2011). Processing Instruction and Russian: Further Evidence Is IN. *Foreign Language Annals*, 44(4), 646–673.

Kempe, V., & Brooks, P. J. (2008). Second language learning of complex inflectional systems. *Language Learning*, 58, 703–746.

Newman et al. (2010). Dissociating neural subsystems for grammar by contrasting word order and inflection. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(16), 7539-7544.

Session 6: 11:30pm-1:30pm
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### **6-1. Open Seminar with Sunnie Rucker-Chang (University of Cincinnati)**

Critical Romani Studies and Central and Southeast European Film

Scholars of Romani Studies, and more recently Critical Romani Studies, address the positions, cultures, structural inequities of and knowledge production about Romani populations. In this seminar, I draw from my recently published book, *Roma Rights and Civil Rights: A Transatlantic Perspective*, to engage with how Critical Romani Studies explores the scope and construction of minoritized European Romani populations and cultures to highlight how issues of racialized hierarchies and failed inclusion strategies surface in Central and Southeast European films by and about Roma. Specific questions I will address in this seminar include: How can we apply foundational frameworks of Critical Romani Studies to films from our region?; Who are some of the Romani scholars contributing to knowledge production in Romani Studies?; What are the familiar strategies of representation and self-representation of Roma in film?; And how can we use these films in our classrooms to expand our curricula to be more inclusive and representative of the peoples and cultures among the geographies included in Slavic and East European Studies? The conversations that I hope to spark intersect well with the current focus of online webinars, symposia, and stand-alone talks addressing how scholars and students of Slavic and East European Studies can incorporate diverse subject matters into their classrooms and scholarship. As such, I look forward to advancing these dialogues and engaging with like-minded scholars.

Session 7: 2:00pm-4:00pm
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### **7-1. The Art of Cultural Survival: Action, Silence, and Dissent in Russia and Eastern Europe**

**Tactics of Cultural Resistance in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia**

Maia Toteva, Texas Tech University

Instituted by the government, Socialist Realism reigned as the monolithic canon of the Soviet state during the Zhdanov period (1946-1954). The state's repertoire of clichéd norms and motifs

justified the censorship (and self-censorship) of all creative production by imparting systematic restrictions on form and content and controlling the education of writers and artists. All exhibition and publication proposals were subjected to scrutiny in order to ensure stylistic uniformity. During The Thaw of Khrushchev, the monopoly of the canon subsided so exhibitions and publications began to illuminate new developments in Europe and the US, while private collections and representatives of Russian Modernism revived the memory of the historic Avant-Gardes of the 1920s-1930s. An array of nonconformist practices coalesced on the periphery of Soviet culture, threatening the status quo of the regime and its inert bureaucracy. This paper outlines various stances of cultural noncompliance—from works created or written in secret and distributed in private circles, such as apt (apartment) art and samizdat publications, to the open confrontation of denounced exhibitions, quashed attempts to reach a broader public, and exile. A close examination of dissident autobiographies, retrospection, and self-archival practices reveals that, despite its romanticized aura, the second Avant-Garde was not a monolithic heroic entity. Driven by fear, cunning, and daring gestures, the eclectic synergies of noncompliance fueled a relentless push and pull between a stagnant state bureaucracy and a tenacious desire for creative freedom.

### **Subversive Affirmation as a Creative Strategy: Embracing Restrictions in the Art of Slovenian Collective NSK**

Gediminas Gasparavicius, University of Akron

Is it possible that the subversive embrace of limiting conditions is more destabilizing to a censoring system than direct critique? Can political restrictions themselves become a conceptual work? By addressing two case studies in the practice of the Slovenian collective NSK, this paper examines how limiting cultural and political conditions may become a basis for critical inquiry and intervention.

The first case focuses on the 1983-1987 ban of the performance and music group Laibach, one of the founders of the NSK collective. Laibach was prohibited because of the group's use of symbolism pertaining to several authoritarian ideologies at once (communism, fascism, Yugoslav socialism), thus effectively equating them. In the absence of Laibach, Irwin (another NSK faction) launched a painting series featuring visual and ideological motifs originally employed by Laibach. By doing so they claimed to build a "memorial" to Laibach at the time of Laibach's absence.

The second case concerns the 1992 project NSK Embassy Moscow where the Slovenian collective, in collaboration with Moscow artists, sought to enact the conditions and sensibility of the Apt Art era. Apt Art was a late socialist tradition of exhibiting art and exchanging ideas in private apartments to circumvent state censorship. With such restrictions largely gone in the early 1990s, NSK Embassy Moscow became both a performative memorial to the bygone era and a conceptual mechanism generating new communication forms. It signaled a novel participatory strategy that would remain politically relevant in the emerging capitalist era in Eastern Europe.

## **Punishment, Performance, and Practice: A Post-War Polish Artist's Basic Training**

Frank Boyer, SUNY-New Paltz

Jan Sawka (1946-2012), was an important artistic gadfly to the Polish communist regime. He created many nonconformist works under sole and shared authorship, including prints, posters, illustrations, theater designs, performance compositions, “happenings,” paintings, and “spoofs” (tricks played on the authorities). These works were moves in a strange game played out before the Polish public, the Russian absentee masters, and the larger world. This game pitted non-compliant performers against the client state apparatus of censorship and control, an apparatus that often attempted to co-opt or even exploit the artists’ expressive energies, as well as to confine or suppress them. In this profoundly absurd game, where mockery was often the means, the young dissidents staked their lives. This game continued for Jan Sawka even after he fled Poland, demonstrating the lengths to which the regime would go in its attempts to manage and “spin” an ambivalent relationship with talented members of the Polish post-war generation. This paper discusses a crucial period in the development of Jan Sawka’s artistic--and dissident--practice, his time during the Summer of 1969 as a military trainee in a “punishment battalion” devised by the authorities to “domesticate” student activists. The paper describes performative nature of the continued resistance of the inmates of this military unit and analyzes two of Sawka’s subsequent works in the terms established by the account of the punishment battalion experience, adding an important avenue of research into Polish art of the late 20th Century, and of Jan Sawka’s work in particular. The paper draws upon an unpublished autobiographical manuscript written by Jan Sawka, casting light on largely undocumented events, introducing them to the discourses of Polish art and politics of the period.

## **7-4. Slavic Horror: Evil Never Rests: Year 2**

### **The Folk Horror Origins of the Ukrainian Gothic**

Svitlana (Lana) Krysa, MacEwan University

The Ukrainian Gothic literary movement emerged around the 1820s in the Russian Empire, and evolved during the Romantic period that lasted until the late 1870s. While Ukrainian authors borrowed heavily from the west European Gothic tradition, they introduced certain innovations, adjusting the adopted Gothic framework to their own cultural realities. One such innovation was the Ukrainian Gothic's grounding in folklore and mythology. I propose that the Ukrainian Gothic literature grew out of the folk horror tradition—a subgenre of the Gothic that, in British and west European literary canons, is considered to be a more contemporary phenomenon, associated mainly with 1960s-70s horror films. A theoretical examination of the folk horror aspect of the early Ukrainian Gothic literature, using the works of Orest Somov and Nikolai Gogol' (Mykola Hohol') as a case study, is the focus of this talk.

## **Gogol's Dead End: *Dead Souls* as the Culmination of a Horror Poetics**

Lev Nikulin, Princeton University

*Dead Souls* has rarely been discussed in the context of horror, which is striking when one considers the many allusions to horror and the Gothic, including parodic ones, present in Gogol's final published fictional work. However, the significance of horror in this novel is deeper, going to the heart of Gogol's poetic development which began in the overtly devilish realms of Dikanka and ended in the meaningless and undead expanses of provincial Russia as depicted in his novel. This paper argues that *Dead Souls* must be understood as the culmination of a poetics that began in horror. In the novel, Gogol transposes the logic of negation and obscurity used for horrific purposes in his early supernatural texts onto the abstract level, transferring the threat of horror from tangible supernatural interference to the non-signification and emptiness of language.

### **From Body Horror to Social Critique: Political Reading of Jan Barszczewski's "Head Full of Screaming Hair"**

Agnieszka Jezyk, University of Toronto

"Head Full of Screaming Hair," a short story written by Jan Barszczewski (1794-1851), Hoffman of Polish-Belarussian borderlands, was published in 1844 as a part of the cycle "Nobleman Zawalnia, or Belarus in Fantastic Stories." Deriving on regional folk tales rich in supernatural events and creatures, superstitions, and beliefs, as well as the images of the peasant life and imagination, the volume was one of the examples of late Polish romanticism. The text follows the rise and fall of an impoverished nobleman Henry who in the attempt to rescue his estate marries a beautiful neighbor Amelia. Soon, however, due to the intervention of the evil forces seemingly harmonious household turns to ashes and the young heir finds himself at his wit's end when first his wife's then his hair starts "communicating" with Henry. Read as an allegory of jealousy and misogyny, as well as the inability of the male subject to undergo the transition from adolescence to adulthood, the short story is ambiguous and open to numerous other interpretations. In this presentation, I would like to demonstrate how the tools provided by body horror and gothic narratives may serve in Barszczewski's story as a class critique of the exploitative feudal order, which in the mid-19th century partitioned Poland still functioned as the main social framework. Moreover, on the example of "Head Full of Screaming Hair," I will show how the class injustice is frequently closely associated with gender inequity, which seems to be prevailing in today's modern societies.

### **7-5. Ukrainian Words in Russian Texts and their English Translations: History and Approaches**

#### **Negotiating Ukrainian Identity in Biographies of Gogol**

Ludmilla Trigos

Nikolai Gogol/Mykola Hohol has always been a challenging subject for biographers due to his idiosyncratic and eccentric personality, the opposing critical interpretations of his literary output and ethnic origins. This paper examines the way that biographers have treated the tricky issue of Gogol's Ukrainian origins within the context of his status as a foundational writer in the canon of Russian literature. Gogol's inclusion in the canon of classic Russian writers leads us to explore how biographers come to terms with or nullify his ethnic origins and the tension between his

place of birth and his complicated national identity as a Ukrainian writer choosing to write his literary works in Russian but also living primarily in Russia and Italy. In *Gogol's Afterlife: The Evolution of a Classic in Imperial and Soviet Russia* (2002), Stephen Moeller-Sally has suggested that the genre of biography played a pivotal role in integrating Gogol into that canon after his death. However, Moeller-Sally does not explore the implications of Gogol's Ukrainian origins and national identity in this process of canonization. Other Gogol scholars such as Edyta Bojanowska and Yuliya Ilchuk have addressed the need for attention to the topic in their work on Gogol's own writing. My task will be to survey representations of Gogol in a variety of biographies. I will focus primarily on works in the popular biography series *Lives of Remarkable People* to highlight their role in the fashioning of Gogol's image as a Russian writer and its dissemination to the Russian reading public.

### **E: V.I. Yakovenko vs. the Censorship: Ukrainian Words in the ZHZL biography of Taras Shevchenko**

Carol R. Ueland, Drew University

The original biography series *Lives of Remarkable People*, founded by Fiorentii Pavlenko included both lives of Western and Russian cultural figures. Two Ukrainians were included in the "Russian section," one of whom was Taras Shevchenko. One of Pavlenko's major biographers was Valentin Ivanovich Iakovenko born in Poltava in 1859 who was not only Shevchenko's biographer but one of the popularizers of his poetry. The first in-depth article on Iakovenko appeared in 1966 in Ukrainian, in which the author, V.G Sarbei argues that "the historical merits of this great son of the Ukrainian people have not yet been revealed." This article gives a full account of the censorship problems which Iakovenko had with the Shevchenko biography, including details of the negotiations surrounding the use of Ukrainian vs. Russian in describing and citing Shevchenko's work which will be the focus of this paper. Beyond this biography Iakovenko was responsible for the publication of the third edition of "Kobzar" and the following year put together the most complete two volume prerevolutionary collection of Shevchenko's works. On Feb. 16, 1914 he published an article in the newspaper "Den" under the title "Savl, Savl, chto ty gonish' menia!" in which he protested the suppression of the Shevchenko jubilee and the continuing censorship of his poetry.

### **Russo-centric English Translations of Taras Bulba: The Colonization Continues.**

Michael M. Naydan, Pennsylvania State University

Gogol himself self-domesticated (for his Russian-reading public) his own early Ukrainian-themed works in his collection of short stories *Vechera na khutori bliz Dikanki*, which were originally written and published in 1829-1832, and in his historical novella *Taras Bulba*, which was first published in 1835 and later in a heavily redacted and expanded edition in 1842. Besides the primary colonizing self-domestication Gogol engendered by writing these works in Russian, the lingua franca of the Russian Empire, he largely used Russian variants of names of individual characters and of places in Ukraine instead of the original Ukrainian. Thus one finds, for example, Andrei instead of Andryi, Dnepr instead of Dnipro, Sech instead of Sich, etc. Gogol, however, does at times use authentic Ukrainian speech and indigenous words such as

“sharovary” (Kozak riding pants) in these Russian-language texts that serve to resist colonization and to convey the otherness of Ukrainian culture. A second layer of domestication occurred when Gogol was coerced to rewrite *Taras Bulba*, removing what were perceived by Russian critics as anti-Russian elements in the novella and thereby aligning himself with tsarist ideology. Despite the fact that *Taras Bulba* is not an historically completely accurate novel per se, it is faithful to basic historical reality. The additional three chapters in the revised version are blatantly pro-Empire and serve to obliterate any notion of that reality, actually perverting it with fake history. Thus the first edition provides a far more authentic version of the spirit of Kozak times than the second. Translators of Gogol’s works (except for John Cournos) tend to be experts in Russian with virtually little or no knowledge of Ukrainian culture. Thus English translations of Gogol’s Ukrainian-themed writings provide a third layer of domestication by not conveying Ukrainian realia. I would argue two things: that a translation of the original edition of *Taras Bulba* should be available to English readers and that translations of these early works convey deference to the realia presented in them.

#### **7-6. Russian Poetry Between the 19th-20th Centuries**

##### **Poetic Oscillation: The Passing of Time in Poems by Fet and Blok**

Elizaveta Dvortsova, University of Southern California

In this paper, I propose a new interpretation of the poems *Nepogoda – osen’ – kurish’* by Afanasiï Fet (1847), and *Noch’, ulitsa, fonar’, apteka* by Alexandr Blok (1912). I examine the connections between the dominant image in the poems and the formal structure of these poems. My argument is based on the idea of motion that the leading image of each poem creates. This motion goes back and forward and it relates to the sense of time passing by. Thus, for these poems, oscillation is an “iconic theme” (the term borrowed from the articles by Alexander Zholkovsky). This means that the oscillation becomes both – the sense, descriptor of the passing time, and the device, the structural engine of the text. The sense of time is highly important for Fet, and while the time passes (moves), so do the objects in his poem. The formal aspects of the poem indicate the specifics of this movement as well. The dominant-image here is a pendulum; however, the pendulum is not defined explicitly, but rather derives from the clock (which is named directly) and the oscillatory movement existing in the poem. Blok’s imagery is even less direct. The dominant theme of his poem is not connected with the concrete image like a pendulum; moreover, it fully opens only on the basis of another theme – the circularity of time. Although the poem starts with a static picture, the idea of motion is nonetheless revealed in the lexicon and the structure of the text. Moreover, a close look at the poem shows that the movement here is not merely circular, but a spiral, with oscillation serving as a time-marker here as well.

##### **The Trickle-Down Effect: The Poison of Alexander Pushkin’s “Upas-Tree” as a Metaphor for Art in Sologub and Balmont**

Olga Zolotareva, Princeton University

In Alexander Pushkin's poem "The Upas-Tree" ("Anchar," 1832), the titular tree is portrayed as unambiguously evil. This changes in Fyodor Sologub's "sequel" to the poem, the novella "The Poisoned Garden" ("Otravlennyi sad," 1908), and in Konstantin Balmont's poem "The Leave of the Upas-Tree" ("List anchara," 1936). This paper looks at how these Symbolists' rereadings of Pushkin enlist the upas-tree to explore the pleasures and perils of artistic creation. Sologub's essay "Poets' Demons" ("Demony poetov," 1907) will ground my interpretation of "The Poisoned Garden." In the essay, Sologub criticizes Pushkin for turning his back on reality and announces his own intention to do the opposite – that is, to unflinchingly accept life. In "The Poisoned Garden," however, Sologub seems to contradict much of what he says in "Poets' Demons." I will argue that the deadly, yet beguiling Beauty – a girl who, in the story, personifies the poison of the upas-tree – symbolizes Sologub's failure to break away from his predecessor's influence: the pull of Pushkin's art proves irresistible. Balmont's poem similarly turns the upas-tree into a symbol of a destructive, yet seductive, artistic struggle. Drawing on Balmont's essays "Poetry as Magic" ("Poeziia kak volshebstvo," 1915) and "Of Sweet Sounds and Prayers" ("O zvukakh sladkikh i molitvakh," 1924), I will explore how, in his poem, he uses the image of the upas-tree to include in this struggle not only Pushkin and himself, but also the next generation of poets.

### **Between Clarism and Hafez, Desire and Distance: the Ghazals of Mikhail Kuzmin**

Evan Alterman, Stanford University

In his programmatic "О прекрасной ясности" ("On Beautiful Clarity," 1909), poet, novelist, and playwright Mikhail Kuzmin coined "кларизм" ("clarism," i.e. economy, exactness, and candidness) as a cornerstone of artistic production. This followed his first encounter (1906-7) with Persian verse (specifically, German translations of Hafez's ghazals), so revelatory for him that in 1908, he wrote his own cycle of ghazals, "Венок вёсен" ("Wreath of Springtimes"). Hoping to uncover flickers of Kuzmin's inchoate creative philosophy contained therein, I read "Wreath" from the positions of clarism and Persianate hermeneutics, investigating the thematic, formal, and exegetical continuities between the Persian tradition and Kuzmin's creations. Of particular interest in both are interplays 1) between the rhetorical categories of *majaz/haqiqat* (metaphorical/literal language) and 2) within the *ma'shuq/asheq* (beloved/lover) dynamic. In ghazals seven and thirteen from "Wreath," while remaining faithful to several generic, structural, and affective (including amorous) conventions in staging the lover's yearning for the beloved, Kuzmin drastically reconfigures the *majaz/haqiqat* dichotomy and thereby establishes a sense of proximity and immediateness. Kuzmin collapses the distance between lover and beloved, poet and reader, and even reader and beloved. The drawing-near observable in his diction, narration, and semantics heeds the simplicity and parsimony of clarism, thereby laying aesthetic scaffolding for future Acmeist experiments. Critics have plotted the genealogy of Russian ghazals but have portrayed them as relatively enclosed, self-contained phenomena; moreover, "Wreath" is under-explored as a theorization site for Kuzmin's queer subjectivity. I address these gaps while elucidating the nexus of translation, distillation, and refinement: in Kuzmin's case, it

demonstrates how his ghazals – re-workings of German re-workings of Hafez – accommodate both retrospective modifications of antecedent systems and prospective projections of original artistic sensibilities.

Session 8: 4:30pm-6:30pm

### **8-5. Far From Moscow: The First Five-Year Plan Production Novel on the Soviet Periphery**

#### **“Balancing Sounds in the Air”: Marietta Shaginyan’s *Gidrotsentral*’**

Matthew Kendall, University of Illinois at Chicago

My paper investigates the role of sound in Marietta Shaginyan’s *Hydrocentral* (1931), widely considered one of the first production novels. Shaginyan also happened to be deaf (Dmitrii Bykov has called her the “artificial ear” of the proletariat), but her prior literary criticism from the 1920s demonstrates a sensitivity to literary sound. Ultimately, I examine how the material ephemerality of sound paradoxically motivates the production novel as a genre, even if, in the case of Shaginyan, its author’s productions are more imaginary than experiential.

### **From Belomor Canal to Vakhsh Canal: Genres and Geographies in the Soviet Carceral Imagination**

Mieka Erley, Colgate University

This talk considers how Soviet national border zones were understood as carceral spaces in Stalinist literary and legal regimes of the early 1930s. Authors imagined the Soviet periphery as a space of both crime and punishment, translating espionage narratives about “enemy nations” into the Orientalizing codes of the Soviet detective genre, the red Pinkerton. I discuss the relation of genre to carceral geographies and the legal regime of the “border region” (*pogranichnyi raion*), focusing on two texts with previously unaddressed thematic, generic, and genealogical links: Bruno Jasiński’s best-selling novel on the Vakhsh canal in Soviet Tajikistan, *Man Changes His Skin*, and the infamous collectively-authored work *The History of the Construction of the Belomor Canal* to which Jasiński was a contributor.

### **“Clark Did Not Believe in Socialism”: Reforging the Novelistic in Bruno Jasiński’s *Chelovek Meniaet Kozhu***

Semyon Leonenko, University of California, Berkeley

Bruno Jasiński (1901-1938) arrived in the Soviet Union from Paris at the time of the Great Break in 1929, at the high point of the proletarianization of Soviet literature. A Polish Futurist poet and the author of the French novel *I Burn Paris* (1928), on Soviet soil Jasiński readily adopts (but also becomes instrumental in working out) a Socialist Realist aesthetic, turns to prose in Russian and joins the editorial board of *Literatura Mirovoi Revoliutsii*. *Chelovek Meniaet Kozhu* (1932-1933) is a novel that simultaneously portrays the irrigation of the Vakhsh valley and the reforging of an American engineer, Jim Clark, who first arrives to Tajikistan an

unbeliever. Thomas Lahusen's illuminating conceptualization of the *montage of life* in Vasily Azhaev's *Daleko ot Moskvy*, a much later text that provided the title for our panel, will be crucial for my reading of *Chelovek Meniaet Kozhu*. Examining ideological underpinnings of verisimilitude in the literature of the Great Break, this paper seeks to locate *perekovka* on the level of plot and characterization, ultimately positing the reforging of the novelistic that occurs precisely at the transitional historical moment of the First Five-Year Plan.

### **8-6. Avant-Garde Arts in Russia and Eastern Europe** **El Lissitzky and the Mobility of the Deleuzian "Minor"**

Nadezda Gribkova, University of Illinois at Chicago

In my paper, I explore the transition of Russo-Jewish artist El Lissitzky's work from the practice of illustration of Jewish fairytales in tsarist Russia, to his Suprematist works that constitute an integral part of the post-revolutionary art of the 1920s Soviet Union. Approaching Lissitzky's oeuvre through the Deleuzian idea of "minor," I propose a reading of his "Jewish period" not as folkloric devotion to and exploration of tradition, but as an outset for his crucial contribution to the development of the supra-personal, universal language of the Russian Avant-garde.

The trajectory of Lissitzky's artistic and ideological development can be understood as a movement from the periphery to the center of the dominant artistic and political narratives without capitulating the ambitious project taken up at a prior stage, translating it into a newly-formulated visual language. I conduct a close visual analysis and comparisons of Lissitzky's early illustrations and his later Suprematist designs to demonstrate their formal interconnectedness and a shared compositional logic.

According to Deleuze, the passivity of an individual presupposed within the "major" artistic structure is antithetical to the very nature of the revolutionary struggle. An individual belonging to the minority, on the other hand, is in perpetual motion to surpass his marginality and erupt into the majority. In his Suprematist practice, Lissitzky's mobility is evident in his myriad prouns that propel the flatness of Malevich's sacred geometry into the three-dimensional space. In his transition from the playful children's book illustrations to the architecturally-minded work on prouns, he shifts from occupying and constructing a minor ethnic and pictorial culture to the grand universal girth of the revolutionary movement. I am exploring the paradox of Lissitzky's erupting into the cultural and artistic majority while maintaining the movement characteristic of his previously occupied minoritarian position.

