

## Teaching Students about Culture

### Participants:

**Philip Bullock** (School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College, London)

**Andy Byford** (University of Oxford)

**Nancy Condee** (University of Pittsburgh)

**Boris Firsov** (European University at St Petersburg)

**Michael Gorham** (University of Florida)

**Pavel Klubkov** (St Petersburg State University)

**Ekaterina Melnikova** (European University at St Petersburg)

**Aleksei Novozhilov** (St Petersburg State University)

**Sarah D. Phillips** (Indiana University)

**Pavel Rykin** (Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences/Institute of Linguistic Research, St Petersburg)

**Gayane Shagoyan** (Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, National Academy of Sciences, Erevan)

**Milena Benovska-Sabkova** (New Bulgarian University, Sofia)

**Yakov Sher** (Kemerovo State University)

**Wes Williams** (University of Oxford)

*The full version of the Forum, published in our Russian edition, also included comments by Pavel Belkov, Yuri Berezkin, Vladimir Buzin, Lev Klein, Valerian Kozmin, Maria Stanyukovich, Valery Tishkov, and Valentina Uzunova.*

## Teaching Students about Culture

### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In the first issue of *Forum for Anthropology and Culture*, we organised a discussion under the title, 'Cultural Anthropology: The State of the Field', with the participation of sixteen academics from Russia, Armenia, Britain, the USA and Australia. The participants agreed that over the last two decades or so, important changes have taken place in the social sciences and the humanities. These include the move away from 'grand theories/grand narratives' (Marxism, structuralism, and so on), and from interpretation towards description; the shift of attention to areas of culture that would formerly have been considered marginal; the move from rural areas to urban areas in fieldwork; the concentration on the present, rather than the past, etc. Historians, folklorists, linguists, anthropologists, and others involved in the discussion all pointed to similar processes in their particular discipline.

For this issue of *Forum for Anthropology and Culture*, we decided to ask university teachers in anthropology, history, archaeology, modern

languages and literature, sociologists, and other specialists in the study of human cultures, the following questions:

- 1 How are these changes reflected (and/or how should they be reflected) in university teaching? Has the educational process kept pace with the conceptual and intellectual changes evident in the humanities/social sciences at large?
- 2 What would you like to see altered in the current methods of teaching undergraduates/postgraduates about culture, and what aspects of it do you think work well at the moment?
- 3 What teaching resources (course books, online databases/guides, audiovisual materials etc.) do you find valuable, and why? If you produce in-house materials, what are they, and what works particularly well with students? What kind of 'hands on' training do you provide — in fieldwork, work with sources, etc.?<sup>1</sup>
- 4 Where do you recruit your students and what kind of employment do they go into after they finish their studies?

We also approached a number of younger scholars who completed their undergraduate degrees relatively recently, some of whom were still in the process of doing doctoral work (while others were of recent post-doctoral status) with a slightly different questionnaire, reading as follows:

- 1 How are these changes reflected (and/or how should they be reflected) in university teaching? Has the educational process kept pace with the conceptual and intellectual changes evident in the humanities/social sciences at large, and should it attempt to do so? Do you sense a gap between what you were taught and the actual state of academic work in your field?
- 2 What would you like to see altered in the current methods of teaching undergraduates/postgraduates about culture, and what aspects of it do you think work well at the moment? Is there anything that you

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<sup>1</sup> This question was formulated slightly differently for the Russian participants, who were asked, 'What do you think a new unified text-book for anthropology (ethnography, history, folklore, linguistics) should be like, and is such a unified text-book necessary (or a group of such textbooks)? The question relates to the time-honoured practice, established in Soviet schools and universities in the mid-1930s, of teaching courses by reference to a single recognised text-book or course-book, the so-called 'unified' or 'stable' textbook (*edinyi/stabilnyi ucheb-nik*). Since the Soviet Union collapsed, such textbooks have no longer been imposed on educational establishments by ministerial fiat, but their disappearance has been associated with a vacuum at the level of course materials; many school and university teachers, bereft of recognised course materials, have been uncertain what they should now teach. Since universities are starved of funding and do not have resources to provide multiple copies of secondary studies or Xeroxed extracts from these, and since Western-published materials are out of reach in terms of distribution and cost (as well as language), 'unified textbooks' — or more broadly, widely-distributed and low-cost textbooks and readers of high intellectual quality that could be used for university teaching — are a sorely-felt need with many university teachers in Russia and the CIS. [Editor].

feel was missing from what you were taught in terms of skills and knowledge relevant to the research that you were doing?

**3** How would you like to see a new educational programme in anthropology/cultural history/the study of culture develop? What should be included in such a programme, and what should be excluded (or retained) from earlier programmes?

**4** Do you feel that you were adequately prepared for scholarly work in your field? What could be done to improve education and training, in your view?<sup>1</sup>

What issues turned out to be bothering the representatives of different academic generations whom we canvassed? The participants with most experience of university education from the pedagogical side, especially the Russian ones (e.g. Yuri Berezkin, Lev Klein) were concerned, above all, by the marked drop in the level of knowledge provided by school education. Maria Stanyukovich's portrait of a university fresher is grotesquely overstated, but many of us will have no trouble in recognising it.

*They write slowly, in messy handwriting and with solecisms of spelling, grammar, and syntax. They're just not used to writing — they've spent their lives ticking boxes in multiple-choice tests or typing texts straight into the computer (or more often, cut-and-pasting them from the Internet). Making lecture notes is a real ordeal for them. They're inarticulate too: they've got used to the frightful pidgin they hear on trendy youth programmes and to the sound-tracks of trashy US films dubbed into what passes for Russian. At the age when earlier generations of schoolchildren were spending their time reading, they were playing computer games. Detective stories and tales about pirates and suchlike may not have been great literature, but they did get children curious enough to peek at an atlas now and again, and give them some kind of sense of the lives and national peculiarities of different peoples and the different ways people lived in the past. The sludgy torrent of fantasy novels that has replaced them doesn't excite the imagination: it chokes it; you can't get any useful information out of those books either. Worst of all, everyone thinks that stuff is 'real modern literature'. It's amazing to realise that they actually do know a thing or two about music and the visual arts.*

Naturally, in this context university teachers have to devote time to school education, including education in subjects lying outside the traditional school syllabus, such as ethnography and archaeology (cf. the remarks below by Lev Klein).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The answers to this questionnaire follow the answers to the first questionnaire.

<sup>2</sup> In the complete version of the discussion, Vladimir Buzin writes specifically on the issue of ethnography in schools, basing his comments partly on personal experience of trying to teach the subject in two St Petersburg establishments. There is no centralised programme for the

The Western participants in the discussion take a more detached view of students' levels of preparedness. Everyone (in the US especially) has long got used to the fact that the aims of university and school teaching are different, and that moving from one to the other creates significant difficulties for first-year students. University teachers take a philosophical view of the situation, but concrete questions do arise about how to deal with it, especially given the 'customer-oriented climate' to which Andy Byford refers. Accordingly, students' own attitudes to education inevitably impact on the content and style of teaching. As everyone knows, if there are no takers for a given course, it may simply not run. (Actually, this state of affairs is starting to make itself felt in Russian universities as well.) The 'market dynamic' can have a constrictive effect on teachers' freedom of manoeuvre too. As Michael Gorham says, '*students [...] generally display a far lower tolerance level for subjectivity, marginality, and ambiguity than do their teachers. At the end (and beginning) of the day [...] they still want unambiguous answers and clearly articulated narratives that do make sense out of an often complicated reality.*' Yet on the other hand, as Gorham himself, and also Wes Williams and Sarah Phillips, show, these very same 'accursed questions' in the contemporary humanities sometimes provoke more enthusiasm among students than the more traditional approaches to the subject. Whichever way, Russian, British, and American academics all acknowledge that changes are essential: even if you're going to cover the same material as before, you have to teach it differently.

At the same time, exactly this requirement to teach differently is particularly vexed when it comes to Russian universities, given that the radical shifts in intellectual paradigms brought about by decades of intellectual isolation mean that the levels reached by the teachers themselves are often far from ideal. As Pavel Klubkov argues, '*most teachers have been faced with an urgent need to master all the many treasures that mankind accumulated over the seventy years that we missed. This enforced acceleration of tempi combined with unfettered relativism means that young people with the same degree from different universities do not share a common outlook or common interests.*' Meanwhile, as our younger participants see it, '*one of the basic tasks of an education in a fundamental sense (that is, an education aimed at training academics, not specialists in 'applied' fields) is to give all students with a particular specialisation a unitary body of knowledge about the elements of their subject. In an ideal world, any anthropologist who has completed an equivalent course in Russia, the CIS, Europe or*

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subject, but there is strong interest among some ethnographers in popularising it among schoolchildren, an interest which, as Buzin points out, goes back to the 1920s at least. [Editor].

*America, should have the same “foundation”*” (Ekaterina Melnikova). And this is really a key requirement if one bears in mind that Russian university graduates now have to learn to communicate not just with each other, but with colleagues from abroad as well.

The range encompassed by courses and their content is an equally pressing topic for young scholars in the West. As Andy Byford aptly remarks, the pragmatic decisions made in British universities (e.g. the focus on a single language, or at most two languages, in traditional ‘modern languages’ courses) generate methodological bias. There is a danger that, in this context, interdisciplinary endeavours will end up being expressed in a few token optional courses at best (what Byford terms *‘renting out space’*).

In the US university tradition, the problem is slightly different: how to hit the ‘golden mean’ when a single introductory course (‘Russian/French/German Culture/Anthropology/Sociology 101’) may be taken by philosophers, historians, literature majors, social scientists, and scientists. In situations like this, the case study appeals as a way of organising multi-disciplinary materials, and becomes not so much an expression of academic helplessness as an essential instrument of effective teaching. At the same time, experienced university teachers who already have years of inter-faculty conflicts behind them emphasise that maintaining a clear disciplinary profile can have advantages. As Nancy Condee puts it, *‘disciplinary walls demarcate a space within which critical specialised knowledge can best be fostered’*.

Russian education, on the other hand, as the participants in this discussion see it, suffers precisely from the students’ narrow specialisation — and this despite the fact that school education in Russia is by tradition remarkably broad.<sup>1</sup> But it is not simply Russian scholars who are preoccupied by the issue of broadening research fields and searching for fundamental methodological principles. Several of our Western participants emphasise the role of cultural studies, which allow, for instance, specialists in literature to broaden the conceptual framework of their discipline and to expand the arsenal of possible analytical approaches to it (see e.g. Andy Byford, Nancy Condee, Philip Bullock).

The lack of useful **textbooks** is a point that mostly bothers Russian anthropologists of the older generation. Westerners have grown up in a pedagogical culture without ‘unified textbooks’ and they see the problem more broadly: which materials (including ‘home-produced’ textbooks and readers, visual aids, IT resources and so on) are most successful when working with students? Those with recent

<sup>1</sup> The syllabus has been slimmed down since the Soviet period, but still requires a large number of subjects, including higher maths and sciences, to be taken to advanced level for those graduating from academic, as opposed to vocational, schools at age seventeen. [Editor].

experience of studying at undergraduate and graduate level in Russia (with the exception of Pavel Rykin, who has some highly critical things to say about his university education) generally don't mention textbooks either. It's clear they know very well that you can work successfully without textbooks (or, to be more accurate, that you don't only need them). But senior Russian anthropologists' preoccupation with textbooks has a perfectly rational foundation: anthropology (in the sense of social and cultural anthropology, rather than physical anthropology, which always had a foothold) is a fairly new discipline in Russia, and this circumstance partly explains the problems in getting hold of any decent course-books (though as a matter of fact there aren't even any in ethnography, which does have deeper roots). The impossibility of finding quality books should be set alongside the ever-increasing shelf-space — metres of it — already devoted to textbooks in ethnography, anthropology, and 'culturology', most of which, unfortunately, aren't up to much.

So what *should* anthropology textbooks be like? Here every participant has different ideas. According to Valery Tishkov, they should *'represent the discipline (socio-cultural anthropology or even just anthropology) from a point of view that is at once up-to-date and broad-ranging, including sections on, say, medical, urban, and political anthropology, transnational communities, the anthropology of the media and so on. Including subjects like this is the optimal way of stimulating discussion; textbooks of this kind would not only provide students with knowledge but also give them guidance about the sort of topics that are interesting to work with'*. Milena Benovska-Sabkova proposes a slightly different scheme of things: *'A general textbook on anthropology needs to have a) a historiographical bent (dealing with the evolution of schools and concepts in anthropology), and b) a substantial scholarly apparatus, including a topic-based bibliography, chronologies of important dates, personalia, and events, and a glossary of technical terms.'* For his part, Yuri Berezkin evokes the ideal thus: *'Students in anthropology could work from course-books like Marvin Harris's The Rise of Anthropological Theory, only brought up to date and adapted to include not just criticism of directions the author doesn't happen to approve of, but description of still unresolved problems. There should be several such course-books in use at once, and the student should have to work through all of them.'* Here the idea of an international textbook,<sup>1</sup> or of courses using several different textbooks produced in different countries suggests itself, since if *'any anthropologist who has completed an equivalent course in Russia, the CIS, Europe or America, should have the same "foundation"'*, then the material covered in textbooks should be comparable.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the current project to create a Franco-German history textbook for teaching in schools in those countries. [Editor].

The main further questions relating to university education as such boil down to *how to teach and how to learn*, i.e. are essentially variations on our question 1. It should be said that the questions discussed in the first issue of *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* were close to the hearts of many participants, and that many began precisely by evoking these. Pavel Klubkov formulates the connection particularly clearly: *'The rejection of 'grand' theories, the resurgence of the descriptive style, the interest in inconsequential details, the rejection of historical reconstructions, and many other such phenomena, are all related to the realisation that the social and anthropological sciences (as well as semiotics and the humanities in general) have the same object.'* And further: *'positing the fundamental irreducibility of an object of research or conversely, asserting the fact that every aspect of it is significant, is unconstructive when it comes to education. I suspect that it is unconstructive when it comes to history, too. Teaching should focus on simple concepts: how to collect material and why it needs to be collected; where the boundaries lie between what is proven, what remains unproven, and what cannot be proved, or between what has been refuted, what remains unrefuted, and what is irrefutable. Perhaps most importantly of all, one should teach students to distinguish well-reasoned texts from irrational ones.'* Wes Williams also has some very interesting things to say about the gains and losses that result from the shift among scholars and teachers towards descriptive rather than interpretive work, and towards 'marginal' phenomena.

The well-known difficulty of combining attention to fundamental and general issues on the one hand, and new ideas on the other, in our pedagogical strategies is resolved by most of the discussants with a suggestion that the former are in fact more important. What is more, this view is advanced not just by the older participants (for instance, Pavel Klubkov and Valerian Kozmin), but also by the younger scholars (see especially Gayane Shagoyan, Pavel Rykin, Ekaterina Melnikova). In the words of Valerian Kozmin, *'Education in anthropology shouldn't try to keep up with current trends, it should try to respond to them. One can anticipate that, given current conditions, diversity will proliferate still further, which will mean using undergraduate training to produce all-round specialists who later on will be able to "answer the call" of their subject when they reach a given scholarly community.'* Gayane Shagoyan has some very similar thoughts: *'Education in social anthropology has no need to chase after the changes outlined in the preamble, since they will catch up with the researcher themselves and dictate new rules; it is only necessary to teach future anthropologists to be sensitive to the changes.'*

Philip Bullock's answers make clear that a person who has covered very traditional ground at BA level, and even as a graduate student, can easily 'switch over' to another level when he or she starts independent scholarly work. It could be that it's not so much specific

material or even a concrete approach that has to be taught so much as an attitude (here one remembers Lidiya Ginzburg's recollections of how the famous Formalist critic and theorist Yuri Tynyanov didn't so much 'teach' in his classes as publicly carry out his own scholarly work).

