

The Border Zone Paradigm: Russia and Hungary, Borderland and Crossroads in Cultures  
between East and West

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**The Name and the Identity**

Workshop

November 22, 2018

Budapest, Institute for Slavic Studies, ELTE University

**Hetényi, Zsuzsa** (Budapest, Institute for Slavic Studies, ELTE University)

Patterns in literary name-giving strategy revealing the problems of identity // Попытки парадигмы проблематичности и идентичности в стратегии имен героев (антропонимов) в литературе

My paper (third part of my research in the area of name and identity excluding the so-called "telling name" topic and also history and philosophy of name in general already widely discussed), focuses on the action and gesture of naming strategy of authors within the paradigm of signs and symbols of émigré pattern, that turned out to fit for those cosmopolite, wandering and eternal home-searching and home-avoiding intellectuals who represent in literature those forced out of their original homes by external or inner motivation. Obvious motifs as suitcases or passports, and less known as biblical allusions or phantom-cities are extended to form a paradigm that includes several sub-genres of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century novel, its specific narrative and rhetoric strategies, among them those placing the 'I' in different distortions of identity with elusive personality.

The topic is broad, interdisciplinary, analytic and theoretical at the same time – because it concerns the very base of the theory of interpretation, narration and that of the text, the relation of authorship and naming strategy of fictitious heroes as well.

**Zlydneva, Nataliya** (Moscow Institute for Slavic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences; Institute for World Culture, Moscow State University)

(Self)-portrait and the problem of identification // Автопортрет в живописи русского авангарда: проблема имени и мифа

The talk dealt with the issue of nomination in visual art, in particular in a portrait genre. A portrait and especially a self-portrait was regarded as a sign/communication system based on a multi-level link between image as a nomen, a title of a picture and a reference to a represented person. The genre roots in a burial mask that established equivalence between a name and face features of a person. The focus made on Russian avant-garde painting (1910–1929) where nomination defines the core of its poetics. On the base of self-portraits of the most famous 20th century Russian painters (Larionov, Malevitsh, Matyushin, Chagall etc.) the presentation demonstrated the inclination of avant-garde non-object portraits with the approach to a human face as a mask treating it as abstract feature typical for an archaic culture. It allows conclude that a 20<sup>th</sup> century non-object portrait corresponds to an image as such and evokes the origins of the genre.

**Urakova, Alexandra** (Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies; A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature RAS, Moscow)

Cult Name / Cult Identity: Delineating the Concepts // Культовое имя / культовое идентичность: к проблеме понятийных границ

My talk adresses the question of literary cults as a contemporary cultural phenomenon in the light of Hungarian and Russian theoretical research undertaken in the 1990s – 2010s. Following up on the previous research and bearing on the theory of performative utterance, I argue that the identity of the cultic author should be seen in direct connection with the performative function of the cultic name. Not only is the cultic identity contingent on specific historical and cultural circumstances of the cult following – it is being allotted to the author as the result of repetitively calling him/her cultic.

**Kalavszky, Zsófia** (Budapest, Institute for Literary Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

The Name of the Author and the Development of Reader's Identity in Literary Cults (Alexander Pushkin and Venedikt Erofeev) // Имя автора и формирование читательской идентичности в литературном культе. На примере культов А.С. Пушкина и Вен. Ерофеева

The talk discusses how literary cults participate in the development of the reader's identity as well as in the development of the group identity of a given community of readers from the standpoint of the sociology of literature. I address the following questions: Is it possible to distinguish between the mechanisms of the development of group / collective identity in the case of two cults – the official, state-inflicted cult of Pushkin and the underground cult of Venedikt Erofeev in the Soviet Union? How different are the strategies of reception in each case and to what extent these differences are initiated by the names of each of the authors?

