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# **Accelerated Development?**

**Socio-Political Landslides, Cultural Ruptures and Literary  
History in Eastern Europe**

## **Book of Abstracts**

29-30 September 2017

Ghent, Belgium

Department of Languages and Cultures,  
section Slavic and East European Studies,  
Ghent University

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The conference 'Accelerated Development?' is organized by the Department of Languages and Cultures, section Slavic and East European Studies, Ghent University

The conference 'Accelerated Development?' is supported by  
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&  
Russian Literature and Culture Abroad (RuLCA), Ghent University

## **Conference Venue**

Campus Boekentoren: Jozef Plateauzaal & zaal Simon Stevin  
Jozef Plateaustraat 22, Ghent, Belgium

**[www.slavistiek.ugent.be/Accelerateddevelopment](http://www.slavistiek.ugent.be/Accelerateddevelopment)**

Special thanks to Gitte Callaert, Inge Claerhout, Hilde De Paepe, Sabine Van Cauwenberghe and Karine Vandermarliere

## Conference Aims and Scope

In 1964 the Bulgarian-Belarusian-Russian scholar Georgii Gachev coined the term 'uskorennoe razvitie' or 'accelerated development' in his 1964 monograph *Accelerated Development of Literature: On the Basis of the Bulgarian Literature of the First Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*. The term describes what happened to Bulgarian literature during Ottoman rule. Being a 'young' and 'peripheral' literature, having started to develop only recently at the time, Bulgarian literature 'had to' go through the whole evolution of European literature at a high pace in order to catch up with the latter. One of the side effects of this accelerated development was that characteristics of different style periods could even co-occur. Gachev's thought-provoking idea has never really received a lot of attention, except in Bulgarian studies, where the concept was elaborated, criticized and / or gave way to new theories (Petar Dinekov, Nikolai Genchev, Roumen Daskalov, Alexander Kiossev ...), but mostly with regard to the development of Bulgarian culture and society.

Today Gachev's theory seems outdated, not in the least for its centralist assumptions – i.e. taking for granted that central cultures take the lead and peripheral cultures follow suit – that form the very basis of the Eurocentric theory. Nonetheless, the potential of the very kernel of the concept is obvious – both for dealing with the literary histories of other 'young' and/or 'peripheral' literatures in different time periods and for challenging the different notions that form the basis of Gachev's theory – 'peripheral', 'young', 'Western', 'dominant', 'oppression', 'conservatism'. 'Accelerated development' may be a suitable term to describe how Western literary critics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century thought about the quickly evolving, 'peripheral' Russian literature of the time. 'Accelerated development' may also be applied to the evolution of (certain) Modernist movements in the 'peripheral' Eastern Europe.

And what to say about the apparent fast-forward evolution of the East-European literatures after the collapse of Communism, quickly adapting Postmodernism, Magical Realism, and other literary trends that other, 'central' literatures had been going through earlier?

This conference aims to explore – i.e., to corroborate, to challenge or to further develop – the concept of accelerated development by looking at concrete cases in the literary histories of Eastern Europe where one can speak of a major rupture, such as suddenly acquired cultural independence or freedom or technological evolution, that causes the literature to change course and, possibly, to 'accelerate'. More specifically, this conference hopes to find new ways to look at the complex relationships between dominant and non- or less-dominant, central and peripheral, old and young literatures and cultures, colonizing and colonized cultures, progressive and conservative cultures, open and oppressive / repressive cultures, etc. Additionally, the conference aims to discuss the (catalytic) role of cultural agents in the process of accelerated development and the tension(s) between literary and extra-literary motivations. Lastly, the conference hopes to shed light on how cultures going through an accelerated development look at their earlier selves and whether, and if so, how accelerated developments may also lead to new, 'own' literary forms that are not quite related to the seemingly dominant cultures.



# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME



## Friday 29 September 2017

### Morning session: Jozef Plateauzaal

10.00 Registration

10.30 Welcome – Ben Dhooge (Ghent University)

#### 10.45 **Keynote Paper 1**

Raymond Detrez (Ghent University / University of Leuven)

*Backwardness and Accelerated Development from a Cultural Policy Perspective*

11.45 Lunch (zaal Magnel)

### Afternoon session: zaal Simon Stevin

#### 13.00 **Session 1**

Chair: Pieter Boulogne (University of Leuven / Ghent University)

Henrike Schmidt (Hamburg University / Freie Universität Berlin)

*Literary Exchange Rates. Economic Metaphors in the Writing of Pencho Slaveykov and Their Potential to Conceptualize the Dynamics of Literary History*

Emilia Faur (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca)

*Romanian Avant-Garde and the Question of Cultural Imports*

Accelerated Development?

