

Winter Academy: Beyond History and Identity: New Perspectives on Aesthetics, Politics, and Society in Eastern Europe

Veranstalter: Forum Transregionale Studien; Max Weber Stiftung – Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland; Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin; Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt an der Oder

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The Winter Academy „Beyond History and Identity: New Perspectives on Aesthetics, Politics, and Society in Eastern Europe“ was organized in the framework of Berlin-Brandenburg Ukraine Initiative by Andrii Portnov (Berlin), Anna Colin-Lebedev (Paris), Rory Finnin (Cambridge), Susi K. Frank (Berlin), Olena Haleta (Lviv), Magdalena Marszalek (Potsdam) and Annette Werberger (Frankfurt an der Oder). The 10-day Academy gathered in Berlin doctoral students and post-docs as well as senior scholars from universities and research institutions of the variety of countries including Belarus, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, UK, USA. The programme of the event combined the discussions of the participants' ongoing research projects, the thematic sessions organized around particular academic texts and the number of public lectures and meetings aimed at bringing the issue of new themes and approaches in East European studies to the broader audience. Combining various formats of presenting academic research and discussing epistemological and methodological problems, the organizers of the Winter Academy pursued the goal to establish a fruitful dialogue about the new ways of understanding Eastern Europe after the Ukrainian crisis.

The Winter Academy opened with two introductory speeches by RORY FINNIN (Cambridge) and ANDRII PORTNOV (Berlin) who sketched how Ukrainian studies had been developing in Anglo-Saxon and German academic traditions. Both speakers admitted certain problems with establishing Ukrainian

studies as an independent academic field and the „willful ignorance“ towards Eastern Europe in the Western academia in general (Rory Finnin). At the same time, both argued about the potential within the Ukrainian Studies to develop the transregional perspective which would be applicable to the understanding of multinational (post-)imperial border regions in Ukraine and beyond it.

The introductory session was followed by the conversation with Ukrainian writers which took place next morning. Besides reading their poetry, ALEKSANDR KABANOV (Kiev), LIUBOV YAKYMCHUK (Luhansk) and MARIANNA KIJANOWSKA (Lviv) discussed what the concept of „national literature“ means in today's Ukraine, how this concept corresponds to the problem of national language and what the relations between translatable / untranslatable in literature are.

In general, literature, art and theater received peculiar attention from the Academy participants. At the session *Arts and Ethics* they discussed the text by Martha Nussbaum (1996) about poetic justice. Questions were raised on how literature might be related to our understanding of justice and how they influence the practices for establishing justice. As Martha Nussbaum argues, there is the connection between fantasy (imagined worlds in the works of literature) and democratic equality. It makes one think about the role of literature in shaping our societies. Why is literature and are writers / poets in general so important in East European countries? Why „poet in Russia is always more than just a poet“? Does it relate to a genre, to a particular writer, or to the readership? As there cannot be one possible answer to these questions, it is important to keep in mind the specific role of actors we often address in our studies. Furthermore, this role is not given, it is not rigid, it changes in time depending on the changing contexts.

The East European visual art was addressed on several occasions. Magdalena Marszalek (Potsdam) led the discussion about art and censorship in East European countries. CATERINA PREDA (Bucharest) presented her research about art and politics in modern dictatorships based on the compar-

ative analysis of Eastern Europe and Latin America. ANNA GLUKHANYUK (Ekaterinburg) regarded the connection between art, religion and politics in contemporary Russian society. She focused on the situation around the opera „Tannhäuser“ in Novosibirsk which brought to the surface the tensions between the Russian Orthodox Church and art practices, in particular theatre, in Russia.

Ukrainian theatre was analyzed by OKSANA DUDKO (Lviv) who concentrated on how theater has been changing since Euromaidan protests. She showed in her presentation that more and more directors turned their views to historic themes and started dealing with difficult past trying to interpret it in new ways. NENA MOČNIC (Ljubljana) discussed how community theater could be used as a creative tool in processing the violent past. She demonstrated how community theater was used as a method in her research on the memories of women who had been victims of rape during the war in the former Yugoslavia. She argued that community theater as a method helped these women tell the stories of their lives in a manner that overcame the traumatic narratives that prescribed only the role of victims to them.