At the same time, our discussants think that some weight should be given to new ideas and approaches in university programmes aimed at producing young academics. As one might expect, it is above all the younger participants (for example, Ekaterina Melnikova) who argue that way: *'It goes without saying that new anthropological trends should be represented in the programme. The range of specialised options should be ready to react to any new or changed modes of thinking, ideas or methods. There should be a wide variety of specialised courses, and they should always be changing, developing in tandem with 'actually existing' science. Of course, students from a given section, faculty, or department will not be able to take all of the specialist options. But the very selection ought to some extent to reveal the basic trends in contemporary science, and show that changes are occurring. And every student should, of course, be able to choose a number of topics which attract his or her interest, just as a professional researcher does.'* Equally, Michael Gorham gives an intriguing account of the way that changing academic priorities feed through into his own academic programme.

In many of the answers, what is under discussion is essentially two different models of university education — an introductory programme based on traditional lectures, and a supplementary level constituted by optional courses and seminars with a narrower thematic range. What is more, the participants place most emphasis on seminars (which is no doubt another reason why textbooks are not of that much interest to them). This emphasis is natural, since seminars allow students to engage in active dialogue with teachers (if not necessarily contradict what they say!) and it is only in such a process of dialogue that one can learn to address topics of serious scholarly interest and to have a sense that one is really doing research. It is seminar work that gives students the desire to think more clearly about topics and allows them to develop skills for doing this (as Boris Firsov suggests). Sarah Phillips's seminar on Chernobyl, described in detail here, allows us to see how many stimulating topics and approaches can be evolved when historical events are described in a seminar offering a broad anthropological perspective on these.

The last question aimed at the more experienced participants gives testimony to new concern with the issue of where knowledge and skills relating to anthropology, sociology, and other such disciplines are used beyond the university. In the former USSR, this concern

is bound up with the decline in the prestige of academic work over recent years, and the lack of demand in the employment market for specialists in the social sciences and humanities. The situation elsewhere, of course, is different, and sometimes strikingly so (cf. Nancy Condee's comments on how in the US, '*virtually all doctoral students find employment in academia*'). But everywhere the question of what happens to our students when they leave is pressing. There are no ready-made solutions presented here, nor did we expect any. But it's important that teachers should feel responsible for their students' fate in a broad sense, as well as for the quality of study offered to them. As Maria Stanyukovich argues, it's as well to help students with this side of things (e.g. how to apply for grants, how to put together applications and curricula vitae, where to publish your work and so on). But we should be thinking beyond scholarly careers as well. Valery Tishkov argues that '*we have to create a demand for anthropological knowledge in broad spheres of society, such as government, business, diplomacy, health care, cultural institutions and the media, and so on. The AAA puts out special brochures listing where anthropologists work and what kind of jobs can be done by them. To put it another way: we have to create a labour market for anthropologists.*' It would be hard to object to this. But how to do it?

We have only been able to mention a few topics raised by the discussion here. There are many more points of interest, including the place of educational and research technologies (see e.g. Andy Byford's comments, and Milena Benovska-Sabkova's), the specifics of the education process in Russia (see e.g. Lev Klein), and the advantages and disadvantages of different national education cultures (e.g. Klubkov, Klein, Byford, Condee), and so on. But we will leave the participants to speak for themselves here. We would like to end by thanking all of them for the time and effort they expended on producing such interesting and useful contributions to the discussion.

*Albert Baiburin*

NANCY CONDEE

**Teaching Anthropology and Cultural History**

The discussion in *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* No. 1 addressed three perceived shifts across a range of disciplines, emphasising the sub-discipline of cultural anthropology. These three shifts were traced as the movement away from core issues to marginal ones (variously construed); from an emphasis on the rural to the urban; and from an interest in the archaic to the contemporary. Issues no. 2 and 3 of *Forum* push these issues forward along two trajectories: on the one hand, the relation of the research object to the researcher's subjectivity; on the other, issues of pedagogy, methods, and resources. With so much territory to cover, it is hardly surprising that many Western humanities scholars would pull out their most capacious suitcase, the battered portmanteau of cultural studies, in hopes everything would fit into it. Indeed, everything will, but in a hopeless jumble. Perhaps this jumble is unavoidable, or perhaps it is the utilitarian use to which cultural studies is often put, as if it were an empty, purely functional container.

**Nancy Condee**  
University of Pittsburgh

I mention this at the outset because my response here attempts instead to situate itself in relation

to two intellectual clusters: on the one hand, a cluster of specific, internal debates of cultural studies (rather than its ‘empty shell’); on the one hand, Slavic studies as a relative latecomer to these debates, insofar as it had been occupied with other debates of its own. My premise here is that these two projects—cultural studies and Slavic—have in recent years creatively disrupted each other’s habits of thought; their incompatibility has been productive in the extreme. At the end of this essay—and against the background of this incompatibility, I will attempt some brief answers to the *Forum*’s most recent questions on pedagogy, methods, and resources.

### **Marginal, urban, contemporary: portrait of the researcher as research object**

By cultural studies I mean, initially, the efforts of Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall, and others working on the cusp of sociology and literature. The seminal texts of the Birmingham Centre — Hoggart’s *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), Raymond Williams’s *Culture and Society* (1958), and others — emerged in the context of a crisis within the Old Left, brought on by the ‘Eastern’ crisis of 1956, long before the ‘Western’ unrest of 1968. In some ways, 1956 was our original wound, marking several generations of Western Slavists off from many of our Western colleagues in the humanities, even as we may have shared some subset of leftist commitments. This estrangement has never been overcome — nor, perhaps, should it — and it constitutes for many US Slavists a key element in the oxymoron ‘Russian cultural studies.’

The early preoccupations of cultural studies, particularly in the work of Hoggart, concerned the reclamation of working-class culture in the face of two dominant, countervailing forces: on the one hand, US mass culture and, on the other, the ‘great tradition’ of F. R. Leavis. The Birmingham Centre’s engagement with mass culture contained a polemic with leading figures of the Frankfurt School, principally Horkheimer and Adorno, whose writings tended to cast mass culture as rather uniformly debased in contrast to the alleged authenticity and emancipatory potential of elite culture. The work of Stuart Hall and others sought to introduce a more nuanced reading of consumer practices, one that emphasised the ways in which mass culture might be appropriated to political agendas differing from those encoded at the stages of production, distribution, and regulation.

As for the Birmingham Centre’s polemic with Leavis, it honoured his contribution as much as it contravened its elitism. What differentiated both Leavis and the early practitioners of cultural studies from their donnish forebears was an absorbing commitment to literary analysis as a moral project: for Leavis, the refinement of

sensibility; for the practitioners of what came to be called cultural studies, the imbrication of working-class culture across everyday experience.

Why am I recounting this brief history? Already we can see the ways in which the cultural studies debate on two ‘fronts’ — in social terms, against both mass culture and elite culture; in ideological terms, a polemic with both the Frankfurt School and with Leavis — curiously refracts the shifts sketched out in *Forum*’s first issue: the move to the self-avowedly marginal; the move to working-class, urban culture; the move to contemporary, lived experience. This coincidence is due less to the capaciousness of cultural studies than to the productivity of the Birmingham debates — initially by a group of marginalised, extramural faculty — for making sense of a context in which an increasing number of intellectuals found themselves by the 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, the surface paradox — marginal yet urban — might be seen as symptomatic of the declining status of academic life itself, a crisis in the researcher’s subjectivity played out across the research object. Among the responses to this crisis was the effort, as Steve Smith puts it in another context, to ‘lay bare the unacknowledged workings of larger systems of power’ (*Forum* 1: 77), to reveal, for example, the self-interest of a Western anthropology originating — as Aleksandr Panchenko remarks (74) — in a colonial project no longer as attentive to academics as it once had been.

Analogously, the shift from categories of ‘folk culture’ (as an implicitly pre-industrial construct) and ‘mass culture’ (with its overweening emphasis on the production stage and its inert consumer) towards ‘popular culture’ encouraged an exploration of how an active *populus* participated in the meaning construction of modernity’s artefacts in a fashion more compatible with intellectual work that, whatever its diversity, conceived of itself neither as ‘folk’ nor as ‘mass.’

### **Authenticity, identity politics, and the Slavist as newcomer**

While cultural studies is thus a useful rubric in addressing some of the *Forum*’s debates, it is not therefore an inert or empty object. Its internal debates have their own centripetal force, organizing issues around recurrent political concerns. Whether this is a good thing or not is a separate issue. Let me briefly identify two ways in which the centripetalism is evident.

The first might all-too-sketchily be referred to as the divide between Gramsci and Foucault: on the one hand, Gramsci’s preoccupations around political agency (how change happens; who is empowered to effect it; in whose name) and hegemony (the countervailing relations of domination not acknowledged as such); on the other hand, Foucault’s subjectivity (an anti-humanist critique of the myth of the unique, coherent self) and representation (his critique of

authentic representation or ‘true text’). While Edward Said is in no sense a representative of cultural studies — his contribution is too large to be subsumed under that rubric — those scholars in cultural studies who have engaged with his foundational *Orientalism* have found themselves caught precisely between these two powerful theorists as they inform Said’s work. If the Orientalist text wilfully distorts the East, is there then an undistorted, ‘authentic’ text? If the categories of authenticity and true representation are indeed spurious, on what foundation does one launch a bid for the political agency of resistance? What might, for shorthand’s sake, be called the Gramsci/Foucault divide vitiate ‘authenticity’ of its representational power and underscores the urgency of accounting for the researcher’s subjectivity. As the project of cultural studies moved from its early debates to its ‘Middle Period’ in the 1970s and early 1980s, this fissure became of profound significance, simultaneously subverting consensus and binding researchers together around these debates.

The second recurrent concern — characteristic of its US variant from the mid-1980s onward — also attends to the *Forum* question of the researcher’s subjectivity, taking the form of identity politics: primarily, of course, postcolonial studies, but also surely gender studies, queer theory, disability studies, etc., inter-sedimented in a fashion that no cautious scholar would undertake to sort out. Indisputably, the same issues of agency and hegemony, of subjectivity and representation play out in this ‘Third Period’ of cultural studies. But in the realm of identity politics, we are not dealing so much with the foundational incompatibility of Gramsci and Foucault as with the fragmentation of (the myth of) leftist solidarity into ever more parochial and temporary alliances of hybrid identities. And while postcolonial studies has sustained an international sweep, much of contemporary US cultural studies has become increasingly monolingual and amero-centric to the detriment of a project whose original muscularity had derived from its determination to move beyond US culture. It is at this juncture in the mid-1980s that a number of Slavists began to venture into what retrospectively became identified as Russian cultural studies.

### **Russian cultural studies: four contradictions**

Four contradictions that haunt much current work operating between cultural studies and Slavic studies. My comments — arising, one the one hand, from Slavist training and, on the other, from twelve years as director of a cultural studies PhD programme with ninety faculty from twenty departments — might be considered an account of the schizophrenia triggered by these very different research cultures.

A first contradiction derives from a major weakness of cultural studies since its inception: its reluctance after 1956 to engage with the contradictions of the Second World and the conundrums that the USSR had posed for Marxism of any stripe. The studied neglect of the Second World — as unworthy of attention, as not Marxist, etc. — revealed a certain political innumeracy: while attentive to the predations of the First World in the Third World, postcolonial theorists strategically neglected not only the existence of the Second World as such, but even its presence in the Third World. At stake is not a matter of ‘equal time’ for compartmentalised spheres of political hegemony; rather, it was a wilful blindness to the imprint of the Second World on the literature, cinema, architecture, ‘friendship societies,’ and political infrastructure of their own subject matter. This erasure of the Second World was not of the same order as that of, say, Latin America or Japan, either of which might be deftly handled in a copious footnote. Rather, it was one of such magnitude that it could only be handled — in the ‘free marketplace of ideas’ — by thundering silence. The failure of Soviet Marxism-Leninism in the late 1980s merely justified this intellectual incuriosity.

As for Western Slavists, entering into cultural studies as an already constituted community at a relatively late stage of its debates, we found little common ground for even the most foundational terms. For the First World, modernity is incomprehensible without capitalism, the nation-state, and liberal democracy. For scholars of the Second World, these were absent, but *present* were other concepts central to second-world modernity — for example, the command economy, the party-state, and democratic centralism.

A second paradox of Russian cultural studies concerns its model of interdisciplinarity. The Cold War model of area studies, familiar to us as REES [Russian and East European Studies] or Slavic Studies [cf. the name of the main American professional body, the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies], is a coalition of already constituted disciplines — ‘economics as such’; ‘history as such’; ‘literature as such’ — that come together in order to share a common set of interests. This project is laudable, but it is not the only project. By contrast, cultural studies is the destabilisation of the discipline before it comes to the table: ‘literature’ is already not literature; ‘sociology’ is already not sociology. If area studies brings together the literary theorist and the economist out of a legitimate concern that their fields are otherwise remote from one another, cultural studies brings the literary theorist and the economist together out of an understanding that they are closely tied. Postcolonial research, situated ambiguously across both area studies and cultural studies, contributes a productive suspicion that area studies itself, as vital as that model continues to be, has nevertheless served in unacknowledged ways as a reconfigured orientalism vis-à-vis Russia,

an interdisciplinarity structured through the cold-war project to sustain relations of power conducive only to very selective lines of intellectual inquiry.

A third contradiction of Russian cultural studies in the West concerns the researcher's subjectivity as Western, a fact that can neither be changed nor expiated, but simply exists as an evident strain in any analysis. Carriers of the very discursive practices to which we claim resistance, we must concede in advance that our work cannot exist uncontaminated by its subject position. How does this redefine the emancipatory dimension of cultural studies? Compounding this dilemma, many of us working in the traditions of Western cultural studies find our work deeply incompatible with either wing of what might be called a home-grown Russian cultural studies: on the one hand, the scientific *kulturologiya*;<sup>1</sup> on the other, the rediscovery of spiritual values. In the aftermath of Marxism-Leninism, it is difficult not to see these variants — scientism and spiritualism — as two sides of the same coin. Culture's resistance to the analytic claims of verifiability and determinacy proffered by *kulturologiya* is matched by culture's inevitable subversion of the overreaching metaphysics proffered by practitioners emphasising a rediscovered spiritual truth. But then this is in no way our business to adjudicate.