Dennis Ioffe (Ghent University / University of Amsterdam)  
*The Garden of Hidden Delights of the Russian-Jewish Avant-Garde: Accelerated Development or a Historical Anomaly? Comments on a Recent Historiography*

14.45 Coffee Break (zaal Magnel)

15.15 **Session 2**

Chair: Miglena Dikova-Milanova (Ghent University)

Georgy Akhillovich Levinton (European University at Saint Petersburg)  
*Some Notes on 'Accelerated Development' in Russian Scholarship*

Nikolay Aretov (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia)  
*From Accelerated Development to National Images of the World*

16.30 Coffee Break (zaal Magnel)

17.00 **Session 3**

Chair: Ben Dhooge (Ghent University)

Adelina Angusheva-Tihanova (The University of Manchester)  
*The Medieval South- and East-Slavic Literatures and the Cultures of 'Accelerated/Delayed Progression'*

Michel De Dobbeleer (Ghent University) & Tilde Geerardyn  
(Ghent University)

*Decelerated Nationalization? The Burgeoning Slavic Literatures'  
Accelerated Development Through a Slavophile 'Inside' Lens*

18.15 End of Session 3

19.30 Conference Dinner  
Antichi Saporì, Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 204

## Saturday 30 September 2017

### Morning session: Jozef Plateauzaal

09.30 **Keynote Paper 2**

Galin Tihanov (Queen Mary University of London)

*Georgii Gachev (1929-2008): An Intellectual Portrait*

10.30 Coffee Break (zaal Magnel)

11.00 **Session 4**

Chair: Michel De Dobbeleer (Ghent University)

Pieter Boulogne (University of Leuven / Ghent University)

*Wanted: Unoriginal Russian Authors. Drawing a Parallel Between West European Accusations of Unoriginality and Plagiarism Towards Dostoevsky and Yemets*

Dmitry Tokarev (Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg / Higher School of Economics, Saint Petersburg)

*Terror as Acceleration in the Philosophy of Alexandre Kojève and the Narrative of Boris Poplavsky*

12.15 Lunch (zaal Magnel)

**Afternoon session: zaal Simon Stevin**

**13.45 Keynote Paper 3**

Willem G. Weststeijn (University of Amsterdam)

*Acceleration and Retardation in Russian Culture*

14.45 Coffee Break (zaal Magnel)

**15.15 Session 5**

Chair: Dennis Ioffe (Ghent University)

Ljuba Tarvi (Helsinki University)

*The Grandeur and Discontent of Metaphorically Formulated Hypotheses*

Alexander Kiossev (Sofia University)

*Accelerated Development in the Age of Globalization. Some Paradoxes of Global Markets, Translatability and Non-Translatability in Contemporary Bulgarian Literature*

16.30 Coffee Break (zaal Magnel)

Accelerated Development?

17.00 **Session 6**

Chair: Tilde Geerardyn (Ghent University)

Marie Vrinat-Nikolov (INALCO/CREE, Paris / CETOBaC, Paris)

*Thinking Anew the 'Literary Clocks' of the World (the Bulgarian Case)*

Miglena Dikova-Milanova (Ghent University)

*How to End Your Father's Novel? The Case 'Theodora Dimova / Dimitar Dimov'*

18.15 Round Table Discussion and Concluding Remarks – Ben Dhooge (Ghent University)

19.00 End of the Conference



## **ABSTRACTS**



## **The Medieval South- and East-Slavic Literatures and the Cultures of 'Accelerated/Delayed Progression'**

Adelina Angusheva, The University of Manchester

From medieval Serbian hagiography to Bulgarian poetry of the Revival period and the nineteenth-century Russian novel, South- and East-Slavic literatures were seen as lagging behind the genre trends of Western European literatures, but also as able to cultivate these genres later in a relatively short period of time. The paper challenges Georgii Gachev's theory of cultures of 'accelerated/delayed progression' by looking closely at the medieval South- and East-Slavic literatures and exploring the patterns of 'acceleration' in medieval literary production and the reasons behind them.

## **From Accelerated Development to National Images of the World**

Nikolay Aretov, Institute for Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia

This paper is directed towards two key notions in the oeuvre of Georgiy Gachev, towards the evolution in his thinking and the tension between them. The ambition is to analyze them in the context of the overall Balkan studies in the field of humanities and their social context. Gachev himself informs his readers about the situation in which he coined the first notion – belated-accelerated development of literature. It was a result of his boring work with Bulgarian literature from the 19th century, in the daytime preparing his PhD thesis, combined with his passionate reading of Hegel at night. All scholars know some kind of variation of such bad moods, but, in the case of Gachev, they also reveal high self-confidence that could even be labeled as ‘colonialist’s’.

