

Artistic interpretation of the war in general and specific events

Online seminar

June 19, 2023, 16:00-18:00

Michael Cole (University of Tartu, Estonia)*

The calm before the storm: Cultural resistance to Russia in Ukraine before February 2014

Much has been written about Russia's false assumptions that a swift invasion of Ukraine would lead to almost instant success, with its armies welcomed by Ukraine's citizens as "liberators".

Alongside Ukraine's gallant military resistance and the role of media-savvy president Volodymyr Zelenskyy in winning over international audiences to the cause, the strength and unity of resistance amongst the population has also been remarkable.

However, while now, in the face of existential threat, Ukrainians appear more united than ever in their assertion of a collective national identity, this was not always the case. I argue that, since 2014 a series of top-down and bottom-up initiatives developed following the Maidan revolution to create a new sense of Ukrainian identity, more comfortable in its own skin and prepared for the level of resistance required to stand firm in the face of Russian aggression.

This presentation draws on interviews conducted with Ukrainians and visual-ethnographic materials gathered from field research conducted in Mariupol, Ternopil, Kyiv and Lviv during Autumn 2021, just months before Russia's full-scale military invasion. Dismissing the notion that popular culture is no more than just a bit of fun, I argue it provides a vital lens for understanding the current war and levels of societal unity and resistance in Ukraine.

Svetlana Maslinskaya (Grenoble Alpes University, France)*

Chrono-journey in Children's Literature about War: the Evolution of Commemorative Pragmatics / Хронопутешествие в детской литературе о войне: эволюция коммеморативной прагматики

It is often possible to find formulations "we got into the past", "the past has returned", "we are in 1937/1941", etc., in the contemporary discourse about the current socio-political situation. To represent such a time transition, there is a special kind of historical fiction story in literature - chrono-journey. The main character, a time traveler, or "drifter" («попаданец» in Russian), finds himself in a "different" historical context and participates in the events taking place with varying degrees of involvement. In Russian-language children's literature (both Soviet and Russian), as well as cinema and animation, this plot can unfold in a variety of (pre)historical times. The report will present an analysis of Soviet and Russian works for children, in which the "drifter" moves into the space and time of the Second World War. The evolution of the pragmatics of such works from the 1970s to the 2020s demonstrates both general trends in the commemoration of the experience of war and specific effects due to age-related addressing.

/ В современном дискурсе о текущей общественно-политической ситуации нередко можно встретить формулировки – «мы попали в прошлое», «прошлое вернулось», «мы в 1937/1941 году» и т. д. Для репрезентации подобного временного перехода в литературе существует специальная разновидность историко-фантастической повести – хронопутешествие. Главный герой, путешественник во времени, или «попаданец», оказывается в «другом» историческом контексте и с той или иной степенью вовлеченности участвует в происходящих событиях. В русскоязычной детской литературе (как советской, так и российской), а также кинематографе и мультипликации этот сюжет может разворачиваться в самых разных (до)исторических временах. В докладе будет представлен анализ советских и российских произведений для детей, в которых «попаданец» перемещается в пространство и время Второй мировой войны. Эволюция прагматики таких произведений от 1970-х к 2020-м годам демонстрирует как общие тенденции в коммеморации опыта войны, так и специфические эффекты, обусловленные возрастной адресацией.

*Bio

Michael Cole is a PhD candidate at the University of Tartu, Estonia. He has a strong interest in Sociolinguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly in relation to Russia and Eastern Europe. His MA Applied Linguistics dissertation combined CDA theories and Corpus Linguistics techniques to examine 'in-group' and 'out-group' discourses and strategies used in television interviews and their influence on opinions on social media. His current research as part of the FATIGUE programme focuses on the influence of 'Shared History' and 'Competition with the West' narratives in Russia on right-wing populist discourses in Georgia and Ukraine.

Svetlana Maslinskaya is PhD in Philologia (к.филол.н.). Her Doctoral Thesis was "Literature of the pioneer organization: ideology and poetics" ("Литература пионерской организации: идеология и поэтика"), Saint Petersburg 2006. Now she works as researcher for the Center for the Study of Modern Slaves (Centre d'études slaves contemporaines (CESC)) of the Grenoble Alpes University. She is also co-editor in chief of the journal 'Children's Readings' dedicated to the history and theory of children's literature. She is the author of research on the cultural recycling of the Soviet past in modern Russian culture, works on the history of Soviet children's literature, the history of literature of the pioneer organization, pioneer folklore and rituals, Soviet school life and education. The current research project is related to the problems of war memory representation in children's literature.