Finally, a fourth contradiction concerns the category of nation-state. Among first- and third-world scholars, the postcolonial debates are such that the nation-state, with all its positive and negative valences, occupies a central position. While to speak of Russia today in terms of an emergent nation-state may appear to facilitate participation in that community of scholars, our participation neglects mounting evidence that Russia remains very much an imperial entity, not only in its geopolitics, but in its cultural articulations across the very fields that we ourselves study. In an insightful comparison, Levon Abrahamian has contrasted Russia to an Armenian preoccupation with roots and ethnogenesis: *'the Russian model [...] tends to be directed towards the tree's upper parts rather than its roots'* (12). This contrast reveals a core difference between the Armenian impulse toward an ethnically homogeneous nationhood (with an accompanying emphasis on primordialism) and the Russian preference for a larger, more diverse encompassing model, wherein its imperial contribution—and I use this term as a historically descriptive rather than a normative characterisation—might find expression. By the same

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<sup>1</sup> *kulturologiya*: This term is often used to translate 'cultural studies', but *kulturnye issledovaniya* is now sometimes preferred for the latter, because *kulturologiya* has come to mean a methodology that adopts an extremely broad-brush approach and is often taught or practised by former specialists in Marxism-Leninism whose grasp of recent Western cultural theory is rather weak. See further the comments in the Forum to mark the VI Congress of Russian Anthropologists, *Forum for Anthropology and Culture 2* (2005). [Editor].

token, Slavists might more productively challenge the putative ‘inevitability’ of the nation-state, not only through the local counter-example of Russia’s imperial legacy, but also through the global counter-example of the US, together with the resurgence of older colonial forces internationally today. To put the question simply: are we done with empire? These contradictions lie just below the surface of our debates both here and with our colleagues in Russia. For the most part, perhaps, they are irresolvable, but then not to speak of them is to confirm by silence their ‘natural’ order.

In the context of these remarks, I would offer brief responses to the *Forum’s* most recent questions:

- 1 The coincidence of two factors — globally, the end of the Cold War (and the black arts of sovietology); domestically, university down-sizing — has had the beneficial, if unintended, effect of integrating US Slavists more thoroughly into the university system, requiring, for example, some rudimentary acquaintance with Foucault, Benjamin, and the ‘other Marx,’ to name a few. Cultural studies, for all its foibles, has served as a productive matrix in this process, insofar as — unlike earlier models, such as comparative literature — it has characteristically insisted upon reflexivity regarding the process itself, including such questions as how its own interdisciplinary claims conspire in university reductions and how the university’s economic agenda might be shaped by the intellectual projects and political practices of cultural studies.
- 2 Though an advocate of interdisciplinarity, I nevertheless understand that disciplinary walls demarcate a space within which critical specialised knowledge can best be fostered. Were Slavists not demarcated from the English Department, it would matter little whether we taught Dickens (in English, of course) or Dostoevsky (in English, of course). This false interdisciplinarity — false, because it is not an intellectual exchange but something more like majoritarian tyranny — is a step *away* from interdisciplinarity towards a homogenisation of knowledge. The tension between a strong disciplinary knowledge base and a disruptive interdisciplinary curiosity is fundamental to productive intellectual work.
- 3 By the early 1990s, as US Slavists began to engage in cultural studies debates, two immense compendia — the first by During, the second by Grossberg, Nelson, and Treichler (see References) — were of particular value in providing key texts, including the ‘classics’ of cultural studies. The online bibliography [<http://www.csbiblio.net>] and the cultural studies listserv [[cultstud-l@mailman.acomp.usf.edu](mailto:cultstud-l@mailman.acomp.usf.edu)] likewise provide glimpses into the diversity of this project. Programmes such as the Centre for Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths College (University of London) and the programme here at Pittsburgh have attempted to provide institutional frameworks, variously conceived, within which

postgraduate students can pursue interdisciplinary study. Two major organisations, the Cultural Studies Association (US) and Crossroads in Cultural Studies, serve as meeting points for scholars to present current work and collaborate across disciplines.

4

The Cultural Studies Program at Pittsburgh coordinates required courses from a student's home department with a set of required courses outside the discipline, as a 'secondary field.' Virtually all doctoral students find employment in academia. While a certification process is only as valuable as the debates of its participants, the programme provides a coherent response to the increasing demand in the US job market, interviews, and grant applications for a demonstrated familiarity with the contesting methodologies often gathered under the rubric of cultural studies.

## BORIS FIRSOV

### Development and Education

1

I am one of the people who believe that education in the humanities and social sciences has not kept pace with the social changes occurring in Russia and in the world as a whole. I would like to propose a diagnosis by referring to the Russian debates on the subject at the end of the past century: contemporary education is excessively rational and verbose; it has been stripped of its emotive and emotional content and its roots in the humanities are limited. This has led to the proliferation of professionally competent but spiritually impoverished individuals in our society [Tolstykh 1997: 6].

The transition from a technocratic to an anthropocentric civilisation, and a pluralist society, calls into existence a new set of human characteristics. The new society requires people who are, firstly, flexible — who can work in more than one professional role, including managerial ones, and who are able quickly to adapt to the slightest change; secondly, it requires people who are curious and inquisitive, who try to explain events and influence their course, particularly in an unpredictable and anarchic world; and thirdly, people must have experience in a range of fields and walks of life, be unhindered by lifelong speciali-

sation, and capable of generating ideas and applying them in a number of different fields [Tolstykh 1997: 6]. Education today undoubtedly fails to fulfil these aims; it teaches students, but does not develop their minds.

Admittedly, some of my Russian colleagues believe that the only problem with our education system is chronic monetary starvation. And they are just as complacent 'at the top'. The Russian government, in the same vein, displayed little concern a few years ago when it approved a document with the enigmatic, if anodyne title, 'The National Education Doctrine'. But at the same time our society is increasingly aware of its own lack of culture in a broad sense — its lack of a culture which could accommodate the critical debates and opinions which have come to the surface during our lifetimes — and for this reason it is in need of a new kind of university education.

2.1. There are four persistent problems which to this day hold back the development of higher education in Russia.

(1) The first such problem is **disengagement from culture**. The university model which Russia borrowed from Germany in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was aimed primarily at personal development. The paradox is that the Communist regime was able entirely to subjugate the work of universities to the requirements of the planned economy, without changing the structure of these as social institutions. *'There was an unspoken assumption that everyone had one speciality which they would occupy for life, and that they would work wherever the Motherland sent them'* ['Desyat' gumanitariyev' 1998: 16]. It is fair to assume that a society with such a pragmatic approach to education would hardly demand that education be enriched with a strong focus on the humanities. By the same reasoning, the traditional idea of a university based on personal development was rejected. Unspecialised, all-round educational courses, particularly in human sciences as the term is understood in the West, did not play any significant role in the education system during the Stalinist and post-Stalinist periods [Graham 2000: 112]. The result of this was that all of university education, and not only technical education in engineering institutes, was characterised by intellectual poverty, political tendentiousness, and an ignorance of society [Graham 2000: 117]. The *homo universalis* remained an unrealised dream, despite substantial propaganda efforts to promote the idea of the new communist man. And so education was polarised, and in a way that was asymmetrical in terms of status. On the one hand, there was education that offered fairly modest goals, which was regarded as an appendage to the general baggage of culture; on the other, there was highly specialised education, seen as an accumulation of knowledge and skills which give the individual a place in society in their own right. Over the years these poles became more and more opposed. The opposition was still

not overcome during the years of *perestroika*. This has led to a systematic depreciation of human potential, a process which until recently has been unstoppable.

(2) What were the consequences of this **hypertrophy of narrow specialisation**? When the student entered university at the age of seventeen or eighteen, he or she would choose a profession (for example as a sociologist or historian) as well as a narrower specialist profile (for example, as a social worker or a historian of medieval France). It was extremely difficult to change track. I do not wish to imply that the mechanics of this education system did not rely on high-quality teaching. The main question is not the achievements of Soviet universities (for they can hardly be contested), but the fact that each university simply endeavoured to reproduce itself. The official ideology sanctioned both the existence of a hierarchical abyss separating student and teacher, and the use of didactic teaching methods which ruled out the possibility of classroom discussion. The students' task was to assimilate and reproduce ready-prepared information [Khapaeva 2000: 71]. In the light of this, one can hardly be surprised by the lack of student feedback on the one hand, and of responsiveness to the labour market on the other. The demand for new specialisms was satisfied extremely slowly, and the interests of the students themselves (as consumers of education) were pushed to one side.

Only free and genuine intellectual life can produce new social consciousness as well as bring about the renewal of the scientific theories which depend upon them and which contribute to society's development. The problem is not that this never happened. It is that the process was not sufficiently public or open. As my colleagues in St Petersburg, Dina Khapaeva and Nikolai Kuposov, have argued, the transition from the private space of the kitchen to the public space of the university or academic institute triggered an automatic switchover from general reflection capable of stimulating academic intuition, to stereotyped professional discourse [Khapaeva 2000: 70]. Dialogue between society and academics about the global problems of modernity and the current state of scholarship and education remains reductive, and social life is divided into separate spheres (and this is particularly the case for culture, economics and politics) which work in isolation from one another. As a result, universities have been left out of the process of stimulating free and genuine intellectual life.

(3) And what of the **lack of intellectual resources**? The breakdown of the Soviet Union was made inevitable by entropy of the higher echelons of power; but this breakdown in turn arose as a result of the paucity of cultural, ideological and human resources [Gudkov 1999]. The Soviet intelligentsia's task was to legitimate Soviet power

and to guarantee support for the regime. The latter was achieved with the help of education which primarily produced ‘placemen’. The uniform models according to which education was conceived ruled out the possibility of individual diversity, variety, choice, and competition. The cultural resources of the Soviet social system were exhausted fairly quickly. They were sufficient to generate industrialisation up to a certain point, modernisation of the country’s strategic base, and — though not without immense effort — reconstruction following the damage and destruction inflicted by the Second World War. Progress was possible for the time being, while the country was catching up with industrialisation. But no sooner had the post-industrial period begun — a period which accords a predominant role to technology and the knowledge economy — than the country ground to a halt. The development of educated society began to seize up [Gudkov 1999: 29–30]

(4) What of **state surveillance, and its paralysing effects**? It is useful to point out here that in many cases universities (for example the University of Bologna, the Sorbonne, and several German universities) were founded long before the creation of nation-states. Their breeding ground, as it were, was the cosmopolitan diaspora of the Latin-speaking academic world. Russia is one of a few exceptions, where absolutist power came first, and only afterwards universities, created as the brainchild of the absolutist state. This tradition continued right up to the beginning of *perestroika*. Perhaps it is for this very reason that universities have never experienced of autonomous life [‘Desyat gumanitariyev v poiskakh universiteta’ 1998: 25]. In any case, the extent of their autonomy was always dictated from above, by the ‘royal command’ emanating from Russia’s rulers — emperors and party leaders; it was subject to massive fluctuations depending on the country’s current situation. This stereotype is so entrenched that even to this day the collective as well as professional perception is that university is a part of the state. Correspondingly, many people still feel that public institutions are more sound, more reliable, than private ones. Attitudes to independent institutes are often, if not always, guarded, and this is why their positive characteristics are overlooked. At fault is a psychological unwillingness to found non-state (private) bodies, or at least an enduring feeling of full dependence on and faith in the state, which will, it is believed, lead the way forward.

2.2. Let us move to the winds of positive change in education. As noted in the journal, *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*<sup>1</sup> [Kornev 1998], the habitual models for the relationships between intellectuals and society in Russia are undergoing a gradual and disconcerting shift.

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<sup>1</sup> A journal of contemporary culture and cultural studies, published by New Literary Review (Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie) publishers in Moscow. [Editor].

The models I will cite here have only ever been fully realised in Chinese history, but that does not mean we cannot use them as metaphors to elucidate what is at the heart of Russia's current problematic situation. According to the 'Confucian' model, the intellectual is replete, well fed and funded by society, and even empowered, to a certain extent, to take decisions. In return he works for society as a part of the administrative and bureaucratic machine. This is a model which, I repeat, was realised in China in the middle ages, when the civil service was, broadly speaking, the preserve of those who had received a classical education. The Soviet Union came very close to this. The US took advantage of this 'Confucian' model (albeit with certain provisos and limitations) while they were creating the atomic bomb, and it has also been used by other developed countries.

According to the 'Daoist' model, the intellectual does not receive any formal support from society. His links with society are fortuitous and, in any case, bear no relation to his chosen status of 'liberated intellectual'. As a result, he should not expect his physical survival to be assured by hand-outs from the state. Instead he must look to other sources of income, and to private sponsors or patrons.

Now let me go back to the world of the European University at St Petersburg.<sup>1</sup> The short but instructive history of this private university clearly demonstrates the anachronism of the 'Confucian' model. I will even be so bold as to say that this university (like, I would add, all of the others in the network of innovative universities supported by the HESP programme (the Open Society Institute, the Soros Foundation) is the prototype of the new intellectual environment. It is an environment which, without disregarding the external social bonds its members may maintain, provides the opportunity to form a defined community living by its own rules and laws. It is not possible to break off social ties completely. On the one hand, the majority of those who work with their minds still need wage work elsewhere, while on the other, an emergent civil society needs the support of fellow citizens.

The autonomy which academic communities such as the European University enjoy in terms of their rules and laws is absolutely legitimate. I see no reason why the university should not, in the near future, become a guild of young teachers and academics with their own sub-cultural norms, professional code, and code of honour which would bring cohesion to a community whose aim is to win a worthy reputation in the eyes of society. The movement towards constructive autonomy and independence, the difficult and persistent struggle for these things, and the aspiration to overcome the

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<sup>1</sup> Boris Firsov was the founding rector of the European University at St Petersburg. [Editor].

burden of social realities and encourage individual initiative, will prove hugely beneficial to society. It is worth remembering Karl Popper's definition of an open society as a place remote from the stifling moral authority of the state, where individual conscience can be expressed. A fundamentally new environment is being formed, one which can be compared to some kind of self-propelling body, travelling on the back of the momentum provided by new social practices born at the end of the twentieth century.

3

The situation in which the world finds itself at the beginning of the twenty-first century can in the main be defined by two factors: orientation towards the future, and uncertainty. In our loyalty to the virtuous old traditions of the nineteenth century, we generally speak of the future, or only about the future, and do not pay any attention to the fact that uncertainty is an increasingly important factor in global development. By uncertainty I am not referring so much to the instability of living space in post-Soviet Russia, so much as to the fundamental unpredictability of key parameters in the socially constructed environment all around the world. As Tolstykh so vividly puts it, the current situation is most easily compared to '*very fast movement in very muddy water*'.

At this point it would be instructive to highlight two dimensions to education. The first rests on the assumption that the world order will remain stable even in an era of transition towards an anthropocentric civilisation and a pluralist society. In other words, there is an assumption that in that promised land on which Russia has set her sights as part of the new Europe, man's most essential characteristics will be to be open to the present and oriented towards the future, towards creativity, individuality and entrepreneurship.

The second dimension is based on the desire constantly to calculate an unpredictable factor. At this point I must look back to the tragic events of 11 September 2001 (in New York and Washington DC), of 23 to 25 October 2002 (in Moscow), and of 1 September 2004 (in Beslan, Northern Ossetia).<sup>1</sup> Society proved to be calamitously unprepared for this new brand of terrorism. Many would object that the totalitarian regime was well able to deal with the terrorist threat. This is indeed a paradox, but I do not want to get into a discussion of the reasons for the relative stability of the totalitarian society — for instance, the role of repressive structures, and the all-pervasive vigilance of the population in a world of mass denunciations. In my opinion there is a more important argument. Educational models have never taken into account the fact that the beneficiary of their unceasing toil, *homo sapiens*, is condemned to a long period of coexistence with, and struggle for survival against, *homo terroristicus*.