The book in which this idea was promoted, was received in Bulgaria with unusual enthusiasm and was largely quoted in Eastern Europe. The psychological and social motives and aspects of this reception deserve special attention.

These two ideas are interconnected, but there is also some tension between them. Accelerated development presupposes evolution towards a universal construction (let us name it modern European literature); national images problematize the universal in behalf of the local, national, that is seen as primordial and has its constant (if not eternal) invariant.

This second idea was also received with enthusiasm, in fact by the analogical new public, while the tension with the previous idea was neglected. The paper goes a little further in conceptualizing this process.

## **Wanted: Unoriginal Russian Authors. Drawing a Parallel Between West European Accusations of Unoriginality and Plagiarism Towards Dostoevsky and Yemets**

Pieter Boulogne, University of Leuven / Ghent University

This paper explores the concept of accelerated development by drawing an experiential parallel between two seemingly unrelated cases in the shared literary history of Russia and Western Europe.

First, light is shed on the French accusations of unoriginality that Dostoevsky faced after his popularization in France in the mid-1880s. During the last decades of the 19th century, the French critic Vogüé, who was largely responsible for the West-European breakthrough of Dostoevsky, was harshly attacked by influential critics for the 'septentriomanie' that had been holding Paris in its grasp. In his article 'De l'influence récente des littératures du Nord', published in *Revue des deux mondes*, Lemaître analyses a key scene from *Crime and Punishment* as a poor remake of Victor Hugo's prose. After Lemaître, also the French critic Combes (1896) and the historian Waliszewski (1900) accused Dostoevsky of unoriginality vis-à-vis French literature.

Second, the analysis shifts to more recent accusations of plagiarism, laid upon the Russian children's and young-adult fantasy writer Dmitry Yemets for *Tanya Grotter*. Although the author claimed that this book series, containing obvious textual and paratextual references to *Harry Potter*, was meant and in a Russian context functions as a parody, the Dutch court in 2003 decided in favour of J. K. Rowling that it was plagiarism after all – whereupon the distribution of *Tanya Grotter* translations was forbidden in most West European countries.

Although the described accusations of unoriginality or plagiarism concern radically different authors and occurred in different periods of times, when the Russian literary polysystem was in quite different shapes, it is argued that both cases have something in common: both Dostoevsky and Yemets are deeply rooted in the Russian culture of *imitatio*, which was developed as a coping mechanism to deal with the belatedness of Russian literature vis-à-vis Western Europe, and which was consolidated under the Soviet rule, with its focus on collective ownership of cultural products. Drawing on insights formulated by Even-Zohar, the author of the polysystem theory, and Baer, the author of *Translation and the Making of Russian Literature* (2016), it is argued that this culture of *imitatio* is essential to understand the accelerated developments within Russian literature both in the 19th century and after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

## **Decelerated Nationalization? The Burgeoning Slavic Literatures' Accelerated Development Through a Slavophile 'Inside' Lens**

Michel De Dobbeleer (Ghent University) & Tilde Geerardyn (Ghent University)

On several places in his *Uskorennoe razvitie* (1964), Georgii Gachev posits that the 'backward' literatures, during their accelerated development, did/could not only follow the West European literatures but Russian – although itself acceleratedly developed – literature as well. This contribution investigates how Slavic thinkers and critics that lived during the transitional period Gachev scrutinizes perceived the development of their 'backward' literatures, linked to the fluctuating Slavic attitude towards the West during the same period. This paper starts from how the Slavophiles in the 19th century thought about how and in which direction their (respective) literatures had to develop and then focuses on two works that explored the literary development of Slavic literatures in relation to Western Europe: Aleksandr Pypin's translation/adaptation of Johannes Scherr's world literary history *Allgemeine Geschichte der Literatur von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart: Ein Handbuch für alle Gebildeten* (1851), and the programmatic literary journal *Slavianskii mir* (1908-1911). As such the paper offers, so to say, a view on Gachev's concept as seen through an 'inside' lens. How did the critics and thinkers in the periods and particular part(s) of Europe under treatment of Gachev's monograph think about the then-ongoing (accelerated?) development of their literatures? How did they assess the often assumed pioneering role of European literature? Did they consider the Slavic literatures to linger in the periphery, and if so, did they take steps to 'deperipheralize' them?



In spite of the nowadays ever-returning critique on Gachev's concept as being too Eurocentric, even well-known Slavophiles, such as Aleksei Khomiakov and Ivan Kireevskii, only tackled the – in their eyes problematic – position of Russian culture in comparison to that of Western Europe. They did not address the pioneering role of Russia – let alone the role of their 'little' Slavic brothers – in the Slavic literary field, while one actually might expect they would have shown an inclination towards inter-Slavic or Russian literary inspiration. They merely stated that Russian literature only would be able to contribute to the legacy of West European literature if it stopped imitating the Western literary models, and allowed typical Russian elements to nationalize and improve their literature instead. Hence, they reproached Russian literature for its late development of a more nationally oriented literature, or – what could be called – its 'decelerated nationalization'.