The issue of violence and trauma was stressed by other participants as well. A special roundtable *Understanding Violence in Post-Socialist Europe* chaired by Alexander Wöll (Frankfurt an der Oder) took place at Europe-University Viadrina in Frankfurt an der Oder. The roundtable started with the presentation by CLAUDIA WEBER (Frankfurt an der Oder) about participant observation as a method to study violent events from the historical perspective. As she suggested, in order to understand the complexity of violence, the accent had to be made on studies of violent acts themselves, instead of a traditional focus on circumstances and causes of violence. Andrii Portnov (Berlin) in his speech tried to explain the roots of violence in military conflict in Ukrainian Donbass. He offered to take into consideration the macro-context of the events including the historical development of the region but even more so its economically and politically specific position vis-à-vis other regions of Eastern Ukraine such as Dnepropetrovsk and Kharkiv in par-

ticular. MONIKA KARENIAUSKAITE (Vilnius / Berlin) considered the Soviet culture of violence and the extent to which it continued influencing Post-Soviet societies. To some extent, this influence was determined by the fact that not every post-Soviet state came to terms with its Soviet past, in particular, Stalinist crimes which, according to Kareniauskaite, had created criminal subcultures, born in the Gulags. The theme of (de)Stalinization was continued by MIKHAIL NEMTSEV (Moscow) who stressed in his presentation that Stalinism in today's Russia was not anymore well known as historical reality. As he argued, despite the fact that the Stalinist period had ended a long time ago, the specific „Stalinist ethics“ (for example, the habit to stigmatize some social groups) still had some impact on contemporary Russian society.

The different ways which political and cultural elites in Eastern Europe employ to deal with the past have been discussed in several other presentations. YULIYA YURCHUK (Stockholm) demonstrated how memory politics changed in Ukraine after Euromaidan. She argued that memory politics were often framed as a strategy to counteract the Russian propaganda that portrayed Ukraine as a fascist state. VOLODYMYR SKLOKIN (Lviv) paid attention to the role that post-Soviet historians played in shaping contemporary political discussions. Considering the transformation of historiography in Ukraine, Sklokin argued in favour of critical public history which would synthesize the attempt to bring history to a broader public with critical re-evaluation of dominant historical narratives, especially in the framework of the current events in Ukraine.

Besides critical re-interpretation of history and memory politics, the claim of the Winter Academy organizers to go „beyond history“ in the studies of Eastern Europe was also fulfilled by transgression of disciplinary boundaries of historical knowledge. Combining historical and anthropological theories and approaches in his research, SIMON SCHLEGEL (Halle) reconstructed the meanings and implications of ethnicity in southern Bessarabia throughout 200-year period of Bessarabian history. As he showed, the importance of ethnicity as a mode of self-identification

had varied in time and had become exclusive category only in periods when the currently ruling state had experienced legitimacy crisis. In this way, Schlegel's presentation also followed suggestion to go „beyond identity“ or taken-for-granted categories of identification such as ethnicity or citizenship. This stance was also partially taken by TANIA BULAKH (Bloomington) who analyzed how recently emerged consumer practices mirrored major political confrontations and shaped new forms of identification among Ukrainians. SUNCANA LAKETA (Zurich) suggested focusing on human body in order to understand how ethno-national identities were enacted, performed and practiced through a diverse range of affective and emotional socio-spatial practices.

As the Winter Academy has confirmed, studies of Eastern Europe remains the intriguing field of research inquiry. It has specified a significant shift from Cold War dichotomic thinking about the region towards a more nuanced and theoretically sophisticated mode of knowledge production. It has also demonstrated a significant demographic change among the young generation of East European researchers many of whom originate from the region and skillfully combine a high level of theoretical competence with first-hand knowledge of the local specificities.

