



THE PRINCESS DASHKOVA RUSSIAN CENTRE JUNE – JULY 2015 NEWSLETTER

14 Buccleuch Place,
EH8 9LN,
Edinburgh, Tel: 0131
650 99 02

28 June, 2015, Issue 4-5

May 2015 Events

Dashkova Open Research
Seminars
Prof Jan Levtchenko,
Higher School of
Economics: ‘The Formalist
Image of War: Viktor
Shklovsky as a Writing
Soldier’

Dr Ilya Kalinin, U of Saint
Petersburg. ‘Russian
Cosmism in the Depths of
the Soviet Cosmos’

Prof Michael Gorham, U of
Florida. ‘Humpty Dumpty
and the Troll Factory:
Varieties of Verbal
Subversion on the Russian-
Language Internet’

Collaboration with the
‘Language and Violence’
research strand and the
‘Edge of Words’ project: A
Talk by Tanya Ury;
‘Language and Violence’
workshop in the Dashkova
Centre;
Participation in the
Language and Violence
mini-conference organised
by DELC at AISH

June 2015 Events

The CHSS, Fulbright
Lecture 2015:
Ambassador Jack Matlock
‘The Ukrainian Crisis:
Reflections on Power in
Today's World’

August 2015 Events

Edinburgh International
Book Festival
20.08 ‘The Crisis in
Ukraine. Heralding a New
Cold Front?’ The UoE
Event, in association with
The Dashkova Centre

Edinburgh International
Festival: Stravinsky's The
Rite of Spring

News: Dashkova Research
Project ‘Discourses of
Russian Tourism in
Scotland’



Reporting on our May 2015 Events

The Dashkova Centre has continued to hold open research seminars and to host events linked to the ‘Edge of Words’ research strand of the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures of the University of Edinburgh. This spring we have also launched a new research project on Discourses of Russian Tourism in Scotland.

The Dashkova Open Research Seminars

Professor Jan Levtchenko, Higher School of Economics (Moscow)
‘The Formalist Image of War: Viktor Shklovsky as a Writing Soldier’
Thursday, 7th May

In his presentation, the renowned scholar of Russian formalism Jan Levchenko, explored Viktor Shklovsky’s war experience.

Viktor Shklovsky, the famous Russian literary theorist, and founder of Russian Formalist School, published his first books right after WWI broke out. One of his publications included a futuristic essay *Resurrection of the Word*. Another, *The Saturnine Fate*, concerned with archaic prose poetry devoted to the war at its onset. Shklovsky borrows an official military rhetoric and changes its emphasis, thus turning it into an instrument of pacifism.



Dr Jan Levtchenko



Viktor Shklovsky

In 1916, Shklovsky was drafted into the army, and the war turned into a fruitful background for his emerging theory. Shklovsky first served as an instructor in the armored car division; following the February Revolution of 1917, he was vigorously involved in a campaign for the Provisional Government. After the October Revolution, Shklovsky proceeded to writing his memoirs, with his own concept of this genre in mind. The war depicted in his book titled *Sentimental Journey* is depicted in comparison with an automobile. Presentation by Professor Levchenko aimed to retrace both theoretic and poetic paths that Shklovsky was able to pioneer thanks to his war experience.



Dr Ilya Kalinin, Saint Petersburg State University
‘Russian Cosmism in the Depths of the Soviet Cosmos’
Thursday, 7th May

In this seminar, Dr Kalinin, whose research deals with themes and metaphors of the Russian culture of the 20th and 21st centuries, presented a survey of amalgamation of scientific achievements, nature and cosmos in the Soviet culture, starting with Russian formalism, until the 1970s.

A scene from the film
 ‘Siberiade’ (1979)
 that was discussed at the
 seminar



The Romantic substratum of Soviet culture consisted of a variety of dimensions, which were growing in number and complexity of their interrelationships over time. Gorky’s model of revolutionary romanticism made it possible to add an emphasis on the role of the individual in history to the Marxist model of history and to eliminate the contradiction between the representation of reality and the portrayal of the ideal by means of the conception of depiction of life in its revolutionary development.