### **Pavel Filonov: Between Russian Folklore and the Northern Renaissance.**

Ksenia Radchenko, USC

This paper is devoted to the theoretical and pictorial practice of one of the most mysterious artists of the Russian avant-garde, Pavel Filonov (1883-1941). The Russian avant-garde has always been regarded as a unique artistic experiment inspired by the Revolutionary changes in the Russian society of the early XX-century. In this lecture, I propose to re-examine the stylistic and philosophical roots of Filonov's art in order to understand the complexity and multi-

dimensional character of Russian modernism. Filonov's art, as it will be argued, can be characterized by the coexistence of the religious and folklore themes, the reflection of the advances in the modern science (X-ray, Darwin's theory of evolution, genetic experiments), as well as the general fascination with the Renaissance artists: Leonardo da Vinci, Bosch, Durer, Breughel, and Holbein. I will analyze the depiction of body and death on Filonov's canvases as corresponding to that of the artists of the Northern Renaissance, with their paraphrase of the medieval "Dance of Death."

### **'More American Than the Most American American': When Russian and East European Avant-Garde Artists Discovered the New World**

Hana Stankova, Yale University

The complex relationship between Soviet Avant-garde artists like Vladimir Mayakovsky and a mostly imagined America has been well studied. But the pull and the threat of this land of modernist excess shaped the careers of East European artists, as well. The Czech case is particularly exceptional, given that the country's first president had close ties with the U.S. and even wrote his country's declaration of independence there. The Czech Avant-garde also had a complicated relationship with the Russian Avant-Garde, which often operated as the "center" in comparison with the Czech "periphery," and helped to frame Czech artist's relationships with America, as well. My paper proposes a comparison between Jiri Voskovec's poems about America and the better-known and better-studied poems Mayakovsky wrote about America. Voskovec and Werich, the stars of Prague's Liberated Theater, remain two of the best-known actor-writers in the Czech Republic today. Their fame didn't follow them to the United States, though V+W took inspiration from multiple aspects of American culture, and were pressured to immigrate to America after the Nazi takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1939. For Voskovec, America became a second home: after eleven months of detention on Ellis Island, he went on to find success as an "exotically foreign" theater actor, if never as a writer.

While V+W's time in America has been documented, the significance of their complex and evolving relationship with this country deserves interrogation within the frame of other East European and Soviet avant-garde artists' fraught imaginaries of the land of Whitman and Wall Street.

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

Session 9: 9:00am-11:00am

### **9-1. New Approaches to Czech Literature (with Slavic Comparisons)**

#### **Humanistic Sustainability: Ecocriticism and Social Ecology in Czech Women's Writing**

Hana Waissierova, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Many Central European authors have had life and work significantly shaped by their direct or indirect experience of totalitarianism, having their work published with a significant delay that followed clandestine and exile publications. This paper focuses on such texts: Eda Kriseová's *Kočičí životy* (1997), *Mezi pannou a babou* (2018), and Cecilia Sternberg's *Masquarade* (1981). Beside complicated publication stories, these texts share an intensified authors' focus on intergenerational fate deeply connected to nature, land, and environment that seems to promote "humanistic sustainability" in a possible response to turbulent 20th-century histories.

#### **Václav Hanka and Russian Slavophiles**

Anastasia Tsylyna, Brown University

I will discuss the ambiguous reputation of Czech poet, mystifier, and scholar Václav Hanka (1791-1861), whom the Russians valued much higher than his Czech contemporaries.

Interestingly, Fyodor Tyutchev (1803-1873) wrote two poems dedicated to Hanka and called him "the Apostle of Slavic Unity." I will analyze how Hanka's literary reputation was constructed and viewed by Russian Slavophiles. Hanka idealized the Russian Empire, called himself Vyacheslav Vyacheslavovich, and promoted the Russian Orthodox Church among the Czechs. Václav Hanka also considered the Russian language closest to the Old Slavonic language and supported it in the Czech lands as a Pan-Slavic language, wrote a Russian grammar, *The Beginnings of the Russian Language*, and translated several literary works from Russian into Czech. However, Václav Hanka never had a chance to travel to Russia, where he was invited to become a university professor. Paradoxically, he idealized the Russian Empire, but never reached it. Václav Hanka created his own vision of Pan-Slavic unity led by Russia, literally an Imagined Community, which was very influential, but far from real life.

#### **Successful Forgeries? Computer Analysis of Oral-Formulaic Epic Poetry Imitations**

David L. Cooper, University of Illinois

South Slavic oral epic poetry traditions played a central role in the development of oral-formulaic theory, which also developed some computer analysis techniques to characterize the repetitive nature of the poetic diction of that tradition. While the Czech forged manuscripts (*Rukopisy královédvorský a zelenohorský*) clearly take the epics published by Vuk Karadžić as a model, particularly in those that imitate the decasyllable form of the deseterac, study of these forgeries has taken little account of the insights of oral-formulaic theory in analyzing the poetics of the manuscripts. This presentation will present preliminary results from a project to apply

newer computer methods from information theory (conditional entropy and pointwise mutual information) that use statistical methods to characterize the predictability of a corpus of texts to the forged manuscripts and to South Slavic epic texts as a way of measuring the success of the imitation. Are the Czech manuscripts (forged by Václav Hanka and perhaps others) as formulaic and thus as predictable as their models?

## **9-2. Soviet Subjectivities: Writing the Self**

### **"This is me": Authorial Presentation of Self in A. Vampilov's *Duck Hunting***

Polina Maksimovich, Northwestern University

This paper explores the relationship between the Soviet dramatist Aleksandr Vampilov (1937-72) and his work *Duck Hunting* (*Utinaia okhota*, 1967) which became the “play-symbol” of Soviet dramaturgy of the end of the 1960s. In his play, Vampilov voices a confession of a ‘lost generation’, deprived of their former ideals and beliefs, through his protagonist—Viktor Zilov who typified a cultural phenomenon of moral decline, degradation, and decay in the post-Thaw Soviet society. I focus on the complex playwright-protagonist relationship, which in the play is presented through the multifaceted concept of duck hunting and culminates in the character’s suicide attempt. The dramatist uses the device of fake suicide as a self-fashioning technique to overcome his creative crisis by gaining the freedom of self-invention. The play’s protagonist, Viktor Zilov, functions as Vampilov’s alter ego—the performed self of “a poor, wretched author” as Vampilov calls himself in all humility and self-irony. At face value, we see a social parasite for whom people are commodities and whose destructive behavior epitomizes a petty nature of evil that corrodes life and stifles human relationships. But in the image of his fidgety protagonist who vainly tries to escape this reality the author weaves in a motif of his own drama—the artist’s existential and philosophical struggle “conducted below the visibility bar.” By juxtaposing the hero and his real-life prototype, the author’s life and text, I trace authorial self-presentation through the character development in which the protagonist’s self-destruction reverberates with a tragic theme of the destruction of the artist.

### **Subjectivity at Scale: Diary-writing in the Soviet Era**

Tatyana Gershkovich, Carnegie Mellon University

Diary writers abound—far more so, for example, than novelists or poets. And the present pandemic has produced still more of them. In turn, diaries have been a valuable source for scholars investigating topics ranging from the literary, historical, and psychological to the medical, sociological, and political. Yet we lack a clear sense of what diary writing means to us as a cultural practice.

A central problem in studying diaries, according to pioneering investigator Philippe Lejeune, is that the diary is “only secondarily a text or a literary genre.” It is foremost an activity, and “the most difficult part [of studying it] is imagining what the diary means to its author while he is keeping it and when he rereads it.” In this paper I propose that one productive way to address that difficulty is to do so at scale: to use quantitative analytical tools on a large corpus of diaries.

Two colleagues and I use machine-learning tools to look at thousands of Russian-language diaries written over the course of a century—published and unpublished, kept by cultural figures as well as ordinary citizens. We ask: How do the upheavals of 20th-century Russian history affect diarists' understandings of what their diaries are for? We find that when examined en masse, the self-understanding of diarists remains remarkably stable. How diarists conceive of their practice seems to be strikingly insulated from war, revolution, and other cataclysms of the social world.

### **Letters by Viktor Shklovsky**

Lidia Tripiccione, Princeton University

The letters of Viktor Shklovsky to his many correspondents are relatively well-known, and readily used by academics as precious biographical sources.

The present paper, which will focus, in particular, on Shklovsky's letters to various Opoiaz members in the 1920s, and to his later correspondence with his grandson Nikita, proposes a novel way to use this material. Drawing from Eikhenbaum's concept of *literaturnyi byt*, I will demonstrate how Viktor Shklovsky consciously pushed the boundaries and the possibilities of the epistolary form, and how this seemingly strictly private material is instrumental in understanding the author's ideas on both the production and the dissemination of the literary discourse.

The focus on two very different historical periods (the 1920s and the 1960-70s) is imperative given the extreme length of Shklovsky's career, and will serve a twofold aim. First, it will allow for a comprehensive view of Shklovsky's use of the epistolary form. Secondly, it will also provide a significant basis to follow Shklovsky's way to implicitly answer Eikhenbaum's question: how does one become a writer, and what does it mean to be one?

### **9-3. New Digital Opportunities for the Online Age**

#### **What Philipp Kirkorov can do for your Russian: The new digital age in the RFL classroom**

Alexander Groce, American University

This paper focuses on assessing a variety of approaches to integrating digital media in both upper-level RFL classrooms and in immersive language learning experiences both domestically and overseas. As students advanced towards what ACTR has defined as 'distinguished' levels of Russian, areas of popular culture and otherwise obscure digital media can play an important role in helping students to both maintain fluency through habits of media consumption and to help increase awareness of changing speech habits among Russian speakers and gain critical competencies in technology-specific language. The paper attempts to synthesize this information and formulate some useful methodologies for integrating some forms of social and digital media in the foreign language classroom.

#### **Using a Learner Corpus as a Medium Between Unfocused and Focused Tasks in Task-based Language Teaching**

Aleksey Novikov, University of Arizona

The inclusion of focused tasks in Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) has resulted in some points of contention (Long, 2015; Ellis, 2017). This presentation will discuss the use of a learner corpus as a way to bridge the gap between unfocused and focused tasks in TBLT by providing examples of both types of activities.

The learner corpus used in this presentation is available online with authenticated access and is composed of nearly 350 texts produced by 100 students of Russian (approximately 42,682 words). The corpus is composed of texts based on unfocused tasks that learners naturally perform in their courses, such as essays and video and/or audio assignments submitted by students as part of the L2 Russian curriculum. Some examples of the unfocused tasks are a) write about your linguistic abilities in different languages b) talk about your studies or your family. The focused tasks, on the other hand, are tasks based on the learner texts produced as a result of the unfocused tasks. These focused tasks were created using the Data-driven Learning (DDL) approach, in which learners are provided with sufficient language data in order to look for patterns and generate rules (Johns, 1991; Gilquin & Granger, 2010; Flowerdew, 2015). DDL focused tasks are inherently similar to consciousness-raising activities (Ellis, 2017) but also focus on form (Long, 2015). The purpose of DDL tasks is to raise awareness of a rule or regularity by focussing on a specific linguistic feature that presents a challenge for acquisition otherwise.

Overall, the focused tasks were based on some of the most common but also more problematic features from the unfocused tasks, thus resulting in direct connections between these two types of tasks.

### **Virtual Conundrum Solved: 3 Ways to Make Online Language Instruction Engaging.**

Irina Poliakova, DLIFLC, Elena Makarava, DLI, Julia Kobrina-Coolidge, DLI

Virtual reality has become a stable feature of modern society. Understanding how to meet students' educational needs and develop new pedagogical approaches in this new reality is of paramount importance. This presentation introduces three innovative projects: a quest, web blogs, and a mini-immersion that allow students to engage with complex linguistic material in a meaningful way.

The use of educational games is caused by the search for non-standard approaches to the organization of classes in the context of the virtual space. The presenter will describe Crime Quest as one of the types of educational games: the structure of the plot, the subject content (examples of tasks will be given as well as concrete recommendations on preparation), the form of work, the period of implementation, the mode of carrying out. Advantages and possible disadvantages of such a form of organization of classes will be discussed at the end of the presentation.

As the use of web blogs becomes increasingly popular, the presenter has incorporated them into the course to engage students in discussing complex course materials to enhance Russian language skills. This presentation introduces blogs as a tool to help students prepare for

meaningful classroom discussion by essentially beginning the conversation online prior to the class session. The presenter will share the design of various blogging assignments, including lesson plans, student discussion questions, activity materials, and procedures for conducting activities.

In response to a growing demand for highly proficient speakers of foreign languages, an added emphasis has been placed on immersion-type activities that offer extensive contact in a target language. The presenter will share a scenario, authentic materials, and activities for a virtual mini-immersion for advanced learners of Russian involving a United Nations session of world leaders discussing the effects of coronavirus on the world community to help students develop speaking fluency and address an existing world problem.

With the current global situation depending on virtual activity more than ever, our presentations demonstrate three exciting ways to strengthen Russian learning online. Engaging students online by sending them on a virtual quest, by involving them in educational blogging, and by immersing them in mini scenarios, helps them digest difficult language concepts.

Session 10: 11:45pm-1:45pm
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### **10-1. Stream 1A: Women and Gender in Slavic and Eurasian Studies (I)**

#### **Pushkin's Drowned Women**

Serenity Stanton Orenko, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

When the countess in Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades* asks for a novel in which there are no drowned bodies, she is referencing the tradition in literature of the "drowned woman." Not only was Pushkin aware of this tradition, but it was one in which he also took part. Both "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai" («Бахчисарайский фонтан») and "Prisoner of the Caucasus" («Кавказский пленник») are narrative poems written by Pushkin in the early 1820s that conclude with a woman drowning. These works are part of a longer tradition in literature—even if they are often overlooked in this context—in which a woman who has been (or perhaps has been) seduced, dies by drowning, often as suicide. The theme dates back in literature at least to Shakespeare's Ophelia of Hamlet, enters the Russian tradition with Nikolai Karamzin's Poor Liza, and has later incarnations in Aleksandr Ostrovsky's *The Storm*, and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, to name only a few. Although "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai" and "Prisoner of the Caucasus" do not feature adulteresses, as is the case in many of the works in the genre, there is still an element of romantic or sexual transgression.

In this paper, I will explore the way these two narrative poems by Pushkin fit into this larger tradition of the drowned maiden, while placing particular emphasis on the East/ West dichotomy present in both of the works. Reading the texts through the lens of orientalism as well as a part of this specific literary tradition will allow for new ways of thinking through the power and gender dynamics present in the texts, as well as in the wider literary motif of the drowned woman.

## **Defining Women's Honor: Marriage and Motherhood in Avdot'ia Panaeva's *A Woman's Lot***

Colleen Lucey, University of Arizona

The “woman question” shaped literary and social discourse in late nineteenth-century Russia. While scholarly focus has remained on the output of male thinkers to understand the nuances of the debate concerning female emancipation, women writers published thought-provoking narratives on gender relations and pointed to domestic inequality as a key factor in hampering their autonomy. Often, though, women writers found themselves the object of critical scorn if they pointed out the shortcomings of their would-be male liberators. When Avdot'ia Panaeva (1820-1893, pseudonym N. Stanitskii) portrayed civic-minded liberals as patronizing misogynists in her novel *Zhenskaia Dolia* (*A Woman's Lot*, 1862), she was attacked for failing to uphold the ideals of emancipation. Particularly irksome for critics like Dmitrii Pisarev was Panaeva's prominent role as a writer and editor of *Sovremennik* (*The Contemporary*), the day's leading journal. When Panaeva's *A Woman's Lot* appeared in *The Contemporary* in 1862, Pisarev wrote a scathing review and accused the author of betraying the ideas of the journal's luminaries, including Nikolai Dobroliubov and Nikolai Chernyshevsky.

While typically overlooked in studies of Russian realism, Panaeva's novel *A Woman's Lot* offers valuable insight into the politicization of the woman question and the blowback female writers experienced when they deviated from the standards established by their male contemporaries. As I show, what the novel lacks in artistic merit it makes up for in razor-sharp condemnation of hypocrisy among male intellectuals. Pointing to inequalities in matrimony and the inability of mothers to prepare their daughters for the real world, *A Woman's Lot* questions the future of women's emancipation when the movement is led by men. The key to understanding the text's incendiary message rests in the narrator's direct addresses, which disrupt the utopian visions prophesized by male radicals of the period. Rather than rely on the dubious intentions of Russia's “new men,” the narrator urges female readers to place trust in themselves and their own sense of honor.

## **Engendering Ethnography in the Nineteenth Century: Aleksandra Potanina and her Women Subjects**

Katya Hokanson, University of Oregon

This paper focuses on Aleksandra Potanina's (1843-93) representation of women, both non-Russian and Russian, in her travel and ethnographic texts. Potanina, who assisted her husband G. N. Potanin on expeditions in Siberia, Mongolia, China and the borders of Tibet between 1876 and 1893, published her own travel accounts, short stories and ethnographic sketches, many of them focused on women, with topics ranging from Buriat women and their production of milk products, to shamanesses in Mongolia, to the lives of women in China. She also produced many drawings. Potanina's role in the expeditions she participated in was explicitly to make contact with local women and enter their living space, be they well off or poor, engaged in domestic chores or shamanesses respected by both men and women. This paper discusses, in context with

other women ethnographers of the time, Potanina's methods of describing her female subjects, which could exist in the genres of fiction, travel literature or ethnography. A "woman of the 60s" who cared about the rights of women and peasants, Potanina was a self-conscious observer, cognizant of the effects of her own presence. In regard to one shamaness, she wrote that "It made us feel guilty that we arranged for ourselves a spectacle, costing a poor woman, obviously, much spiritual and bodily strain." Her description of Buriats and Mongols, as well as of Chinese women of the lower classes, was sympathetic and resisted stereotyping, while her descriptions of upper-class Chinese women could be quite critical. Her belief in the civilizing mission over Asia was complete, but she was not blinded to numerous instances of Russian peasant women's disadvantages compared to those of Buriat women, who she noted were spared numerous household chores that Russian women had to perform. She used her knowledge of Buriat lifeways in her children's story "Dordzhi" (based on the real-life Buriat scholar Dordzhi Banzarov), presenting a story of Buriat people that resisted othering, even as it presented an inevitable imbrication of the Buriats into Russian society.

## **10-2. Stream 2A: Empirical and Experimental Approaches to Second Language Acquisition and Pedagogy of Slavic and Eastern European (SEE) languages (I)**

### **The Interplay of Cognitive Factors, Motivation, and Language Exposure in Russian SLA** Dmitrii Pastushenkov, Michigan State University

Why do second language (L2) learners coming from similar backgrounds often achieve different results? A primary reason pertains to individual differences (IDs), which can be classified into three categories: cognitive IDs, affective IDs, and the quantity and quality of L2 exposure (Pawlak, 2017; Serafini, 2017). Despite the insights provided by previous research (e.g., Muñoz, 2014; Sagarra, 2017), the interplay between these ID categories has not yet been widely investigated (e.g., Winke, 2013). To address this gap, this study will explore the effects of aptitude, working memory, motivation, and L2 exposure in long-term Russian SLA.

Despite the need to investigate SLA of LCTLs (Kim, 2017), Russian remains relatively understudied within the domain. Specifically, not much is known about learners' experiences (e.g., Klimanova & Dembovskaia, 2013; Zaykovskaya et al., 2017) and their motivation to study Russian (e.g., Pastushenkov & McIntyre, in press). Previous studies have often been laboratory-based with participants having no prior knowledge of Russian (e.g., Denhovska et al., 2016). To promote ecological validity, the data for the study will be collected at the Summer Middlebury School of Russian. The programs' placement and exit tests will be used to calculate gains for grammar, speaking, and writing. In the analysis, different IDs and their interactions will be used as predictors of gains.

To test the procedure's feasibility, a pilot study with 27 students from Middlebury was conducted. Working memory was a stronger predictor of grammar learning gains at curricular levels 1-4 than levels 5-7. The analyses also revealed that working memory may be moderated by motivation and peer interactions in Russian. Finally, regression analysis revealed that app use and peer interactions in Russian accounted for a large portion of variance in the learning gains.

These findings illustrate potentially compensatory relationships between different IDs and importance of experiences outside formal classes.

### **When you need a helping hand, but you get a foot: Russian FL learners' and teachers' perceptions of learning affordances**

Marina Tsylyna, Hadis Ghaedi, and Jose Luis Garrido Rivera, U of Madison-Wisconsin

The environment potentially has a variety of resources that are beneficial for language learning and enhance learners' language development. However, these resources become effective learning and teaching tools only if they are recognized by language learners. In other words, if they become their affordances. The concept of affordance, adapted from Thoms and Poole (2017), is defined as all learning resources that students and teachers perceive through their engagement in an L2 learning environment, both inside and outside educational contexts. Learners and teachers, however, might not recognize the same affordances, or may perceive them differently in terms of their usefulness, enjoyment or accessibility. In fact, mismatches between students' and teachers' perceived affordances may slow or impede the learning process, may result in misinterpreting learning practices and wasting time on designing tools that are not used by learners. Therefore, studying students' and teachers' perceptions of learning affordances can emphasize resources that remain hidden or misinterpreted.

Thus, this study compares Russian FL learners' and teachers' perceptions of affordances in their learning and teaching experiences. Undergraduate FL Russian learners (n=20) and their teachers (n=5) completed: 1) a background survey to elicit personal information; 2) surveys to identify perceived affordances for learning and teaching.

This research will present the discrepancies and overlaps that exist between Russian-language teachers' and students' perceptions on language learning affordances. The affordances are operationalized according to their usefulness, frequency of use, time of use, level of enjoyment, locus, and the goal they meet for each individual. This will help teachers, textbook designers and students reassess the affordances in their L2 environment and enhance learning and teaching experiences.

### **10-3. Language as a Weapon**

#### **Implications of Framing of Russian Language in Ukrainian language Policies for Russian-Speaking Ukrainians**

Anna Vozna, Vancouver, BC

Discrepancies between ethnic and national identities and language use of Russian speakers in Ukraine have long been the focus of researchers working in the Ukrainian context. While numerous studies highlight and explore causes and implications of this issue, studies of how ideologies of teaching of Russian contribute to the shaping of Russian speakers' national, ethnic, and linguistic identities are scarce. Moreover, little is known about how they contribute to the

educational opportunities of Russian speakers. This paper addresses this gap and explores these two questions by problematizing ideologies of the teaching of the Russian language in Ukraine. The paper relies on Norton's framework of Imagined Communities to elicit ideologies of Russian language learning in contemporary Ukraine. Besides, it utilizes Hornberger's Continuum of Biliteracy framework as a heuristic to analyze the impact of the elicited ideologies on the literacy development of Ukrainian Russian speakers.

Based on the critical analysis of methodological recommendations for the teaching of Russian by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, analysis of Russian language textbooks and interviews with Ukrainian Russian speakers from the Eastern Ukrainian city Kharkiv, the paper suggests that teaching of Russian in Ukraine is rooted in essentialist discourses framing Russian exclusively as the language of Russian Federation. It further demonstrates that the educational system thus encourages the compartmentalization of Russian speakers as ethnic Russians and does not provide opportunities for Russian speakers to explore their Russian speaking identities and develop literacies in Russian crucial for their educational development. Overall, the paper argues that essentialist framing of Russian in the educational system contributes to the delegitimization of Russian speaker identity in Ukraine and to the consequent widening of the discrepancies between the national, ethnic identity and language choice in the country as well as to lowering of the quality of literacy education of Russian speakers.