Not unlikely, the most popular West European literary historian of the time, Johannes Scherr, in his above-mentioned world literary history, appears to divide the literary history of (burgeoning) nations into three distinguishable phases: (1) the phase in which only folk poetry is produced, (2) the phase in which foreign examples are (merely) imitated, and (3) the phase in which the literature in question deceleratedly (*vis-à-vis* the West) becomes nationally distinctive and in which certain authors try to emulate or compete with great foreign authors. In his so-called *Weltliteraturgeschichte*, Scherr covered the Slavic literatures rather briefly (ca. 20 out of 550 pages), but in the Russian translation of Scherr's work, the literary historian Aleksandr Pypin included a 530-page supplement on the Slavic literatures. Whereas Pypin devotes a lot of attention to the Slavophile 'paradigm', he incites Western and Southern Slavs to firstly follow the example of the general (thus, also literary) development of their English, French and German contemporaries, instead of following their Russian peers (or each other).

The Russian programmatic journal *Slavianskii mir* (1908-1911) observed the then-ongoing literary developments through a liberal, Slavic-oriented lens. The journal, with a focus on the cultural and national awakening of the Slavic peoples, expresses a similar, yet more evolved and future-oriented take on the development of the Slavic literatures. The contributors to the journal seem to discern a similar ('Scherr-like') phasing in their literary critical articles. They especially address the tendencies that also can be discerned as Scherr's second and third phase, imitation and (decelerated) nationalization. Moreover, the journal acknowledges that the combination of the two has enabled the Slavic peripheral literatures to clear their arears towards Western Europe. Thus, the critics who wrote for *Slavianskii mir* perceived (at least) a kind of accelerated development of the Slavic literatures.

The contributors to and inspirers of the journal, such as Janko Lavrin, problematize, that the unhealthy relationship between West European and Slavic literature is still ongoing (in spite (or maybe because?) of the accelerated development of the Slavic literatures). They believe, influenced by the cultural ideas of the pan- and neo-Slavic movement, that the development of the Slavic literatures could only gain momentum by inter-Slavic exchange of creativity and ideas.

Not only Gachev, but also contemporaries of the period treated in *Uskorennoe razvitie*, perceived significant transitions in the Slavic literary field. However, they rather seem to focus on a shift from imitation to decelerated nationalization. This shift was inspired by the Slavophile aversion of Europe and was recognized by both Scherr and Pypin and the contributors to *Slavianskii mir*. Whereas Pypin in the 1860s still encourages the Slavic literatures to follow the Western lead, *Slavianskii mir* believes the examples of Slavic peers would be more inspiring. We hypothesize that *Slavianskii mir's* confidence in the Slavic literatures is related to its exponents' particular temporal position at the

end of a period of – what Gachev called - accelerated development. After the turn of the century the development of the peripheral Slavic literatures became more and more advanced, in other words: more and more distinctively national (and – not contradictorily – more West European as well). As such the journal could be said to have turned the peripheral status of the deceleratedly 'nationalized' Slavic literatures into that of a (though merely locally) self-sufficient centre.

## **Backwardness and Accelerated Development from a Cultural Policy Perspective**

Raymond Detrez, Ghent University / University of Leuven – Keynote Speaker

'Backwardness' and 'accelerated development' are two concepts that are often applied to Eastern European history and just as often – and probably with good reason – fiercely challenged. (See, for instance Daniel Chiriot (ed.), *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989; John Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe, 1914-2014. A Century of War and Transition*. London: Palgrave, 2014.)

A distinction is made between democratic and (fascist, communist and other) authoritarian forms of accelerated development. My presentation focuses on the relevance of such distinctions and on their ideological use in reference to arts and literature in particular. Or: how authoritarian development may result in backwardness and going back to the past boils down to catching up.

## How to End Your Father's Novel? The Case 'Theodora Dimova / Dimitar Dimov'

Miglena Dikova-Milanova, Ghent University

The paper aims to examine the complex relationship between the concept of accelerated development, and the acts of self-reflection which frequently surface on the Bulgarian literary scene during periods of big political and historical changes. In 2007, the Bulgarian writer Theodora Dimova published her novel *Adriana* which is a continuation of her father's, Dimitar Dimov, unfinished work *Novel without a title* (*Роман без заглавие*, 1967). In the original novel, the main character Adriana is only 29, tragically beautiful and seductive, suffering from heavy spleen and heading towards an existential deadlock. In Dimova's *Adriana*, the character is 93. The now old, changed Adriana finds the deep cleansing power of religious spirituality, and finally, an unexpected salvation. The latter novel is anything but a simple continuation of the plot line, conceptual context and structure of Dimitar Dimov's text. For one thing, the *femme fatale* from the father's novel has been transformed into a critically minded feminist, who actively seeks her way out of life's traitorous twists.