The mass ethos of *romance (romantika)* wrapped both grueling labour and the State’s demand for self-sacrifice in the name of the common good in an aura of voluntary heroism, transforming the conquest of nature and the transcendence of the self into central values for Soviet men and women. At the end of the 1950s and the start of the 1960s, yet another level appears in Soviet romantic culture, with rediscovery of the romantic poetics, historical imagination and *naturphilosophie* of the nineteenth century romanticism. Related trends extend far beyond the neo-nativist (*neo-pochvenniki*) redaction of late-Soviet culture, that adopted an ecological ethic in opposition to technological drive; the organic wholeness of the national body or the existential unity of individual existence in place of the rationally organized collectivity; and the return to historical reconstructions or the preservation of monuments of the past instead of the headlong rush into the future.



Dr Ilya Kalinin and the audience

As one of the most important tropes in Soviet culture, outer space constituted a complex topological arena in which the technological conquest of nature acquired a new dimension of meaning, leading humanity toward the total transformation of the world and ending the conflict between nature and culture, the organic and the technical, the individual and society. Gagarin’s predecessors include not only Korolev, but may also be traced back to Konstantin Tsiolkovsky.

And Tsiolkovsky's predecessors, in turn, included the figure of Nicholas Fedorov. The *Soviet cosmos* stood in the same relationship to *Russian cosmism* as Soviet romance stood to nineteenth-century Romanticism: the signs and symbols of the former became more and more complex and semantically loaded with meanings relating to the latter.

Professor Michael Gorham, The University of Florida
'Humpty Dumpty and the Troll Factory: Varieties of Verbal Subversion on the Russian-Language Internet'
Thursday, 21st May



Professor Michael Gorham

Professor Gorham researches internet regulations and attempts of Russian authorities to bring the Internet under State control. Information battles between various participants, such as pro-governmental and oppositional hackers, trolls, and cyber-activists, as well as languages and discourses of these battles were the focus of this presentation.

The past five years have proven dramatic for the Russian-language Internet as a space for political debate. Events surrounding the 2011–2012 election season, which some have come to call Russia's 'snow revolution', placed on full display the potential of the Internet as a

tool for civic protest. The medium's success as medium for oppositional organization and agitation was promptly rewarded after Putin took office for his third presidential term by over 20 different legislative measures somehow designed to regulate, restrict, constrain, or simply outlaw web-based oppositional expression and initiatives. Events in Ukraine since the beginning of 2014 have only exacerbated what seems to be an increasingly polarized virtual public sphere. In fact more recent media coverage of the Russian-language Internet seems dominated by reports of more seditious forms of online political activity—namely hacking and trolling—that have become central weapons in ongoing information wars.

In his presentation, Professor Gorham took a closer look at these manifestations of verbal subversion to get a better sense of how they operate, the degree to which they can be seen as 'deviant' or pernicious, and the likely impact of their discursive production on the public information sphere in the longer term. Do hackers and trolls spell the demise of the Runet as a space for open, civic, and civilized exchange? Or could they simply be natural or necessary features, however unsavory, of a free and open, electronically mediated public sphere?



The Edge of Words

A close collaboration between research at the Dashkova Centre and the Division of European Languages and Culture 'Language and Violence' research strand has made the Dashkova Centre a venue for the series of events connected with this research strand (29th – 30th April).

On 29 April we hosted a presentation 'Personal Affects: on the Archive', in which the Germany-based artist Tanya Ury shared her personal traumatic experience of familial memory destruction caused by the Cologne City Archive Collapse.



On 30 April the Dashkova opened its doors to an introductory Language and Violence workshop, led by Professor Peter Davies. This was a very successful launch of the research strand in which 16 participants from German Studies, Hispanic Studies, Italian Studies, Scandinavian Studies, Russian Studies, Celtic and Scottish Studies, Translation Studies and Film Studies gave brief presentations sharing their theoretical approaches and case studies. The sections included “Colonial trauma, memory and conflict”, “Linguistic violence and translation of violence”, and “Performing violence in literature, film and theatre”. The workshop participants explored the links between forms of violence and experience and the ways of their expression in language and discourse. The workshop aimed to initiate a discussion between specialists working in different languages, and to encourage further research in the form of collaborative projects.