<sup>1</sup> One could add the terrorist attacks in Madrid, London and Bombay too. [Editor].

*'The most terrifying thing is that a whole generation of people who hate us has emerged in Chechnya. From the age of eight, their boys have already learnt how to handle a gun,'* wrote the political psychologist, Dmitry Olshansky in *Izvestiya* on the 1 November 2002. Since the violence remains ineradicable, it is certain that, even if it is not here forever, terror is here for the long haul. Its antithesis is harmony, the consideration of other people's interests and the non-acceptance of extremism.

Under current social circumstances it seems inevitable to me that the monolithic educational model will have to be split into two. This conclusion is fully consistent with Yury Lotman's irrefutable thesis on contemporary sociological and scientific knowledge: *'It is only the past that is open to reasonable explanation; the future remains unpredictable'.*

4

Where do we go from here? The urgent plan of action which I propose relies on another of twenty-first-century man's required qualities. Society needs people who are able to work professionally under conditions of instability, uncertainty and disorder. For this reason we need conciliators and mediators in unprecedented numbers. The ability to liaise between conflicting parties is sure to become the fundamental characteristic of the twenty-first century man. Otherwise it will become impossible for contemporary society to function normally.

(1) We need to make constant, concerted and integrative efforts to assure the inter-osculation of the cultures and traditions of different countries. One might say that these efforts should be aimed at synthesis, in that they should not just come down to a training course in marketing or management, but should transform the age-old customs and stereotypes which have entered the very fabric of our culture and which, in the case of Russia, are preventing the development of the country's society which would benefit both Russia and the rest of the world. This is why a broad and thorough university education in social sciences and the arts is strategically important.

(2) The concept of the university, as we can see from its long history, has always oscillated between two poles — on the one hand, an interest in receiving in-depth knowledge (the search for the truth), and on the other the desire to provide excellent vocational-professional training (a utilitarian, pragmatic approach, stripped of socio-cultural baggage). The persistent aspiration to professionalism and the reliance on subject-specific knowledge do not equate in any measure to a painstaking search for meaning in the universe. And so I would like to emphasise once again the divergence between the basic premises of professional, vocational education and of academic, higher, education, and underline the greater importance of the latter.

(3) For a relatively long time, modern students (and those at EUSPb are no exception!) have tended to choose their own intellectual interests as they wish. When they are not satisfied in the lecture theatre, they turn to bookshops, nightclubs, or the internet. The French philosopher, Jacques Derrida once said that universities had become an **auto-encyclopaedia** for the state. I imagine that the civil society to which we aspire will free us from this unprecedented severity of disciplinary boundaries. In which case, the widely recognised post-university education can be seen as a means of overcoming this severity, since education there is oriented towards the interests of each given individual.

(4) Another new direction which has affected our attitude and actions has been the assimilation of educational and academic activity into networks of cooperation between universities. At the time of its inception, the founders of the European University wanted to build a temple of learning. We wanted to bridge the gap between education and academic activity which is the norm in Russia. But at the same time we wanted to isolate ourselves from the world, creating what was to a certain extent an exclusive space, a unique reserve in which to form an academic elite — though I must emphasise that this was to be an elite selected according to entirely democratic principles, with precedence given to young people's talent and ability, independent of their social standing, nationality and so forth. Reality soon put us in our place, helping us to avoid this ambivalence. Despite our initial plans we became the hub (and one which, I would like to emphasise, possesses magnetic qualities), of a vast and very mobile network of several dozen task groups and research associations, over forty Russian and foreign universities, and a large number of international support programmes for education and academia, as well as charities. These contacts helped us to develop a network mindset, to take on a new network mentality which is a prerequisite for progress and a symbol of the growing regional relevance of higher education.

(5) As far as the new kind of university teaching is concerned, its secret is well known. The concept of the university has always rested upon the coexistence of two elements: the synthesis of knowledge (scientific progress) and the completion of the more private tasks of teaching general and specialised subjects (training productive workers). Internally, this coexistence has come under constant and focused pressure from the state. As a result, the end of the century and of the millennium witnessed society's pragmatism put down its roots in university soil. At the same time the value of learning for its own sake as part of an individual's education was diminished. As Professor Yury Afanasyev, former rector of the Russian State University for the Humanities, correctly pointed out, *homo faber* (the handyman, inventor and solid professional) has crowded out *homo*

*sapiens* (the rational, intelligent man) [Afanasyev 2000: 38]. Even today, the difference between these two concepts is not fully appreciated. The persistent aspiration to professionalism and the reliance on subject-specific knowledge do not, as we have seen, equate in any measure to a painstaking search for meaning in the universe. This thesis accentuates once more the difference in content between professional formulae and academic higher education.

The noticeable leap which the European University has taken in the direction of world-class standards for graduate education does not mean that there has been a revolution in the field. Specialised disciplines dominate education just as they did in the past. Their cultural capital is insufficient to exert any significant influence over Russia's socio-economic and socio-political transformation. And for this reason they should be supplemented with a whole range of disciplines which would develop the student's analytic, reasoning, intellectual, and aesthetic abilities. And so in answer to the question as to what and how we should teach, I will try to capture the imagination by appealing to historical experience. The classical curriculum consisted of the trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). This curriculum worked like a kind of intellectual DNA, a foundation of inherited information upon which universities were built. I will also cite Confucius, who said 2500 years ago: *'To study something without reflecting on it is absolutely futile. To reflect on something without having studied it beforehand is dangerous'*. It has become the aim of graduate education to stimulate demand for the organic development of the individual and to help him or her to rediscover the ability to reflect, following the example of our distant predecessors. We need to present a united front in our movement towards this goal. To achieve it would mean both strengthening the world community's capacity for self-reflection, and helping protect modern society from the fateful danger of asymmetrical, i.e. meaningless, responses to synchronised historical challenges.

## MICHAEL GORHAM

1

I speak primarily about how these changes are reflected in my own teaching, most relevantly in a course I've taught twice now to undergraduates at the University of Florida, dedicated to contemporary Russian culture (listed under the innocuous title of 'Russia Today'). For an introductory course taught to a primarily non-specialist audience at a large state university, this

one reflects the aforementioned changes quite healthily, albeit in a watered down (de-jargonised) mode. Theoretical frames from Geertz, Shalin, Paramonov, and others collectively underscore the role of narratives (personal and collective) in generating sense and meaning out of culture, history, and identity. Studies of regional cities and towns almost overshadow those dedicated to major metropolitan centres. And grand narratives of all types, be they theoretical or geopolitical in origin, are constantly subjected to sceptical scrutiny.

At the same time, I've found that over-emphasis of any of these relatively recent intellectual strands quickly runs up against resistance from students, who generally display a far lower tolerance level for subjectivity, marginality, and ambiguity than do their teachers. At the end (and beginning) of the day, they want to know about Moscow and St. Petersburg, they want to hear about the life and views of 'everyday Russians', and they still want unambiguous answers and clearly articulated narratives that do make sense out of an often complicated reality. While at times I find this frustrating, as a certain portion of this more conservative approach is anchored in a lingering pool of cultural stereotypes (about both native and target cultures), in the broader scheme of things I see it as a healthy kind of pedagogical reality check, a challenge to be critical about the new intellectual changes and their relevance to the end user; and to be rigorous, in any case, about putting into plain English the rationale behind using theoretical frameworks in general, and about the individual frameworks themselves.

2

Although, coming from a language and literature perspective, I don't pretend to have vast knowledge about the state of teaching culture to undergraduates and graduates, it does appear that the tendency in my discipline is to adopt one of two pedagogical strategies lying at one or the other extreme of the methodological spectrum. At one extreme, we still see plenty of courses along the lines of 'Russian culture and civilisation' that are chronologically driven and historically unproblematic, that give students a good overview of vast swathes of cultural history (with ever more integrated multimedia components), but that make little attempt to tune students into the 'big issues' at stake (as outlined in the preamble to these questions). At the other extreme are 'cultural studies' courses that assume a largely thematic orientation and de-emphasise (or more directly challenge) conventional chronologies and canons, but which make a bolder effort at encouraging students to ask big-issue questions about culture, history, national identity, etc.

My hunch is that colleagues in history have done a better job at finding ways to integrate the two approaches and thereby situate their courses closer to the centre of the spectrum. But in literature departments we have been slower to bridge the methodological

divide. It may be that the solution is best found at the level of the general programme curriculum, rather than that of individual courses, since that would allow faculty greater flexibility in following their own professional inclinations. But this approach runs the risk of doing neither ‘literature’ nor ‘history’ particularly well and wreaking confusion among an already befuddled undergraduate population.

3

Like most teachers of contemporary culture, I’ve compiled an eclectic thematic and disciplinary mix of sources for course reading. Though closer to my own intellectual heart, even the more well-conceived collective volumes (e.g. [Barker 1999]; [Shalin 1996]) tend to engage students less successfully than single author books dedicated to broader swaths of contemporary Russian culture (e.g. [Pesmen 2000] [Neidhart 2003]). The more successful shorter pieces tend to be more essayistic in style, such as Victor Erofeev’s ‘The Russian God: Vodka Celebrates Its Five-Hundredth Anniversary’ (*The New Yorker* [December 16, 2002], 56–63). One surprising hit has been Vladimir Putin’s political ‘autobiography’ (*First Person: An Astonishingly Frank Self-Portrait by Russia’s President* [New York: Public Affairs, 2000]), because it manages to draw in students with its light, journalistic style and compelling subject matter, while at the same time appealing to their more pedantically minded cultural studies professors (myself included) who find in the book plenty of accessible examples of how identities are narrated and constructed in post-Soviet Russia.

Even the strongest of reading lists will have a hard time competing with audiovisual resources that are of good quality and well-integrated into the course content. Students of ‘Russia Today’ tend to reserve most positive feedback for the documentary and feature films shown in the context of the course, and welcome lectures that are accompanied by even the most primitive form of slide accompaniments. And it’s not just for the heightened entertainment factor: a string of mid-term and final evaluations suggests that students can distinguish between gratuitous bells and whistles and those that are well integrated into lectures, discussions, paper assignments, and tests. My ideal set of resources would be a multimedia renewable database of thematically organised culture modules that would allow instructors to pick and choose material to supplement their own course designs. Creating and maintaining such a database would require substantial funding and the time of a working group of dedicated scholars and pedagogues, but would be, in my mind, well worth the investment.

The closest I have come to ‘fieldwork’ in this course is the very recent introduction of a cross-cultural correspondence option that hooks my students up with their peers from our partner university at the Russian State University for the Humanities (RGGU), and encourages them to test course and personal hypotheses about contempo-

rary Russians and Russian culture with real Russians. As this project is just underway it is still too early to assess the value in terms of teaching culture, but there's no question that the assignment itself has proven extremely popular, and been appreciated especially among students (non-majors) who would have no other reason or occasion to communicate with peers from a foreign country. Beyond this, I'm hoping it will also a) provide a healthy 'reality check' for the relatively 'academic' activities and ideas that define traditional course work, and b) demonstrate through practice how the exploration of culture (native and foreign) should and does extend beyond the walls of the classroom.

4

Post-graduate placement trends favour graduate training of some sort, ranging from unrelated programmes in Law, Business, and Medicine to more directly related training in History, Political Science, International Relations, Language and Literature, National Security, Intelligence, and all four branches of the U.S. Military.

## PAVEL KLUBKOV

### Education in Anthropology and the Social Sciences

1

One crucial point here is that in order to solve the problem of finding themselves jobs, a large number of specialists in historical materialism, dialectic materialism, communism studies, atheism studies and similar subjects, have adopted new titles and adjusted their line of study. Being practically-minded people, they have transformed themselves effortlessly into fanatical idealists obsessed with the spiritual world and toiling over its every detail. One of the results of this has been that the term 'culturology'<sup>1</sup> has been utterly discredited.

In addition Russian education in social anthropology (could one add, in the social sciences and humanities generally?) has had no option but to take a great leap into the unknown. It seems like only yesterday that the new-fangled idea, 'structuralism', was recognised as a fashionable new Western theory that it would make sense to attack — or even that one really ought

**Pavel Klubkov**

St Petersburg State University

<sup>1</sup> i.e. *kulturologiya* (see the note to Nancy Condee's comments above). [Editor].

to attack; and now all of a sudden even post-structuralism is out of date. As a result, most teachers have been faced with an urgent need to master all the many treasures that mankind accumulated over the seventy years that we missed. This enforced acceleration of tempo combined with unfettered relativism means that young people with the same degree from different universities do not share a common outlook or common interests.

When considering the link between problems in education and the situation in the humanities (including social anthropology), I am inclined to change the emphasis slightly. The rejection of 'grand' theories, the resurgence of the descriptive style, the interest in inconsequential details, the rejection of historical reconstructions, and many other such phenomena, are all related to the realisation that the social and anthropological sciences (as well as semiotics and the humanities in general) have the same object. People have realised that linguistics can shed light on the functioning of the brain and the motivation for human actions; that psychology and ethnology can elucidate the semantics of linguistic units and the nature of historical events; that history is interested in psychological processes, and sociology in linguistic structure, and so forth. But *interdisciplinarity* and *cross-disciplinarity* sometimes seem as unnatural as the words sound. Attempts to re-structure knowledge in a new way (one of which can be seen in the institutionalisation of cognitive science) have not made us any happier, although they may have opened up new sources of funding for research.

These days, it sometimes seems that we not only do not know what aspects of the phenomena we study are significant, but that we openly flaunt our ignorance in this regard. However, positing the fundamental irreducibility of an object of research or conversely, asserting the fact that every aspect of it is significant, is unconstructive when it comes to education. I suspect that it is unconstructive when it comes to history, too. Teaching should focus on simple concepts: how to collect material and why it needs to be collected; where the boundaries lie between what is proven, what remains unproven, and what cannot be proved, or between what has been refuted, what remains unrefuted, and what is irrefutable. Perhaps most importantly of all, one should teach students to distinguish well-reasoned texts from irrational ones. How they put this knowledge to use is no longer any of our business.

2

Over the last two hundred years the education system in Russia has been reformed roughly every ten to twenty years. Almost any variant would count itself lucky if it managed to survive for a reasonable length of time. Nearly all the reforms, however, affected only the external, the administrative, face of the education system, only rarely introducing some exotic new fashion in methodology such

as the Dalton plan or the brigade method, and then only for a short time.

In general terms, education is by its nature conservative, if only because of the age asymmetry between the agent of the process and its object. And the long period of isolation from educational developments around the world seems to have meant that we in Russia have retained a couple of features which may turn out to be sought after in the modern world.

In my opinion one of the indisputable advantages of the prevailing system for training researchers in Russia is that it aims to provide an exhaustive knowledge of previous generations' work. When writing coursework, extended essays, and most of all doctoral theses, the student is held to account if he or she is not familiar with even one of the relevant texts on his subject. This, admittedly, ties the student's hands, discouraging her from formulating bold new ideas; but nonetheless it prevents him or her from talking patent nonsense.