### **Enemies and Brothers: Nationalism in Russian Official Discourse Regarding Crimea**

Maria Donahoe, University of Arizona

Leading up to and following Russia's annexation of Crimea, Russian official discourse (political and media discourse) used nationalist language to create and disseminate their narrative of the conflict (Teper, 2015). The discourse reveals two major trends: anti-Ukrainian sentiment (Marple, 2016) and pro-Russian sentiment (Teper, 2015), each comprised of ideologically contested language to draw listener support. While several studies outline the official narrative and document examples of nationalist language, no study analyses this language through nationalist theory. Placing this narrative within a nationalist context creates a new avenue for understanding Russia's motivations in international policy. The current paper aims to 1) outline the ideologically-contested language used in Russian official discourse to reveal the official narrative of the Crimean conflict, 2) place the ideologically-contested lexemes within their social/historical context, and 3) explain the emotive power of such language in context through the lens of nationalist theory. To answer these questions, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Russian official discourse from October 2013-October 2014 was conducted, drawing mainly from the CDA framework of Norman Fairclough. The paper also utilizes Teun van Dijk's concept of polarization and negative-other presentation. Additionally, two nationalist theories were used in conjunction with CDA: Eric Hobsbawm's instrumentalist theory and Anthony Smith's ethno-symbolist theory. Overall, the research suggests that through ideologically-contested nationalist language, anti-Ukrainian Sentiments create an image of Ukraine as the enemy (instrumentalism) while pro-Russian speech stresses the importance of shared memory

and historical homeland (ethno-symbolism). These sentiments construct the official narrative of the Crimean conflict, presenting the Ukrainian regime as a threat to Russians in Crimea and highlighting Russia's duty to defend her historic homeland. Understanding this narrative provides a new direction for navigating future political interactions with the Russian Federation in both Ukraine and other nations.

**Migration, Media, and Marginalization: Central Asian Migrants in New York City -**  
Randall Rowe, The Ohio State University

I analyze news media coverage of migration from former Soviet Central Asian republics to New York City within the larger context of migration and racial difference in the United States. I argue that many self-identified Central Asian migrants are unfairly considered to be labor migrants due to racist media narratives. My methodology is based in media content analysis, which spans news media coverage of, at least, the last 3 years, during which increased xenophobic attitudes and sentiments have been observed in the US, as well as Russia due to so-called "migration crises." First, I examine the Russian government's rhetoric, which represents the situation that, perhaps, influences this migration to the US as opposed to Russia; I selected for analysis: ITAR-TASS, RIA Novosti, Channel One, and Izvestia. The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal are used to illustrate current narratives about labor migration to the US of those marked as racial others. These narratives are likely consumed by diasporic communities in addition to Russian-language international news media, which is also analyzed, such as BBC – Russian Service, The Moscow Times, Russian Bazaar, and Russian language television channels, like RT – America and Current Time TV.

I hypothesize that an analysis of English and Russian language media, which both are presumed to target Russian-speaking people in the United States, will suggest a stratification of marginalization from power of Central Asian migrants. I suspect that this group is subject to racist narratives in media that originally target groups such as the Latinx and Arab communities. Consequently, a two-fold marginalization emerges from this transnational media consumption. Central Asian migrants face dominant media narratives from Russian and American outlets that exacerbate difference and exclusion, but perhaps, incidentally, due to existing xenophobia in the United States as well as 'pre-existing' types of prejudices in diasporic communities.

**10-4. Religious and Ethical Questions in Dostoyevsky and Gogol**  
**Marmeladov's Competing Narratives of Salvation**

Benjamin Musachio, Princeton University

I propose a fresh reading of Marmeladov's "tavern" sermon, last confession, and post-mortem funeral feast from Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. Interpreting Marmeladov's speech and acts as theologically-freighted takes seriously the character's self-presentation as a preacher of holy truths. The proposed analysis of the tavern scene is two-pronged. First, I discuss how Marmeladov employs rhetorical strategies -- strategies that correspond to features of modern homiletics -- to inculcate his message. Secondly, I characterize the actual content of said

message: Scandal, universalist soteriology, and “cheap grace” all suffuse Marmeladov’s monologic sermon. Yet in the scene of Marmeladov’s death, we witness his pivot away from soteriological universalism and his apparent conversion to a praxis-oriented understanding of salvation. My argument foregrounds how Dostoevsky weighs two narratives of salvation inherent within one seemingly minor character. I argue that Marmeladov’s discursive and then practical examination of soteriology – who shall be saved and by what means? – does not, in the final analysis, offer the reader cut-and-dry moralism. Marmeladov’s “afterlife” in the novel (embodied in his funeral feast organized by Katerina Ivanovna) reintroduces Menippean (in Bakhtin’s sense) elements into the Marmeladov family texture. The return of scandal and monologism unsettles any linear or finalized reading of Marmeladov’s development arc from sacrilege to sanctity.

### **Becoming Aware of Sin and Despair: The Aesthetic vs. the Ethical, and the Need for the Religious in Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground***

Maxwell Parlin, Princeton University

Using Kierkegaard’s concepts, this presentation shows precisely how Dostoevsky executed his intention, obscured by censorship, to demonstrate “the necessity of faith and Christ” in *Notes from Underground*. The Underground Man is caught in what Kierkegaard calls the battle between the aesthetic and the ethical. According to Kierkegaard, the aesthetic stage of existence culminates in despair. (His critique of the aesthetic stage, in which one’s life is limited to the pursuit of pleasure, is not a critique of the aesthetic *sphere* or aesthetics *per se*.) Though it may seem that the ethical stage would liberate from despair, it actually deepens despair because of sin, a category that problematizes a strictly ethical worldview. Ultimately, sin and despair are overcome not by the ethical action of human efforts, but only through faith, the religious. Faith, to be sure, works itself out in ethical action, but from a different starting point. Largely implicit in *Notes from Underground*, the aesthetic-ethical tension that leads to despair and necessitates the religious leap of faith, is given explicit form by Kierkegaard.

### **Three Crucifixions in Gogol’s Cossack Nation: *Taras Bulba* and I Corinthians**

Kathleen Manukyan, University of Pittsburgh

Nikolai Gogol’s work of historical fiction about Cossack life, *Taras Bulba*, is subjected to scholarly scrutiny much more rarely than most of Gogol’s other major works. The mainstream interpretation of *Taras Bulba* as primarily an adventure tale concerned with Russian and Russian Orthodox patriotism may explain the critical lacuna. The work strikes academic readers as one-dimensional, not to mention chauvinistic, and therefore is ostensibly of value only as light entertainment. This paper offers a new, alternative interpretation of *Taras Bulba* based on the biblical subtexts present throughout the novel, especially the triple execution of the title character and his sons. The paper interprets the novel as an allegory of Chapter 13 of Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians interwoven with imagery borrowed from the Slavic pre-Christian mythology. In this interpretation, Taras Bulba is no longer heroic, but a diabolical destroyer of virtue and

salvation. The reading finds *Taras Bulba* and Gogol's literary masterpieces to have much more in common thematically than is usually admitted by critics. Indeed, the paper argues that, like so many of Gogol's other works, *Taras Bulba* ultimately addresses the perceived futility of the struggle for wholeness in artistic life as in spiritual life. The paper seeks to rectify *Taras Bulba*'s status as misfit in Gogol's corpus and offers new insight into Gogol's fraught positions on questions of nationality and the relationship between the Orthodox and Catholic church institutions.

### **How Nikolai Gogol Imagined His Readers: The Exclusion of Readers from Their Own Transformation**

Yonni Kim, University of Southern California

Nikolai Gogol held a keen interest in his readers' responses to his literary works. This interest has traditionally been understood in the context of his life-long project of morally and spiritually transforming Russia, and its reading public (which began to emerge as a critical factor in determining an artist's success). (Mann, 1984; Lounsbury, 2007) However, the image of the Russian readers Gogol depicts in his works is very much a product of his own imagination. This paper examines how Gogol crafted an image of the Russian reader as a group that urgently requires external guidance to lead it in the right direction. Relying both on Gogol's fiction (especially *Dead Souls* and the preface to the second edition of the novel) and on his critical writings (such as "On the Movement of Journal Literature in 1834 and 1835"), this paper will argue that Gogol depicts the Russian readership through opposing images of meaningful movement vs. false movement. In *Dead Souls* in particular, the interpretative activities of the townspeople of N. take the form of vigorous but directionless movement. In comparison to the potentially meaningful movement symbolized by Chichikov's carriage speeding towards an unknown destination, the false movement of the townspeople of N. requires guidance from the outside. When it comes to the matter of who it is that can give direction to the random activities of incompetent readers, Gogol considered the task to be entirely up to the leadership of men of letters i.e., himself. In Gogol's imagination, there seems to be little room for the Russian readers to participate in their own transformation.

### **10-5. Constructing Others in Eastern Europe (16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries)**

#### **Character out of Caricature: the Starosta**

Virginia Zickafoose, independent scholar

The starosta of "Slavic" origins was a composite whose military creation was "Přemyšlid", official adoption "Angevin", judicial evolution "Jagiellonian", and elite political adaptation "Carolingian". His evolution in old Poland from tribal elder, to proxy in settlement, appointed authority in the justice system, and senator by entitlement, is a complex study on royal power, republican reform, even constitutional restoration. Populating town and country, he presided over royal courts of justice and managed enterprise on crown estates. Now sheriff, now steward, his purview was extensive, ranging from criminal matters concerning provincial nobility to

commercial transactions between minorities. The “loyal hands” were the grasp by extension of the king's reach. Ever-present, he was familiar and contemptible. Stereotypes deride his character and disarm his service to the crown. Images of the rapacious starosta seem etched in the most immovable of narrative stone and are recognizable in legacies of the Fall of the *rzeczpospolita*. The royal officer of the kingdom was “Lucifer”. In Russia, he was a drunk, extorting sixteenth-century villagers. Mikołaj Rej ironically tinkered with him in verse, with a wink bestowing false praise. Culturally imported into Yiddish Ukraine, “starosta” was a matchmaker. In industrializing Poland he violated young brides. This paper draws out these images of local interaction with *starościńskie* powers of court and castle. In relation to minority autonomy, political decentralization, and religious reformation, it responds to limits placed upon the king's official. They began very early and continued, in doing so, it addresses Rej's pen of scorn over robbing game lands and playing God. This is part of a larger study on the “Polish” starosta, putting a lens on crown lands of Chelm and Bełz between the Angevin kings of Louis of Hungary and Henry of France.

### **Negative Image of Jews in Older Slovenian Folk Prayers**

Irena Avsenik Nabergoj, Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts  
The article presents the first research on the origins of the negative image of "evil" Jews in Slovenian folk prayers, which were created in all Slovenian regions from the Middle Ages onwards in similar, mostly poetic forms and are now available in four extensive collections which were edited by Karel Štrekelj (1895–1907); Vilko Novak (1983); Zmaga Kumer (1999); Marija Stanonik (2013). According to the thematic-formal analysis, the motif of "evil" Jews as Jesus' tormentors appears in most Slovenian folk prayers based on the Gospel story of Jesus' passion. I will present the so-called "Golden Our Father - prayed by our Jesus" which was the most popular type of these apocryphal prayers prayed during fasting time. It has been orally spread throughout the entire Slovenian ethnic territory since pre-Reformation period and has parallels elsewhere in Europe. Its prevalence, popularity and perseverance in Slovenia is evidenced by recordings from the late 1970s and the last sound recording from 1996. Such prayers will be presented as a living folk prayer tradition, which is important for getting to know Slovenian folk spiritual culture and the attitude of the Slovene people towards the Jews in the past. Many similar stereotypical representations of "evil" Jews (also "ruthless Jews", "bloodthirsty Jews", etc.) as in Slovenian folk prayers are found in the extensive meditation on passion in the "Poljanski manuscript" (ca. 700 pp.) from the end of 18th century. This manuscript is a more or less literal translation of the monumental work "Das grosse Leben Christi" by the German Capuchin Father Martin von Cochem (1634–1712). The article seeks to answer the question of what factors and historical circumstances within the Slovenian lands and in Central Europe make up the context that inspired the authors of folk prayers to develop negative stereotypes about "evil" Jews.

### **11-1. Stream 1A: Women and Gender in Slavic and Eurasian Studies (II)**

#### **Between Marxism and Feminism: Alexandra Kollontai and Lu Märten's Theories of the New Woman**

Mari Jarris, Princeton University

For most Russian and German Marxists in the early twentieth century, the so-called “woman question” at best presented an opportunity to recruit women to the workers’ movement and at worst threatened to smuggle in bourgeois women’s interests as universal. In my paper, I focus on two Marxist theorists who insisted on the priority of gender and sexuality in the revolutionary politics of the early Soviet Union and Weimar Germany: Alexandra Kollontai (1872-1952) and Lu Märten (1879-1970). Specifically, I turn to Kollontai and Märten as theorists who are not only notable for their consideration of the gendered specificity of class struggle, but also for their turn to fiction as a means to articulating their revolutionary politics.

Kollontai and Märten’s attempts to transform economic precarity and the marginalized position of women into the foundation for Marxist theory and practice alienated them from both the workers’ movement and the feminism of the time, which Kollontai defined as “the attempt of bourgeois women to stand together and pit their common strength against the enemy, against men.” I contrast Märten’s appeal to the critical utopian potential arising from women’s “nameless ingenuity” (1914) with Kollontai’s call for the renunciation of the feminized characteristics of sentimentality and emotionality in her vision of the “New Woman” (1913) and her subsequent theory of the expansion of Eros (1923) that reintroduces “sympathetic feelings,” as the basis for solidarity in the post-revolutionary period. Finally, I consider the challenges that both authors faced in theorizing gender and sexuality from a Marxist perspective, including the risk of essentializing femininity through the idealization of women and feminized traits, and the pressure to prioritize either class or gender.

#### **Costuming the New Soviet Woman: Fashion and Gender in 1920s Theater and Film**

Alisa Lin, Ohio State University

How does clothing advance or challenge concepts of gender? How do its ways of obscuring or accentuating the body reflect cultural norms and aspirations? And how does clothing designed as mass-culture costumes operate within structures of consumerism, politics, and power? This paper analyzes select theater and film costumes designed for cis-female bodies in the 1920s USSR to understand how costuming was deployed to quite literally mold the nation’s new imagery of the Soviet woman. In particular, I look at theatrical costumes worn by major stars Alisa Koonen at the Kamerny Theater and Zinaida Reich at the Meyerhold Theater alongside film costumes from such popular movies as *Miss Mend* and *Tret’ia Meshchanskaia* to illuminate the intersections of fashion, celebrity, gender, and politics in early-Soviet culture. Especially interesting in these costumes is their mediation between a gender-neutral aesthetic commonly associated with amorphous shape and erotically charged details that revert attention to the “feminine” body form.

Stars such as Koonen and Reich, I show, had more leeway to insist on fashionable, often gendered clothing, while female film actors were subject to greater political oversight of their working wardrobe. This paper situates its argument within theoretical discourse on the body by the (almost exclusively male) directors of these productions and films to indicate moments of tension between body discourse in the era and female costume design. I build on Soviet fashion scholarship by Jukka Gronow, Sergey Zhuravlev, and Helena Goscilo, as well as scholarship on early-Soviet theater and film by such scholars as Dassia N. Posner, Robert Leach, and Lilya Kaganovsky.

### **Liudmila Petrushevskaia and Tatiana Tolstaia's Dacha Landscapes as Palimpsests of Social and Political Transformations**

Elizabeth McBean, Ohio State University

Country homes and country living are phenomena across the globe, but in Russia the dacha has a broader cultural significance that is used by authors of fiction, memoir, and creative nonfiction to make larger commentaries on Russian culture and history. This paper explores how the dacha landscape functions to create a societal critique in two particular literary works by contemporary authors, Liudmila Petrushevskaia and Tatiana Tolstaia. Typically an idyllic safe haven embodying a simpler life, the dacha turns out to be nothing of the kind in Petrushevskaia's play *Three Girls in Blue* (*Tri devushki v golubom*) and Tolstaia's povest' "Invisible Maiden" ("Nevidimaia deva"). Petrushevskaia absurdly distorts the dacha landscape so that it becomes a place of conflict and degradation. Tolstaia also distorts the dacha landscape by bending time and space in the layers of worlds she creates in this space. Both distortions illustrate idiosyncrasies of the Soviet system and create an intimate and dark critique of the late Soviet era. An analysis of these two texts deepens our understanding of the institution of the dacha, its role in Soviet society, and its function as a literary and social chronotope. Entrenched in the tradition of Magical Realism, this genre gives these works a larger canonical context and helps lighten the absurdities and idiosyncrasies illustrated by these authors in their dacha landscapes.

### **11-2. Stream 2A: Empirical and Experimental Approaches to Second Language Acquisition and Pedagogy of Slavic and Eastern European (SEE) languages (II)**

#### **Lexical and syntactic complexity development in Russian learner language and correlations with raters' scores**

Rossina Soyan, Carnegie Mellon University; Dmitrii Pastushenkov, Michigan State University; Olesya Kisselev, U of Texas at San Antonio

Longitudinal learner corpora studies have shown that L2 writing development is a non-linear process that develops over time (Byrnes, 2009; Bulté & Housen, 2014; Yoon & Polio, 2017; Menke & Strawbridge, 2019). However, even after one month of instruction, statistically significant changes in linguistic complexity can be identified in student writing (Mazgutova & Kormos, 2015). The goal of the current study is to investigate writing development in an 8-week intensive Russian language program by comparing pre- and post-program essays along a set of

lexical (LC) and syntactic complexity (SC) indices. In addition to investigating which indices correspond to development over time, we assess whether and how these indices relate to the essay ratings on the Writing Proficiency Test (WPT).

A total of 344 texts (two pre- and post-program essays) created by 86 Russian learners at five curricular levels were subjected to corpus-based analyses which yielded a set of LC measures (word length, TTR by lemma/wordform, lexical frequency profile, and parts-of-speech averages) and SC measures (mean sentence and clause length, readability score, clauses per sentence, coordinate/subordinate clause ratio, averages of clause types, phrases per sentence, and dependency relations averages). At the next stage of the study, correlation and regression analyses will be conducted to investigate the relationships between the LC and SC measures in pre- and post-program writing with WPT scores and curricular levels serving as additional variables. Based on the results in Kisselev et al. (2020), we hypothesize that all LC indices will strongly correlate with time of writing and the WPT score (and, possibly, curricular level); we expect the SC indices to present a more complex picture of correlations with the three independent variables.

The results of the study may be valuable for teaching writing in regular and intensive immersion contexts as well as writing assessment.

### **Exploring variation and change of the Russian prepositional phrase: evidence from corpus-based and experimental methods**

Olga Eremina and Ekaterina Vlasova, Higher School of Economics

The Russian prepositional case government is a complex morphosyntactic phenomenon, which establishes a zone of simplifications in non-standard Russian varieties, for instance, overuse of the Nominative instead of the Prepositional:

*в камер-а. NOM хранения* (non-standard government)

*в камер-е. PREP хранения* (standard government)

‘in a locker’

Summarizing the non-standard phenomena, reported in research literature, we formulated two hypotheses explaining the change in prepositional phrase across Russian varieties:

- a) non-standard patterns are influenced by cross-linguistic transfer from the dominant language
- b) non-standard patterns are induced by different mechanisms of underacquisition, related to early bilingualism or second language learning

This paper examines the proposed hypotheses and anomalies of prepositional government in written production of non-standard Russian learners with different dominant languages and sociolinguistic background. The study employs a corpus-based method and comparison of quantitative data, extracted from four subcorpora of the Russian Learner Corpus, containing student essays of heritage speakers and advanced L2-learners with distinct dominant languages: English and Finnish, which have different structure of the adpositional phrase.

The results indicate three non-standard patterns, prevailing across the subcorpora, regardless the dominant language:

- a) overuse of the Nominative
- b) overuse of the Genitive instead of the Prepositional
- c) overuse of the Genitive instead of the Instrumental

The statistical analysis of these patterns and their distribution demonstrate the significant difference between learners, depending on their sociolinguistic background: while the heritage speakers overuse the Genitive instead of the other case forms, the L2-learners mostly employ a pattern with the Nominative. Unlike it is alleged in research literature, the transfer from the dominant language does not significantly contribute to the observed changes. Based on the corpus-data, we designed speeded grammaticality judgment tests, which results support the observations.

### **Syntactic and Morphological Complexity Measures as Markers of L2 Russian Development**

Aleksey Novikov, University of Arizona

Corpus-based investigations have been shown to be a robust way to investigate learners' L2 complexity development (Biber, Gray & Staples, 2016; Vyatkina, 2012, 2013; Lu, 2010, 2011). Research has shown that L2 complexity can be measured by increased levels of subordination (Norris & Ortega, 2009; Kisselev & Alsufieva, 2017) at lower levels and increasing phrasal complexity at higher levels (Biber, Gray & Staples, 2016). Further, an increase in morphological complexity has also been demonstrated (Brezina & Pallotti, 2019).

Despite the existing research on L2 complexity, there is a need for more studies to include lower levels of proficiency, languages other than English, and more emphasis on morphological complexity, which is a fairly new construct in complexity studies, thus needing an objective metric (Brezina & Pallotti, 2019).

To address these gaps, this study analyzed clausal, phrasal and morphological complexity using a cross-sectional corpus of written and oral assignments in L2 Russian (over 1000 texts). These assignments were collected at four program levels (the first four semesters) at a large Southwestern university and tagged for the complexity measures. The frequencies of these measures were then normalized per 100 words and analyzed statistically.

The preliminary findings show an increase in subordination, especially with an increase in temporal and conditional adverbial clauses. With regards to phrasal complexity, there is an increase in post-modifying nouns (in genitive case), which contributes to morphological complexity in that there is a significant increase in nouns in genitive case over four semesters. These findings lend themselves to making more explicit what learners can achieve at different levels of instruction in terms of various levels of complexity and can be used in assessment rubrics and incorporated into the curriculum as learning outcomes.

### **11-4. Writing Disorder: From the Absurd to the Fantastic**

**Kharmasian Chaos: Disrupting the Unnatural Order**

Caitlin Giustiniano, University of Southern California

In a letter to actress Klavdia Pugacheva in 1933, absurdist writer Daniil Kharms wrote of creating a new, correct order in his literature and world. He wrote, “However, I began to put the world in order. And at that moment Art appeared...Now my concern is to create the correct order. I’m fascinated by this and can’t think of anything else.” Past scholarship on Kharms has focused on only his biography or the reflection of his scientific interests, such as in mathematics, in his art. These are only part of a larger process for constructing the absurd. What role does this “order” play in art?

The proposed paper explores the problem of how Daniil Kharms creates the absurd in his short prose collection from 1939, *Случаи*, and considers his ideas, which run contrary to the traditional notion of “order,” specifically, what is and is not “true order.” The analysis of the *Случаи* collection will attempt to determine the process of creating the absurd and identifying the invariables present in these texts. The brevity and concise nature of the texts in this collection provide us with distilled, yet rich examples of Kharms’ process, from which we might glean insight into his larger body of work in the absurd.

For Kharms, the construction of the absurd is in his play with this tension between chaos and order. In his search for correct order, or what he terms, the “purity of order” (“чистота порядка”), he reveals the chaos and disorder that govern our lives unnoticed. To overturn the chaos of these existing “orders” and to create the new “pure” order, Kharms exposes the lack of a logical progression in both his fiction and our own lives, attributes significance to the unknown, and parodies and subverts established artistic expectations.

### **Crimes without Victims or Perpetrators: Violence, Society, and the State in *Elizaveta Bam***

Lenora Murphy, Stanford University

In his 1927 play *Elizaveta Bam*, Daniil Kharms exchanges the immediate physical violence which is a common feature of his work for the threat of state violence. The terror and absurdity of this threat is heightened by the impossible premise of the play, which follows a young woman as she is chased by two men for the crime of killing one of them. As the pursuit continues, all three characters experience numerous transformations, complicating the concept of personal identity and throwing the possibility of individual agency—agency to speak, to remember, and even to commit murder—into doubt. As each character’s lack of control over themselves and their surroundings is revealed, the potential for violence grows until it becomes an inescapable component of their environment. In this paper, I explore the intersection between the individual, society, and violence that Kharms creates in this play, and the implications this might have for understanding his position on violence and power in early Soviet society. Referring to notable scholars of power and violence such as Foucault, Agamben, and Žižek, I will examine how Kharms paints a society in which guilt and innocence become arbitrarily imposed categories divorced from real agents of violence and death. I will argue that the elusive source of this violence is the state apparatus itself, which Kharms portrays as a vacuum at the heart of society, sucking in and destroying its citizens.