The second workshop took place on 29 May. Sessions led by Emmanuelle Lacore-Martin, Rose France, Lara Ryazanova-Clarke, Bárbara Fernández, Peter Davies, Raquel Ribeiro, Carlos Soler Montes, and Frauke Matthes, investigated the interplay between violence and language in various historical and cultural contexts, from a number of disciplinary perspectives (literary and linguistic studies, translation, memory studies). Sessions took place on “Linguistic creativity, literary subversion, and violence: the case of the Grotesque”, “Language and memory in conflict: Interdisciplinary perspectives” and “Language and violence: theoretical approaches, texts and experiences.” A broad range of themes was explored under these rubrics which not only reflected the range of cultures represented in the department but also presented the result of collaborative work between disciplines: the use of literary grotesque as a subversive strategy, theoretical perspectives on linguistic violence, the use of “Aesopian” language in totalitarian regimes, the ethical dilemmas involved in translating Holocaust testimony, and cross cultural influence as a legacy of Portuguese and Spanish colonialism.

It is planned to continue cross-departmental collaborations on these and other topics and to develop an internet presence for the research forum, to encourage the cross-fertilization of ideas across the various language disciplines and to make advantage of knowledge-sharing between disciplines, particularly as regards theoretical perspectives. Blogs, further roundtables and seminars, publications and more experimental research projects such as films, exhibitions and other events are all possible directions in which this research strand may develop.

June 2015 Events

Fulbright Lecture 2015

College of Humanities and Social Science, The University of Edinburgh

Ambassador Jack Matlock (Former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1987-1991) The Ukrainian Crisis: Reflections on Power in Today's World

The Dashkova Centre featured in the University of Edinburgh's series of events to welcome the 2015 Fulbright Lecturer Ambassador Jack Matlock on 10 and 11 June.

Ambassador Matlock worked in US Foreign Service for 35 years from 1956 to 1991. He attended all but one of the U.S. – Soviet summits from 1972–91. He was US ambassador to Czechoslovakia in 1981-1983, Special Assistant to the President for National Security (1983-1986), and US Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1987-1991, playing a pivotal role in the agreements that ended the Cold War. Since leaving the Foreign Service in 1991 he has concentrated on being an academic at Universities such as Colombia and Princeton, and has authored detailed and definitive accounts of the end of the Soviet Union such as *Autopsy on an Empire, Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* and *Superpower Illusions: How Myths and False Ideologies Led America Astray -- And How to Return to Reality*, establishing his reputation as a historian of detail and depth.

On June 10, Ambassador Matlock **visited the Dashkova Centre**. Lara Ryazanova-Clarke, Luke March and Vera Zvereva introduced Ambassador Matlock and his wife Rebecca Matlock to the work of the Centre and had an informal conversation which covered Russian-American relationships from the time of Princess Dashkova (the first woman member of the American Philosophical Society), to the period of the Perestroika and the establishment of the current Russian State, which the Ambassador witnessed first hand, and discussed the present dynamics in Russia-West relations. Jack Matlock emphasized that development of various forms of cross-cultural communication between Russia and the West would be crucial for improving mutual understanding, and for establishing a productive dialogue.



Ambassador Matlock has accepted an invitation to become an Honorary Member of the Dashkova Centre.

On the morning of June 11 was the Fulbright seminar: **Cold War Lessons Ignored: From the Collapse of the USSR to the Ukrainian crisis**. This session was chaired by Luke March (Dashkova Centre) and Nataliya Kibita (History). Students and staff attended to hear Ambassador Matlock focus on the period of negotiations from 1985, to end of Cold War in 1988. His main argument was that the illusion that the West won Cold War by breaking up USSR his history backwards: the Cold War was not defeat for USSR or Russia, and the co-operation in 1988 to 1991 better than many times since. The end of the Cold War was a negotiated end that all won and avoided mutual annihilation.