Another feature of the old Russian or Soviet education (probably inherited from the Austro-German model) is now almost unanimously regarded as a fault which ought to be remedied, but not necessarily rightly. This is the question of to what extent we recognise the value of encyclopaedic knowledge and of transmitting this knowledge to pupils. Journalists and bureaucrats have almost managed to convince us that knowledge itself has no inherent value. There is no need, in their opinion, to know the date of Pushkin's birth, the atomic mass of oxygen or the number of stamens in a camomile flower, when one can easily look up the answers in any reference book. The important thing is ability. And so knowledge has been replaced with all manner of nebulous schemes described by the detestable expression, 'life skills'. The idea is that these skills have a use in any real-life situation: once someone has mastered a given set of techniques, he will be able to solve any problem that befalls him. I am not convinced. I have never met a single philologist, historian or ethnologist capable of commanding respect, whom one might consider ignorant. Knowledge as such, *scientia*, still has value. The folksy expression, 'it's the pot that does the boiling' still assumes that the pot has something to boil.

When it comes to the question as to what changes should be made to education, it makes sense first to consider what we are hoping to get out of it. Education's main function is probably to overcome provincialism, something that can be detected in the enthusiastic reception given to any new English word (and to a lesser extent French, German or Italian ones), and something that manifests itself in blind obedience to regional authorities.

By the time it reaches Russia, information about what is happening

in the rest of the world has been abridged and distorted. People used to think that the university's two component parts were the staff and the library. The state of Russian libraries is worse than lamentable. This should give us food for thought. Our legal system has some odd ideas. It isn't much easier to get a library book across the border than a consignment of weapons. The year before last, when a retired American professor sent us some books on linguistics for the library, we never received them. The state (in the form of the customs service) demanded impossibly high duties, and in the end chose to pay the postage to send the book back across the Atlantic. And this is only one of the routine problems libraries experience.

Equally important is the need to incorporate the Internet into the education system. For the moment, even though the prognosis is not terminal, the outlook is bleak. In the '.ru' domain, social anthropology is first and foremost an endless collection of amateurish, if not downright charlatanic, websites and portals. One gets the impression that because of education politics, there is no funding for this kind of thing. The best sites appear on the internet thanks to some more or less fortuitous grant, and when the money runs out they go out of use forever, with news from the year before last still on the homepage.

3

If one conceives of the textbook as a kind of basic guide ('An Introduction to...') which the student leaves behind him as he is able gradually to gain an understanding of his subject's themes and problems, it can be a useful thing. Any textbook, however, imposes its own set of terminological and ideological conventions, and it often happens that when talking to some young talent, one can tell literally from the very first word they utter which book formed the sole basis of their studies. A much simpler way of fulfilling the fundamental task of the 'introduction' — to teach the student to discuss problems in her field — is to do this through seminars and through contact with more experienced colleagues. To gain an initial understanding of their subject, students need to study two or three books as thoroughly as one possibly could, read another ten, glance over one hundred, and hold one thousand in their hands. At the same time they should constantly refer to encyclopaedias or trawl through academic material on the Internet.

As far as the textbooks themselves are concerned, these should have a non-linear structure; that is, they should be primarily reference books — reading aids to accompany academic literature.

4

In general terms, I would say that we train students to carry out academic research. But there is reason enough to suppose that someone who is trained as an academic will be qualified to work in other kinds of profession.

## ALEKSEI NOVOZHILOV

**Answer to question 1b and to parts of 1a and 2**

1. The function of university-level teaching is not primarily to introduce the student to the current range of problems in his or her field, but rather to instil in them the behavioural norms of the academic and teaching community. These norms are, it is clear, passed on during communication between teachers and students.

The education process comprises a minimum of three elements, whose aim is to ensure the existence of a network of communication between teachers and students which responds to the needs of the modern academic community. These elements relate to 1) the structure of general and specialised professional training; 2) the nature of the teaching staff; and 3) the character of students' independent work.

In order to answer the question as to whether or not ethnography programmes ought to keep pace with the intellectual changes referred to in the editor's preface to the questionnaire, each of the three elements must be examined separately.

2. The structure of general and specialised professional training is set out formally in teaching plans. We can see from the history of higher education in the Soviet Union just how little teaching plans changed under the influence of Marxism even between the 1920s and 1950s. Any changes were generally limited to the introduction of disciplines from Marxist-Leninist philosophy and political economy.

There were no systematic mechanisms to ensure that teaching plans for general and specialised professional training were formulated in the spirit of Marxism. Even Morganism could not have formed the basis of a plan. All of the attempts that ethnographers and teachers made in the 1930s to construct a teaching plan with a strictly evolutionary focus ended in failure. In Russian ethnography, a continuing tribute to Morganism has been retained in the form of the

consistency with which discussion tends to be focused on world regions, from ‘primitive’ Australia to socially and economically ‘developed’ Asia, completely bypassing industrial Europe.

The influence of structuralism on the structure of ethnographers’ training was, for obvious reasons,<sup>1</sup> non-existent.

In practice, teaching plans for Soviet ethnography students were formulated using the model of ethnography education developed in Leningrad and Moscow in the 1920s; this model was strongly influenced by the traditional approach adopted in history faculties, into which ethnography departments were incorporated in 1938–39.

The history faculties’ practices developed long before Marxism. They can be considered responsible for the appearance of courses such as bibliography, source study, history of art (folk art), historiography (the history of ethnography) and so forth.

Essentially, the ethnography teaching model included: a) traditional techniques of ethnography fieldwork, which L.Ya. Shternberg<sup>2</sup> and V.G. Bogoraz-Tan considered the *raison-d’être* of specialised ethnography training (fieldwork methods and practices, narrow regional specialisation); b) the tradition of coexistence between ethnography and physical anthropology; c) the teaching of regional ethnography in the spirit of diffusionism. The proponents of these ideas in the 1920s were, in addition to Shternberg and Bogoraz-Tan, Professor P.F. Preobrazhensky<sup>3</sup> and Academician L. S. Berg.<sup>4</sup> In the second half of the twentieth century disciplines such as ethnosociology, ethnopsychology, and ethnodemography were added to the above; already, these courses were Marxist only in the most superficial sense.

3. Longevity and fidelity to tradition are no guarantee that educational methods will fulfil our requirements today. Moreover, each institution at which our graduates later work has its own demands regarding their level of training. One employer might be dissatisfied with their competence in museum work, but another dissatisfied with the level of their knowledge of the classic structuralist texts.

Today, a two-level ethnology programme aims to eliminate this deficiency: in the second stage, the masters degree, the student will

<sup>1</sup> Because structuralism was a marginal and semi-clandestine direction under Soviet power. [Editor].

<sup>2</sup> In 1918–1927 L.Ya. Shternberg was first the dean of the ethnography faculty at the Geography Institute, and then the head of the ethnography department in the geography faculty of Leningrad State University.

<sup>3</sup> Dean of the ethnography faculty of the *second* Moscow State University in the 1920s.

<sup>4</sup> In the 1920s L.S. Berg was the dean of the geography faculty of Leningrad State University, which was home to the ethnography department.

choose a specialisation — as a museum professional, as a theoretician, or in any other particular field.

Under this new plan for two-level training in ethnology, all the traditional elements of the course are to be preserved, albeit in slightly modified form. A modular system will be introduced, and the number of courses in geography, linguistics and sociology will be increased at the expense of history courses.

Modules are blocks of study, each of which includes a series of disciplines, taught in parallel or consecutively,<sup>1</sup> and connected to one another either insofar as they belong to the same field related to ethnography (the foundations of geography, ethnodemography, ethnogeography, ethnoecology) or insofar as they are related to one another thematically (bibliography, archiving, ethnographical source study, information systems in ethnography).

The workload for all of the modules combined is on average 120 to 330 hours. In the first stage, the timetabling for individual courses retains its traditional weekly structure. However, the new plan envisages a fundamental change in the relationship between the various kinds of study within each module (courses of lectures and students' independent work, practical study and seminars, writing and defending papers and coursework). This will in turn change the methods of monitoring and marking students' work and attainments.

It is particularly worth mentioning the role of regional studies in ethnographic training. First, programmes which rely on theoretical training to the detriment of a familiarity with regional ethnography are liable to descend into scholasticism. Second, in St Petersburg we have such a great number of specialists on different regions of the world, who represent different schools and areas of study and who have a background in regional investigations, that one can only lament the fact that it is not possible to invite them all to run classes.

**4.** Apropos specialists studying different areas of the world, it is worth saying something about teaching staff as a whole. St Petersburg undoubtedly has great academic potential in the field of ethnography. In their lessons, the majority of teachers convey to their students not only the dry facts, but also their own vision of intellectual problems, and their own accumulated theoretical insights. As there is a large number of teachers in the department, the student is able to formulate his or her own position, taking into account a multiplicity of academic paradigms and methodologies.

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<sup>1</sup> In other words, the meaning is slightly different from 'module' in the sense used in Britain, where it tends to mean what would be termed an optional or 'special course' in Russia. [Editor].

Of course, the teacher's individual manner of taking classes has an influence on the process of education. Education requires a mixture of everything — from banter with students and straightforward mentoring, to complex systematisation and exposition of information in accordance with views of the accepted subject authorities in academia and educational psychology.

Finally, when preparing ethnography classes, equal emphasis should be placed on the latest findings and on the achievements of previous generations, both when it comes to selecting facts, and at the level of ideas and interpretations. In any case, applying new ideas should not be an aim in itself, but rather should correspond with the ideology and structure of every specific course.

5. On the other hand, students' independent work is the element of the educatory process which should reflect intellectual changes to the greatest extent. Today, students' own work at St Petersburg State University takes the form of written coursework and papers, preparation for the occasional regional or specialist seminar, and presenting (giving an oral account of) a monograph. This system is so well established that it has become second nature, and it has its benefits.

Nonetheless, it is necessary to increase the volume of independent work. We no longer trust the student sufficiently. Lectures should not be abolished or massively reduced in number; but it is essential to give students the opportunity to do more work outside of the lecture hall. That is, to allocate more time to independent study, to increase the number of seminars and colloquia in which the results of this study can be formally assessed, while making a small reduction in the number of lectures.

Naturally, methods of supervising and assessing students' independent study need to be modified. In order to do this, it is important to produce a system which can assess independent study, as well as one which can monitor the way in which teachers supervise this study; this system should build upon the Russian educational tradition while taking into account the experiences of Russian universities which have borrowed from European models. A similar administrative activity cannot fail to be beneficial.

6. In any case, depending on what changes are made in ethnographic education, and how these changes are made, the current series of reforms, introducing the a two-level training system (bachelors — masters) could either be the death of ethnographic training, or, on the other hand, could raise it to a new level.

**SARAH D. PHILLIPS**

Cultural Anthropology is a field of study with a rich history and a copious toolbox of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches. A major challenge, I find, of teaching courses in cultural anthropology is simultaneously conveying the diversity and richness of the field historically and in the present; doing justice to the specific foci of the particular course; and engaging students in the learning process in meaningful and, I daresay, personally transformative ways. I begin this short article with a brief discussion of the major challenges I have encountered teaching undergraduate and postgraduate anthropology courses, and offer some examples of what I have found to be potentially successful strategies for addressing them. I then describe in some detail a seminar course I recently taught, 'Chernobyl: Legacies of a Melt-down', to argue for the potential of single event- or topics-focused seminar courses to achieve a range of important instructional goals.

**General challenges of teaching anthropology**

Courses for undergraduates and postgraduates present their own particular challenges. At large institutions such as Indiana University in Bloomington (IUB), undergraduate courses are often big lecture courses populated by students who may or may not be excited about anthropology. One elementary challenge is to adequately engage those students who are taking cultural anthropology merely to fulfil a university division requirement. In large survey courses it is also easy to overwhelm students, who may feel disoriented by the enormous range of topics covered in the discipline of anthropology (and in course lectures). Finally, especially in today's unfortunate atmosphere of conflict, mistrust, and cultural essentialism, instructors must be careful how we present the 'culture' concept, lest the notion of 'cultural difference' fuel prejudice and ethnocentrism among students. In my undergraduate teaching, I find the best way to simultaneously address these issues is to offer

students a range of hands-on research and writing exercises. These activities allow students to carry out participant observation, surveys, and personal interviews in order to apply anthropological concepts to their own lives as they explore issues of gender, ritual, cultural stereotypes, narratives, and others. Mini-fieldwork projects can give class discussions a meaningful and manageable focus, and they allow students to begin interpreting the seemingly mundane aspects of their everyday lives in an anthropological fashion.

Seminars for postgraduates offer a separate set of challenges. Many postgraduates are already working towards a specific thesis topic and may resist material that they find ‘irrelevant’ to their own interests. My postgraduate seminars frequently include students from other disciplines, many of whom are looking to incorporate anthropological research methods and theories into their own work. This often leads to interesting and challenging discussions of varying (and sometimes conflictual) disciplinary traditions. To complicate matters, as the discipline of cultural anthropology grows and the literature expands, it becomes difficult to ‘cover it all’. This means that earlier works and discussions of historical intellectual trends often do not find their way into anthropology courses. The move away from grand narratives (as discussed in previous Forums in this journal), I think, has contributed to the tendency to neglect or inadequately engage the work of the disciplinary predecessors in some courses.

I believe students being trained in anthropology (undergraduate majors and postgraduates) should be provided with a good sense of anthropology’s rich intellectual history, not merely to criticise our forebears (though such critiques are certainly necessary), but rather to engage students in the rich history of ideas that has shaped the contemporary discipline of anthropology. Some students embrace the exploration of anthropology’s history of ideas, but others may resist it. I have encountered this resistance even in a course (required for all PhD students in anthropology at IUB) I taught that is especially designed to introduce incoming postgraduate anthropology students to the history of the discipline: ‘History of Anthropological Thought, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries’. In this course, I ask students to engage with a range of theories and through a series of essay assignments I encourage them to attempt to apply some of these approaches to their own research interests. This endeavour has met with mixed results. I am beginning to rethink the traditional timeline approach—students tend to see ‘old’ theories as merely irrelevant, rather than trying to understand the motivations (and contributions) of these approaches. One student has suggested the following appealing approach for future seminars: the History of Anthropological Thought course might be designed to allow students to ‘excavate’ recent articles in anthro-

pology journals for theoretical influences. This would allow students to engage with cutting edge work being published in the top journals today, and simultaneously require them to seek out how new ideas might be rooted in a range of previous approaches and historical influences. I hope to do similar work by teaching a new book this semester in my joint undergraduate/postgraduate seminar course, 'Anthropology of Russia and East Europe'—Alexia Bloch and Laurel Kendall's *The Museum at the End of the World: Encounters in the Russian Far East* (2004). In this hybrid ethnography/travel book, the authors document their 1998 travels along the route of the original Jesup North Pacific Expedition of the early 1900s, as they interweave discussions of history, methodology, culture change, and culture work. I see teaching this book as an opportunity to introduce students to the work of the early Russian ethnographers (Tan-Bogoraz, Jochelson), and to Franz Boas and others, while helping them critically engage the history of anthropological research of native peoples in the region.

This course ('Anthropology of Russia and East Europe') is an example of the sometimes-fraught joint undergraduate/postgraduate seminar, a format that poses its own set of pedagogical challenges. How is one to address the intellectual concerns of the postgraduates without intimidating or losing the undergraduates in the process? How to ensure that students at both levels (and from diverse disciplinary backgrounds) contribute to and benefit from the course in ways that help them reach their own learning goals? Finally, a question relevant to teaching any anthropology course: how can we engender an appreciation of anthropology's diverse approaches to understanding human life in a way that is comprehensive yet focused and meaningful to students?