## **An Absurd Literary Future: Theorizing the Evolution of Literature in Zoshchenko's Michel Sinyagin**

Ben Hooyman, Columbia University

In Mikhail Zoshchenko's *Michel Sinyagin* (1930) an unnamed narrator relays the life of the titular protagonist, a hapless, sentimental poet unable to adapt to post-revolutionary life.

Zoshchenko's narrator describes Sinyagin's pampered pre-revolutionary childhood in his aunt's estate, his growth into a sensitive poet with aspirations to become the next Fet, Nadson, or Blok, and his subsequent relocation to post-revolutionary Petersburg to capture his dreams. However, Sinyagin soon realizes that his idealistic nature and modest literary talent carry little cultural capital amid the new values instituted by the Soviet regime.

Scholars overwhelmingly interpret Zoshchenko's novella as a parody of intellectuals clinging to bourgeois value structures and archaic literary models years after the revolution. In this light, *Michel Sinyagin* reads as a characteristic, if not slightly banal rendition of the 'superfluous intellectual' trope appearing regularly throughout the 1920s and early 30s. But Zoshchenko's treatment of the material is more nuanced than this reading would suggest.

The complexity the novella is revealed through a closer reading of its narrator. *Michel Sinyagin* was written at a time when leading cultural theorists, most prominently Averbakh and his fellow compatriots in RAPP, were bitterly arguing over how the literature of the Soviet future ought to look, and how they might uncover the 'red Lev Tolstoy,' the paragon of the new literary paradigm. Far from Zoshchenko's typical 'skaz'-wielding simpleton, the narrator in *Sinyagin* is written as a parody of this purely theoretical Soviet Tolstoy. By imbuing his narrator with the qualities of the supposed 'ideal Soviet writer,' Zoshchenko preemptively identifies the flaws in RAPP's theoretical forecasts, revealing the paradoxicality of the idea of a 'red Tolstoy' itself. Although the chronicle of Sinyagin's failed poetic aspirations reveals the untenability of pre-revolutionary forms of literature in the post-revolutionary space, the narrator's literary blunders demonstrate the flaws bound to arise should culture evolve in accordance with RAPP's prescriptions. Zoshchenko's *Michel Sinyagin*, then, anticipates a worrying future for Soviet literature, a literature with no way forward, and no going back.

## **Bruno Schulz: The Fantastic and the Real**

David A. Goldfarb, independent scholar

Bruno Schulz's prose and visual works attract the reader and viewer with stark juxtapositions of the fantastic and the real or the sacred and the profane, but the line between the seemingly impossible and the surprisingly actual can be blurry. Are Schulz's fantastical images and chimeras wholesale inventions of a fertile mind, or is Schulz a kind of collector with an eye for the uncanny as it genuinely existed around him? Is what he called the "mythicization of reality" something that he does as a poet of images or something that he finds out there in the world? Is Schulz a maker or an observer of the fantastic? Aristotle wrote in the *Poetics* that a probable falsehood is likely to seem more true than a representation of an improbable element of reality, but perhaps Schulz's precise talent is as a curator of the improbably real. This paper will

consider some of Schulz's most fantastic images in relation to the genuinely strange things that he could have encountered in his world, in commercial advertising, Austro-Hungarian government propaganda, and the polychromes in the Orthodox Church of St. Jura in his home town of Drohobycz, to further drill down the status of the real in relation to the imaginary and myth in Schulz's universe.

### **11-5. Social and Literary Questions in 19th-century Literature**

#### **The Turning of Mills and Minds: How a Reading of Tolstoy's *Azbuka* Illuminates the Educational Themes in *Anna Karenina***

Laura Matthews, Princeton University

In a cluster of chapters in *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy shifts the narration to Serezha's perspective and, in discussing the boy's education and upbringing, builds a stage to reflect on educational issues. Curiously, these pages contain several seemingly disconnected references to windmills and watermills. When viewed only in the context of the novel, the mills' meaning and significance is unclear. However, as I will show, both types of mills figure prominently in Tolstoy's educational works, particularly in his short stories for children composed for his *Azbuka*, published in 1875 contemporaneously to *Anna Karenina*. The mills can only be understood in the novel when examined in his pedagogical works, where their connection to the process of development is clear. In my presentation, I will first examine the symbols' meaning in Tolstoy's educational stories before returning to *Anna Karenina* with deeper insight into these loaded images.

My methodology encompasses comparative analysis across genres (Tolstoy's novels, pedagogical tracts, children's stories and primers, and personal correspondence), as well as close readings from *Anna Karenina*, paying attention to how this idea is underscored even on the level of grammar. I rely on scholarship of *Anna Karenina*, particularly Gary Browning's framework of reading the novel through layers of linkages and finding the main moral messages embedded within symbols and allegories in addition to the plot. I expand on this framework: Tolstoy's fundamental moral message is embedded in another layer of this novel, the educational one, and one must look beyond the novel to search for linkages. This approach results in a better understanding of Tolstoy's pedagogical musings, as well as a more comprehensive appreciation of the morality of *Anna Karenina*. I will conclude with showing how the educational content in these chapters reveals a development in Tolstoy's pedagogical philosophy from what he espoused in the early 1860s.

#### **The Martyr-Heroine on Trial: The Russian Revolutionary Women of the 1870s-1880s**

Natalia Dame, University of Southern California

The history of Russian revolutionary women has long been a topic of interest in Slavic scholarship. While researchers mainly focus on the biographies of Russian female revolutionaries, this paper examines the cultural contributions of the real-life revolutionary women of the late 1870s-early 1880s to the concept of the modern Russian feminine and its

foundational component – the martyr-heroine. How did historical female revolutionaries promote the idea of the martyr-heroine in Russian culture? What were the consequences of their revolutionary activism for changing the patriarchal perception of women as familial subjects? And, most importantly, who and how accommodated the concept of the martyr-heroine in the Russian cultural space of the 1870s-1880s?

Having established the notion of the martyr-heroine as a cultural construct of Russian modernity, this paper will investigate three trials of female revolutionary martyrs: the propagandist Sofia Bardina in 1877, the martyr-avenger Vera Zasluch in 1878, and the terrorist Sofia Perovskaia in 1881. These trials are examined through a discourse analysis of the oral and written narratives presented by the revolutionary women, their defense lawyers, and court observers. Each trial not only helped shape the concept of the martyr-heroine in the eyes of the Russian public, but also contributed to the renewed perception of women as modern subjects and agents of political change. In the end, I will argue that the resulting myth of the martyr-heroine is a product of Russia's cultural discourse on female emancipation, martyrdom, and justified violence and a possible source of the fin-de-siècle ambivalence about the saintly/wicked nature of women.

### **Three Editions of *Masquerade* as Lermontov's Variations on the Theme of Pushkin's "Queen of Spades"**

Daria Solodkaia, independent scholar

On the New Year's Eve of 1834, Lermontov's grandmother wrote in a letter to her friend: "My hussar is prowling the town, and I am happy that he is frequenting balls: He is a young boy, and a good company will teach him good; if he is just friends with young army officers, it will be of little use." It had indeed been a bit over a month since Lermontov graduated from the School for Guards Subalterns and Cavalry Cadets and plunged into the social life of noble Petersburg. His *Masquerade* came as an immediate response to that "good company." Hoping to see it staged, Lermontov wrote three editions of the drama, two *Masquerades* (1835) and *Arbenin* (1836). Scholars have noted how abundant *Masquerade* is in allusions and quotes, with the most conspicuous and numerous literary curtsies made toward Pushkin, who nonetheless has been generally regarded as a reservoir from which Lermontov drew a few motifs and poetic lines. In my presentation, I will focus on Pushkin's "Queen of Spades," which in a large measure, as I will suggest, determines the framework of *Masquerade*. The first edition of the drama where Lermontov's creative impulse feeds much on the autobiographical source demonstrates it to a lesser degree. But for the second edition, "The Queen of Spades" is a plot- and character-forming engine. I will show how the theme of fate changes the lens through which Lermontov looks at his protagonist, turning the latter into an incarnation of Pushkin's Hermann. The juxtaposition of the second and the third editions will reveal Lermontov's faithfulness to Pushkin's novel despite a drastic revision of the original plan. Viewed as a fundamental and unifying element, "The Queen of Spades" sheds light on the evolution of Lermontov's drama, with its three editions becoming variations of Pushkin's story.

## **Nabokov's family and the assassination of Rasputin**

Rusina Volkova, independent scholar

In his memoirs, Nikolai Nabokov says that his family was somehow involved in the murder of Rasputin. Recollections from his youth inspired his opera *Death of Rasputin*, written in New York in the 1950s and was parodied in an episode from Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin*. The historical literature usually mentions only those directly involved in the actual assassination, i.e. Felix Yusupoff, Grand Duke Dmitry Pavlovich, Vladimir Purishkevich and Dr. Lazovert. However, a far larger number of people prepared a plot against Rasputin, including some members of the Nabokov family. This murder was the last straw after which events began to develop like a snowball until the February Revolution of 1917. Certain previously unpublished documents demonstrate that Vladimir Nabokov's closest relatives were instrumental not only to Rasputin's assassination, but also to the abdication of Emperor Nicholas II. There are also some bizarre coincidences between the two murders – Rasputin's and that of writers' father, Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov.

Session 12: 5:15pm-7:15pm
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### **12-1. Stream 1A: Women and Gender in Slavic and Eurasian Studies (III)**

#### **The New “Three Sisters”: Portrayals of Domestic Violence in Contemporary Russian Drama**

Fiona Bell, Yale University

The issue of violence in New Russian Drama has received ample scholarly attention, initiated, in part, by Beumers' and Lipovetsky's 2009 work, *Performing Violence: Literary and Theatrical Experiments of New Russian Drama*. Violence figures into New Drama in a number of guises: as a “catalyst of the unconscious,” as a “form of communication,” and as a naturalistic reflection of violence in Russian society (36-38). Indeed, most plays in this movement are direct responses to events and currents in Russian society. In the past few years, with domestic violence reform in the Russian Duma and accompanying protests, there has been a flood of new, woman-authored plays about domestic violence. 2019 was an especially notable year: as the three Khachaturyan sisters came under investigation for killing their sexually abusive father, documentary theater artists responded with two new plays: Elena Pavlova's *Сестры по крови* and Teatr.doc's *Три сестры*, which were staged in the same year.

Though theater about domestic violence is proliferating, there has been little scholarship that offers a framework for its study. In this paper, I approach domestic violence as a unique category of violence. After offering a background on the development of this theme in twenty-first-century Russian theater, I focus on the theatrical responses to the Khachaturyan sisters' case. I discuss how the plays' formal elements – both as texts and as productions – develop their authors' political arguments. Particularly, I argue that time is a distinctly fraught aspect in the narration of stories about domestic violence. Abuse, unlike more isolated instances of violence,

takes place on an extended time scale; a single event is preceded and informed by years of a relationship. Theater, however, is an art form especially constricted by time. By considering how Russian playwrights have met the temporal challenges of narrating domestic violence on stage in the Khachaturyan plays of 2019, I hope to build on Beumers' and Lipovetsky's project, extending our conception of violence on stage to include the gendered and frequently misunderstood category of domestic violence.

### **Screening the Gulag in Putin's Russia: Gender in Contemporary Russian Television**

Natalie McCauley, University of Richmond

This paper examines recent Russian television drama series set in the Gulag prison system.

*Dekabristka* (2018), *ALZhIR* (2019), and *Obitel'* (2020) trace individual experiences of mass trauma through various women's perspectives, either as prisoners, wives of prisoners, or prison guards. Working within Peter Brooks and Linda Williams's scholarship on melodrama on page and screen, this study examines how these programs utilize a melodramatic modality to pose to viewers questions of moral codes, pathos, and national mourning. Boundaries between heroes and villains are clear, audiences are led to feel sympathy for protagonists, and the Manichaean approach to right and wrong encourages viewers to revisit the nation's past violence.

### **Can the Post-Soviet Subaltern Speak? Silence, Women's Emancipation and Postcolonial Discourse in Guzel' Iakhina's *Zuleikha otkryvaet glaza***

Alexey Shvyrykov, Columbia University

In 2015 the first book of a young Tatar writer Guzel' Iakhina *Zuleikha otkryvaet glaza* received two main Russian literary awards: "Bol'shaia kniga" and "Iasnaia poliana." Her novel depicts the process of dekulakization, mass deportations and life in a labor camp under Stalin. Success of the book was not limited to Russia as it was translated into eighteen languages. Through the analysis of the subalterns in the novel, I am aiming to deconstruct contemporary Russian (neo)orientalism to argue that the postcolonial discourse is constructed for them and not by them. Firstly, relying on Alexander Etkind's framework of "internal colonization," Michael Foucault's analysis of power, knowledge and "silence as a discourse;" Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said's postcolonial critique I will argue that Iakhina's characters are internally appropriate colonizer's discourse that is exemplified and communicated through three forms of "silence:" Zuleikha's reticent silence, Ignatov's silence of memories and Professor Leibe's Chekhovian-like silence. Secondly, constructed in terms of binary oppositions, counter-history told by Zuleikha au contraire to the dominant discourse is, in reality, conveying a colonizer's rhetoric. The hybrid story of her emancipation is told in terms of creating a New Soviet Woman, who had to adopt "masculine" qualities to be able to work and fight, at the same time preserving "feminine" traits necessary for duties at home. This story is constructed through binary oppositions of colonizer/colonized, civilized/primitive, advanced/backward, where life in the camp is contrasted to a traditional Tatar way of life. Subjugation to the colonial rhetoric further perpetuates the existing dominant discourse of the exceptionality of the Soviet past in terms of its civilizing attempts. Thus,

reproducing the same patterns of thought and behavior towards the ethnic minorities in contemporary Russia.

**12-3. Stream 2A: Empirical and Experimental Approaches to Second Language Acquisition and Pedagogy of Slavic and Eastern European (SEE) languages (III)**  
**Mastering Academic Russian: Functional-Semantic Approach to Analysis of Genitive and Instrumental Cases Usage in L2 Writing**

Natalia Nekora, Bard-Smolny program, St. Petersburg State University

Within the semantics of the Russian case system, the Genitive and the Instrumental cases present multiple challenges to learners of Russian, even at advanced levels; the challenge of the Genitive is its multiple meanings; whereas the Instrumental is applied in quite numerous and diverse contexts. In this paper, I discuss the benefits of using the Functional-Semantic (FS) approach and comparative approaches to the study of grammars of different languages to the teaching of Russian case system. The FS framework allows the teacher to be well-versed in categorical semantics, and, therefore, to offer students solid conceptual explanations of the use of the Genitive Case and the Instrumental Case. The conceptual mastery will allow the learners to avoid communicative breakdowns and to master the Russian language and, especially, academic genres in Russian.

The paper reports on the study that systematically analyzed written production of American students studying in the Bard-Smolny program; the data sample includes students from more than 30 different American language programs who came for a semester or one whole academic year between 2016 and 2020. All instances of Genitive Case and the Instrumental case were identified, categorized by function and evaluated for felicitous-ness. This report will present a diagram of erroneous usage of Genitive and Instrumental, such as: incorrect usage of the Genitive Case with words of imprecisely calculated semantics, as well as with numerals; “delegating” a clear and strong meaning of the sense of possessiveness in English to the Russian value of locality; the use of the Instrumental Case instead of the Genitive after the preposition “C” and some others.

A method of isolating various types of errors in the use of Genitive Case and Instrumental Case forms will be offered on the basis of a set of exercises aimed at increasing students’ fluency and advance their grammar skills.

**The Dynamics of Acquisition of the Russian Verbal Aspect by American Learners of Russian**

Albina Khabibulina, University of Georgia

The study employs a Dynamic Assessment approach to studying the dynamics of acquisition of the Russian verbal aspect by American learners of Russian. The purpose of the study is to investigate how a systematic Dynamic Assessment (DA) intervention can help American

learners of Russian improve their conceptual understanding and control over the Russian verbal aspect in written language.

Dynamic Assessment (DA) is a sociocognitive approach to second language instruction that employs cooperative dialoguing between the mediator (instructor) and the learner aimed at understanding the learner's abilities and promoting his/her development as s/he performs a task. The mediator provides the learner individualized, conceptually-driven, systematized implicit (e.g., leading questions) and explicit (e.g., explanations) hints that help the learner realize and overcome linguistic problems and move to independent performance.

#### **12-4. A Sixth of the Earth: Russian and Eurasian Geopoetics**

##### **Seeing Struggle, Between Forest and Steppe**

Daniel Brooks, Franklin & Marshall College

The gradual colonization of Russia's southern steppes by northern cities and forested settlements was as much a cultural project as an imperial one. Movement between those two spaces, typically motivated by the pursuit of commerce and property, feature prominently in much 19th-century literature (Chekhov's "The Steppe," Tolstoy's "How Much Land Does a Man Need?" etc.), and the conceptual terms through which fictional texts express the forest-steppe distinction (e.g. crowded-open, full-empty, etc.) are frequently commensurate with imperial rhetoric. This paper will explore possible counter-rhetorics that emerge from different ways of seeing Russian nature in the work of Petr Kropotkin. Kropotkin's landmark text *Mutual Aid* drew heavily on his travels through the 19th-century Russian empire, and his observations about the varied natural phenomena therein compelled him to modify the Darwinian concept of "struggle for existence"—specifically by challenging its metaphorical implications and Malthusian underpinnings. Per Banerjee and Presto's call for geopoetic examinations of Russian culture (founded on the "relationship between space and culture as already embedded in diverse circuits of contact, contamination, translation, and transculturation"), this paper will explore how the geopoetics of Kropotkin's scientific thought might complement ongoing comparisons of Western and Russian imperial projects, and help us reconceptualize the "struggle for existence" (broadly and metaphorically defined, per Kropotkin's modifications to Darwin) in literary depictions of movement between, within, and across forest and steppe.

##### **Alpine Sublime, Steppe Mundane?: The Geopoetics of Flatness in Russia**

Emily Laskin, UC Berkeley

In his *Course of Russian History* Vasilii Kliuchevskii calls the territory on which the culture of the early Slavs developed a "boundless and inhospitable plain," attributing many Russian national characteristics to this formative experience on a flat landscape with few natural boundaries. A conception of Russia resembling Kliuchevskii's geographical determinism persists in discussions of Russia's "unchecked" imperial expansion into the southern steppes and Central Asia. And it finds a counterpart in accounts of the massive discursive shifts in Russian literature

and culture occasioned by the Russian Empire's encounter with the high alpine landscapes of the Caucasus.

This paper explores the final period in Russia's imperial expansion—the conquest of Central Asia—with a focus on the region's geopoetics and its relationship to earlier conceptions of Russian geography. It centers on a comparative reading of Tolstoy's *The Cossacks* (1853) and a lesser-known novel, *Two-Legged Wolf* [*Dvunogii volk*] (1876) by Nikolai Karazin, examining how each novel uses landscape to trouble the distinction between the exotic and the familiar, between novel foreign lands and natural extensions of Russia itself. I argue that, despite Russia's long history of engagement with the Caucasus, Tolstoy's novel reflects the exotic significance which alpine landscapes had acquired by the mid-nineteenth century. Karazin's, by contrast, depicts territory which was, in fact, quite new to Russian settlement, but he envisions its easy incorporation into Russia in large part by emphasizing the familiarity of Central Asia's expansive plains.

### **Remapping the Village: Sholokhov and Platonov Write Collectivization**

Lily Scott, UC Berkeley

This paper argues that Soviet literature in the countryside develops a more complex orientation toward the non-human environment than Socialist Realist works on industrial themes, as the process of systematically transforming the countryside dredges up centuries of cultural perceptions of the Russian landscape and its people for reevaluation. I analyze two works written during and about the height of the collectivization drive: Mikhail Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned* (*Podniataia tselina*, 1932) and Andrei Platonov's "For Future Use" ("Vprok," 1929-30) within a geopoetical framework. Both works describe and detail the process of collectivization while also philosophically engaging with contemporary science and the ecological transformation underway. Here Sholokhov and Platonov push against the "struggle with nature" trope in their own way and offer models of relating to the non-human environment that anticipate some of the most influential environmental philosophies to develop in the latter half of the 20th century.

### **12-5. Early 20th-century Prose and Drama**

#### **Yuri Olesha's *Liompa* as Allegory of the Journey through Life**

Marya Zeigler, Department of Defense

Yuri Olesha's *Liompa* can be interpreted as a description of the parabola of life from youth to adulthood and then on to old age. The three characters of the story represent respectively each stage of life. The extent to which they are able to participate in the world is determined by their relationship to things. The nameless small child, referred to as *резиновый мальчик*, represents the early stage of life, infancy, childhood and adolescence. Things rush towards him, but he cannot make use of them, because he does not understand where they are situated in time nor what their purpose is. Olesha is pointing out through this character that opportunities are

boundless when we are young. However, we cannot fully take advantage of them until we gain more experience and wisdom. The older child, Alexander, represents adulthood, the prime of life. He understands the principles of science, which he employs to create a model airplane that actually flies. He also knows what the coffin is for and moves it where it has to go. He can both create and control things. The author uses Alexander to state that when we have had experience and are responsible adults, we can participate fully in life. The dying old man in the bed, Ponomarev, knows that things are leaving him as he approaches death and tries to stop this process by remembering the names of items. Olesha utilizes Ponomarev to underscore the diminished opportunities of old age, which disappear entirely in death. Liompa is an eloquent parable of the human condition.

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### **Aleksey Tolstoy's Historical Plays: Russia's Political Crises and the Modernity Project**

Irina Avkhimovich, University of North Georgia

Aleksey Konstantinovich Tolstoy's historical dramas explore the legacy of Ivan the Terrible, his son Fyodor, and Boris Godunov. I demonstrate that Tolstoy's conceptualizes this historical epoch as a tumultuous but inevitable transition to modernity, in the implied parallel with the 1860s, the era of great reforms. A study of the concurrent historical scholarship reveals that the playwright polemicized with the state/judicial school (Soloviov, Kavelin, and Chicherin) and disagreed with their progressist interpretations and emphasis on modern state-building. Tolstoy was, nevertheless, influenced by the new categories of historical thinking that were inspired by Hegel's dialectics. The playwright takes the genre of Shakespearean chronicle series and fills it with the dialectical understanding of history. Ivan the Terrible, Fyodor, and Boris are, in a way, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in Tolstoy's artistic world, and the grand historical tragedy is each monarch's failure, be it the tyrant, the benign tsar, or Boris who strives to become the "happy medium." The plays manifest Tolstoy's growing historical pessimism, his disagreements with Slavophiles as well as Westernizers, and his Romanticized vision of Kievan Rus' as the time that preceded absolute monarchy and Russia's political and cultural separation from Europe.

### ***The Death of Vazir-Mukhtar* as a Spy Novel**

Anna Aydiyanyan, Kenyon College

In *The Death of Vazir-Mukhtar*, Yury Tynianov explores Russia's empire-building project through a parody of nineteenth-century Orientalist texts while at the same time alluding to the writings of the twentieth-century avant-garde authors. This parodic synthesis incorporates such

different genres as travelogues, poems, political treatises, and a colonial management proposal. Tynianov includes in this motley pattern elements of a spy novel set within the historical context of the Great Game, the Russo-British diplomatic rivalry in Persia, Central Asia, and Afghanistan. There are many similarities between *The Death of Vazir-Mukhtar* and the 1901 novel *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling, India born English writer who coined the term the Great Game. While Kipling's novel is set in what is now India and Pakistan, and Tynianov's in Russia, the Caucasus and Iran, both highlight the whimsical and amusing symbiosis of tradition and modernity, superstition and scientific inquiry in the colonized regions. However, while Kipling uncritically celebrates the advancements of modernization and prosperity brought by the imperial power, Tynianov denounces the predatory nature of imperialism. The main protagonists of both novels embrace their role in the Great Game; only *The Death of Vazir-Mukhtar*, however, ends tragically for most of the participants.