The paper will argue that Dimova's novel uses contemporary literary techniques, such as intertextuality, available to and accessible for contemporary Bulgarian writers, also because of the historical and social changes after the fall of the Wall in 1989. However, Dimova uses these tools as to revisit and 'rewrite' her own textual roots, both personal and national. In this sense, the concept of an accelerated development, which

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is associated with the idea of quick appropriation of 'other' literary techniques and traditions, takes on an entirely different meaning. It becomes a tool for re-working, correcting, arguing with, and incorporating of, one's own literary tradition into the contemporary cultural landscape. While at the beginning of the 20th century, after another wave of major historical changes, Pencho Slaveykov needed to invent the Bulgarian literary tradition and wrote his *On the Island of the Blessed*, the contemporary Bulgarian writers 'simply' need to re-position and re-think it. Finally, is 'accelerated development' still viable, or is it replaced by the gestures of re-writing the tradition and overcoming nostalgia?

The paper refers to the texts of different contemporary Bulgarian literary critics and to the works of Maria Todorova, Georgii Gachev, Julia Kristeva and Jean-François Lyotard.

## **Romanian Avant-Garde and the Question of Cultural Imports**

Emilia Faur, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

Constantly haunted by the thought of being a peripheral movement, Romanian avant-garde was mainly preoccupied with being in synchronicity with the central European art movements. Their main concern was thus how to carry out the import and assimilation of the new art production principles. A simple chronological view of the Romanian avant-garde is unattainable: Dadaism, Futurism and Constructivism seem simultaneous. There is a time gap – the movements appear at a few years' distance from that of Europe's. By trying to overcome this gap, the Romanian avant-garde imports at a fast pace the new art production principles and doesn't manage to take its projects to their final form, therefore its movements are overlapping. The time distance is not so much the result of a communication gap. The socio-political situation in Romania contributed to it. For instance, it was impossible to adopt the radical European slogans such as the annihilation of tradition or the destruction of museums. In Romania, the museums were just being built; as for the annihilation of a tradition, the promoters asked themselves what tradition should be destroyed when there seems to be none – none, except one: the tradition based on imitation, comprising almost everything until 1900. We refer to it as: 'the tradition of borrowing'.

Being preoccupied with the image they projected in the eyes of Europe, the 19th-century Romanian intellectuals begun importing along the political and administrative institutions the cultural and artistic modes of production and display they had seen in Western Europe, in order to 'civilize' the Romanian public. This politics of import led to many dysfunctions. Titu Maiorescu (1840-1917) was one of the first intellectuals and public figures who drew the attention to the

consequences. His resounding critique directed against the import of 'form without content' opposed this policy an 'organicist' stance. His theory stated that whatever the borrowings were, they had to take into account the local state of affairs and their 'natural' development. But this prudent approach gave way to the pressure exerted by the 'synchronicist' obsession of 'being in time' with Western Europe.

By wishing to be recognized as part of an international European artistic movement, the Romanian avant-garde is forced to reckon with the two conflicting attitudes of synchronicity and organic development. To overcome that issue, the avant-garde searched for ways to prove that the borrowing question was an old story that was beside the point. In that sense, they set out a higher goal: the cultural export. For that, they made connections with other European avant-garde artists, by exchanging favours (e.g., translating and being translated, making international exhibitions at Bucharest and others). The frustration of not being yet recognized turned into irony, best seen in its late movement, 'integralism'.

The obsession with being at the center of Europe is the driving force of the Romanian artistic and social development. Unfortunately, due to the lack of resources and compatibilities, the fast development translated itself into a chaotic dispersion of the avant-garde groups. But one cannot neglect the fact that Europe furnished the ideal the Romanian avant-garde dreamed of: being at the core of Europe, as culture and nation.