### **Anthropology through the case study: the example of Chernobyl**

These were questions that fifteen students and I struggled with in a seminar course during fall semester 2004 entitled 'Chernobyl: Legacies of a Meltdown'. My motivation for proposing this course was straightforward: I wanted to design a course that would introduce students to the rich field of cultural anthropology (and related disciplines) through the lens of a single, yet multi-faceted event. I had carried out research on Chernobyl effects in Ukraine during the 1990s, allowing me the opportunity to bring my own fieldwork experience to the course. I was familiar with the large body of literature on Chernobyl, work that covered vast disciplinary, methodological, and theoretical ground. Chernobyl, in short, seemed to present something for everyone. Though I did not know in advance which students would sign up for this new course, I predicted that area studies students affiliated with Indiana University's Russian and East European Institute (REEI) would be interested, as well as

students seeking degrees at the University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA). I began designing a course that would be compelling to students from these disciplinary backgrounds, and that would, I hoped, introduce students with little or no background in cultural anthropology to the seemingly boundless potential of this discipline to lend insights into human and technological tragedies such as Chernobyl.

In accordance with these goals, I tried to create a course that would offer students an integrated view of Chernobyl and other ecological and technological disasters. The course would cover the important environmental aspects of such events, but also other ways in which calamities such as Chernobyl reverberate locally and globally with persons and societies. I planned to take students through the rich field of cultural anthropology by highlighting anthropological ways of understanding the far-reaching and intersecting environmental, political, social, and health effects of Chernobyl locally and globally. We would interweave discussions of policy and international law with considerations of ethics, risk, social entitlements, subjective experiences of health and disease, and others. I envisioned a course that would utilise anthropological approaches to studying complex events such as Chernobyl via unique literatures and media sources that highlight local, humanistic interpretations of the disaster while placing the accident's effects in a dynamic, multidisciplinary, global context. Going beyond Chernobyl as an environmental case study, we would examine the symbolic uses of the accident, local interpretations of nuclear catastrophe, and Chernobyl as an example of various globalizing forces.

As expected, many of the fifteen students who joined the seminar had area studies and policy interests, but a range of other majors was also represented. Two PhD students were pursuing a degree in anthropology; a third was studying applied health sciences, with a minor in anthropology. Three students were pursuing joint MA degrees in REEI and SPEA. Undergraduate students were majors in the following disciplines: History (with a focus on Russia), Communication and Culture (specializing in film), General Studies, Theater, Biology, Anthropology, SPEA and International Studies, and Environmental Science. The format of the seminar allowed me to introduce anthropological approaches and theories through the example of Chernobyl, while also allowing students to connect readings and discussions with their particular disciplinary interests. During the course of the semester, students and I were able to explore in some depth the following anthropological approaches and bodies of literature: medical anthropology, anthropology of development, diasporas and migration studies, nationalism, ethnicity and identity, nostalgia and constructions of 'home', environmental and ecological anthropology, symbolic anthropology, popular culture, the anthro-

polology of risk, political anthropology, economic anthropology, the anthropology of performance, and the anthropology of food. Readings for the course were varied, representing practically every point on the academic and popular literature spectrum. Students read policy reports, newspaper and other popular articles, classic anthropological literature, new ethnographic works, literary criticism, novels, plays, and poetry. A range of ethnographic and documentary videos complemented the course, as well as slides from my own fieldwork. Exposure to such diverse materials gave students an idea of the richness of cultural anthropology and provided them the opportunity to connect with those approaches that spoke most directly to their own experiences and scholarly interests. Over the course of the semester, I found that students became more invested and excited as they were given more responsibility for the course. Students were asked to choose another environmental issue in the region about which they gained some expertise that they then shared with the class (nuclear testing in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan; the Ignalina Nuclear Power Station in Lithuania; oil shale in Estonia; and others). Online discussion forums outside class time on a range of issues also bolstered student interaction with the course material and with each other.

In order to encourage students to further engage the material and to allow them to pursue their own interests in their respective fields, I designed a range of writing projects for completion during the semester. Two short essay assignments presented students with a choice: they could pursue a 'traditional' essay question, or choose a more creative approach to synthesizing their ideas. This strategy produced a range of insightful and artistic projects, including a Chernobyl fairy tale, a screenplay set in Chernobyl, an article on Chernobyl in the 'Alien Times' newspaper (making the familiar, strange), and several book reviews. Students were also assigned a final research paper, for which they were expected to research in depth some aspect of Chernobyl or a related topic. Class presentations on these topics allowed students to teach each other about their library research, and several postgraduate students incorporated their preliminary thesis research into these projects. Students with expertise in languages other than English (in this case Russian, Estonian, and Lithuanian) were encouraged to use foreign language sources in their library research. Many of the students got caught up in current events in Ukraine, especially the tumultuous presidential elections of fall/winter 2004 and the ensuing 'Orange Revolution'. We began to devote the first fifteen minutes of each seminar to a discussion of these unfolding events. As a result of their active participation in these discussions, many non-area specialist students became more invested in learning about the region.

Organising a seminar around a key event such as Chernobyl allowed the students and me to benefit from the expertise of a range of scholars at Indiana University. We were fortunate to host several guest speakers during the semester. This served to complement the anthropological approaches that students were learning about with perspectives from other disciplines. Mike Snow of the IUB Physics Department gave a fascinating account of what went wrong at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant to cause the 1986 disaster. Jerry Hennefeld of the IU-South Bend Physics Department discussed research he carried out with immigrants to Ohio from the Chernobyl zones in Belarus. He described the physical effects of radiation exposure while highlighting the difficulties of determining individual doses. Matt Auer, from IU's School of Public and Environmental Affairs, gave students an overview of environmental issues in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe, and stressed the implications of EU accession for the environment. Finally, Steve Raymer from Journalism at IUB shared his experiences of covering Chernobyl for National Geographic's 'Chernobyl: One Year Later' issue in 1987, and discussed the difficulties Western journalists faced in the Soviet Union in general. Students also designed a virtual interview with Natalya Preobrazhenskaya, an environmental activist in Kyiv, about Chernobyl and the growth of the Green Movement in Ukraine. As a culmination of the seminar, students and I are creating a course web site, which will help us share the successes of our seminar with other instructors and students. The web site will also serve as an informational resource on Chernobyl's social, political, economic, and health effects. We are including bibliographies, links to relevant sites, translations of little known research and creative works on Chernobyl, and students' own writings from the course.

When I began designing the Chernobyl seminar, the idea of coalescing a course around a singular event was admittedly daunting. Colleagues continuously asked me, 'Will there be enough material for a sixteen week course on Chernobyl?' Even I had my doubts, but in the end students and I found ourselves scrambling to manage the wealth of disciplinary literatures on Chernobyl, and to follow up on the many leads and new avenues for inquiry that our studies of Chernobyl sparked. Students began to connect the issues surrounding Chernobyl (the politics of risk and blame, health inequalities, secrecy and corruption, social welfare debates, disability politics, human-technology interactions, environmental movements, the symbolism of illness, and many others) to other social issues, to other disciplinary approaches, and to their own lives. Anthropology through the case study is a teaching strategy that I will continue to pursue, since I have found it an effective way to simultaneously focus, diversify, and enliven student learning about diverse approaches to understanding humans and our lifeways.

Note: The author is happy to provide readers with a copy of the course syllabus for 'Chernobyl: Legacies of a Meltdown'. Please send a request to Sarah D. Phillips at sadphil@indiana.edu.

### MILENA BENOVSKA-SABKOVA

**1** I should begin by mentioning some specific features of the intellectual paradigms current in Bulgarian anthropology (and ethnography and folklore studies) over the last fifteen years. These include a marked lack of desire to engage in reflexivity and in theoretical discussions; hence, quite a number of new tendencies simply don't get discussed. Where writers refer to their theoretical or methodological principles at all, they put these forward as a matter of personal choice. All the same, a general drift along the lines of that adduced in the first issue of *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* can be identified, one characteristic of post-Soviet (and perhaps more broadly, post-socialist) space in general. Let me attempt to list them here.

(a) *Concentration on subjects connected with the study of national minorities and/or ethnic groups:*

When funds for research are short, it is most expedient to focus on topical issues. In Bulgaria, the foremost issue of this kind is that of minorities, since: a) in the mid-1990s the effects of the ethnic conflicts of the late 1980s could still be vividly felt; b) the war in former Yugoslavia acted as a warning from the recent past about the possible consequences of ethnic conflicts; c) under socialism, this subject could not be addressed at all, for reasons of political censorship. The priority given to ethnic minority issues means that in practice it is impossible to focus exclusively on urban areas. *The village is by no means neglected as a site for fieldwork.*

(b) Another characteristic factor of Bulgarian ethnography is that the types of fieldwork and research which were current under socialism still persist. For instance, the 'tradition' of carrying out regional expeditions still survives, and

such expeditions still take the form they did in the 1970s and 1980s. The results of such expeditions still get published in regional collections that generalise from field records (in the form of ‘invariant descriptions’ of all the traditional ethnographical areas of investigation: material culture, mythic belief systems, life-cycle and seasonal rituals, and so on). For instance, the collection *Sakar. Etnografsko, folklorno i ezikovo izsledvane* (Sakar: An Ethnographical, Folkloric and Linguistic Description, 2003) has exactly the same structure and range of materials as, let’s say, *Dobrudzha*, published in 1974. On the other hand, it’s hard to say how long the stasis will last, given that it’s becoming more and more difficult to get funding for projects of this kind.

(c) One can’t exactly term what’s going on in Bulgaria a rejection of theory; it’s more accurate to speak of renewal and fragmentation in the area of theory. Some researchers are still using structuralist concepts and analytical techniques. As a rule, this is connected with studies of the ‘historical/semantic reconstruction’ type. Quite a number of scholars of this kind have adopted the orientation of ‘historical anthropology’, combining fieldwork (using the autobiographical method) with archival research. ‘Political anthropology’ is also practised, though more in the sense of an interest in politics as a theme than as an analytical method. The ambitions of renewal in the area of theory are also accompanied by a striving (which at the moment is in its very early stages) to cross national boundaries. Thus, there is a developing interest in the cultures of the countries neighbouring Bulgaria (and not necessarily simply with reference to the Bulgarian diasporas located there).

Inevitably, *education* has also been affected by these changes. I should begin by remarking that, despite the existence of no less than two independent institutes relevant to the subject within the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (the Ethnographical Institute and Museum, and the Institute of Folklore), education in anthropology and ethnography had no institutional base before 1980: the subjects were integrated into history and philology generally. In 1980, a ‘department of ethnography’ (later renamed a ‘department of ethnology’) was set up within the History Faculty of Kliment Okhriski, University in Sofia. From 1995, ‘ethnology’ was transmuted into an independent speciality within the History Faculty (see [www.uni-sofia.bg](http://www.uni-sofia.bg)). The granting of academic autonomy to Bulgarian universities in the 1990s generated a rapid proliferation of ethnology departments in other state universities as well (e.g. Plovdiv, Veliko Tyrnovo, the South-Western University in Blagoevgrad).<sup>1</sup> As a rule, these new departments were staffed by scholars from the Ethno-

<sup>1</sup> V. Ganeva-Raicheva. ‘Pet godini universitetska etnologiya’ [Five Years of University Teaching of Ethnology] // *Bulgarski folklor*. 1997. Vol. 23. No. 3–4. Pp. 144–52.

graphical Institute and Institute of Folklore of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. From 1993, there has been a Department of Anthropology at the private New Bulgarian University in Sofia;<sup>1</sup> at this university, tuition in ethnology and folklore is also included in programmes run by other departments. Over the past four to five years, masters degrees in anthropology have also been set up at Sofia University ([www.uni-sofia.bg](http://www.uni-sofia.bg)).

It's clear that the theoretical (and institutional) fragmentation of research activity is also being reflected in anthropological education. The 'classic themes' (traditional village culture) have survived alongside the new interest in modern phenomena, without there being any subordination or even co-ordination between them. The relationship between these different orientations is articulated differently in different universities.

In my view, it is very important to preserve the study of traditional culture (the village) as the basis for integrating all the other directions in modern anthropology. 'Modernity' and 'urban anthropology' can hardly be understood by those who have little knowledge of archaic and traditional culture. In this respect, I hold to the idea of the importance of a specific variety of 'evolutionism' in education: from 'traditions' to 'modernity'.

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One can't deny that the loss of Sofia University's monopoly on anthropological (ethnological) education has been accompanied by an unmistakable rise in educational professionalism. The opening of several new departments and specialisations of an anthropological kind is a real step to the creation of competition, and thus professionalism, and I would regard this as wholly positive. The same can be said with regard to the move towards theoretical renewal, including the striving to overcome narrow national boundaries in academic work.

At the same time, it is impossible not to notice a silent, but absolute, rejection of co-ordination and information exchange between colleagues at different universities. Bulgaria must be one of the few countries in the world where associations of anthropologists/ethnologists and other forms of professional organisation simply do not exist. The long-standing antagonism (which I suspect predates the founding of the Institute of Folklore in 1973) between 'ethnographers' and 'folklorists' also seems to be reflected in the field of education. There seems to be no systematic communication between research centres and/or university centres of anthropology/ethnology. Hence the lack of harmony between the efforts being made by different anthropologists/ethnologists — above all with regard to professional discussion of university programmes and the development of these.

<sup>1</sup> P. Bochkov. 'Predgovor' [Introduction] // *Antropologichni izsledvaniya*. 2000. No. 1. Pp. 3-4.

**3** It is essential to produce and publish new textbooks at regular intervals. This section of the questionnaire was phrased with the Russian situation in mind, but it is equally relevant to Bulgaria, where, I would emphasise, new textbooks on all the disciplines mentioned are a key requirement. We have never had sufficient high-quality textbooks in Bulgaria, and so the appearance of such textbooks in the Russian language would be a positive step so far as we were concerned as well.

Regarding the form that a (general) textbook on anthropology should take, it would be best if it were to have a) a historiographical bent (dealing with the evolution of schools and concepts in anthropology), and b) a substantial scholarly apparatus, including a topic-based bibliography, chronologies of important dates, personalia, and events, and a glossary of technical terms.

**4** The issue of what happens to our students when they graduate is not straightforward. I think the most accurate answer is that we educate specialists of a specific kind who then end up in a variety of different 'contexts'. Maybe the simplest way of putting it is to say that we produce something similar to 'culturologists'. I think it would be a good idea if we were to bear in mind, when educating our students, that our graduates don't just end up as research students, and that they may well need practical skills of a kind that would allow them to work as expert advisors (to NGOs, say), as consultants, journalists, and perhaps also as social workers.

## YAKOV SHER

### The University Teaching of Archaeology: Some Thoughts

In Russia, archaeology has long been an integral part of university courses in history. By extension, to evaluate the current state of archaeology education, it is worth looking at its history and at the various models offered by other countries, in order to have some comparative material.