Ambassador Matlock argued that the end of the Cold War came on December 7 1988 when Gorbachev renounced Marxian theory of class struggle. A second seismic event often conflated with the Cold War is the end of communist rule of USSR in 1991 which was done voluntarily by Gorbachev, not by Western pressure. The third seismic event is the breakup of the USSR in 1991 led by the elected president of Russia, helped by Ukraine and Belarus. Ambassador Matlock detailed the negotiating process to show the later idea of Western triumphalism that we beat communism is entirely incorrect. He discussed later Western triumphalism and the expansion of NATO as wrong-headed, but not a Western plot nor betrayal of a commitment to Gorbachev. The Ambassador took questions after which there was an informal lunch, during which students were able to ask him more specific questions.

The 2015 Fulbright lecture entitled **'The Ukrainian Crisis: Reflections on power in today's world'** took place in the evening of June 11.

Ambassador Matlock focused on how misunderstanding of effective power is at the core of the current conflict – the problems of the wrong kind of power with feeling of impotence when this fails to achieve its ends. The current 'New Cold War' has similar polemics to Cold War, but is entirely different with the stakes very different. As noted in the seminar, the end of the Cold War has been conflated with the collapse of the CPSU and the USSR. Although Western triumphalism has become dominant, at the time the West did not want the collapse of the USSR.

At the same time, Russian obsession with the US as sole superpower is meaningless – military power is useless in transformative terms, and if we are talking about destructive power, then Russia is a superpower too. But power and problems are increasingly transnational and there is need for international cooperation to deal with these issues. The public beating on other countries that is part of the 'New Cold War' is not helpful or effective. Ukraine itself is deeply divided, electorally, and also with no federative constitution, with many of the problems as other post-communist countries. Its Maidan was an internal event, not substantively helped by outside interference, although some US officials' interventions were not constructive. The only solutions involve private consultation and co-operation to help Ukrainians to put country back together. This should not be made into an East West issue, if so competition will fail with Ukraine as major victim. Overall, the West is not responsible for the conflict, but its failure to read Russia has provided the conditions whereby the Russian president can use events to strengthen his own authority.

The Fulbright Lecture video is available here: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/humanities-soc-sci/news-events/lectures/fulbright-lectures/2015>

August 2015 Events

Edinburgh International Book Festival



The Crisis in Ukraine. Heralding a New Cold Front?
 Thursday, 20th August, 7.30-9pm, Garden Theatre

The University of Edinburgh Event, sponsored by the University of Edinburgh. In association with The Princess Dashkova Russian Centre



Does the crisis in Ukraine mark the beginning of a new cold war between Russia and the West? Is Russia looking to redefine its role on the global stage and how should the West and NATO respond, given they promised to protect Ukraine's borders? In many parts of the world nation states are having to defend themselves against insurgent groups from inside and outside their borders.

Peter Pomerantsev, journalist and expert on the real Russia, and **Luke March** from the Princess Dashkova Russian Centre discuss the changing relationship between Europe and Russia. Chaired by Allan Little.

Tickets available at: <https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/the-festival/whats-on/the-crisis-in-ukraine>

Edinburgh International Book Festival

Russia-related events:

Rosamund Bartlett & Maureen Freely : The Essence of Tolstoy; The Soul of Pamuk
 19th August 7-8pm

Nowhere are the decisions of the translator more forensically picked over than in a translation of one of the classics. Fortunately, Rosamund Bartlett's new version of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* is the most accomplished of several recent translations. Meanwhile Maureen Freely is best known for her translation of five novels by leading Turkish author, Orhan Pamuk. Both are exceptional translators and today they discuss their craft. Chaired by James Runcie.

Rosamund Bartlett on Anna Karenina
 20th August 1-2.30pm

Reading Workshop

In the workshop today translator and biographer Rosamund Bartlett looks at *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy. The novel portrays a beautiful and intelligent woman whose passionate love for a handsome officer sweeps aside all other ties – marriage, friendship and moral values.

Simon Mawer & Iain Pears - Cold War, Hot Fiction
 20th August 10.15-11.15am

With the Russian state in some ways looking rather like its old Soviet-era self, the time seems ripe for a return to the stories of yore. So the new Cold War thrillers which Iain Pears, with Arcadia, and Simon Mawer, with *Tightrope*, have written might well be catching a wave. These are dark, compelling novels about identity and deception. Come and meet the authors.