**Kalafatics, Zsuzsa** (Budapest, Budapest Business School)

Searching for Genre Identity. (Questions following from the genre specified by the author) // В поисках жанровой идентичности. (Вопросы авторских жанровых номинаций в современной русской прозе)

The paper takes its starting point from Bakhtin's theory of the novel, according to which unlike other genres, historically the novel has never developed a close canon. Due to the lack of a canonised form, the novel has proven to be capable of integrating genre constructions different from itself via reinterpretation. The constant search for potential renewal, present in the sub-title of contemporary Russian novels, is also reflected in genre-specifications supplied by the author. In the focus of the analysis is Vodolazkin's novel *Laurus*. The problem of name and identity is revealed in the context of the historical and non-historical novel.

**Mikola, Gyöngyi** (Szeged, Department of Russian Studies, University of Szeged)

The Name as a Rhizome (Name and Identity in Otto Tolnai's Works) // Имена и идентичность в творчестве Отто Толнаи

The paper analyzes the poetic methods of naming characters in Otto Tolnai's latest works. First of all in poem *Kisinyovi rózsza* (Rose from Kishinev), essay-novel *A pompeji szerelmesek* (Lovers in Pompeji) and novel *Szeméremékszerek* (Genitale Piercings).

Otto Tolnai is a poet, writer, essayist and dramaturg who belongs to the ethnic Hungarian minority in Serbia (in the former Yugoslavia.) He was among the first contributors and later he became the editor-in-chief of the legendary avant-garde review *Új Symposion* (New Symposion).

First I show how Tolnai creates new poetic meanings of cultural and literary codes of his own name. Then I examine his method of naming in connection with his characters. During the Yugoslav wars, new type of characters has been appeared in his works: a legion of unfortunate, misadventurous poor devils, the „infaustuses” as the author calls them. Their names and nicknames shape a very special type of unstable, transitive or fluid form of identity of minorities in Vojvodina, Serbia. The paper shows the close connection between Tolnai's creative poetic methods and the philosophical concept of rhizome developed by Deleuze and Guattari.

**Korolkova, Polina** (Moscow, Russian State University for the Humanities)

On the Border of Reality and Fantasy: the Problem of Name and Identity in contemporary Russian literary (author) Fairy Tale // На границе реальности и фантастики: имя и идентичность в современной русской литературной сказке

The report deals with the problem of name and national identity in the fairy tale texts of contemporary Russian authors Alexander Kabakov and Andrey Stepanov. We have analyzed common features in the poetics of the texts and compared them with the folktale canon and author fairy tale tradition in Russian and Soviet Union literature. The conclusion can be drawn that the aspects of name and national identity show two main distinctive characteristics of today's existence of the genre: postmodern play with the reader and actualization of author

fairy tale as a genre which is able to speak with the reader about any actual theme in our life. Special creative possibilities of the author fairy tale make it not only alive but also a very productive genre which is still extremely popular in contemporary Slavic literatures.

**Polyakov, Dmitry** (Moscow, Russian State University for the Humanities)

The Region through the Eyes of Neighbors: Central Europe in Russian Discourse (Problems of Naming) // Регион глазами соседей: Центральная Европа в русском дискурсе (проблемы наименования)

The report examines the reflection on Central Europe in the Russian / Soviet scientific and non-scientific discourse. The scientific material is Slavic and areal studies (primarily historical). They contain several similar concepts: *Central Europe*, *Central and Southeastern Europe*, *Central-Eastern Europe*. Non-scientific, “everyday” discourse is presented by texts of Soviet and Russian writers devoted mainly to the countries of this region (from the 1920s and 1930s, by I. Ehrenburg, S. Tretyakov, V. Mayakovsky, etc.). The author also analyzes the discussion between Russian and Central European writers at a conference in Lisbon in 1988, which revealed the inability of Russians to perceive Central European literature and culture as a mental unity. Perhaps the reason is that, traditionally, this region was considered in the opposition *Slavic vs. non-Slavic*, and later – *the socialist countries vs. the capitalist countries*; we see traces of this perception even today, when the most active discussions about the concept of *Central Europe* are left behind.