### Looking back

At the turn of the century there were two kinds of educational establishment in Russia that offered training in archaeology: universities, and institutes of archaeology. St Petersburg University did not have its own archaeology depart-

ment, but different aspects of archaeology were taught in different faculties. For example, 'prehistoric archaeology' was taught in the Physics and Mathematics Faculty, whose graduates included I.T. Savenkov, P.P. Yefimenko, S.I. Rudenko, and many others. M.P. Gryaznov studied at the Physics and Mathematics faculty of Tomsk University. The famous Russian classical archaeologists B.V. Farnakovskiy and M.I. Rostovtsev studied in the classics department of the History and Philology faculty. In other words, what we now call 'specialisation in archaeology' did not exist. It was thought that the archaeologist of prehistoric times ought to have a wide education in the natural sciences, particularly in geology and what was known as 'natural history'. It was considered unthinkable that archaeologists working on the classical world or on the Orient might not have mastered their respective ancient languages — Latin and Greek for the former and Arabic or Persian for the latter. When the Imperial Academy of Sciences needed to send someone to conduct an archaeological study of Central Asia, shortly after it was incorporated into the Russian Empire, the man they chose was V.V. Bartold — a brilliant orientalist, certainly, but equally certainly no kind of an archaeologist.

Archaeological institutes taught the discipline in greater detail than the universities. St Petersburg Archaeological Institute, which was opened in 1877 (its first director was N.V. Kalachov), initially produced archivists, and it was not until 1899 that a specialisation in archaeology as such was introduced. In 1907, at the suggestion of Dimitry Samokvasov, another institute was opened in Moscow, this time with two sections — archive work and archaeology. The St Petersburg institute was officially affiliated to the Ministry of Public Education, and the Moscow institute was supported by private benefactors, although in 1912 it started to receive public subsidies as well. To make a comparison with modern times, both colleges had something in common with what we now call additional qualifications colleges.<sup>1</sup> They offered two-year courses to students who already had a higher education (normally at a university) and three-year courses to students with secondary education. The teachers at the St Petersburg Archaeological Institute included N.P. Likhachev, N.K. Rerikh, and A.I. Sobolevskiy; its last director was N.V. Pokrovskiy. V.A. Gorodtsov, Dimitry Samokvasov, and other famous specialists lectured at the Moscow institute. The Moscow institute also had branches in Smolensk, Kaluga, Vitebsk, Nizhny Novgorod, and Yaroslavl.

A similar system currently exists in Europe and America. For example, alongside universities such as the Sorbonne and 'Paris X'

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<sup>1</sup> Institutions providing in-service training to professionals such as teachers and doctors. [Editor].

(Nanterre) in France, exist ‘schools’, or specialised institutes, such as the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* or the *École Normale Supérieure*. One could mention also the various specialised archaeological colleges founded and maintained by developed countries in the countries which are home to the different civilisations of the Ancient World — Egypt, Greece, Iran, Syria, India, and so forth. These do not teach full courses with a comprehensive curriculum, as is customary in Russia. They take students who are nearing the end of their studies, or newly graduated academics doing short placements. The students live at the college, and are guided by experienced specialists as they carry out research projects related to the work of the particular college. This normally consists of work comparable to our pre-university fieldwork or dissertation preparation. One example of this system at work is Cyprus, which covers an area of only 100 by 200 kilometres, but in which there are around 70 foreign archaeological colleges. The former imperial powers which founded the colleges thus continue to exert an influence on the academic and pedagogical politics of their former colonies. There was once a similar Russian archaeological institute in Constantinople; and the department of Egyptology at Cairo University was founded and directed for many years by B.S. Golenishchev, the son of a Petersburg merchant, curator of the Hermitage Egyptian collection, and a prominent Russian Egyptologist. Another Russian classicist, Mikhail Rostovtsev, who was forced to emigrate in 1919, spent 25 years in charge of the department of Ancient History at Yale, one of the USA’s most prestigious universities, and led the world-famous Dura Europos excavation project in Syria.

It is clear from this brief overview that the pre-revolutionary Russian professional education system for a ‘specialist archaeologist’ (the term recorded on the degree certificates issued by archaeological institutes — incidentally, the same was to be found on other degree certificates, for example ‘specialist agronomist’ or ‘specialist silviculturist’ and so forth) was to all intents and purposes a two-stage one, without being specifically labelled as such. We have endless arguments today about the introduction of the two-stage (two-level) education system in universities. A quick glance at Western models, and we borrow the foreign labels, ‘bachelors’ and ‘masters’ (incidentally, a ‘bachelor’ in France is someone who has completed only a secondary education).<sup>1</sup> But wouldn’t it be simpler to revert to our own not so distant experience — to our own perfectly adequate, not to mention time-tested, two-level archaeological education?

Until the early 1990s there were only four archaeology departments in the whole of the USSR (Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev, and Tashkent).

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<sup>1</sup> However, the intended effect of the Bologna Agreement is to iron out such differences in profile and terminology. [Editor].

While they did not have identical academic standards, each one had its own specific character. They were united by the fact that their students learnt their trade first hand from the very people who had laid the foundations of archaeology in Russia and the Union Republics.

What distinguished the education that specialist archaeologists received in these departments was the particularly rich experience of practical fieldwork and the high academic standards in specialist courses and seminars. When P.I. Boriskovsky brought a tray of stone tools to a class, a lesson on the Paleolithic Period — a subject which is usually less than engaging — came to life in his hands and through his words, taking on the very quality that A.N. Rogaev liked to call the ‘concrete historical approach’. M.P. Gryaznov’s classes on traceology were just as interesting. He taught his students things that do not appear in textbooks even today: how to acquire professional intuition and the ability to check one’s intuitive hypotheses through practical observation. During his lessons, M.I. Masson, who had just begun his teaching career, covered the blackboard with diagrams of the basic ceramic forms from all the Anau and Namazga periods, and expected the same of his students at the end of term assessment. Lectures by M.I. Artamonov and V.F. Gaidukevich were not only filled with the latest archaeological discoveries of the time, but were also deeply imbued with sensitivity to historical methods; they taught one not to lose sight of history itself while working down through the chronological layers, the pottery shards, and the glittering golden treasures. In his lectures on Transcaucasian archaeology, B.B. Piotrovsky demonstrated a particular intricate method for the historical interpretation of archaeological findings. By describing how insignificant ‘trifles’ such as scorched flowers, grape stems, or grass seeds could be used to reconstruct a painstakingly detailed picture of how the Scythians (or was it the Midians?) stormed the Urartian fortress of Teishebain, he taught one to understand the historical evidence such ‘trifles’ contained. When M.K. Karger took a group of undergraduates, research students, and enthusiasts around the old town in Novgorod the Great, it almost seemed as if he had himself been an eyewitness to the historical events at Yaroslavl Fortress and its environs.

Only a researcher and lecturer as talented as A.V. Artsikhovskiy could have overcome the effects of a considerable speech impediment and kept the undivided attention of a large hall of rather unruly students while giving a lecture series on the foundations of archaeology. B.A. Rybakov and S.V. Kiselev were equally engaging lecturers. And even such quiet, modest and unimposing figures as A.V. Kiryanov and P.I. Kostrov, in Moscow and Leningrad respectively, laid down the very foundations of practical archaeological conservation and restoration, teaching these skills to the students and graduates who worked alongside them on the ground.

The department of Archaeology at the Central Asian University (in Tashkent), which for many years was directed by M.E. Masson, founded a unique school specialising in the historical topology of the early mediaeval town; its graduates joined forces with Leningrad orientalist archaeologists, and in the space of fifty years, they essentially built from scratch the foundations of Central Asian archaeology.

Of course, four departments in an enormous country is extremely few. When P.N. Tretyakov returned from his trip to Czechoslovakia in the 1950s (a trip of this kind being a rare event in those days), he professed a strange feeling of regret and admiration combined: the number of archaeologists per square kilometre in tiny Czechoslovakia was comparable to the number all over the Soviet Union. S.V. Kiselev's lectures on his findings from a trip to Mao's China and B.B. Pitrovsky's tales of his work in Nasser's Egypt struck a similar note: these were countries with no less rigid totalitarian regimes, but ones in which the authorities paid immeasurably more attention to archaeology than they did in Russia. We produced few archaeologists — not more than 40 or 50 per year in an enormous country — and even then a significant number were unable to find themselves suitable employment in the field. The country needed 'physicists', not 'lyricists'. Even the campaign to build 'the glorious constructions of Communism' had little impact on the numbers of archaeologists finding work.

### **Imitation reforms**

Like the reforms carried out in every other area today, there is nothing systematic about education reform in Russia: this amounts to no more than a slapdash collection of disorderly ideas. Up to the present, all reform has revolved around changing labels and badges. Institutes are renamed as universities, and men of genius who aren't recognised by the official Academy of Sciences gang up in self-styled 'academies' so that they can confer on themselves the title of 'academician'. A former department of 'The History of the Communist Party' renames itself a department of 'Russian History', while a department of 'Communism Studies' becomes a 'Department of Political Science'. The rapid spread of departments of 'culturology' is particularly telling. The old universities never used to have these departments, and yet teachers and students knew a great deal more about culture than they do now.

One would be tempted to laugh ironically at all these imitation reforms if it were not for the fact that they swallow up an enormous number of teaching hours and have no effect at all, where they don't actually do harm. All the while there is no time to study archaeology's latest accomplishments, and particularly its technical and scientific revival over the last decade.

### Crisis

In the 1970s the situation started changing rapidly. New academic centres with archaeological subdivisions sprang up in the republics and the regions, and new departments were set up in the universities. Although the centre retained control over the process of establishing new departments, it became more and more difficult for it to control them. A generation of local specialists grew up who objected to centralised control. On the one hand this was to be expected. New academic centres, universities and museums were being set up, and sizeable sums were being given out for archaeological excavations at building sites. There was a real demand for specialists, and training programmes began to be offered outside of the old departments. But the other side of the coin, and one which was not immediately apparent (indeed it often passes unnoticed today), is that the problem of quality in archaeology education became more and more vexed.

When the older generation of archaeologists began to pass away in the 70s and 80s, it became clear that for a number of reasons they had not been able to cultivate a generation of successors who might be able to achieve even more than their teachers. Yet this is the only foundation of scientific progress: if students are not able even to take just one step more than their teachers, science does not only stop; it begins to deteriorate. I am not one to idealise our teachers. They were a mixed bunch, and one or two were far from saintly. But they had reached extremely high standards professionally. We should ask ourselves: which of our generation has done more for Siberian archaeology than S.I. Rudenko, M.P. Gryaznov, and A.P. Okladnikov; who has done more for that of the Black Sea area than V.F. Gaidukevich, V.N. Grakov, and V.D. Blavatsky, or for ancient Russian archaeology than A.V. Artsikhovsky, M.K. Karger, and N.N. Voronin? Of course, to a certain extent it was easier for them, since most were starting archaeological investigation from scratch, or working in areas which had previously received little scholarly attention. But whatever the circumstances, each successive generation should be able to make at least a small advance on the achievements of their predecessors.

Starting from the 1990s, archaeology departments began to open up in almost every university, regardless of prevailing conditions. The teaching staff learnt their subject as they went along. There were shortages of books, study materials, and laboratory equipment. In the wake of this 'acceleration' arrived a number of other new phenomena. Some people even welcomed these; at least, by no means everyone considered them damaging. One of these is 'foreman's archaeology' ['instant archaeology']. Archaeologists are responding to meet the demand for specialist-supervised excavations

at building sites, but the ensuing projects are carried out hastily: instead of formulating plans and hypotheses in advance, they take the attitude, ‘leap before you look’. The result of all this has been that while many young archaeologists have learnt to lead excavation projects competently and to write up decent reports, they have not learnt to recognise and make sense of cultural and historical problems in the midst of the avalanche of new material.

Something comparable to our ‘foreman’s archaeology’ situation has developed recently in France. But unlike in Russia, the Prime Minister, Michel Rocard, wrote a letter in 1990 to Christian Goudineau, a professor at the Collège de France, asking for a brief account of the situation of archaeology in France, particularly regarding what we call ‘emergency’ archaeology of the kind done at building sites. Even our youngest generation of archaeologists will most likely not live to see the day when our Prime Minister requests a report on the situation of archaeology in Russia! Here, excavations get done, and then the artefacts accumulate in museums, or more often in laboratories, for indefinite periods of time. Field research departments put together reports, but nobody makes time for the most important part — producing a full publication of findings accompanied by an authoritative academic commentary. Instead of full publications, abstracts are scabbled together in haste and rushed into print (in time for the next conference).

‘Abstract archaeology’ is another significant phenomenon in Russian academia. A sea of unsubstantiated ‘abstracts’, which generally provide no academic commentary or illustrative material, has flooded archaeology bibliographies in recent years. One even finds perfectly ‘grown-up’ authors featuring in collections of abstracts from students’ conferences. Sooner or later people will understand what this literature is for — curriculum vitae fodder, and nothing else. Not long ago, a graduate student in archaeology at one of the Siberian universities announced that in two years she had managed to produce no less than 18 (but really!) publications.

As has happened elsewhere in education too, an exchange has taken place. We used to have scholarly publications, now we have ‘abstracts’. True, ‘abstracts’ do have a use. But they are purely auxiliary works, useful as a supplement to a conference programme. After the conference they lose their purpose, and are only useful as an indication of a given author’s interests. Back when there were fewer conferences, Rotaprint ‘abstracts’ were routinely produced at the beginning of the conference, to be followed a year or two later by a collection of papers, complete with properly annotated articles furnished with illustrative material.

Let me offer a **diagnosis**. In my view, contemporary archaeology education suffers from two serious ailments. The first, of course, is

the lack of funding. And while departments in Moscow and St Petersburg are able to scrape by, the new provincial departments are destitute. A comprehensive education in archaeology requires the student not only to participate in excavations, but also to study museum collections and archives, as well as take part in student and 'professional' conferences around the country. It requires travel - which the provincial universities cannot afford. Some people have already reconciled themselves to this problem; one sometimes hears a doctoral student defending his or her dissertation remark that he or she was not able to access a certain work because he or she had no budget for travel.

The second ailment is more serious. It is a fact that a large disparity in quality, measurable by a number of criteria, has formed between old and new archaeology departments. It may seem as if there is one set of standards and one common curriculum. But in practice a student from a provincial university need only try to transfer to MGU or St Petersburg State University in order to discover that there can only be a question of achieving this if he or she drops an academic year; and even then they will need to make up the difference between the two programmes by taking five to eight exams and assessments. There are, to all intents and purposes, two different curricula. What is more, the provision of academic and specialist literature in metropolitan as opposed to provincial departments cannot be compared. Even if students have a genuine thirst for knowledge and learning (which in itself is not all that common), they cannot satisfy it at a provincial university, for several reasons: the inadequate standard of the teaching staff, the inferior local libraries, the paucity of laboratories and museums, and the reduced access to practical archaeology during their studies. There can simply be no question of aligning the 'starting lines' for metropolitan and provincial departments in the next fifteen to twenty years.

All this inevitably brings with it a general lowering of the bar when it comes to examinations, extended essays, candidates' dissertations and doctoral theses. Until the beginning of the 1990s we had only two doctoral committees specialising in archaeology - in Moscow and Tbilisi. One could also count the number of candidates' committees on the fingers of two hands. Now there are many more of both. But how many dissertations are there now which deserve comparison with the doctoral theses submitted by V.V. Piotrovsky, S.A. Semenov, P.I. Boriskovsky, M.P. Gryaznov, M.K. Karger, B.A. Rybakov, and N.N. Voronin? I pose the question rhetorically.