**Motherhood Traits as a Rebellious Force in Female Characters of Evgenii Zamiatin's *We***  
Irina Potapova, the University of Arizona

Boris Lanin in his "Images of Women in Russian Anti-utopian Literature" examines how female wild irrationality challenges the "lifeless rational thought" of male characters in *We*. The scholar suggests that D-503's awakening towards spiritual life coincides with the male character's passion for female rebel I-330. The current paper argues that not so much sexual attraction, as motherhood traits within I-330 drove the woman to challenge D-503's rationality. The paper maintains that maternal instincts become the force that rebels against suppression by the rationality of the One State. Additionally, the One State is indeed a finite state, since without feminine, irrational elements it is prone to entropy, and possibly extinction. Methods of the current research include the analysis of a theoretical framework, a close reading of *We* with a textual analysis. Four female characters – the old lady-guardian, I-330, O-90, and U – are analyzed in the following groupings: a collocation of the old lady-guardian with I-330 is studied through the lens of Baba Yaga to show functions of a maternal figure; a dichotomy O-90 – U serves to elicit fertility of O-90 and juxtapose it to the frigidity of U; the old lady-guardian, I-330, and O-90 are analyzed through the prism of a "Hecatian" unity to prove that the three women are the embodiment of one maternal force. The paper concludes that a "Hecatian" unity of I-330, O-90, and the old lady-guardian manifest the irrational maternal force that pushes back the suppression by the frigid rational masculinity and contradicts the uniformity of the One State. Without motherhood, any state is doomed to extinction.

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2021

Session 13: 9:00am-11:00am

### **13-1. Pragmatics and Politics of Literature (Poland, Ukraine, Latvia)**

#### **When Poetry Matters: The Lives of Poems in 20th-Century Poland**

Aleksandra Kremer, Harvard University

Eastern Europe is known as a region where literature has been highly valued, and poets have been perceived as national leaders. This paper asks what it means in practice that certain poems and songs are widely known and performed on political occasions. Focusing on Polish sources, it shows that the same text can be used in subsequent decades to support very different political causes. For instance, a song supporting a tsar can become an informal anthem sung against Soviet dominance; a song about the impossibility of social change can become an anthem of Solidarity; a wartime poem can be used as a communist credo, and then an anti-communist manifesto. Such surprising performance histories are exemplified by Feliński's "God Save Poland," Konopnicka's "Oath," Tuwim's "Prayer," Miłosz's "You Who Wronged," Herbert's "Envoy of Mr. Cogito," and Kaczmarski's "Walls." These examples suggest that it is not so much poetry that guides society as society that uses its national poems. These shifts of meanings resemble postmodern views of literature, which seem far from the clichés about Eastern Europe. This paper argues, however, that these examples should rather remind us that 20<sup>th</sup>-century Poland retained certain features associated with oral and manuscript culture.

#### **The Italian Regency of Carnaro and unrecognized quasi-states in Eastern Ukraine: literary substrate.**

Mykyta Grygorov, zaxid.net Online Media

In my paper I compare functioning of literary texts in ideological realm of two quasi-states divided by a century in time: the Italian Regency of Carnaro and unrecognized quasi-states in Eastern Ukraine («L/DPR»). I also compare roles of literary figures in ideological and political existence of aforementioned quasi-states.

Both quasi-states had no official recognition, were established after World War I and Cold War respectively, governed by figures with literary ambition (Gabriele D'Annunzio and Igor Strelkov), strived to reconstruct social order of Greek polis/late antiquity Rome and Russian Empire outland/late Soviet revolutionary republic. In both cases literature enjoyed significant role in political life, right to power appealed to neo-romantic paradigm, actual lawlessness was aestheticized.

In my opinion, political life of these quasi-states is defined by a basic juxtaposition of the following literary figures: Nietzsche/de Sade (Carnaro) and Gogol/Sorokin («L/DPR»). I also analyse literary work of Gabriele D'Annunzio and Igor Strelkov themselves as well as the work of Vladislav Surkov (éminence grise of Eastern Ukraine quasi-states) and some Donetsk authors

whose writing influenced the emergence of ideological strain in the area (Fyodor Berezin, Sergei Shatalov). The purpose of my research is to describe as completely as possible the literary influences on the political and the ideological life of two quasi-states.

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### **Structure of cultural imaginaries of Soviet and post-Soviet Latvian society in Jana Egle's collection of stories "Strangers or Milenkij Ti Moi": from binarism to homogenization**

Maija Burima, Daugavpils University

The collection of stories by the Latvian writer Jana Egle "Strangers or Milenkij Ti Moi" was published in 2018. The bilingualism emerges right in the title of the book (the words "milenkij ti moi" are derived from a popular lyrical Russian folk song-romance and can be translated from Russian as "you, my beloved") and represents the complex co-existence of Latvian and Russian ethnos and the Latvian and Russian languages in the Soviet and post-Soviet Latvia.

Jana Egle's stories are united by the family ties of the depicted characters, through which the models of Latvian-Russian relations against the background of Latvian political events of the 20th - 21st centuries are also being fixed. J. Egle exposes the distortions of the Soviet policy regarding the representation of an individual's ethnicity, marking the "erasure" of the ethnic identity of the inhabitants of the occupied territories and its replacement by the concept "a Soviet person" as a single central line of conflicts in her stories and reveals the conflicts and traumas caused by these shifts.

J. Egle depicts performative manifestations of political conflicts in ethnic clichés, gender roles and language use. The stories appeal to social imagination and determined performative practices of ethnic affiliation of colonizers and the colonized in the Soviet colonial matrix of power and the context of the post-Soviet post-conflict situations.

In my paper I will discuss binarism 'ours' - 'strangers' extended from ethnic stereotypes to Soviet everyday materiality (Epp 2018) which encounters different aspects of the Soviet role at various stages: (1) cultural ignorance and conflicts; (2) putting 'strangers' into the image of 'ours'; (3) homogenization between strangers, newcomers and local inhabitants. I will study the relations between the identity and the power and the complexity of the image of Russianness in Latvia presented in the collection of Egle's stories in various discourses in the context of post-Soviet and postcolonial debate.

### **13-2. Intercultural Competences**

#### **Students' Reflections on Intercultural Competence in a Faculty Undergraduate Summer Engagement (FUSE) Project**

Tatiana Maslova, University of North Georgia

Developing Intercultural Competence in students learning a foreign language is one of the key goals of Liberal Arts education of the 21st century. Students of upper level Russian courses possess a good command of the target language structure, vocabulary, and pragmatics and are capable of exploring and critically analyzing the products and practices of Russian culture in the target language. The FUSE grant award made it possible for the researcher to involve three undergraduate students majoring in Russian to explore some unique Russian culture aspects through the lenses of the Intercultural Competence (ICC) framework developed by Byram (1997).

Upper level students of Russian investigated some specific cultural phenomena through interviewing Russian speaking people in the target language, reflected on their critical awareness as pertaining to the ICC model in their native language, and created a series of short videos as authentic teaching materials for the use in various level Russian courses at their home institution. The presentation will report on the goals, learning outcomes, and structure of the project; the implementation stages in the domestic setting instead of the initially planned study abroad location (which had to undergo some major alterations due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation in summer 2020); the students' findings; and the process of creating valuable authentic teaching materials based on the conducted interviews with the native speakers of Russian. The presenter will share some limitations and challenges of the project, as well as the created online resources.

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### **Fostering intercultural competence in the beginner's Russian courses through online cultural presentations and discussions**

Anastasiya Smith, University of Georgia

Developing intercultural competence in students is one of the major goals of any foreign language course. The most widely used framework for teaching Intercultural Competence (ICC) developed by Byram (1977) suggests that in order for students to gain ICC, they need to acquire positive attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical awareness of products and practices of the target culture. This concept is so multi-faceted that it is often challenging to do it justice in the classroom due to the time constraints. It is especially difficult at the lower levels as we mostly focus on developing basic grammar and lexicon, and introducing first communication patterns. We also find that the students who come to our classroom to study Russian have very limited, if any, knowledge of Russian culture. Yet it plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between the hypothetical knowledge of the language and its practical use. We tried to address this issue by designing a cultural component to accompany our beginner Russian course. During the semester, each student in the class had to prepare 5 presentations in English with a voice over and a short quiz for the classmates on the topics that were aligned with

the contents of the course. Students were asked to upload their presentations in the discussion section of the learning management system, watch each other's presentations, comment, and answer the quiz questions. At the end of the course, students were tested on the knowledge they gained and asked to reflect on the experience.

In our presentation we are going to share the details of this project, its goals, outcomes, challenges, and suggestions for improvement.

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Multilingual Matters.

### **A Discussion - Based Online Approach to Fostering Cultural understanding in the Beginning Russian Class**

Alla Kourova, University of Central Florida

Fostering and assessing language learners' cultural understanding is a daunting task, particularly in the early stages of language learning with target language instruction. The purpose of this study was to explore the development of beginning Russian language learners' intercultural understanding in a computer-mediated environment where students discussed online cultural instruction among peers, in English, and some Russian vocabulary, outside of formal instructional time. Discourse analyses of the discussion transcripts revealed sizeable growth in learners' development of intercultural sensitivity in response to different types of online instructional materials. Volunteer participants provided additional insight into the influence of the instructional materials on changes in their worldviews in post-post discussion interviews. In addition to providing evidence of effective uses of technology to resolve conflicts between target language use and deep cultural learning in the beginning world language curriculum, findings from this study document the application of an assessment model used to measure learners' development of intercultural understanding in the Russian class.

### **13-3. Spaces of Soviet Poetry**

#### **Craving Infinity: Transcending Space and Exile in Joseph Brodsky's Late Poetry**

Miroslava Nikolova, Bowdoin College

While exile and its variegated refractions in the poetry of Joseph Brodsky have been thoroughly explored by scholarly investigations, spatiality and concrete topographical motifs remain less studied. The loss of place is an essential feature of exile and the delineations of physical topoi render fertile ground for a literary analysis in the poems of the exiled artist. Using theoretical frameworks by philosophers such as Bachelard, Casey and Foucault as a point of departure, this paper will present a brief overview of space and place in two short Brodsky pieces from the 1990's, "Swiss Blues" and "A Photograph". The analysis will suggest that Brodsky's works show a centrifugal tendency with regards to space: there is a palpable affinity towards open, expansive and expanding topoi as well as a general move away from a restrictive core or center. Islands, skies, vast horizons, and the boundless azure are all images that recur throughout Brodsky's artistic trajectory and that are especially visible and varied in his late poems.

### **Igor Kholin's "Barrack Dwellers:" The Poetics of Double Exposure**

Yulia Kim, Columbia University

The world of Igor Kholin's cycle "Barracks Dwellers" is the world of barrack — a specific Soviet housing phenomenon, poorly constructed one or two-storied buildings. Kholin's poetic sketches depict life situations, full of hardships, quarrels, violence, routine, but also reckless, bestial fun. I will address the poetic subjectivity of the cycle, which is expressed in a peculiar way. By the analysis of the text, I will show that the subjectivity in "Barracks Dwellers" has a "double" nature: there is an external and dominant point of view on the described events, and there is a point of view, manifested in the speech of the "heroes," participants of these events. Paradoxically, this "doubleness" does not result in two different worldviews, present in the text. The "double" poetic subjectivity in its both instances becomes a realization of the barrack identity, making the poetic world of the barrack absolutely hermetic. By analyzing the barrack chronotope I will show that the logic of the barrack world is similar to the logic of a myth. With the use of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of epic, I will conceptualize the provided understanding of Kholin's poetics. By writing the "barrack epic" for the "barrack myth," Kholin created the epic distance within the cycle. At the same time, the documentary style of the poems implies that the distance between the reader and the text is very short, almost invisible. This creates a poetic paradox, which is in my work called the "double exposure."

### **Translation as Trying out Forms: Pasternak's Metapoetic Exploration of Simplicity**

Veniamin Gushchin, Columbia University

This paper examines the role that translation played in the development of Boris Pasternak's later poetic style, one emphasizing the importance of simpler, more traditional forms in favor of the experimentation of his early poetry. Indeed, this can be read as a privileging of form over content, a theme reflected in his later metapoetry. The paper provides close readings of Pasternak's translation of Percy Bysshe Shelley's "To —" and the ways in which it ignores the original poem's meaning to recreate its formal structure and Pasternak's original late poem "Bez nazvaniya," which recontextualizes a line from the abovementioned translation. "Bez nazvaniya" can be read as a metapoetic exploration of focusing on the external instead of the internal, of prizing form over content. The paper also situates Soviet translation theory and its concept of "context length" in a Hegelian form-content distinction in order ground discussions about a translation's faithfulness to the various aspects of the original. I argue that Pasternak's translations sacrifice some of the particular word-to-word meanings that would come across in a more literal translator in favor of reproducing the formal aspects of Shelley's verse. Similarly, his late poetry, both on the level of its poetic form and its content, showcases a similar emphasis on external form over internal content.

### **13-5. Constructing and Deconstructing Communist Ideologies**

**Racism and Soviet Internationalism in The Moskviad by Yuri Andrukhovych**

Tetyana Dzyadevych, New College of Florida

In her book, *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets* (2013), Svetlana Alexievich recounts the various difficulties Soviet people faced after the collapse of the USSR. Among different issues she highlights the tragedy of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. Lyudmila Ulitskaia in her recent book of short stories, *About Soul's Body/O Tele Dushy* (2019), addresses this conflict in the opening story "Dragon and Phoenix." She explores the possibility of love and friendship between Azerbaijanis and Armenian people. Mythology about Soviet internationalism, equality, friendship among peoples remains strong and feeds feelings of the Soviet nostalgia.

However, as Nikolay Zakharov shows in his book, *Race and Racism in Russia* (2014), the problem is real, and the true situation of ethnic and race group relations is problematic. As a number of current publications from respected organizations like the Council for Europe's Anti-Racism Commission or Wilson Center show that Ukraine is also far from innocent regarding the issues of racism.

Rejecting the mythology of Soviet Internationalism, I claim that the contemporary situation with racism and xenophobia in post-Soviet countries are deeply rooted in the Soviet times. In my work I analyze Yuri Andrukhovych's novel, *The Moskoviad* (1993), by focusing on latent racial and ethnic tensions in the late USSR. I argue that Andrukhovych has masterly depicted all the complexity of potential interethnic conflicts, as well as latent racism of Soviet subjects. Since the main character and the narrator of the novel is depicted as a bearer of Ukrainian identity, I will address my analysis to the creolization of Ukrainian people in the Soviet Union, who though they felt subject to Russian superiority also adopted the Russian practice of power towards those who according to their hierarchy were above them (for example, Africans or Romani).

### **The Return of Marxist Discourse to Russian-American Fiction: Keith Gessen's Novel *A Terrible Country***

Adrian Wanner, Pennsylvania State University

While most of the Jewish immigrants who came to the US from the former Soviet Union are conservative Republicans, the generation of so-called Russian-American writers that has sprung up over the past twenty years has rejected the right-wing politics of their parents in favor of a more liberal position. However, few Russian-American authors go as far as embracing "communism" or Soviet-style state socialism. An interesting exception to this rule is the writer and journalist Keith Gessen. Unlike the Russian liberals, who criticize the Putin regime as a relapse into Soviet-style totalitarianism, Gessen interprets Putinism as a symptomatic manifestation of global neoliberalism. For him, the formula for resisting Putin's tyranny does not consist in anti-communism, but anti-capitalism. Gessen's 2018 novel *A Terrible Country* traces the protagonist's (and Gessen's own) political evolution from liberalism to neo-Marxism. The book offers a view on contemporary Russia and the current state of Russian-American relations from an anti-capitalist perspective. It also contains a fictional portrait of the prominent Russian poet and Marxist activist Kirill Medvedev, and it draws parallels between the current situation in Russia and the labor conditions in the US academy. This paper will discuss Gessen's portrayal of

contemporary Russian society in the context of American and Russian neo-Marxist theory. As I will argue, even though the plot of the novel is situated in 2008, Gessen presents an indictment of the current Russian and American regimes by using his own bicultural Russian-American identity as a springboard for politically engaged fiction.

### **Undoing Communist War Ideology in Soviet Literature: The Pain Narratives of Female Veterans**

Susanna Weygandt, Sewanee: The University of the South

The Nobel Laureate Svetlana Alexievich's "second hand" writing about first-hand testimonies of women who have lived through wars have captured scholars' attention for their graphic narratives and foregrounding of voices of the subaltern. But scholars have also criticized Aleksievich for being far from objective. My previous research on the Documentary has discussed how film directors and writers of the Documentary conceptualize the real into a clear message about a social problem. I draw from frameworks and approaches used in my previous research on the Documentary in my next project – and in this conference presentation -- which focuses on Aleksievich's conceptualization of "women's war" in War's Unwomanly Voice. Alexievich's main aesthetic device is that she edits recorded interviews, primarily with women who have lived through wars, to compile stories about the body's suffering, liability, and sacrifice. There are narratives in history and Soviet literature about male sacrifice in WWII, even though, as Aleksievich shows, women were a part of this. So then my next question is, by uncovering the truth and filling this gap of knowledge, what does the filled gap do for society? War's Unwomanly Face reminds us that public remembrance of war and sacrifice is coded. Sacrifice of the body and life are often connected to the male soldier in Soviet literature, and his war wounds are glorified as sacrifices for the greater communist goal and victory. Aleksievich, however, shows that in war female soldiers do not see victory or ideology. Through recordings with female veterans, Aleksievich ultimately puts forward a message of peace. While Eurasian literature tends to be under-studied within Gender and Women's Studies departments, it is hoped that recent translations and scholarship on Aleksievich (most notably in Canadian Slavonic Journal's Special Issue on Aleksievich) will help.

Session 14: 11:45pm-1:45pm

### **14-1. Stream 2A. Between Estate and Class in Russia's Long 19th Century (I) Pseudo-Autobiographical Narratives of the Raznochintsy Realists**

Helen Stuhr-Rommereim, University of Pennsylvania

The cohort of non-noble writers who took up literary work inspired by the writings of Nikolai Chernyshevsky and Nikolai Dobroliubov in the 1860s constituted a new social contingent in their contemporary literary sphere. Among these writers' varied works of "sober realism" is a corpus of texts – short stories, sketches, and novellas – that describe the coming-of-age of figures whose biographical details closely mirror those of the authors

themselves. These works fit Andrew Wachtel's definition of pseudo-autobiography, and across the texts, a standard narrative emerges that, through the pseudo-autobiographical dynamic between author and protagonist, serves to articulate a particular role for the authors in contemporary culture. This paper will outline this standard narrative as it appears across works by Nikolai Pomialovsky, Fedor Reshetnikov, Alexander Levitov, and Nikolai Uspensky, and show how these writers grounded their literary legitimacy in their shared experiences – a mix of rites of passage specific to young men of the priestly estate, and those common to educated non-nobles, including sons of priests and petty officials alike. The collective bildungsroman that takes shape across these minor texts shows a passage between collective identities tied to a notion of literary objectivity, as the authors begins to present a kind of class consciousness specific to the literary profession.

### **Making Peasants Sensible: The Paradox of Opaque Minds in Russian Pre-Emancipation Literature**

Alexey Vdovin, Higher School of Economics, Moscow

In my paper, I put into question the traditional history of representation of peasants in Russian Literature before 1861. Using as a starting point J. Ranciere and G. Didi-Huberman concept of 'sensible', I operationalize it by establishing peasant mind as a key representational and narrative category which was at stake in pre-emancipation Russian literature. This category allowed writers, critics and readers to make visible and sensible those zones of peasant subjectivity which were most elusive and controversial since the end of the 18th century. My analysis of more than 150 stories about peasants demonstrates that instead of rendering peasants as thinking and reflexing individuals with transparent minds, the absolute majority of Russian writers depicted their minds as either partially or totally opaque. I offer to call this fact the 'paradox of opaque minds' because it helped to prioritize the figure of a peasant as a character with agency and subjectivity, different from those of educated elites.

### **Herzen and the Meshchane**

Anne Lounsbury, New York University

As part of a larger project on the evolving meanings of *мещанство* in the 19th century, this paper will examine Herzen's use of the word and its cognates in *Былое и думы*. After remarking on the shifting relationship among categories like *мещанин*, *купец*, *обыватель*, *разночинец*, *интеллигент*, and *bourgeois*, I will consider how and why *мещанство*—originally just a legal designation referring to a certain social group—started to take on markedly negative associations in the middle third of the century. My working hypothesis is that *Былое и думы* marks a particularly important moment in this process, perhaps because Herzen is using it to suggest certain (negative) qualities he attributes to the European *petit bourgeois*.

## **14-2. Stream 2B. Sustainability and Slavic Studies: Classroom, Research, Profession (I)**

### **Nonhuman Subjectivities in Mikhail Zenkevich's *Wild Porphyry***

Colleen McQuillen, University of Southern California

In 1914, Mikhail Zenkevich proclaimed at a literary salon, “If you want, you can call an Acmeist a Neo-realist. Doing so is more honorable than calling him a Symbolist or Romantic. But this ‘Neo-realism of Acmeism’ has nothing in common with philistine Realism or with the updated Academism of the Parnassians.” Sergei Gorodetsky likewise insisted that Vladimir Narbut has nothing in common with a “simple Realist,” but rather produces a special “chemical synthesis that fuses the poet with phenomena” and which “gives a completely different nature to things.” This paper probes the claims of certain Acmeists that their styles of representation constituted a distinctive break with other realisms by examining select poems in Zenkevich’s 1912 collection *Дикая порфира*, which treats the themes of cosmology, paleontology, geology, and natural history. It argues that Zenkevich (and fellow Adamist Vladimir Narbut, to a lesser extent) rejected the Kantian epistemology and subjectivism of Symbolism, proposing instead an ontology that posits a material reality existing outside of humans and human thought. The paper draws on the discourses of new materialism and speculative realism, two tendencies in contemporary philosophical thought, to supply a vocabulary and critical framework for analyzing Zenkevich’s distinctive approach to realism. Zenkevich’s poems such as «Магнит,» «Танец магнитной иглы,» «Камни,» «Металлы,» and «Махайродусы» attempt to portray nonhuman subjectivities thereby suggesting, or speculating, that a reality outside of human perception exists (while nonetheless being inescapably mediated by the human poet). This paper participates in the broad field of inquiry known as environmental humanities by developing a case study of literature in which the universe of animals, plants, and minerals takes center stage.

### **Mayakovsky and the Trash of the Anthropocene**

Zachary Rewinski, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The poetic world of Vladimir Mayakovsky has long been acknowledged as urban, modern, and technological. Mayakovsky’s distaste for the “eternal theme” of nature in poetry is also well-documented. This paper attempts to situate Mayakovsky’s poetic world as a product and reflection of the Anthropocene, and thus, as a resource for understanding climate change. This paper focuses on elements that feature prominently in Mayakovsky’s poetic world: industrialization and all sorts of “trash” (*drian*). We now must read factory smoke as environmentally destructive rather than as a harbinger of the technologically advanced utopia, and indeed, as productive of the literal and sometimes metaphorical trash that pervades “everyday existence” (*byt*) in the Mayakovskian environment, and more broadly as a contributing factor to the global climate crisis. At the same time, parallels between the revolutionary context of Mayakovsky’s writing and impending social, political, economic, and cultural crises resulting from climate change cannot be ignored. Drawing examples from Mayakovsky’s lyric and narrative poems of the 1920s, this paper asks what of Mayakovsky’s trash may be repurposed to limit the harmful effects of climate change.