Conference Overview:

Welcome and Introduction

Michael Kämper-van den Boogaart (Vice president of the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin): Short Greeting

Rory Finnin (Cambridge University): „New Possibilities for European Studies“

Andrii Portnov (Forum Transregionale Studien / Wissenschaftskolleg): „What Berlin-Brandenburg Ukrainian Initiative is about?“

A Conversation with Ukrainian Writers (Room Saal John Klepper)

„Fragmentation and Translation: Language and Poetry in Contemporary Ukraine“

With Aleksandr Kabanov, Liubov Yakymchuk, Marianna Kijanowska, Olena Haleta

Chair: Susi K. Frank

Project Presentations 1

Group A

Nena Močnik (University of Ljubljana): Community Theatre as Creative Source in Processing Violent Past: Post-War Youth from Bosnia-Herzegovina Creating Spaces for Reconciliation through Performative Arts

Discussant: Yulia Yurchuk

Group B

Oleg Zhuravlev (EUI, Florence): From the Event to new Political Subjectivities: Comparing Euromaidan and 'Bolotnaya'

Discussant: Monika Kareniauskaitė

Group C

Volodymyr Sklokin (Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv): The Social Relevance of History in Poland, Russia and Ukraine in Comparative Context (1989-2015)

Discussant: Sunčana Laketa

Thematic Sessions 1

Group 1. The Visual Language of Patriotism. Reading: Christopher Breward, „The Politics of Fashion: The Politics of Fashion Studies,“ review of Nazi Chic? Fashioning Women in the Third Reich, by Irene Guenther; Fashion under Fascism: Beyond the Black Shirt, by Eugenia Paulicelli; and The Fashion Doll: From Bebe Jumeau to Barbie, by Juliette Peers, Journal of Contemporary History 42 (2007): 673-681

Introduction by Anna Novikov

Group 2. Translation at Checkpoints.

Reading: Emily Apter, „Translation at the Checkpoint,“ Journal of Postcolonial Writing 50:1 (2013): 56-74

Introduction Susi K. Frank

Group 3. Geographies of Affect.

Reading: Keith Woodward and Jennifer Lea, „Geographies of Affect,“ In The SAGE Handbook of Social Geographies, eds. S. J. Smith et al. (London: Sage, 2009), 154-175.

Introduction by Sunčana Laketa

Project Presentations 2

Group A

Caterina Preda (University of Bucharest): Art and Politics in Modern Dictatorships: A Comparison of Eastern Europe and the Southern Cone

Discussant: Anna Novikov

Group B

Mikhail Nemtsev (Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration): 'Destalinisation' as a Problem and Perspective for Social Ethics in Contemporary Russia

Discussant: Ana Milosevic

Group C

Jovana Vukcevic, (EHESS Paris / Charles University Prague): Consuming Heritage in Post-Socialist States: Nostalgia, Political Negotiation and Disneyfication of the Socialist Memorial Sites in CEE

Discussant: Olga Sasunkevich

Project Visit: Phantom Borders in East Central Europe

Introduction: Beatrice von Hirschhausen

Project presentation Sabine von Löwis: „Field Research on Phantom Borders in Ukraine“

Thematic Sessions 2

Group 1. Arts and Ethics.

Reading: Martha Nussbaum, Poetic Justice: the Literary Imagination and Public Life (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 1-12.

Introduction by Rory Finnin

Group 2. East-Central Europe: A Transnational Paradigm.

Reading: Cristina Şandru, Worlds Apart? A Postcolonial Reading of post-1945 East-Central European Culture (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 18-33.

Introduction by Anca-Gabriela Baicoianu

Group 3. Nationalism and Violence.

Reading: Sinisa Malesevic, „Is Nationalism Intrinsically Violent?“ Nationalism and Ethnic Politics 19 (2013): 12-37.

Introduction by Marharyta Fabrykant

Project Presentations 3

Group A

Oksana Dudko (Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, Lviv): Rattling The Bars Of Its Cage: New Alternative Theatre in Ukraine

Discussant: Meg R. Jackson

Group B

Anca-Gabriela Baicoianu (University of Bucharest): Traveling Concepts: Postcommunist Perspectives on Postcolonial Studies

Discussant: Oleg Zhuravlev

Group C

Olga Sasunkevich, (European Humanities University, Lithuania/Belarus): De-Essentializing Ethnicity: 'Karta Polaka' and the Process of Ethnicization in the Belarus-Poland Border Region

Discussant: Simon Schlegel

Thematic Sessions 3

Group 1. Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe.