## **The Garden of Hidden Delights of the Russian-Jewish Avant-Garde: Accelerated Development or a Historical Anomaly? Comments on a Recent Historiography**

Dennis Ioffe, Ghent University / University of Amsterdam

In my presentation I will focus on the way (Russian-Jewish) Avant-Garde Utopian creativity expressed itself in a variety of forms which championed accelerated development (убыстрямость развития) and 'intensification' (also 'radicalization') of some of its central concepts and imagery. I will start with the major early Russian-Jewish Avant-Garde artists (such as El Lissitzky and the brothers Antoine Pevsner & Naum Gabo). I will then proceed to what is widely known as the 'Second Russian Avant-garde' with some major Jewish experimental artists who were profoundly invested in Utopian/Dystopian themes; some of these were also focused on the concept of the Time-conquest. (Among these artists are: Oscar Rabin, Ilia Kabakov, Mikhail Grobman, Eduard Shteinberg and Mikhail Shvartsman.)

## **Accelerated Development in the Age of Globalization: Some Paradoxes. Global Markets, Translatability and Non-Translatability in Contemporary Bulgarian Literature**

Alexander Kiossev, Sofia University

The notion of 'accelerated development' presupposes a unified, linear and progressive temporality, a kind of 'Universal History' with its inevitably following phases, evolutionary stages, style formations and periods. However, today this underlying traditional image of cultural time is challenged by the processes of globalization; we are living in global, interdependent world, where national institutions are slowly eroded by mobile, corporative capital, space and its boundaries are almost 'annihilated' by speed and free movement, and under the surface of the 'global digital present' time is split in various cultural layers, isolated 'jobs' and 'niches'.

What is happening to national literatures in this trans-linear global context and its new "regime of historicity" (François Hartog)? The question seems especially relevant to those literatures which has been traditionally regarded to be 'small', 'young', 'peripheral', 'imitative', 'self-colonizing' and 'accelerated' in their historical development. What is happening to them under the reign of the new 'world literature' (global literary production in English or in/for translation), conquering the world book markets?

On examples of contemporary Bulgarian literature, I will discuss the gradual erosion of the institution of 'national literature' in this 'glocal', market-driven context.

The paper will describe the new condition of Bulgarian literature, beyond its traditional 'catching up with Europe' minority complex, its 'westernization' and 'self-colonization'. It will discuss both the recent tactics of accommodation of this literature to the global literary processes as well as its various forms of isolation and cultural resistance.

My intention is to focus on the centripetal literary usages of the 'native language' (regarded since the times of Herder and Romanticism to be inevitable precondition for each genuine literary creation and repeatedly represented as the 'Greatest Literary Work' of the national genius; a crucial idea, later conventionalized by the cultural and educational institutions of the national state). Focusing on this problem, I will investigate the complex relationship between Bulgarian language and its disappearing collective cultural memory as it is demonstrated by various contemporary strategies of literary writing. Special attention will be paid to the strange forms of competition between 'deep' Bulgarian, 'individualistic' Bulgarian, group jargons and 'global English', and to the consequent problem of 'translatability – non-translatability' with its different forms in prose and in poetry.

## **Some Notes on 'Accelerated Development' in Russian Scholarship**

Georgy Akhillovich Levinton, European University at Saint Petersburg

The concept of accelerated development (evolution) implies several important postulates. First of all, it is the very notion of evolution and especially that of development; without this notion the idea of accelerated development would be impossible. Therefore this concept cannot be understood without its evolutionist context. The evolutionism in literary scholarship has some interesting aspects and achievements connected with such scholars as V. Zhirmunsky and N. Konrad. It differs from the much more developed and popular evolutionist trend in anthropology (ethnology, folklore).

Secondly, the concept of accelerated development presupposes the idea of a model, an example to be imitated – otherwise, the very metaphor of 'overtaking' would be senseless – and it implies Eurocentrism as a basic notion of development. The development has to accelerate because it has not reached the Western standards.

It is interesting to note that Konrad's purely evolutionist comparison of Chinese and European Renaissances is free from this feature, since the connection under discussion is purely typological, polygenetic. His Chinese Renaissance writers did not strive for 'catching up' with Dante and Petrarca, while the notion of accelerated development, beside the unequal rate of development of different cultures, implies some kind of contact and the knowledge of Western models which the 'younger' literature seek to reach or surpass. This approach, thus, necessarily (and rather unnaturally) combines the typological (evolutionist and polygenetic) and 'migrationist' approaches,

the latter of which in literary scholarship is usually treated in terms of influence, borrowing, intertext, etc.

Still the term and the phenomenon somehow caught the audience and can be used by some scholars who would hardly subscribe to its evolutionist premises (e.g., M. Gasparov).

## **Literary Exchange Rates. Economic Metaphors in the Writing of Pencho Slaveykov and Their Potential to Conceptualize the Dynamics of Literary History**

Henrike Schmidt, Institute for Slavic Literatures, Hamburg University /  
Peter Szondi-Institute for Comparative Literature, Freie Universität Berlin

Pencho Slaveykov (1866-1910) is a key figure of Bulgarian modernism and has, with his sharp and witty criticism, largely contributed to the rhetoric of Bulgarian post-revival literature as a 'belated' one. The trope of 'belatedness' has in later scholarly thinking been related to the concepts of 'accelerated development' (Gachev) or 'self-colonizing cultures' (Kiossev), which shall critically be reevaluated throughout the conference.