## **‘This is how a factory begins...’: The Utopian Environmentalism of El Lissitzky’s *Industry of Socialism***

Anne Eakin Moss, John Hopkins University

The seven-volume album *Industry of Socialism* (Industriia sotsializma), designed by El Lissitzky for the Seventh Congress of Soviets in 1935, lavishly illustrates the accomplishments of the Soviet Union with multicolor photo montages, overlays, fold-outs, and graphics. It celebrates the riches of the vast empire and the transformation of the land. Given out freely as a gift to delegates at the congress, and now rare enough to be a coveted avant-garde collector’s item, its heavy bulk as a material object stands as a monument to socialist production indifferent to market demand. This paper will examine the sensory qualities of texture and montage in the album, arguing that it offers a utopian environmentalism in which the sublime beauty of nature and machine are simultaneous, and the ravaging destruction of industrialization, undoable. If, as Gorky stated in his address to the 1934 Writer’s Congress, socialist realism was supposed to transmit both what is, and what is coming into being, by a process of creative addition (“*dobavit’ – domyslit’*”) in order to “complete the image” (*dopolnit’ obraz*), *Industry of Socialism* accomplishes this aesthetic goal by multiple color juxtapositions and tissue overlays that demonstrate to the reader the before and after of industrialization. Where there once was a swamp, now there is a ball bearing factory. Where once there was a forest, now there is a web of electric wires. Yet the technology of the book allows the reader to go in either direction – both forest and factory complex are made simultaneous by the overlays. The book, while constructed of pulp and oil itself, allows for the reader to return to undammed waters and uncut forests. I will consider the implications of the album’s utopian environmentalism for the study of socialist aesthetics as well as the pedagogical possibilities of presenting the book as object in the classroom.

## **14-5. AATSEEL Presidential Panel: Socialist Anti-Racisms and their Ambivalent Legacies**

### **Through the Looking Glass of Race: Soviet Yiddish Poets and Internationalism, 1920-1940**

Amelia Glaser, UC-San Diego

What do Soviet Jews have to offer a multi-national discussion about race and ethnicity? A great many Yiddish writers who published in Soviet and Soviet-aligned journals in the interwar period described the struggles of non-Jewish groups, from Chinese workers to Ukrainian peasants and Palestinian Arabs. These internationalists set out to offer a counter-narrative to the story of Jewish religious and ethnic insularity that is often told of East European Jews. Yiddish Party-aligned writers were proposing a radically new understanding of community: if their parents and grandparents had identified as Jews, they chose instead to identify as workers of the world. And yet, their vocabulary for describing group belonging came from Jewish tradition and Jewish collective memory. The Soviet Yiddish internationalist poets of the interwar period were not merely describing other struggling peoples; they were bringing other peoples into their own fold, making them metaphorically Jewish. As I shall demonstrate in this talk, in addition to providing

a forum for discussing the struggles of other national minorities, poets who wrote about other ethnic minorities in Yiddish were creating a language that could, by the late 1930s, be used to discuss the problems and discrimination faced by Soviet Jews.

### **Bandung, Brijuni, Belgrade, and “Friends” of the Non-Aligned Movement**

Sunnie Rucker-Chang, University of Cincinnati

The cities of Bandung and Belgrade and Brijuni islands represent steps to the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which positioned Yugoslavia, a country coded as European and “white,” with geographies, cultures, and peoples marked by their colonial history, and therefore with identities as “so-called colored people,” to recall Sukarno’s speech at the 1955 Bandung Afro-Asian Summit. The cultural and racial differences typify the people who became Yugoslavia’s “friends,” memorialized through videos, images, and travelogues of Josip Broz Tito’s “peripatetic diplomacy” (Sladojević, 2017) to Asian and African nations in the 1950s and 1960s. In these works, he is described as “being among friends,” an important acknowledgement of the connections Tito forged as head of state. These images provided a cultural map of difference and helped normalize the visual discord of European whiteness and African Blackness. Through the creation of mobility programs aimed at students from future NAM countries in the 1950s, “colorful friends” (Vlahović, 1969) came to be among the mundanities of Yugoslav life. These students symbolized the reach and power of Yugoslavia and, arguably Serbia, as seat of the capital of the country. The end of these programs effectively disconnected former Yugoslav countries, and Serbs in particular, from those visible signifiers of their global reach. Using this history as a backdrop, I discuss the creation of an educational mobility scheme for students from NAM member and observer countries in Serbia, the “World in Serbia Program.” Participants hail primarily from countries defined as Global South and are described locally as *crnci* (Black(s)), *tamnoputi* (dark-skinned), or other less desirable terms, but decidedly not *local*. I address how students embodying this Blackness, in a space defined by its whiteness, code in Serbia, and how that affects their experiences. What does the incorporation of these students signify and how might we understand the contemporary meanings and associations attributed to Blackness, and attending concepts of whiteness and race, in the region? Are there still lessons to be learned from Bandung, Belgrade, and Brijuni or is it necessary to construct new frameworks to understand these new NAM “friends?”

### **Racism, the Highest Stage of Anti-Communism**

Rossen Djagalov, NYU

Liberals, let alone members of the liberal intelligentsia, rarely figure in journalistic or scholarly discussion of racism in Russia (Rainbow 2019). And yet the reactions of a number of public liberal figures to George Floyd’s murder and the subsequent protests in the US lay bare, among other things, a capacious reservoir of racial prejudice within that milieu. This essay will historicize its emergence, identifying its origins in anti-communist ideologies of the last half-century. If, as heirs of the Russian intelligentsia’s progressive traditions, the early Bolsheviks were committed anti-racists, domestically and internationally (Baldwin 2002, Roman 2012; Lee

2015; Mukherjee 2021), mature Stalinism heavily compromised that record through the deportations of whole nationalities during WWII or the subsequent anti-cosmopolitan campaign, which were accompanied by racialization of the targeted populations (Weitz 2002). The origins of contemporary liberal racism, however, lie not so much in communist ideology as they do in dissidents' negation of it. Indeed, since the emergence of the dissident movement in the 1960s, its most radical, anti-Soviet section challenged official Soviet values and foreign policy engagements. Not without reason, its members saw Soviet support for Third-Worldist forces as coming at the expense of peaceful relations and convergence with the imaginary entity they had come to identify as their ideal: the West (Yurchak 2005; Gilbert 2018). While most of this negation took the form of kitchen conversations, a number of disparaging utterances about non-whites were nevertheless recorded, whether Joseph Brodsky's about African-Americans and Vietnamese people, Alexander Solzhenitsyn's about Angela Davis, Alexander Galich's and other dissidents' about "the stinking Arabs." Following the perestroika era, with the lifting of censorship and in the rush to join what Mikhail Gorbachev called "the civilized [implicitly Western and white] world," what used to be a forbidden, anti-Soviet language became media mainstream (Quist-Adade 2001; Matusevich 2008; Law 2012; Zakharov 2017). Human rights stalwarts such as Valeria Novodvorskaya and Vladimir Bukovsky—who had spent years in Soviet jails--bemoaned the fall of apartheid in South Africa and the arrival of Middle Eastern labor migrants and refugees on European shores. In their defense of the white race and crusade against "political correctness" over the course of the 2000s, they were joined by a younger generation of Russian liberals, who saw in demands for racial justice a Soviet or a communist legacy they were committed to confronting. It is precisely their voices that rang the loudest in response to the George Floyd protests in the United States.

### **Racializing the Russian Columbus between Victorian England and Soviet Bollywood**

Anindita Banerjee, Cornell University

The first collaboration between the Soviet and Indian film industries was the screen adaptation of a fifteenth-century travelogue, *Khozhdenie za tri moria* (*Journey Beyond Three Seas*), authored by a merchant called Afanasii Nikitin whom the pioneering Soviet medievalist Dmitrii Likhachev triumphantly named "the Russian Columbus." Both the canonization of the author and the screen adaptation of his text took place under the Khrushchevian aegis of Friendship of the Peoples, which sought to align newly decolonized nations' search for identity with the monumental arc of revolutionary internationalism. Released in 1957-- the conjunctural year that marked the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution and the launch of Sputnik as well as the tenth anniversary of India's independence from British rule -- the monumental three-hour technicolor extravaganza became a testimony to the dual project of looking backwards and forwards, inwards and outwards, to rediscover and redefine the boundaries of the self and other. My presentation revisits this little-examined artifact of the utopian culture industry of Soviet internationalism to explore a dark side of its contradictory legacies-- one informed by the genocidal violence that accompanied Indian independence with the Partition of India and

Pakistan in 1947, and a coeval hardening of ethno-racial identities in the historical reconstruction of the Russian imperial past. The search takes us all the way back to the Great Game and forwards to contemporary performances of identity across the span of Euro-Asia.

### **Civilizational Myth and Class Politics: Yellow Peril and Its Discontents in Late Imperial Russia**

Jinyi Chu, Yale University

We can find the earliest Russian reflections of the fraught relationship between race and class in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century discussion on China and Chinese migrants. At the turn of centuries, the Chinese question became one of the most topical issues in Russia. Russian critic and publisher Aleksei Suvorin wrote in 1900, “We are all interested in China. The conversations about it are endless.” In response to latest geopolitics and the emerging racial theory of the time, Russian policymakers, cultural celebrities, and revolutionaries all began writing about China and racial difference. However, their voices are not as homogenous as we commonly conceived. As I shall demonstrate, while Vladimir Solov’ev, Iakov Maksimov, and Nikolai Przhevalskii presented a familiar discourse of Russian Yellow Peril, Chekhov, Dmitrii Zavalishin, Nikolai Garin-Mikhailovskii, and Aleksei Remizov critiqued these racist representations of China in their stories on the encounters with Chinese. Vladimir Lenin and Jacques Novicow, in turn, argued that Yellow Peril concealed a global class politics that oppressed Russian and European proletarians themselves.

Session 15: 2:30pm-4:30pm
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#### **15-1. Stream 2A. Between Estate and Class in Russia’s Long 19th Century (II)**

##### **A Bride for Belinskii: The Iconic Ambivalence of Mariia Vasil'evna**

Sara Dickinson, Università di Genova

Aleksei Naumov's well-known painting "Belinskii pered smert'iu", completed in 1884, depicts the dying critic in conversation with Nekrasov and Panaev just as the three are interrupted by Belinskii's wife, entering with the unpleasant news that a gendarme from the Third Section has just arrived with a summons. The painting immortalizes Mariia Vasil'evna as an ambivalent figure: the bearer of bad news, she intrudes upon her husband's close literary circle, hesitant and unsure. Despite that fact that this canvas is ostensibly about the state's harrassment of a dying man, Naumov's rendition of Mariia Vasil'evna's alienated hovering on the edge of her husband's conversation is arguably one of its most striking features. This image of Belinskii's wife also echoes what we know of her from letter and memoir sources, namely that Mariia Vasil'evna was not generally popular with her husband's literary friends. While this may not have been Naumov's intent, as the son of a serf who had studied at the Imperial Academy of Arts, he certainly knew what it meant to be an outsider. Nonetheless, Mariia Vasil'evna's alienation seems not to have been the direct result of soslovie hierarchy: as a well-educated noblewoman who had

married a *raznochinets* (impoverished and already gravely ill to boot), she could not be seen as a social upstart. Still, their union, which lasted four and a half years (from November 1843 until Belinskii's death), was troubling to some. This paper will attempt to trace the contours of Mariia Vasil'evna's unpopularity by examining questions of *soslovie* and ideology that permeate the literary circle around Belinskii (and the journal *Sovremennik*) and linking them to the iconography that underlies Naumov's painting. Specifically, we will draw a connection between Naumov's canvas, Il'ia Repin's "Ne zhdali" (also completed in 1884), and Pavel Fedotov's earlier "Svatovstvo maiora" (1848), painted in the year of Belinskii's death.

### **Belinsky and the Social Status of the Critic**

Kirill Zubkov, Higher School of Economics, Moscow

The paper exposes connections between the rhetorical strategies used in the articles by Vissarion Belinsky and the emergence of professional literary criticism in Russia. According to Jurgen Habermas, in the bourgeois public sphere the critic might represent either the rules of pure art as understood by few outstanding creators or the audience and its demands. Comparing early and late works by Belinsky, I argue that he used both strategies, slowly switching from the first one to the second one as the professional literature in Russia was developing. Aesthetic and political ideas of Belinsky quickly became objects of sharp criticism. At the same time, his understanding of the role of critic as a mediator between pure art and the public sphere and the rhetorical strategies he employed to perform the role of such a mediator were the reason why Belinsky was and probably still is widely considered the most influential literary critic in the history of Russian literature.

### **15-2. Stream 2B. Sustainability and Slavic Studies: Classroom, Research, Profession (II)**

#### **Russia's Ecological Footprint: A View from the Nineteenth Century**

Tom Newlin, Oberlin College

What has been Russia's long-term impact or "footprint" upon our shared ecological and environmental consciousness—upon the way we think about and interact with the natural world? Drawing both on literary giants such as Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky, as well as less well-known scientists such as Karl Rouillier, Nikolai Severtsov, and Andrei Beketov, this paper will survey the contours of Russian ecological thinking in the nineteenth-century and reflect on some of the ways that the Russian tradition prefigured and shaped modern ecological thought in the West.

#### **Environmental Subjectivity in Chekhov's *Sakhalin Island***

Matthew Mangold, Georgia Institute of Technology

In late-nineteenth century Russia, theories about the role of the environment in human health and psychological development played a large role in medical discourse, influencing fields from hygiene to clinical medicine and psychiatry. Anton Chekhov's training as a physician fostered an intimately familiarity with this discourse, which he applied in his medical work. But he also

carried ideas about how environments shape human subject into his prose, with a particular concern around disclosing the negative influence of hazardous environments on physical and mental life. By 1890, having established himself as a social writer, he sought to develop his ideas into activism and set out the Sakhalin to study how the environmental conditions of exile on the island affected the population. This paper investigates the documentary work he wrote about his travels, Sakhalin Island, through the lens of the environmental theory of health in which Chekhov was immersed. Drawing on kinesthetic theories of spatial orientation in destabilizing environments, this paper argues that Chekhov represents human subjects environmentally thorough a position of visual empathy. In so doing he creates a work that synthesizes medical ideas with an aesthetic practice to create a model for how writers might promote healthy living and working conditions as they voice dissent against institutions that exploit environments and people in them.

### **Climate Politics, Anglophone Experts, and the Russian Opposition: A Polemic**

Hilah Kohen, University of Pennsylvania

Current energy policy in both the Russian Federation and the United States contributes greatly to climate change. U.S. experts on Russian politics, including policymakers and journalists working at the intersection between the two countries, could therefore have a significant impact on international climate action — if more of those experts viewed climate as an issue central to their field. At present, many Russianists understand the climate crisis as a marginal policy concern in the Russian state and a peripheral part of the Russian opposition. In the years 2018–2020, we have discussed climate issues infrequently in journal and newspaper articles because those issues have occupied little space in Russian political discourse. This position paper argues that experts in Russian politics inside and outside academia should evaluate the importance of the climate crisis to their work not by this short-term discursive metric but rather based on how much damage the crisis will do to life in Russia.

This is an argument about scholarly and journalistic ethics, not about geopolitical facts. Still, this paper will begin with a brief overview of the damage climate change has already done in Russia and the additional loss of life that state and independent scientists have predicted. Then, the paper will use two case studies to establish the ethical grounds that researchers and journalists have available to cover this problem on par with issues already considered central to their fields. The first case study will center on the mass opposition protests of 2019, using expert coverage of election protests in Moscow to demonstrate the importance of covering environmental protests in other regions. The second will discuss Anglophone depictions of individual youth activists, drawing parallels between often-covered free-speech advocates and almost-never-covered climate advocates. The paper will conclude by highlighting successful examples of Anglophone writing on Russian climate politics.

### **15-3. Russian Linguistics**

#### **The New Intonation of the Russian Broadcast Media**

Richard Robin, George Washington University, and Emily Herring, Harvard University

In the present study, we examine changing prosodic patterns in the Russian broadcast media over the past seventy-five years. Our corpus comprises television and radio segments from three periods — the Soviet years (1945–1990), the 1990s, and the 2000s. Using a Praat-based analysis of the pitch contours and length (time) of each audio clip, we examined: (1) tempo of speech as measured in syllables per second, (2) the prevalence and distribution of Elena Bryzgunova's (1977) intonation contours, or ICs, and (3) concomitant syntagmatic pauses. A comparison of the results from each of the three periods suggests that, following the collapse of the USSR, an increase in the tempo of broadcast speech fractured the traditional intonational landscape. Not only has the average length of syntagmatic pause boundaries declined, but new types and patterns of ICs have appeared. That ultimately gives modern Russian broadcasts a peculiar melodic quality that has been a salient characteristic of American English broadcasts.

### **Aspect in Russian Iterative Constructions: Rules and Errors (based on Russian National Corpus and Russian Learner Corpus).**

Valentina Apresyan, Higher School of Economics, and Maria Shchepetova, Higher School of Economics (Moscow)

Our study refines rules of aspectual usage in Russian iterative constructions and examines respective errors in RL learners. Russian iterative constructions usually require imperfectives. However, as demonstrated by RNC data, there are exceptions in the following overtly iterative contexts: 1) non-linear scope reading, as with modals (On kazhdyj den' smozhet fotografirovat' = On smozhet kazhdyj den' fotografirovat') and phase verbs (On kazhdyj den' nachal hodit' na ohotu = On nachal kazhdyj den' hodit' na ohotu); 2) semantically non-iterative generic sentences (Ne chasto vstretish' takoe!), demonstrative future perfective (Kazhdyj den' pridet, syadet i nachnet boltat'); 3) subjunctive (Nado, chtoby kto-to inogda proveril, vse li v poryadke). Moreover, in some languages iterative markers and the marking of completed action are compatible (e.g., Czech or Finnish). All these factors potentially complicate the choice of correct aspectual forms in Russian iterative for language learners.

We considered 2609 examples from RLC with iterative markers *inogda*, *redko*, *chasto* and *kazhdyj*. Aspectual errors occur in 4,4% of contexts; 90% of errors are by L2 speakers, 10% - by heritage speakers (informant distribution in RLC is 67% L2 vs. 31% heritage). Most errors occur in past tense forms, which reflects both their overall predominance in RNC and RLC, and future tense orientation of most exceptions to imperfective in iterative constructions. Most errors are by Finnish and English speakers – 36% and 30% respectively. While for English speakers, error percentage is proportionate to their share in RLC, Finnish speakers make twice as many errors as expected by their corpus representation. We explain this by interference of Finnish, where completeness (marked by genitive case) is compatible with iteration.

To conclude, we refine the rules of aspectual choice in iterative constructions, show that heritage speakers have advantage over L2 speakers wrt them, and demonstrate effects of native language on their acquisition.

**16-1. Stream 2A. Between Estate and Class in Russia's Long 19th Century (III)**

**Some Sort of Company: Capitalists in the 19th century Russian Novel**

Vadim Shneyder, UCLA

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Russian literary tradition had developed robust conventions for representing a number of character types defined by their relationship to money, such as misers, gamblers, and merchants. However, changing economic and social conditions called for a literary response to a new phenomenon: the capitalist. Striding across boundaries between the old estates, the new capitalists could not be defined by the linguistic or sartorial markers of the merchantry. Nor did their plot trajectories follow those of the daring gamblers or impassioned misers already available to literature. The capitalist, devoted to the operation of a business whose aim was perpetual growth and endless accumulation, did not fit well into the end-directed temporal organization of established narrative forms. As a result, where capitalists appear in nineteenth-century Russian literature, they disrupt the movement of narrative, introducing a countervailing temporality in which discernible events are invariably bad for business. The capitalist can hardly rise to the status of a protagonist of a nineteenth-century novel. Instead, they lurk on the margins, driving the novels' economies while avoiding entanglement in their plots. Concomitantly, the spaces and institutions associated with them—factories, warehouses, banks, and companies are usually curiously under-defined, often dispatched with the characteristic phrase “some sort of.” Yet, as I will argue here, these peripheral companies and factories are more than mere bits of disposable detail. They mark the very limit of how nineteenth-century realism could imagine the national economic life.

**The Masses Are Hungry Because We Are Too Well Fed: Literary Responses to the Famine of 1891-2**

Olga Ovcharskaia, Stanford University

In the media, the Russian famine of 1891–92 was interpreted as a big failure of management rather than the result of a natural disaster. Conservatives blamed the crisis on the collapse of economy caused by the reforms of 1860s while liberals denounced the government for poor organization of the relief. In my paper, I analyze fictional and journalistic works written by Tolstoy, Korolenko, and Chekhov during the famine years. I argue that their attitude to the crisis was determined by their class origins and some of their texts reflect inner contradictions experienced by the authors who had to play many different social roles in new circumstances of the end of the 19th century. Tolstoy saw the root cause of the famine in the exploitation of the peasants by the ruling classes. A writer psychologically close to the Enlightenment culture of the 18th century that believed in the omnipotence of a man, he published a brochure with the instructions on how to organize dining halls for starving peasants. Korolenko's book *In the*

Famine Year continues a literary tradition most vividly presented in Turgenev's *The Hunting Sketches*. The writer traveled to Nizhegorodskaiia region, one of affected by the famine, in order to carry the voices of the starving people back to the distant capitals. The youngest of three authors, Anton Chekhov, conveyed his thoughts about the crisis in a short story *The Wife*. Chekhov combined several very different social roles – a writer, doctor, estate owner, grandson of a former serf – the contradictoriness of his persona was reflected in the complicated structure of the story.

### **16-2. Stream 2B. Sustainability and Slavic Studies: Classroom, Research, Profession (III)** **Russian Nature Writing: From the Margin of the Canon to the Center (and Back)**

Polina Barskova, Hampshire College

My presentation will be dedicated to the possibilities of reshaping the traditional pedagogical canon of Russian literature in American higher education by means of focusing on environmental issues. I argue that this approach allows one to include important and intriguing literary and cultural texts in syllabi and classroom discussions, yet also to find new ways to teach texts already seemingly established. As examples of the former category I will discuss works by Elena Guro and Lidiya Zinovieva-Gannibal, while in the latter group I'll consider Ivan Aksakov and Ivan Turgenev. I will utilize these "nature texts" to demonstrate a diversity of stylistic and thematic approaches to the topic, and exciting connections of these textual approaches to the issues of power and gender.

### **Bringing Russia into the Environmental Humanities Classroom**

Jane Costlow, Bates College

What does it mean to bring Russian material into understandings of humans' relationships with the natural world, particularly in light of the estrangements and challenges that have accompanied modernization and modernity cross-culturally? This presentation will reflect on several decades' experience teaching Russian texts and Russian locations in an Environmental Humanities curriculum. A key assumption of the Environmental Humanities is that cultural traditions and contexts are essential to any comprehensive vision of sustainability. My comments will be based on my use of Russian texts and materials in introductory-level Environmental Humanities courses, both in a U.S. campus setting and in travel courses in Russia.