Rory MacLean - The Quest for New Soviet Man**20th August 10.30-11.30am**

When the USSR dissolved in 1991, a narrow sliver of land next to the Ukraine declared independence. Transnistria now has its own Leninist government, but is still not recognised by any other country in the world. Photojournalist Nick Danziger and author Rory MacLean spent time with Bentley-driving, AK47-wielding oligarchs in Gucci tracksuits to create an absorbing illustrated study of a region whose fate will affect the whole of Europe. Chaired by Jamie Jauncey.

Robyn Marsack on Eugene Onegin**20th August 11-12:30pm****Reading Workshop**

Today Director of the Scottish Poetry Library Robyn Marsack looks at Eugene Onegin by Alexander Pushkin. This classic Russian novel is written in verse and was originally published in serial form. It depicts the life of the eponymous hero and is a glimpse into the social and intellectual world of Russian society.

Peter Pomerantsev - Adventures in Modern Russia**20th August 12.30-1.30pm**

Thanks to his job within Russia's media industry Peter Pomerantsev has witnessed first hand the energy, danger and corruption of a country that has known communism, oligarchy and a mafia state over the past two decades. For his book Nothing is True and Everything is Possible, Pomerantsev travelled into the heart of modern Russia, meeting Hells Angels who believe they're messiahs and filmmakers who used to be gangsters. Chaired by Viv Groskop.

Ben Stewart - Two Months in a Russian Jail**20th August 5.45-6.45pm**

When a peaceful Greenpeace protest against oil drilling in the Arctic ended with 30 activists being incarcerated in a jail in Murmansk, it sparked an intense campaign, led by Ben Stewart, to bring the protestors home. Don't Trust, Don't Fear, Don't Beg, is a startling record of their experiences in jail. Today Stewart is joined by Frank Hewetson, logistics co-ordinator of the expedition and one of those imprisoned.

Andrea Bennett & Emma Hooper - First Fictions, Fantastic Futures**25th August 5-6pm**

Intelligent stories ooze from the keyboards of Andrea Bennett and Emma Hooper in their respective first novels, Galina Petrovna's Three-Legged Dog Story and Etta and Otto and Russell and James. Bennett's book is the story of a canine, Boroda, whose capture triggers a trans-Russia escapade, while Hooper's tale has an octogenarian taking a walk of 2000 miles in order to see the ocean for the very first time.

Andrzej Klimowski & Danusia Schejbal on The Master and Margarita**28th August 11-12.30pm****Reading Workshop**

Graphic novelists Andrzej Klimowski and Danusia Schejbal explore The Master and Margarita by Mikhail Bulgakov in today's workshop. In Soviet Moscow, God is dead but the devil - to say nothing of his retinue of demons - is very much alive. Many critics consider the novel to be the foremost satire on Soviet Russia.

Full programme of the Book Festival and booking: www.edbookfest.co.uk

Edinburgh International Festival

7th-31st August Full programme: www.eif.co.uk



Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring
Sunday, 30th August, Usher Hall

London Symphony Orchestra
Valery Gergiev Conductor
Yefim Bronfman Piano

Bartók *The Miraculous Mandarin*
Bartók *Piano Concerto No 3*
Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*

Tickets booking: www.eif.co.uk/2015/riteofspring

News

The Princess Dashkova Russian Centre has launched a new research project on **Discourses of Russian Tourism in Scotland** (funded by LBAS/CRCEES). As part of the project, our staff are conducting interviews with Russian-speaking visitors to Scotland. We invite our friends and subscribers to get in touch with us with contacts of any Russian-speaking travellers who may be interested in taking part in this research and sharing their impressions of Scotland.

We're on the Web!

Follow us on Facebook for regular updates of news and events.

<https://www.facebook.com/DashkovaCentre>



The Dashkova Centre is on Twitter! You can follow us on [@DashkovaCentre](https://twitter.com/DashkovaCentre)

To become a friend of the Dashkova Centre please contact Dashkova.Centre@ed.ac.uk

The Princess Dashkova Russian Centre
The University of Edinburgh

14 Buccleuch Place, EH8 9LN, Edinburgh, Tel: 0131 650 99 02, Email: Dashkova.Centre@ed.ac.uk.