Reading: Piotr Piotrowski, „Unfulfilled Democracy“ in Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe, Piotr Piotrowski (London: reaktion books, 2012), 262-307

Introduction by Magdalena Marszałek

Group 2. Expanding Europe through Memory.

Reading: Peter J. Verovšek, „Expanding Europe through Memory: The Shifting Content of the Ever-Salient Past,“ Millennium 43 (2015): 531-550.

Introduction by Ana Milosevic

Group 3. Remembering or Forgetting through Heritage.

Reading: Matthew Rampley, ed., Heritage, Ideology and Identity in Central and Eastern Europe. Contested Pasts, Contested Presents (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2012), 1-20.

Introduction by Jovana Vukcevic

Roundtable „Understanding Violence in Post-Socialist Europe“ at Europa Universität Viadrina Frankfurt Oder

Andrii Portnov and Claudia Weber, Chair: Alexander Wöll

Presentation of the „B/Orders in Motion“ Center and the project: Cultural competence in the entangled history of Central and Eastern Europe: neighborhood, migration, and Jewish experience (Annette Werberger)

Project Presentations 4

Group A

Meg R. Jackson (University of Arizona): The Running Body: From Cultural Motif to Critical Methodology

Discussant: Oksana Dudko

Group B

Monika Kareniauskaite (Vilnius University): Disclosing Violence in the Soviet Union and its Colonies: the Case of Soviet and Post-Soviet Lithuania

Discussant: Anca-Gabriela Baicoianu

Tania Bulakh (Indiana University): Consumer Citizenship in Post-Soviet Ukraine

Discussant: Jovana Vukcevic

Thematic Sessions 4

Group 1. Transformations and Transitions.

Reading: Nicolette Mackovicky, „Me, Inc.? Untangling Neoliberalism, Personhood, and Postsocialism,” in *Neoliberalism, Personhood, and Postsocialism. Enterprising Selves in Changing Economies*, Nicolette Makovicky (Ed.) (Farnham, 2014): 1-16.

Introduction by Thomas Skowronek

Group 2. New Documentary Theater Politics in the Orthodox Church.

Reading: Mark Lipovetsky and Birgit Beumers, „Reality Performance: Documentary Trends in Post-Soviet Russian Theatre,” *Contemporary Theatre Review* 18 (2008): 293-306.

Introduction by Anna Glukhanyuk

Group 3. Violence, Law and State in Soviet Empire: Connections and Distinctions.

Reading: Michael Burawoy, „The State and the People, Symbolic Violence and Physical Violence,” in *Conversations with Pierre Bourdieu: The Johannesburg Moment*, by Michael Burawoy and Karl von Holdt (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012), 1-9.

Introduction by Monika Kareniauskaite

Project Presentations 5

Group A

Anna Novikov (Cologne Centre for Central and Eastern Europe/The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): You Are What You Wear: Polish and Jewish Visual Nationalisation through Fashion in the Partitioned Poland (1848-1918)

Discussant: Caterina Preda

Group B

Ana Milosevic (University of Maastricht/University of Leuven): From Balkanization to Europeanization: The Politics of Memory in Croatia and Serbia 1990-2015

Discussant: Marharyta Fabrykant

Group C

Simon Schlegel (MPI Social Anthropology, Halle): Ethnicity and its Translations—the History of an Ambiguous Concept in a Contested Land

Discussant: Nadiya Trach

Public Lecture „How Space becomes Place: Russia's Eurasian Trajectories”, Jane Burbank (New York University / Wissenschaftskolleg)

Chair: Andreas Eckert (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin / Forum Transregionale Studien)

Group A

Anna Glukhanyuk (Ural State University, Ekaterinburg State Drama School): Pressure of Religious Context: Russian Theatre, Politics and Orthodox Church

Discussant: Nena Močnik

Group B

Miroslav Tomek (Universitas Carolina Pragensis): 'They'd be surprised that Banderites spoke Russia'. Perception of Ukraine in Czechoslovakia during 1945-1989 and its Repercussions Nowadays

Discussant: Marharyta Fabrykant

Group C

Sunčana Laketa (University of Zürich): Affect, Identities, Territories: Nationalism Embodied

Discussant: Tania Bulakh

Thematic Sessions 5

Group 1. Theory from the East.