### **Studying the Sacred Sea: Lessons from a Longstanding Lake Baikal Course**

Thomas Hodge, Wellesley College

Wellesley College's *Lake Baikal: The Soul of Siberia* has been offered since 2001 as a joint venture between departments (Russian and Biology) and institutions (Wellesley and Irkutsk State University). The course's hybrid character has attracted a wide variety of undergraduates majoring in Russian, Russian Area Studies, Biological Sciences, Geoscience, and many other fields. After satisfying science and Russian language prerequisites, the enrolled students spend

spring semester in a weekly seminar co-taught on the Wellesley campus by instructors from Russian and Biology, then reconvene in the summer for a month of fieldwork at Baikal itself. These activities are guided by rigorous ecological problem-solving and a spirit of *kraevedenie*, which, in the words of D. S. Likhachev, “demands knowledge in the fields of history, art history, literary analysis, natural history, and so on.” For the cultural component of the on-campus seminar, students immerse themselves in Siberian history, religion, anthropology, art, music, and literature through extensive readings in primary and secondary sources as well as commentary by guest lecturers. Once settled at their biological field station in a remote lakeside village, students devise and test limnological hypotheses by day and host local stakeholders as guest speakers in the evening. Numerous cultural activities—including journal-writing, interviewing locals, attending campfires, and exploring cultural sites in Irkutsk as well as at Baikal—rapidly deepen students’ knowledge of and reverence for one of the true wonders of the natural world. Fine-tuning a course based on the scientific and cultural study of a specific natural site has led the instructors to develop sustainability-focused learning goals that include connecting Russian literature with science, and analyzing the simultaneously celebratory and cautionary functions of the arts in relation to the natural world.

### **Mapping Things Other Than St. Petersburg: Geographic Information Systems in the Environmental Humanities Classroom**

Daniel Brooks, Franklin & Marshall College

Russian literature courses conversant with trends in the environmental humanities must necessarily wander beyond metropolitan centers and aristocrats’ country estates. Modern iterations of Russia’s city-country divide hinge on circulation of resources and pollution (see the recent Shiyes landfill controversy), and the country’s singular vastness presents no obstacle to comparison with global trends (see the summer 2019 fires of Siberia, Brazil, and Australia). Such content may represent unfamiliar terrain for instructors and students alike; nevertheless, learning new ways to visualize Russia’s regions and the global whole presents a valuable opportunity for those on both sides of the classroom.

In this roundtable presentation, I will demonstrate how I and my students made use of freely available geographic information systems and digital storytelling tools (specifically ArcGIS and StoryMaps) in a literature & environmental studies course during Spring 2020. I employed this technology to highlight the importance of local landscapes in our core texts (e.g. charting the steps of Avvakum’s multiple exiles, distinguishing between the narrative potentials of forest & steppe, etc.). Students employed this technology to deepen their understanding of environmentally-focused news stories that they followed throughout the semester (Siberia’s melting permafrost, pollution in Russia’s waterways, etc.). For a final assignment of their own design, students again used these mapping tools to weave site-specific environmental context into literary and cultural analysis. I will highlight several of these students’ projects, indicating how their use of the tools deepened their engagement with the course content, and speak to the

opportunities and limitations that these visualization tools afford both instructors and learners—particularly during a moment when remote teaching is the norm.

### **16-3. Stories, Retold: Polish Texts and Contemporary Memory of the Holocaust**

#### **Beyond the metaphor: breaking the silence of gendered violence in Irena Krzywicka's *Życie mimo wszystko***

Anna Dulba-Barnett, The University of Oregon

Polish art and literature have a long tradition of using the female body as a metaphor for Poland (Polonia) where acts of sexual violence represent the fate of the Polish nation rather than the actual lived experiences of Polish women during times of foreign oppression. This paper analyzes how Irena Krzywicka's play *Życie mimo wszystko*, written in 1946, portrays the trauma of war as experienced by Polish women. Her characters are often hesitant to speak about the sexual violence enacted upon them, not only because of the pain they experienced, but also because of the shame they feel because of perceptions of sexual victims deeply rooted in Polish culture and worldview. I explore why Krzywicka's play has only been published recently, in 2018. I analyze the delayed reception of Krzywicka's play within Polish social discourse and how it contributes to disrupting the increasingly homogenous narrative of national memory and Polish identity.

#### **In Service of Grafting: Zuzanna Ginczanka's Chimerical Metaphors in *About Centaurs***

Alex Braslavsky, Harvard

In her 1936 collection *O centaurach (About Centaurs)*, Zuzanna Ginczanka seizes upon biblical imagery and puts it in communication with her geological, cosmological and botanical obsessions, enabling her own complex creation myth to rear its head. Abundant with birth imagery and the wildness of nature, the collection evokes an atmosphere of frenzied plenty rather than lack, as it delivers on its promise to graft opposites, conjoining wisdom with passion, sensuality with sage, and the effete with the mannish. One of the key ways Ginczanka achieves this kind of grafting on the level of form is by her manipulation of metaphor, whereby she extracts one key element of one metaphor and implants it into the next metaphor to follow. This paper traces Ginczanka's chimeric treatment of metaphor throughout the collection.

#### **"What Will Happen to Me Tomorrow": the Reception of Rywka Lipszyc's diary of the Łódź Ghetto in Contemporary Poland**

Jessica Mitchell, Harvard

Written in 1944, the diary of Rywka Lipszyc describes the adolescent author's experience of confinement in the Łódź ghetto. In 2014, the diary was published for the first time in an English translation. Three years later, the Galicia Jewish Museum in Kraków, Poland created a traveling exhibit on the diary to coincide with its publication in the original Polish. This paper examines the delayed Polish reception of the work and its presentation in Polish museums using an interdisciplinary approach: just as critical theory pinpoints the emotional and instructive potential

of the diary genre, sociological and historical research on Holocaust education in Polish schools and museums reveals the heretofore negligible impact of diaries on Polish Holocaust memory. The recent promotion of Lipszyc' diary thus represents a new trend in the field of contemporary Polish memory studies and an attempt to bridge a divide between Polish and American memory of the Holocaust.

#### **16-4. Aesthetics & Politics in Eastern European Film**

##### **Communism, Capitalism, Carnival: Genre and Ideology in Dušan Makavejev's *Sweet Movie***

Milica Ilicic, Columbia University

Despite his outstanding global reputation, the Yugoslav director Dušan Makavejev (1932-2019) was met with almost unanimous condemnation after the release of his most controversial work, *Sweet Movie* (1974). Like Makavejev's previous films, *Sweet Movie* was intended as a critique of both the communist and the capitalist ideologies; but for the most part, it left even his more sympathetic viewers baffled. In addition to footage of repulsive bodily acts and a graphic sequence portraying the seduction of a group of young boys by an adult woman, the plot is convoluted and heavy-handed, making the film's morally and viscerally disturbing imagery all the more difficult to process.

This paper reevaluates the political charge of *Sweet Movie*, focusing on Makavejev's transgressions of the boundaries of the genre of the art film. Makavejev's portrayals of the body parody both the "low" cinematic genres of pornography, melodrama, and horror; and the "high" genre of the politically engaged arthouse film. This parodic mode, understood through the lens of Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of unfinalizability, carnival, and the grotesque body, shows that cinematic form can be used to unsettle and destabilize conventional modes of ideological messaging. Ultimately, even though the film remains problematic, a reading of Makavejev's *Sweet Movie* through the Bakhtinian lens contributes to the understanding of the potential of montage and generic tropes in conveying a political message through non-narrative means.

##### **Film censorship in Romania and Hungary during the 1980s: a comparative perspective**

Elena Popan, Texas Tech University

The present paper, which is part of a larger comparative effort, focuses on the film censorship systems active in Romania and Hungary during the last decade of Communism, by outlining their characteristics and the influence they had on the cinemas of these countries. Despite being both members of the Eastern Bloc and under Soviet control, the political contexts of Romania and Hungary were very different during the 1980s. Romania was undergoing through a dark period, marked by extreme poverty and the exaggerated personality cult of the dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena, while Hungary was leaving behind the "Goulash Communism" with its relative prosperity and consumerism, entering a decade of inflation and massive foreign debt, when people's dissatisfaction became widespread. The different degrees of control exercised by the Communist Party (in Romania the control was extreme, while in Hungary the

communist system was slowly disintegrating, and thus increasingly unable to maintain the upper hand over arts and literature) reflected upon the censorship systems in place, as well as on their ideological impositions on culture. Film, I argue, was one of the arts most heavily impacted, and the particularities of the censorship apparatuses shaped the cinemas of the decade and their visibility on the international stage.

### **An Uncanny Inheritance: Juraj Herz and the Czech Cinematic Tradition of Gothic Surrealism**

Joseph Nakpil, University of Southern California

The long tradition of Czech surrealism contains a strong taste for the gothic, specifically in how 19th century gothic horror intersects with 20th century surrealist explorations of dreams, grotesquery, and the Uncanny. Czech cinema draws from such a tradition, a prime example being the late director Juraj Herz (1934-2018). Among Herz's thirty plus films are five clear fairytale adaptations, most notably *Beauty and the Beast (Panna a netvor)* (1978). With this adaptation in particular, Herz made a contribution that would initially seem to fit the large number of fairytale adaptations from 1970s Czechoslovakia. Despite its well-trod source material, Herz's film is a unique gem of Czechoslovak cinema for its dark tone and allusions to Czech-French surrealist art. In fact, the changes made by Herz to the original story show no intertexts other than those from surrealist-gothic sources. These artistic allusions have never been explored before in scholarship, and indicate a look to the suppressed past. All of Herz's fairytale and fairytale-like films were shot between 1968 and 1989, a time frame including the Czechoslovak New Wave and after. Given this time period this paper will explore if Herz's infusion of the popular genre of fairytale adaptation with surrealist gothic horror tropes such as bodily peril, gender, and dreams display older Czech artistic practices at risk of censorship after the Prague Spring.

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2021

Session 17: 9:00am-11:00am

### **17-1. Stream 3A. Teaching Language Through Culture (I)**

#### **Russo-Soviet (Post)Imperial studies in Russian language classroom**

Olga Mukhortova, DLI

To reach the level of Advanced Mid or ILR2+/3 in reading, listening, and speaking, students need to fully understand contemporary Russian culture and its everyday language in its neutral, colloquial, publicist, and scientific registers in depth. However, it is often difficult for students to reach level 2 and higher not because of their language skills, but because they need to produce the narrative centered on their opinion. There are also required to hypothesize and think aloud on the topics of politics, economy, social issues, ecology, and globalization. Advanced and Superior levels of proficiency require not only demonstrating how students speak but also how they analyze and synthesize using the Russian language. This task is usually extremely difficult for students with very little or zero knowledge of Russian culture, without specialized courses on Russian history, literature, and politics in English. Students who are in an intensive Russian language course or not majoring in Russian are especially of need for introducing some analytical apparatus through their language studies to reach higher proficiency levels.

I argue that the research apparatus of (post)imperial studies centered on Russian culture of the 15-21 centuries should be introduced through language course from level Novice or 0+ and would be extremely helpful in reaching the Advanced or 2+/3 level. However, many Russian courses and textbooks visit the topic of Russo-Soviet empire only once and very indirectly on the level 0+ or Novice high, introducing two adjectives “russkii” and “rossiiskii.” Sometimes, professors add the third adjective “sovetskii” referencing the USSR’s culture. I argue that introducing some elements of the research apparatus such as the definitions of an empire, post, and neo-imperial Russian state, as well as postcolonialism and modernity can help students to form their opinion on contemporary Russian culture, analyze recent events, and to understand the Russian language as a means of communication for the whole post-Soviet space. I would like to present several topics on Russo-Soviet imperial studies for Russian language classrooms from Novice to Advanced Mid/Superior, 0+ to 2+/3.

#### **Teaching Russian history through docuseries in an Advanced Russian language classroom**

Irina Hniadzko, John Hopkins University

Exploring culture through history seems natural and logical when learning a foreign language, yet courses that teach Russian history in the target language typically do not look interesting to students. Then how can we make historic topics appealing to more students? The discussant will share their experience in teaching an Advanced Russian content course that uses Russian docuseries on TV Kultura. The series that were utilized are available without subscription

through the TVKutura.ru website, and in each episode, the host tells a 13-minute long story about a historic artefact from the museums of Saint Petersburg, Russia.

This presentation will discuss some of the features of the docuseries and share which of these features worked especially well in the classroom as well as what topics seemed relevant to the students. There will be examples of classroom activities, homework assignments, group work tasks, and assessment.

### **Teaching Culture through the Language of STEM Fields**

Molly Thomasy Blasing, University of Kentucky

This presentation considers how exploring topics in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) opens avenues for teaching culture in the Intermediate and Advanced level Russian language classroom. Materials presented are based on elements of a one-semester, hybrid “Russian for STEM” course in which learners explore topics such as climate change, epidemiology and virology, the future of space exploration and the structure of scientific texts. In particular, the presentation focuses on how material from STEM fields can be harnessed for discussions of diaspora communities; race and ethnicity across the regions of Russia; culturally specific responses to the global pandemic; international cooperation and competition in space and the Arctic; and cross-cultural comparisons of data analysis and reporting methods within scientific studies. While Russian for STEM is not what we typically imagine when we think about teaching culture, these instructional materials offer surprising avenues for meeting today’s students’ desire for curriculum that prepares them for a globally interconnected society. Indeed, we might think of the culture of scientific inquiry as a cultural category unto itself, one that will prepare our learners to be successful global language professionals in jobs as diverse as translator, journalist, diplomat, doctor, or scientist.

### **Incorporating Russian songs into an Advanced–level Russian course**

Olga Butyrskaya Scarborough, US Air Force Academy

In many world cultures, music plays an essential role in people’s lives. It accompanies us along our life journey beginning at birth and until our very last days. Music may unite people in various communication situations. Certainly, as almost every person can sing or at least sing along, musical pieces are typical means of achieving the union, such as anthems, religious canons, sports or military cadence and others. Singing folk or contemporary popular songs together is a common tradition in many Slavic and East European cultures. That is why listening to the most popular in Russia songs of various genres, discussing and learning by heart their lyrics and singing them together in class can be among the most effective ways to better understand aspects and products of Russian culture in the target language, especially at the Advanced proficiency level. Moreover, such activities might be novel to students. During my talk, I will focus on the themes and genres of songs that can be selected, methods and assessment tasks that can be utilized for developing students’ listening and reading comprehension skills and

cultural awareness. I can provide the audience with examples of music pieces and relevant assignments. Student feedback can also be included.

### **17-3. Decolonizing Soviet Literature**

#### **Empathy and Viewpoint in Ivan Kocherha's *Masters of Time***

Olga Garabrandt, University of Kansas

*Masters of Time* was written at the time of heavy Soviet censorship, and it underwent multiple forced revisions. The characters of the play belong to a variety of ethnic and social backgrounds, and they represent different dispositions toward the Soviet ideology. The overall ideological stance is ambiguous in Kocherha's play. To understand the viewpoint that *Masters of Time* presents, this paper will explore the devices of inducing empathy and distancing that appear in the play. Viewpoint is a category widely explored in narratology; it refers to the subjective stance or worldview that the narrative expresses. Prototypically, dramatic texts do not have an overt narrator, however, McIntyre (2004, 2006) argues that elements of subjective narration, including viewpoint, are present in plays, even though they are not foregrounded as in prose fiction. Empathy plays a significant role in constructing viewpoint in theater because playwrights and directors have an array of tools to evoke empathy, such as verbal emotional markers, tone of voice, gestures, plot details, and physical proximity to the viewer. The implicit narrative of drama can manipulate the readers'/audiences' access to the characters' interiority, constructing the overall viewpoint through empathy and distancing, a phenomenon which Keen (2006) calls "strategic empathizing". This paper will delve into Ivan Kocherha's use of strategic empathizing, aiming at a better understanding of the viewpoint that *Masters of Time* expresses.

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#### **Fatal Mimicry in Maksim Haretski's "Руски"**

Alana Felton, Yale University

In 1915, Belarusian author Maksim Haretski wrote his poignant short story "Руски" while recovering from injuries sustained serving in the Russian Imperial Army in World War I. The short story tells an allegorical tale of lost identity in which a Belarusian peasant who is forced to serve in the Imperial Russian Army wavers between his imposed "imperial" identity and his native identity. Haretski depicts his protagonist's loss of identity as a loss of authenticity as well as morality. This paper will offer a close reading of the largely unexplored story through the lens of (post)colonial theory and argue that it should be read as Haretski's warning against and exposition of the oppressive and de-moralizing imperial power of the Russian Empire. This paper serves not only to examine an individual work about the self-destructive trauma of a

colonial subject but also to exemplify how East Slavic materials can diversify (post)colonial theoretical models.

### **17-5. Mixing Genres in Post-Soviet Film and Music**

#### **Children Without Parents, Parents Without Children: Zviagintsev's Fractured Families**

Kirsten Rutsala, Virginia Tech

Andrei Zviagintsev's films frequently include the motifs of orphaned children and fractured families, which often serve as mirrors reflecting broader cultural and historical tendencies. In *Vozvrashchenie (The Return)*, two boys have spent their lives as functional orphans, with no conscious memory of their father. When the father unexpectedly reappears, they must negotiate a relationship with him, a process complicated by his gruff authority and occasional brutality. Not coincidentally, the father's absence spanned twelve years: *The Return* was released in 2003, twelve years after the fall of the Soviet Union. The father in the film orphaned his boys at precisely the time the Soviet state also abandoned its children. The return of the father may be read as a national longing for former certainties, the chance to once again be a child in a paternalistic state that provided all the answers and enforced clear codes of behavior. The influence he exerts on his children indicates both the appeal and the danger of clinging to those absolutes. His sudden death orphans the boys but may also liberate them, allowing them to develop new paradigms and values, a complex process that the larger culture is also undergoing. Zviagintsev's 2017 film *Neliubov' (Loveless)* addresses similar themes but from a much bleaker perspective. In this film, the bonds of family are even more fragile. A divorcing couple coldly discusses the possibility of relinquishing their son to a children's home. Shortly after, the boy goes missing without a trace. While *Vozvrashchenie* offers a sense of continuity with the past and at least a chance to create new cultural paradigms, though unresolved and ambiguous, *Neliubov'* removes even that qualified hope. New cultural mythologies have been developed (or manufactured) in the contemporary landscape, in particular by the government and the Orthodox Church, but they provide neither enduring principles nor comfort. The domestic sphere turns out to be as empty and morally bankrupt as public life has become, as the main characters construct new families that seem doomed to fail. This paper examines the subjects of orphanhood and family life in *Vozvrashchenie* and *Neliubov'* as they parallel facets of the post-Soviet experience in Russia, including ambivalence about the Soviet past and the development of new cultural narratives.

#### ***Shanson* in Pictures**

Anastasiia Gordiienko, University of Arizona

The popular music labeled the *shanson* is a hybrid genre that in the 1990s, in addition to its formative component, the criminal song (*blatnaia pesnia*), took under its wing a variety of subgenres, ranging from a banned during the Soviet era diverse song culture detailing the lives of marginalized groups to much less subversive romantic *shansons* and restaurant songs [*kabatskaie pesni*]. And whereas *shanson* heroes and heroines are not homogeneous—some adhering to the

ethos of the criminal world, others existing within the mundane, pedestrian sphere—there is a relatively small number of tropes and protagonists employed by this genre. My talk will trace the most notable *shanson* tropes, features, protagonists, and gender relations through *shanson*-related visuals (such as album covers, posters, music videos, concert advertisements, stage images of *shansonniers*, etc.). And while it is perhaps not surprising that the *shanson*'s visual domain corresponds to the core tropes and features of the musical genre, the intriguing question is how the themes and characteristics of this genre, which remains rooted in both criminal and patriarchal cultures, have been realized in artworks. For instance, *shanson* melodies' and lyrics' unpretentious nature is often visualized through straightforward, trope-evocative visuals; and graphic images of women as objects of sexual desire, along with artworks glorifying stereotypical masculinity, perpetuate gender stereotypes codified in the *shanson* lyrics.

### **Video Authenticity and Epistolary Self-Expression in Kira Muratova's *Letter to America* (1999)**

David G. Molina, University of Chicago

In this paper, I engage in an analysis of Kira Muratova's deepest exploration of an unusual form of epistolary self-expression in cinema: the video letter. In her 1999 short film *Letter to America*, the protagonist prepares a video response to a message sent by a lover who has emigrated to the United States. As he attempts to shoot the film, however, he runs into problems of self-representation and authenticity that lie at the intersect of the epistolary and the cinematic: to speak about one's self directly, on camera – as in a written letter – does not seem to produce an authentic-sounding missive, just as mere video representation of particular locations in and around the city of Odessa are incapable of conveying the meaning of those spaces for the former couple. In the paper, I explore Muratova's presentation of this problem and its unusual solution: poetic estrangement or distance. In keeping with epistolary traditions of the Russian nineteenth century, the protagonist turns to poetry as a more authentic mode of self-expression than the unbounded sincerity of everyday language. The artistry provided by the rigid confines of poetry, ironically, endows the protagonist with the ability to accurately express himself on screen, a procedure that sheds light on Muratova's far from naturalistic approach to cinematic truth.

Session 19: 2:00pm-4:00pm
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### **19-1. Stream 3A. Teaching Language Through Culture (II)**

#### **Communal Apartment**

Yana Polyakova, DLI (Monterey)

A way to a learner's proficiency does not preclude a route through the stomach. Cooking events, when planned and organized around the goal of language-learning, etch relevant vocabulary into the learners' minds, challenge and expand their cultural palette, contextualize their language learning by familiarizing them with the norms of a traditional Russian table gathering, and create

a rich and meaningful learning environment. A team approach to this immersive, proficiency-based, student-centered, day-long activity will be presented. Students were assigned homework prior to the event with the goal of maximizing the benefits of learning and to encourage deeper acquisition of the language. The activity was conducted towards the end of a second semester of an intensive language-learning course and was designed as a comprehensive language review and to expand their cultural awareness.

Communal living in the Soviet and Post-soviet period is worth exploring with American students of the Russian language. The subject helps to illuminate the differences in perceptions with respect to sharing the living space and the psychology involved in resolving conflict in individualistic and collectivist cultures. A two-hour lesson plus one-hour of homework on historical communal apartments in St. Petersburg exposed the students to a cross-section of history from the early 20th century to the early 21st century. The students listened to a range of present-day opinions from people who either lived or had family living in communal apartments, worked with a video on the subject, and read an article describing five communal apartments. Students worked in five groups. Each group was assigned a specific communal apartment to read about and present the information about the place and its inhabitants to the rest of the class. The lesson was designed for the students ranging in their proficiency from advanced middle in listening and reading and intermediate beginner, middle, and high in speaking. The students were in the second semester of an intensive language-learning course.

### **Intermediate Russian Fairy Tale Project**

Maria Khotimsky, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Fairy tales offer a wonderful way to learn about culture and folklore heritage, to familiarize the student with culturally significant symbols and allusions, while practicing reading and writing skills and working on pertinent grammar topics (e.g., use of aspect and motion verbs). In this presentation, I will discuss a unit on Russian fairy tales, which is taught during the second semester of the second year. The unit encompasses three main readings (“Маша и медведь,” “Доктор Айболит,” “Царевна-Лягушка,” accompanied by conversation and grammar practice activities). In addition, while working on the unit, students learn to recognize fairy tale characters, typical plot elements, and expressions, in order to develop a fairy tale structure map (based in part on Vladimir Propps’ *Morphology of the Folk Tale*). Then, the students work on their writing project to develop a rough draft, and the final variant of their own fairy tale. Students are invited but not required to add illustrations to their texts. The fairy tales are then collected in a class “anthology.”