Within this overall framework the paper aims to analyze the use of economic metaphors for the description of literary dynamics, as they feature abundantly in the feuilletonistic and literary writing by Pencho Slaveykov. Thus, for example, intertextual references are described by Slaveykov as a credit or loan from a foreign bank, which is later 'paid back' at high rates of interest. The usage of economic metaphors within Slaveykov's writings is supposedly inspired by Goethe and his concept of world literature as international trade, but develops as well against the historical background of the Bulgarian post-revival period, when, after liberation from Ottoman rule, a new economic system is implemented, including a new national currency (the Bulgarian lev) and a modern bank and credit system.

The paper has a two-fold intention: 1. it seeks to explore Pencho Slaveykov's vision of Bulgarian literature as part of a global literary market and credit system (which stands in distinct contrast to his anti-market orientation) and 2., on a broader level, to test the potential of economic metaphors as a spatially organized descriptive model, alternative to the temporal approach of acceleration (being well aware of the fact, that the model of capitalist credit economy may be a colonizing factor in itself).

## **The Grandeur and Discontent of Metaphorically Formulated Hypotheses**

Ljuba Tarvi, Helsinki University

When Albert Einstein offered the mathematical world the concise result of many years of his elaborations on relativity,  $E=mc^2$ , it was translated into common parlance as the intrinsic connectedness of matter and energy. This hypothesis needed a practical confirmation, which followed shortly. When, inspired by Einstein's ideas, Mikhail Bakhtin enriched the literary theory with the term 'chronotope' to designate "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature", that insight still needed a theoretical support and methodological elaborations.

The umbrella term a 'metaphorically formulated hypothesis' or a 'metaphorical hypothesis' may be roughly defined as a research idea formulated in a concise and cognitively appealing way that activates imagination, i.e., interaction between information and related associative connections. The shortcomings are obvious: such a formulation ensures both a wide range of interpretations (as will be shown on the example of Gachev's term 'accelerated development of literature') and the impossibility to falsify the findings (e.g., Jung supported Freud's hypothesis on the existence of the unconscious, but they disagreed as regards its contents). The merits of metaphorical hypotheses, however, are difficult to overestimate, since they inspire one's non-Aristotelian logic and 'leaps in faith' – all that due to the fact that, as Robert S. Hartman believes, metaphorical formulations pertain to the intrinsic level of values.



An example: in his three-page essay 'Art as Technique' (1917), Shklovsky expressed the basic idea of Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor* (1975) and Lakoff-Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), and he built his arguments on laws of perception long before the cognitive approach took root (no claim that these ideas were copied).

As I intend to show, Gachev's 'eye-catching' and 'mind-provoking' term 'accelerated development of literature' is a fine example of a metaphorical hypothesis with all its merits and demerits. By the drive of its metaphorical suggestive power, his idea might be compared with such related hypotheses as, for instance, Tynianov's concept of 'literary dynamics' or Jakobson's notion of the 'shifting dominant'. Such ideas are a major driving force in interconnecting the humanities, the study of how people process and document their experience, and exact sciences. One should not underestimate the importance of such hypotheses for revitalizing the pool of theory – their provoking role is comparable with that played by *haute couture* in the evolution of *prêt-à-porter*.

## **Georgii Gachev (1929-2008): An Intellectual Portrait**

Galin Tihanov, Queen Mary University of London – Keynote Speaker

In this paper, I seek to locate the idea of ‘accelerated progression’ in the larger context of Gachev’s intellectual career and Soviet culture and ideology of the 1960s. On the basis of ample primary research, I reconstruct Gachev’s intellectual biography and his later journey from Hegelian universalism to a post-romantic embrace of particularity.

## **Terror as Acceleration in the Philosophy of Alexandre Kojève and the Narrative of Boris Poplavsky**

Dmitry Tokarev, Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House), Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg / Higher School of Economics, Saint Petersburg

This paper is concerned with two emblematic figures of the younger generation of Russian émigrés in Paris, the poet and writer Boris Poplavsky (1903-1935) and the philosopher Aleksandr Kozhevnikov, alias Alexandre Kojève (1902-1968). If the first one has been posthumously christened the 'tsarevich of the Montparnasse kingdom', the second, thanks to his famous seminar (1933-1939) devoted to Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, has come to be regarded as one of the pioneers of French Neo-Hegelianism.