Reading: Boris Buden, „Translation and the East. There is no such thing as an 'Eastern European Study of Culture',” in *The Trans/National Study of Culture*, ed. Doris Bachmann-Medick (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 171-180.

Introduction by Annette Werberger

Group 2. Politics & Poetics: Transformative Role of Art.

Reading: Kip Jones, „Connecting Research with Communities through Performative Social Science,” *The Qualitative Report* 17 (2012): 1-8.

Introduction by Nena Močnik

Group 3. Body and the East: Public Sphere by Performance.

Reading: Zdenka Badovinac et al., ed, 2000+

Arteast Collection: The Art of Eastern Europe in Dialogue with the West, From the 1960s to the Present (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 2002), 9-32.

Introduction by Meg Jackson

Group A

Yulia Yurchuk (Baltic and East European Graduate School, Stockholm): Aesthetics and Politics of Remembering: New Trends in Commemorative Practices dedicated to WWII during and after Euromaidan

Discussant: Anna Glukhanyuk

Group B

Marharyta Fabrykant (Belarusian State University): From Tolerance of Power to Power of Violence: Geopolitical Turn in Contemporary Belarusian Nationalism in Comparative Perspective

Discussant: Mikhail Nemtsev

Group C

Nadiya Trach, (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy): Linguistic and Semiotic Landscapes of Maidan: New Symbols in Ukrainian Public Space

Discussant: Volodymyr Sklokin

Berliner Seminar „EuroMaidanTahrir: Trajectories of Revolution and Violence in Eastern Europe and the Arab World, with Mayssun Succarie (Beirut/EUME Fellow 2015/2016) and Nataliya Gumenyuk (Kyiv, Ukraine/Visiting Fellow of BBUI), Chair: Cilja Harders (FU Berlin/Eume)

Thematic Sessions 6

Group 1. Theories of Eventful Protests.

Reading: William H. Sewell Jr., „Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille,” *Theory and Society* 25 (1996): 841-881.

Introduction by Oleg Zhuravlev

Group 2. Approaching Ethnicity in Eastern and Central Europe.

Reading: Rogers Brubaker „Ethnicity without Groups,” *European Journal of Sociology* 43 (2002): 163-189.

Introduction by Olga Sasunkevich

Group 3. Beyond Civil Society: Addressing a Demand to the State in Socialist and Post Socialist context.

Reading: Elena Bogdanova, „Religious Justifications of Complaints Addressed to the President in Contemporary Russia,” *Laboratorium* 3 (2014): 55-79. Online at: <http://www.soclabo.org/index.php/laboratorium/issue/view/17>.

Introduction by Anna Colin-Lebedev

Thematic Sessions 7

Group 1. Literature and Articulation of Trauma.

Allan Megill, „Does Narrative Have a Cognitive Value Of Its Own?” *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error: A Contemporary Guide To Practice*. Chicago, 2007, 63-77.

Introduction by Olena Haleta

Group 2. Reconsideration of Societies Moral Consequences.

Reading: Chris Hann, „Moral dispossession,” *InterDisciplines* 2 (2011): 11-37. Available Online at: <http://www.inter-disciplines.org/bghs/index.php/indi/article/view/36/31>.

Introduction by Mikhail Nemtsev

Group 3. Thinking between the Posts.

Reading: Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery, „Thinking between the Posts: Post-colonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography after the Cold War,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (2009): 6-34.

Introduction by Tania Bulakh

Roundtable „The politics of Memory, History and Identity in Eastern Europe” Volodymyr Sklokyn, Yulia Yurchuk, Miroslav Tomek, Simon Schlegel, moderated by Anna Colin-Lebedev

Final Discussion, moderated by Olena Haleta and Andrii Portnov

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