### **Integrating Internet Culture in the Russian Language Curriculum: Runet for Culture-Based Language Learning**

Olga Klimova, University of Pittsburgh

One of the benefits of using Internet for second language (L2) learning and teaching is an immediate access to updated and relevant cultural content to create meaningful learning

experience for language learners. Understanding the culture of the target language helps learners to understand better how language functions in real-life situations and to develop L2 pragmatic proficiency. Language acquisition proceeds gradually and cumulatively, and the regular exposure to and interaction with Internet-based authentic materials do not only help students with the development of language proficiency, but also contribute to the expansion of their cultural literacy. In this paper, I discuss the benefits of using Internet-based authentic materials for language learning activities for the development of both receptive and productive skills. In Elementary and Intermediate Russian language courses, we regularly integrate the content of Russian language-based websites (Runet) through various activities that allow language instructors to involve multiple modalities (textual, visual, auditory, etc.) and target all modes of communication—listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The learner-content interaction is more effective and motivating for students as they engage with various formats of Russian Internet culture—blogs, vlogs, memes, Youtube videos, and social media (Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki)—with which they are already familiar from their own culture. The engaging language learning activities that focus on the development of interpretive reading and listening skills along with presentational speaking and writing and interpersonal speaking and writing allow students not only to work on their language proficiency, but also to develop abilities to recognize, accept, and appreciate cultural differences.

### **19-3. New Perspectives on Ivan Turgenev**

#### **“Living Pictures”: Domesticating 19th-century Nature with Turgenev and Aksakov**

Walker Griggs, University of Southern California

In this paper, I will use an article by A. P. Bogdanov in the 1856 issue of *The Herald of the Natural Sciences* to examine the 19th-century desire to domesticate the natural world and its study. In the article, Bogdanov argues that hunting stories—especially the writings of Turgenev and Sergei Aksakov—are vital to understanding nature scientifically and advocates for the domestication and popularization of Russian biology through zoological gardens and aquaria. By examining Bogdanov’s article in dialogue with Turgenev’s and Aksakov’s prose, I argue that there is merit to Bogdanov’s characterization of their nature writing as a kind of aquarium, in which complex ecological interactions are preserved for the viewer. According to this paradigm, I argue, the reader can be at once immersed in nature and outside it, both participant and voyeur, like the hunter-narrator of Turgenev’s *Zapiski Okhotnika*. Examining Turgenev and Aksakov through Bogdanov enables a new understanding of their impact on popular science and of the readerly experience of their prose. At the same time, this understanding raises new questions: can a complex ecological system maintain its features when separated from its environment? If not, then how useful are such aquariums, ultimately, for science or literature?

#### **Klara Milich: ways of seeing (and listening to) a ghost**

Dmitrii Kuznetsov, University of Southern California

*Klara Milich (Posle Smerti)*, arguably one of the least conventionally Turgenevian texts, is full of ambiguity, hints, and obscure, almost Symbolist imagery. To a great degree, this effect is achieved through Turgenev's narratorial treatment of the photograph: it introduces the idea of "immortality" within an artform and stands for the haunting influence of the dead over the living. This influence from beyond the grave is strongly associated with the technological aspects of photography, the uncanny effect of which is engendered by linking the mystical and the scientific. This paper aims to trace and demonstrate the trope of "immortality" in artistic forms achieved through technology by looking at Turgenev's story "Klara Milich," its Russian pre-revolutionary silent film adaptation "Posle Smerti" by Yevgeny Bauer, and a French arthouse film "Le Pont des Arts" by Eugène Green. While the connection between the first two sources is explicit, I argue that Eugène Green's film works with the same toolkit of topoi: the influence of the dead through technology and immortality through art. By looking at the devices of representing the beyond in different media, this paper aims to demonstrate how *Klara Milich* concentrates on a set of themes and topoi, essential to our understanding of art forms.

### **The Perception of Ivan Turgenev's Sportsman's Sketches in the US in the late 19 - early 20th centuries**

Elena Makarova, UCLA

Through studying literary interconnections between Russia and the US in the 19th century we found out that Ivan Turgenev was actually the first Russian author well-known in America. His novel *Fathers and Sons* was brought to America in 1861 (the same year it was published in Russia) by one of the Russian officers who served on the ship sent from the Russian emperor to support the Union in the Civil war. This text provoked an interest for Russian culture in the American officer Eugene Schuler, who successfully studied language and translated Turgenev's novel for the first time in 1867. After that, translations of Turgenev's other novels appeared one after another: *Smoke* (1872), *Liza*, *Rudin*, and *Torrents of Spring* (1873), *Virgin Soil* (1877). Nevertheless, some abstracts from the earlier book of short stories *Sportsman's Sketches* appeared both in Europe and America approximately at the same time. The magazine *New Yorker Revue* had an application written in German *New Yorker Herold: Morgenblatt*, where we can assume the first abstracts translated into German appeared in 1853. Russian writer Alexandr Herzen in the letter dated October, 29-30, 1853 mentioned that "In America in German Revue some Turgenev's short stories were translated". While here we only have some suppositional evidence, there is another approach where the date of Turgenev's short stories' first publication is 1854. That was a year when the stories from *Sportsman's Sketches: Khor and Kalinych*, *Singers*, *Bezhin Meadow* and others translated into French appeared in American magazines *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science and Art* and *Graham's American Monthly Magazine of Literature and Art*.

The report will be devoted to the further stages of the perception of Ivan Turgenev's writings and *Sportsman's Sketches* in particular during the 1870-s to 1920-s. The influence of Russian writing

school on formatting American realism at the end of the 19th century and modernism tendencies will be analyzed.

#### **19-4. Inner Thoughts of the Silver Age**

##### ***Petersburg as Andrei Bely's Thoughtography***

Byungsam Jung, Stanford University

French physician Hippolyte Baraduc (1850-1909) reported to the French Academy of Medicine in 1896 his experience of “thought photography.” Despite his unscientific method of conducting the experiment, Baraduc’s attempt to capture human thoughts seemed plausible as it followed the discovery of Röntgen radiation. Later, Baraduc’s experience was noticed by the Russian Symbolist Valery Bryusov (1873-1924), who delivered this “discovery” of thoughtography to Andrei Bely (1880-1934), who had recently started his literary career. The radical, even extraordinary, developments in the realm of photography might explain Bely’s fascination with the idea of photographing the human psyche and thoughts. By analyzing Bely’s novel *Petersburg* (1913), I demonstrate how Bely projects the metaphysical world of his characters onto the “physical” world of his fiction, creating a double-exposure picture that resembles the mechanism of thoughtography. Specifically, this paper argues that the mechanism of thoughtography influenced the aesthetics of Bely, allowing him to conceive of the idea that the process of artistic creation consists of two different but sequential processes; namely, the photographic memorization of an art object and the iconic manifestation of the artist’s inner experience. I argue that Bely’s “photographic” aesthetics in *Petersburg* reveals the visual nature of Bely’s symbolism triangle, which, by combining two base vertices (the cognitive and the creative), reaches the apex, the Symbol. Bely, as a photographer, truthfully captures human cognitive activity, but at the same time, as an artist who performs thoughtography, he produces retouched and distorted images, the products of the artist’s imaginative creativity. Based on these two seemingly different photographic images, I place Bely’s photographic aesthetics in dialogue with conversations about the artistic object (the *res*) in Symbolist art and, by examining the mechanism of thoughtography, explain Bely’s opinion on the *res*: the necessity to transform it into a real thing.

##### **From Fate to Instinct: Vsevolod Ivanov's *U* and The Psychoanalytic Drives**

Nikita Allgire, University of Southern California

In 1927, V. N. Voloshinov published a wide-reaching critique of psychoanalysis by questioning the materialist pretensions of the Freudian concept of the drives. “Влечения (die Triebe) — это основное понятие всего психоанализа — Фрейд определяет как психические представители соматических раздражений” (97). To figures such as Bernard Bykhovsky and the young Alexander Luria (taken to task by Voloshinov), the drives were conceived as *coterminous* to Pavlovian reflexes, seen as an important conceptual keystone to a totalizing materialist view of the human organism (and potential toward fashioning a new Soviet subject). The presentation will provide a reading of Vsevolod Ivanov’s novel *U* (written between 1929-1932, though unpublished in the author’s lifetime) in light of the psychoanalytic idea of the drives (*vlecheniia*)—a concept I argue holds an underexamined, though important, conceptual paradigm for the time. The novel depicts the attempted transformation of a former criminal into an ideal subject of the state with the help of a Red Freudian psychoanalyst, Doctor Andreishin.

I would like to argue that the notion of the drives was the conceptual point forming a psychoanalytic “regime of relevance” (to use Galin Tikhanov’s terminology for the Formalist movement) at this time, explaining how psychoanalysis became distributed among incompatible intellectual positions which, for a short time, coexisted in the 1920’s. Within literary-aesthetic debates, Alexander Voronsky, prominent Bolshevik editor of the thick literary journal *Krasnaia Nov’*, used aspects of the drives to articulate his own intuitivist theory of ideal, aesthetic creation. A model for Voronsky’s thinking was none other than Vsevolod Ivanov, member of the Serapion Brotherhood group of writers. Ivanov is an author both praised and chided by Voronsky, however, for his artistic (over)emphasis on the impulsivity and “spontaneity” [stikhiinost’] of his characters—what I read as a component of the drives.

**A Close Visual Analysis of Mstislav Dobuzhinsky’s *City Grimaces (City Types)*, 1908 as a Teaching Tool for Class Discussion of Verbal and Visual Elements of Silver Age Petersburg**  
Julia Kriventsova Denne

A close visual analysis conducted in the form of an interactive class discussion could be a useful teaching tool to engage and encourage students to navigate through the ever-changing myth of St. Petersburg, moving from Dostoevsky’s to the Silver Age Petersburg. Mstislav Dobuzhinsky, famous for his cityscapes of St. Petersburg created between 1902 and 1921, was particularly interested in visual perception of the interconnection between the city’s residents, the architecture, and the world of objects. For Dobuzhinsky, the city is the universe. His Petersburg combines the decline of the old Petersburg characterized by its symmetry, clarity, and lines, Dostoevsky’s ghostly Petersburg with its derelict buildings, organ-grinders, and pouring rain, and the emergence of the new 20<sup>th</sup> century city. The inanimate objects (billboards, streetlights, and window mannequins) become animated, filling the space and capturing the city’s touching but eerily grotesque atmosphere, which the World of Art artists called *skuril’nost* (from the Latin *scurrilis*, “diabolically funny”). The paper will build on the research on Dobuzhinsky by Alla Gusarova, John E. Bowlt, Grigory Kaganov, Betsy F. Moeller Sally, and Ksana Blank. It will investigate the practical applications of close visual analysis of *City Grimaces* in the classroom. The paper will demonstrate how to use the existing research for creating a series of interpretative iconographical questions and ekphrastic commentary on the images, which could be used as a basis for actively engaging and directing the students’ deeply individual intellectual and emotional experience of visual perception to discover how the visual and the verbal art forms from previous epochs are frequently reapplied and transformed to form a new reality. The paper will argue that the case study of Dobuzhinsky’s *City Grimaces* is particularly productive for engaging students in interpreting, sequencing, comparing and contrasting, while moving across boundaries of time between the St. Petersburg of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The iconographical analysis could become a meaningful teaching practice for class discussions, particularly valuable for online teaching.

**The Inner Sound of Colors: Synaesthesia, Counterpoint, and Abstraction in Kandinsky’s Poetic Album *Sounds***

Polina Dimova, University of Denver

The pioneer of abstraction Wassily Kandinsky was famously a synaesthete; he experienced a crossing of the senses. As evidenced in his reminiscences and theoretical writings, the artist viscerally felt the colors and forms of music, movement, temperature, texture, scent, and taste; the timbres of colors and shapes; and the personalities and emotions of forms and sounds. This talk studies Kandinsky's album of poems and woodcut images *Sounds* to show how his foray into abstraction and experiments with multiple mediums were informed by his lived experience of synaesthesia. By sampling Kandinsky's theories and his picture poems from *Sounds*, this paper traces the synaesthetic logic of Kandinsky's artistic practices.

In *Sounds*, Kandinsky notably evokes various mediums—text, color, sound, shape, motion—that unite into a multisensory “inner sound.” Following the principle of what I term *synaesthetic mimesis*, that is, cross-sensory imitation, Kandinsky imagines a range of ways of harmonizing the senses and the arts in this multimedia works. He recombines words, images, sounds, and motions (blue-yellow, black-white, falling-rising, droning-whistling) so that they run parallel to each other or clash in synaesthetic counterpoint to capture the dissonant sound of modernity. Kandinsky's synaesthetic correspondences can be either idiosyncratic sensations as in the “red sound” of the tuba, or commonly shared cross-modal associations. Formulated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the latter laws of weak synaesthesia postulate, for instance, that high pitches correspond to bright colors, while low pitches suggest dark colors. Angular shapes resemble shrill sounds, rounded shapes — deep sounds. Kandinsky's explorations of the abstract relations between the mediums and the senses, I will contend, gave rise to his non-objective art. Kandinsky's vision of the synchrony or counterpoint of the arts was predicated on his perceptual synaesthesia, which the artist developed in his theories and abstract practices.

Session 20: 4:30pm-6:30pm
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### **20-1. Making Russian Real**

#### **From Poetry to Memes: Poetic Citation and Internet Culture in the Russian Classroom**

Dominick Lawton, University of California at Berkeley

Poetry occupies a unique place in Russian culture: the poetic canon is prestigious, yet popular, memorized in Russian schools, and professionally performed and recited aloud. This particular cultural position enjoyed by poetry can be more challenging to convey to non-Russian learners than are individual poems. Yet the opportunities for expanding poetry work in the language classroom beyond close reading of particular texts are inviting, given the habitual use of well-known poetic phrases in everyday conversation by educated Russians -- a creative reappropriation of catchy verbal formulas which is fundamentally memetic, and resembles the digital genre of the humorous internet meme. This project explores poetry memorization and citation in the Russian L2 classroom. A series of modules guide students through analyzing,

understanding, learning and reciting famous and widely cited poems. Students also encounter cultural echoes of these poems -- in film, the press, and particularly through internet memes -- and ultimately re-deploy recognizable poetic citations in creative ways using the meme format themselves.

### **Films with Targeted Subtitles. The Results of 10 Years of Practice**

Richard Robin, George Washington University

Are subtitles ultimately good or bad for FL learners? In this presentation, I will argue that the good far outweighs the bad, especially if we target the subtitles. The ostensible purpose of most of the video that we feed our first and second year students is the development of listening comprehension and is heavily scaffolded and work-heavy (lots of scaffolding activities, lots of information extraction, little watching for fun). On that plane, many believe that subtitles turn listening activities into screen reading. But effective research on the subject is scarce. Other broader research shows that captions boost student motivation. “Targeted” subtitles — in L2, or L1, or “either/or” (if not L2, then L1, and vice-versa) or full/partial “both/and” (L2 + L1 or L2 + individual glosses in L1) force more language processing and enhance noticing without additional scaffolding or “work.” Ten years of using Russian *serialy* with targeted subtitles in the first two years has demonstrated benefits beyond listening comprehension: (1) confirmed enhancement of motivation (2) vocabulary uptake, especially of certain items, (3) better noticing, (4) better preparedness for non-interactive listening (i.e. when the learner is not part of the conversation). Targeted subtitles are hard to create, but they are worth the effort.

### **Really Reading Real Russian: Teaching Strategies for Independent Readers**

Lynne deBenedette, Brown University

Both undergraduate and early graduate students of Russian find the transition to reading texts on their own challenging. There is now a considerable body of research on second language reading (Bernhardt, Kern, Grabe, Comer) and many edited anthologies of literary or non-fiction texts for intermediate and advanced student readers of Russian. The latter (e.g., Rosengrant, Lubensky, Moskvitina) provide scaffolding, comprehension and discussion activities that essentially organize the students’ experience of the text(s) and of the reading process.

However, many students need to do independent reading when they have not yet had three or more years of language study or studied abroad – i.e., when they have a much smaller active vocabulary and experience of syntax than many of their chosen texts will include. Whether a text is literary or non-fiction, students need the strategies to organize their own reading experience so that they engage in deep processing of a text’s language, even when there is no guiding pedagogic apparatus accompanying the given text.

This paper will describe an independent reading project undertaken by students of fifth and sixth semester Russian (after approximately 250 hours of previous instruction). Learners chose non-fiction texts with some guidance, but to receive credit were required not only to demonstrate comprehension, but to show their reading process: providing their own full glosses,

demonstrating they could do effective dictionary work and identifying key vocabulary. The talk will describe the instructional process and show samples of students' individual and collaborative work, including ways in which the independent reading figured students language production by the end of the year.

### **“Zhili-byli...”: Russian Folklore in the Intermediate Language Classroom**

Kit Pribble, University of California at Berkeley

One of the central challenges of Intermediate L2 pedagogy is helping students transition from basic familiarity with the grammatical system to proficient engagement with authentic texts in the target language. This project explores the use of Russian fairytales (*skazki*) and other folkloristic genres as supplemental materials in Intermediate-level Russian courses. Piloted lessons suggest that fairytales and folktales are ideally suited for introducing students to authentic cultural documents in Russian. The narrative structure, cyclical imagery, and mnemonic devices of traditional fairytales and folktales are engaging and facilitate comprehension. Moreover, these genres introduce students to the fundamental ur-texts of modern Russian culture, while also promoting a metalanguage in the classroom for thinking about how national identity and culture are constructed. This project presents four learning clusters, each organized around a different motif or figure from traditional Russian folklore, which are designed to deepen L2 learners' engagement with Russian culture while also building their confidence in approaching authentic narrative texts.

### **20-2. New Readings of 19th-Century Lyric**

#### **Not so Lovely Love Poems: Form Contradicting Content in Pushkin, Baratynskii, and Akhmatova**

Sarah Matthews, University of Southern California

The theme of lyrical speakers and other voices in a love poem declaring one thing but the poem itself conveying the opposite is a common trend found in world literature. Famous examples include William Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130" and Horace's "Ode to Pyrrha." The Russian poetic tradition is no exception. Aleksandr Pushkin's "Ia vas liubil," Evgenii Baratynskii's "Uverenie," and Anna Akhmatova's "Szhala ruki pod temnoi vual'iu..." are all examples of highly arranged verse that conveys complicated emotions. Although positive readings of these poems are certainly possible and quite popular, the purpose of this paper is to add nuance to those readings. The lyrical speaker in Pushkin's poem tries to appear stoic in front of his former beloved and the lyrical speaker in Baratynskii's poem tries to reassure his beloved that he is still in love with her. In the eyes of many readers, both of their attempts are believable and sincere, but, in the eyes of others, their attempts fall flat. The lyrical speaker in Akhmatova's poem is female, unlike those in Pushkin and Baratynskii's poems. Similarity exists, however, in the fact that the male lover is revealed to be not as charming as one might originally expect. Each poet relies on formal features, such as lexicon, verbal aspect, end rhymes, meter, and rhythm, to help expose the irony, bitterness, and resentment that abound in these seemingly lovely love poems.

## **Shedding Light and Finding Individuality: The Role of Artificial Light in the Characterization of Vasily Zhukovsky's "Svetlana"**

Jiyoung Hong, Stanford University

The changing use of light in eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century Russian literature correlates with the discovery of new types of subjects. Light was first employed as a sacred metaphor to indicate God and religious holiness and then, in the course of secularization, to evoke the gloriousness of tsars. At the end of the Enlightenment period, as individual subjectivity and sensibility were discovered, light started to illuminate individual space and new characters. Vasily Zhukovsky used artificial light such as candles and lamps as part of his sentimentalist aesthetics to depict the individual's inner life and dreams. In his gothic-sentimental ballad "Svetlana" (1812), a character's individuality emerges as her imagination conjures up visual images and emotions that had earlier been inaccessible to her. With their flickering flames and vulnerability to extinguishment, artificial lights affect Svetlana's vision and give rise to fantasy or illusions. This paper demonstrates how light functions in creating the heroine of the stylized Russian ballad by illuminating the hidden sides of human psychology and imagination. It explores Zhukovsky's own theorization of a tie between lighting and the illumination of inner life and emotions in his lantern philosophy (философия фонаря).

### **20-3. Adventures in Early Soviet Film**

#### **Deconstructing *Circus*: Man in the Cage!**

Alexei Pavlenko, Colorado College

Students of Russian cinema have broadly agreed on interpreting *Circus* (1936) as a classic Stalinist propaganda film which successfully employed contemporary Hollywood techniques in order to advance its own ideological agenda: the triumph of humanity under the Soviet system over the inhumanity of the American and German capitalism and racism (Salys, Taylor, Hilton, Holmgren). As is characteristic for the propaganda art with its tightly controlled message, *Circus* invites a deconstructive analysis. The film's very title, the destabilizing function of the secondary comic figures, Chaplin and Skameikin, and the scene with the tamed "predators" point to a concomitant defiant message: The supposedly superior heart-warming Soviet humanity is, instead, merely a show, a circus. The truth about life in the USSR is suggested by the repeated cry of despair, "Man in the cage!," when the little man, Skameikin, finds himself inside the cage with the predators. Furthermore, the binary structure of the circus cast—Martynov versus von Kneischitz, Raika versus Marion Dixon, Skameikin versus Chaplin—which is intended to prove the superiority of the Soviet performers, instead ends up revealing more depth and humanity in the foreigners than in their one-dimensional Soviet counterparts.

#### **Soviet Cleopatra and the Left Front of the Arts: *Kleopatra* (1927), a film libretto by Osip Brik**

Sasha Razor, UCLA

Although the phenomenon of Cleopatromania occupied an important role in the cultural imagination of the Silver Age, particularly in the literature, theater, and ballet, Russia's early forays into cinema did not produce any films on the subject. It was not until 1927 when the Left Front of the Arts (LEF) conceived their screen idea of Kleopatra with two goals in mind: to juxtapose LEF's ethos against the pre-revolutionary Cleopatromania and to demonstrate collective action in support of actress Alexandra Khokhlova. Osip Brik's adaptation stands in stark contrast to his previous texts and to his interest in the study of sexuality or, for that matter, LEF's polyamorous practices. His deconstruction of the conventional melodramatic plot aimed to educate viewers about the corruption of the capitalist theatrical system while simultaneously imbuing them with class-consciousness. Brik wrote the libretto specifically for actress Alexandra Khokhlova and her husband, director Lev Kuleshov, as part of a campaign to support Khokhlova after her unofficial ban from acting. Despite numerous attempts by both Osip Brik and Lilya Brik to pitch the screenplay, Kleopatra was never unproduced. The theme of Cleopatra in Russian cinema would not find its expression until the Era of Stagnation. Ceasing to be an erotic spectacle, Osip Brik's unproduced screen idea remains an expression of LEF's collective ethos and testimony to the potentialities of the group's cine-praxis.

### **Empire's New Clothes: The Adventures of "The People" in Soviet Biopics**

Elena Vasileva

This paper discusses a key trope of the Soviet biographical films produced during Stalin's rule and their function in the agenda of empire-building during the post-WWII period. Specifically, the focus is on the manipulations, both linguistic and symbolic, that accompanied the use of the term "the people" in the most politicised genre of Soviet film-making, the biopic. Quite a few of these movies (Vasily Surikov, Akademik Ivan Pavlov, Aleksandr Pushkin, Admiral Ushakov, Admiral Nakhimov, Kompozitor Glinka) feature a variation on the fairy-tale trope whereby early on in the film the title character encounters a mentor or a helper in the form of a common man. The common man (the peasant or the sailor or the factory worker) assists the protagonist with solving a problem or serves as a source of spontaneous inspiration for the Great Man. This encounter usually leads the subject of the biopic to weigh in on the Russian people's unique spirit, ingenuity or acumen. Just a decade earlier these members of the gentry, regardless of their impact on Russian history, would not have headlined a movie, nor even been included within the designation of "the people", on the grounds of belonging to a hostile class. Nor did the new internationalist state have any place for the nationalist/essentialist pathos in the form of speeches about the Russian character. To frame this curious phenomenon, the paper turns to S. Zizek's analysis of the ways in which totalitarian ideologies have been able to manipulate the term "the people", so as to include or exclude parts of society, based on political expediency. The paper contends that the trope symbolically connects the gentry of the past with the working class of the present, creating an epic sense of an ahistorical continuity. This ahistorical epic Russianness is argued to be an integral part of the post-war empire-building agenda.