Beginning with the publication in 1947 by Raymond Queneau of Kojève's *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, this revolutionary (in all senses) interpretation of Hegel has remained a focal point not just for Hegel scholars, but also for specialists in social philosophy, psychoanalysis and even literature.

Despite numerous studies regarding Kojève's teaching, it is still difficult to get a comprehensive picture of his Russian contacts. Indeed, scholars of both Kojève and Poplavsky have completely overlooked the fact that Poplavsky, a key figure of the Russian diaspora, attended the Seminar. Most importantly, Poplavsky was at the Seminar in 1934-1935, that is at the time he was working on his second novel, *Domoi s nebes* (*Homeward from Heaven*, 1934-1935), which he completed several weeks before his death.

In this novel, Poplavsky develops some socio-political speculations which he likely borrowed from Kojève's teaching (Kojève discussed the master-slave dialectic during the 1933-1934 and 1934-1935 academic years). I will focus on what Kojève calls the dialectics of Terror in Hegel, and will try to highlight the echoes of his interpretation in Poplavsky's novel. In particular, I will touch on Kojève's idea of Terror as a means of 'acceleration' of History. Poplavsky grafts it on literary ground arguing that Russian writers in exile must experience Terror and death in order to become "terrorist writers" (in Jean Paulhan's terminology, see *Les Fleurs de Tarbes, ou la terreur dans les lettres*, 1936) and to "sublate" (*aufheben*) classical literary forms (i.e., the literature of the "fathers", the Rhetoricians, as Paulhan puts it) and finally to catch up with the European literature which he considers to be more innovative in producing new ideas and fictional techniques.

## Thinking Anew the 'Literary Clocks' of the World (the Bulgarian Case)

Marie Vrinat-Nikolov, INALCO/CREE, Paris / CETOBaC (EHESS/CNRS), Paris

Since the emergence of post-colonial studies and the renewal of questions about world literature, literary history can no longer be bound by a purely national perspective. Addressing the literary fact with a transnational and transdisciplinary approach enables fruitful perspectives. In my research on the history of the Bulgarian literary space, two points seem crucial to me because they are insufficiently studied: its languages (especially Ladino, Turkish, Armenian, Romani) and its own temporality.

The notions of 'delay', 'accelerated development', theorized by Georgiy Gachev have already been questioned by Bulgarian researchers. Nikola Gueorguiev, for instance, remarked that "Скоростомер за литературния процес няма, така че за ускорено развитие на литературата през XIX в. Не може да се говори поне в полето на литературната наука". And we find an interesting metaphor in Pamuk's *Black Book*, where "the various literatures are like clocks hung up on the walls" of a house and it would be "stupid to say that one of the clocks in the rooms is 5 hours ahead of another, since [...] it can be said that the same clock is 7 hours behind. [...] It's even more stupid to conclude that one's clock is imitating the others."

How can one escape the 'Western European centrism' without neglecting the fact that Paris, London, Berlin and New York are "literary Greenwich" (Casanova)? How can we put into perspective, without comparing them in terms of 'being ahead' or 'lagging behind', the different temporalities, periodizations, events, "qualitative leaps" (Berque) of each literary space within the world space? Is it not also the

notion of 'development' that must be questioned? Indeed, it is difficult to get it out of the teleological idea of improvement (forms, texts, writings). And that of "ruptures" regularly interrupting the "organic course" of literature (Zhechev)?

Considering literature as a "space of possibilities" (Bourdieu) at a given period, a 'polycentric' space with different temporalities, forms and rhythms, an open and transnational space of dialogue and intertextuality, I intend to explore some 'road-maps', such as poetics of the diverse, of the *totalité-monde* (Glissant); the triangulation between "center", "semi-periphery" and "periphery" proposed by David, inspired by Wallerstein's work, will also be examined in order to attempt thinking anew staggered literary historicities which develop their own modalities. The reciprocity of intercultural dialogue, "l'effet en retour des innovations de la semi-périphérie, voire de la périphérie, sur le centre" (David), which is increased by cultural globalisation, should be included in the analysis.

## **Acceleration and retardation in Russian culture**

Willem G. Weststeijn, University of Amsterdam – Keynote Speaker

The development of Russian culture does not materially differ from that of the western European countries. That is to say, Russia had its Baroque, Romanticism, Realism, Modernism etc. at approximately the same time as at the heyday of these movements in France, England and Germany. However, due to historical and political circumstances, which in Russia were different from those in Western Europe, we have to conclude that there were also differences in cultural development: sometimes Russia clearly lagged behind Western Europe, sometimes it ran parallel with it, sometimes it took the lead. Starting from the periodization of literature that we can find in the work of Likhachev, Chizhevskii and Döring/Smirnov, I will trace the development of Russian culture from the tenth century until the present day.