**Self help.** Self help is by no means the best cure. But there is simply nothing else in Russia that can save archaeology education. The government only remembers the discipline's existence when it suddenly needs to knock up a prestigious foreign exhibition (particularly

of ancient gold), or receive an important guest in a Moscow or Petersburg museum. The Ministry of Education and Science essentially ceased to exist in early 2005. The agencies and departments set up to replace it are busy dreaming up education reforms which will land further body blows on secondary and higher education. The projects born in bureaucrats' offices are whipping up indignation among scientists, scholars, and teachers, senior and junior alike. Universities' own options are more than limited. Is there anything we can change ourselves?

The metropolitan departments do not need any particular reforms. It is enough for them to maintain the high standards they have inherited. Perhaps it would be worth dedicating more teaching hours to the study of methodology, while reducing classes in the so-called 'social sciences'. Some modern teaching equipment would be no bad thing. It is essential that we close the gap between the 'specialism' [*spetsialnost*] and the 'specialisation' [*spetsializatsiya*]. The former has real value; the latter is definitely second-rate. In the metropolitan universities, one has a specialism, 'archaeology', meaning the subject is studied in depth from the first year. In the provincial universities, specialisation begins on paper from the third year, but in practice only after the student has started postgraduate study. This means that from the outset he or she is bound to lag behind his or her counterparts in Moscow and St Petersburg.

No more than a third of the students who opt for a specialisation in archaeology go on to work in the field: thus, more than two thirds of the students end up doing three years' work for nothing. When they leave to work in a school or in another profession, they don't use the specialist knowledge they have absorbed from related courses and seminars, which is bad enough; worse, they turn out not to have other knowledge and skills which are essential to their future career (particularly in teaching). Hence, there should be a more rigorous and focused selection process for specialisations; but this should be combined with greater freedom in choosing specialised courses and seminars. For example, students should take three to four specialised courses or seminars per term, and sit the same number of assessments and exams. They should be absolutely free to choose the courses they take. Of course, this would require a larger variety of courses and seminars. But this would be perfectly manageable, even in the provincial universities.

An archaeologist needs to have a knowledge of specialist literature in order to guarantee a high level of professionalism, but this alone is not enough. Specialist skills and fieldwork or laboratory techniques are very important in research today — including the more scientific techniques like technical photography and drawing, topography, field conservation and restoration methods, geophysics,

physical and chemical analysis methods for old materials, and so forth. Information technology is becoming more and more important for archaeologists' work. The current curriculum, however, does not cover these subjects. At the same time, precious teaching hours are being wasted on other disciplines which can hardly be considered essential (political science, sociology, economics and so forth). We can confidently cut them back to make room for the essential subjects.

Certain specialist seminars could do away with the traditional 'classroom' format, and instead consist of participation in real research projects, in which students would have their own tasks to fulfil in collaboration with each other and an academic supervisor. At the conclusion of the study, students would receive a grade equivalent in value to those awarded for examinations or other formal assessments. The experience of universities all around the world suggests that this is the most effective way of enabling students to learn the skills and techniques they need for work in research. It would bridge the unnatural gap between academic research and university study that has opened up in Russia over the last fifty years. However, there are currently only limited opportunities for practical study of this kind here, and then only in the metropolitan universities and at Novosibirsk.

The most important thing, however, is that exacting standards are applied at all levels and in a uniform manner. Low quality coursework, extended essays, and dissertations can be hidden, but they don't stay hidden for long, certainly not from real professionals. The necessary corollary of poor teaching standards is low standards in examinations and assessments, as well as in coursework and extended essays, all the way up to doctoral dissertations. 'Successful' trainees who have become used to these conditions will teach even less competently than they were taught themselves. The cycle continues: standards do not even stand still, but spiral downwards.

The diminishing public funds for education and research represent a heavy blow to intellectual aims, but not a mortal one. Sooner or later our political leaders will realise what the government of Japan, for example, realised immediately after the Second World War: if they are to avoid lagging behind other nations, they must invest more funds in education. But the outlook for academia is much gloomier if by the time the money starts to flow back, its standards are in a state of decline.

It is now becoming clear that some archaeology departments in provincial universities were opened in a rush, without the necessary conditions for success, and that even highly qualified teachers cannot turn their students into competent specialists. In this situation, the only option is 'individualised' teaching. From the first year of study,

the most talented students should be picked out, consistently given separate assignments, and involved in research work (paid where possible). Ideally, departments in Moscow and St Petersburg would officially reserve three to four places in the second or third years for able students to be transferred (on a competitive basis) from provincial universities. Until this practice was established, one could take on the best-qualified graduates from provincial universities and send them on an internship for the first year or two in a research institute or at one of the old universities. This option has been tested, for example in Kemerovo University, and has produced very satisfactory results. Graduate students take internships at the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute for the History of Material Culture, enrol as external students to 'pick up' the additional specialist courses they lack, carry out fieldwork under the guidance of some major specialists and prepare dissertation material, but return to their own university to present and defend the dissertation. Of course, this is only a half measure, but it is one that will nonetheless see us through until a new, effective, system of education is established.

Russia is currently the only country in the world that does not have a single archaeological monument on UNESCO's list of world heritage sites. That is a frightening symptom, and whether we can cure it depends entirely on the quality of archaeological education that we manage to deliver.

## WES WILLIAMS

### On being in the middle

#### i.

A number of propositions were presented to us by the editors concerning changes in our various, interconnected fields over the last twenty years. In the field in which I work most intensively — Renaissance literature/culture — three of these seem most pertinent. The first is the move from 'grand narratives' (Marxism, structuralism, psychoanalysis, and so on) accompanied by a shift in style from interpretation to description. The second is a redirection of scholars' attention towards aspects of literary and cultural production which would formerly have been considered either marginal, or beyond the competence of literary scholars. The third I shall return to below.

There is both profit and loss in the redirection of scholars' and students' attention away from interpretation and from the centre of literary production, towards descriptive work and towards the margins. The profit is most evident in the new forms of attention given to the anecdote, to composite narrative forms, and to the history and evidentiary status of terms such as 'experience' and 'witness' in the Renaissance. Recognition both of the historicity of texts, and of the textuality of history has led to often exciting work, at all levels, from first year discussion of Montaigne's 'des cannibales' through to analysis of doctoral theses and of books among colleagues. The 'early modern' field is currently an exciting place to work on both the larger picture, and on the detail of texts, images, culture. The energetic and productive redescription of philology as 'word-history' has fostered forms of micro-analysis (for instance of 'curiosity' and its cognates 'wonder', the 'marvellous'), which have contributed much to reconfiguring our understanding of the cultures of the Renaissance as plural, complex structures, rather than a singular monolithic, elite institution.

The multiple forms of exchange between different professions, confessions, and other interest-groups within Europe have been productively explored, as have Europe's encounters with cultures beyond the borders of Christendom. This has promoted an at times richly complex engagement with forms of writing which we would previously have considered 'background' or 'raw materials', and which we now think of as themselves the proper objects of stylistic analysis (or at least inclusion in 'our' project). Medical and legal case histories are read for the stories they tell; we focus our attention not only on Shakespeare's dramatisations of witches, ghosts, sailors and monsters (in, for instance, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*), but also on trial records, on treatises, theological polemic, travel narratives, and maps — and we ask students to do likewise. We discuss not only Molière's satire of religious hypocrisy in *Le Tartuffe*, and of medicine in *Le malade imaginaire*, but also explore the construction of interiority in confessor's manuals, of the body in medical textbooks, and of professional subjectivity in the curricula of universities and seminaries in Molière's time.

In relation to teaching, this has meant, first of all, that students have been introduced to not just great authors (Montaigne, Racine, et al), but also more 'minor', less canonical figures who work with similar themes, ideas, and forms. The great author is still alive and well, but he (or sometimes she) is more likely to find him/herself in the company of others than before; and more likely to be studied by a group of scholars than an individual: witness the plethora of (often useful) multi-authored 'companion to' series which now serve effectively as textbooks for a wide range of courses (albeit not often in Oxford). Such 'companions', bringing together a range of scholars often locating their work across disciplines, encourage students to

extend their understanding of literary analysis to an analysis (or at worst a simple description) of ‘rhetoric at work’ in a wide range of texts and images. At graduate level in particular, students are given a sense of how the profession of literature can be seen developing and competing with other forms of writing, other organised modes of professional discourse, other instances of power: medicine, the law, the church, colonial trade and empire.

ii.

With such evident gains in the energising of the study of the Renaissance, talk of loss seems unnecessarily defeatist. But loss there is, and most obviously in relation to the third of the editor’s propositions, namely that of a concentration on the present, rather than the past. The temptation to read the scenes, images, poems, handbooks, narratives and dramas produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the light of modern concerns, issues and theories is enormous. The peculiarly English collocation ‘early modern’ (French has no such concept; German has ‘frühe Neuzeit’, and we caught it off that) serves of course to re-describe such temptation as a venial sin at worst; indeed it can serve to make of its indulgence a method. One of the determining conditions of narratability in our field is the migration of ‘early modernity’ from historical to literary, or more broadly cultural studies. This move, as well as consolidating the interests of History, has lent credit to a range of compelling narratives of emergence and/or foundation, on condition that they take ‘early modern culture’ as their point of origin. What initially functioned as a sign within historical discourse that the object of a scholar’s attention was not exclusively the ‘high’ culture of the ‘Renaissance’, serves now as evidence of History’s having been rescued from the bankruptcy with which it once seemed threatened. As I suggested above, when talking of profit, talk of ‘early modern culture’ allows for a merger of sorts with (if not a hostile take-over of) anthropology to be effected. Negotiating with cultures (rather than reading literature), the early modernist draws on both the evidentiary and the ethical credit of anthropological labour: reading is reconfigured as field-work.

For some, this move comes as a great relief. Leaving literature and the literary to the moderns, they shift into reverse theoretical drive, and go with gusto from the text back to the work.<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that the work is quite what it was. For ‘early modernity’ can signal not so much a method, as redescription of the entire field, such that a period once figured as the Renaissance — an age of discovery, of renewal, of humanism, and so forth — is now more often, and often

<sup>1</sup> For more on the contexts and the shape of this shift, see the insightful introductory essay, ‘The Time of Theory’, in [O’Brien and Quainton 2000:1–52].

more reasonably, represented as (the onset of) an age of disenchantment and/or disillusion. Not only old-fangled historians but also — indeed especially — erstwhile theorists appear, from such a perspective, to have outlived their usefulness. For noting that much of what passes for theory these days seems to be a suspect concoction of ethico-historicist inquiry and foundationalist myth-making, the early modern cultural historian lays claim to a peculiar and privileged position in relation to Modernity: that of the not-quite outsider, explaining to the unaware moderns just how they got to be in such a sorry state. Some of us, it seems, specialise in suggesting how things might have turned out differently; others stress the inevitability of the mess.

iii.

I am not pursuing here an argument against ‘the (early) modern.’ Again, as I suggested above, a great deal of important, instructive and engaging work has been done under its sign, in a range of different fields, from the history of science to the history of the book, from the relations between law and literature, to those between sex and gender, text, image and the imagination. It seems, for instance, clear, from the point of view of my current research on monsters in the ‘early modern’ era, that in relation to the grammar of narrative and its imbrication with discourses of colonial expansion abroad and internecine conflict at home, it makes real sense both to talk of modernity, and to isolate the ‘early modern’ as a specific stage in the elaboration of the *‘juridical-natural concept’* (Foucault) of the monster, as of its counterpart, the merely — or the barely — human. There is a need, then, to question the story which has ‘folk’ or ‘superstitious’ interpretations of monstrosity as portent, sign of God’s wrath or glory, displaced by reasonable, professional institutions, offering understanding, assistance, and where necessary, treatment. An alternative to this narrative of enlightened progress would tell of ways in which the conjoining of medical, legal and colonial discourse with the politicised monster marks the onset of modernity by way of the emergence of something especially pernicious which ‘early modern’ culture only just began to possess: biopolitics.<sup>1</sup>

But here, too, methodological caution would be useful. For when we talk of cultures, of their history and their customs, we need to maintain a properly stereoscopic perspective: there is no safely different Modernity from which to look back on the Early Modern. And archival recovery can of course find itself furthering, in nostalgic mode, the politics of utopian imperialism. The ‘Earlies’ are not some now sadly lost tribe whose interest lies in their being sublimely

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<sup>1</sup> Monsters are proliferating in the ‘early modern’ field, and the bibliography on them is now vast. For a fine series of meditations on monsters, and on their recurrence as subjects/objects of recent theory, see [Knoppers, Landes 2004].

ignorant of what was to come, their culture announcing, but itself largely uncluttered by, our present concerns. We need, and clearly, to acknowledge that the pursuit of the ‘monstrous’, for instance, has a history at least as long as community; that it has a future is clear not only from our own culture’s obsession with children, but also — as Agamben has shown in his work on the state of exception, and Derrida explored in his study of hospitality — from the wretchedly conjoined discourses of terror, asylum and migration.<sup>1</sup> The work of un-coupling these discourses, demonstrating their historical facticity, decolonising History and agitating against the current of barbarism in our own culture is important, necessary, vital. But none of this can really be done unless alongside all the stories of emergence, of modernity and its origins, and alongside the extension of the field of study into territories we have hitherto left to others, we also attend to what it means, then as now, to locate one’s work, and oneself, properly in between cultures, somewhere in the middle.

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### PHILIP BULLOCK

As someone who began the study of Russian language and culture in 1991, I have spent the whole of my university career (undergraduate, graduate student, postdoctoral fellow, university lecturer) in the post-Soviet context. Whilst the transition Russia has undergone is most obviously a political and historical one, it has been accompanied by the kind of changes in scholarship and research considered in first issue of *Forum for Anthropology and Culture*. Hence my educational autobiography might well be considered a good case study in how changes in research culture have been reflected in university teaching.

In many respects, my research career reflects broader changes in the humanities. My undergraduate degree had been broadly traditional, with an emphasis on the study of literature through close reading and attention to historical context. This led to doctoral work on Andrei Platonov, using feminist theories of language and selfhood to analyse the importance of genre

#### Philip Bullock

School of Slavonic and  
East European Studies,  
University College, London

<sup>1</sup> [Agamben 2005]; [Derrida 2000a]; [Derrida 2000b]; [Borradori 2003].

on his prose works. However, my subsequent research has involved the study of art song in Russia, a project that draws more clearly on recent developments in cultural history and which draws heavily on the example set by my former supervisor, Catriona Kelly.

The question naturally arises of how this change in my research practice is reflected in my teaching. In many respects, my current appointment is an ideal one for someone interested in broadening the undergraduate and graduate experience. The School of Slavonic and East European Studies at University College London is explicitly an area studies centre and students can take a far broader range of courses than is usually the case in British universities. Options are available in language and literature, culture, history, economics, and politics. This leads to less emphasis on the traditional disciplinary divisions, as well as a reduced sense of the importance of the canon. Moreover, the presence of a student body that is regularly exposed to a variety of disciplines and methodologies leads, I think, to a heightened sense of interdisciplinary study. This can be felt within the Russian department itself, which offers, alongside literary courses, options in film, thought and music. The courses I teach at the moment are, perhaps, more traditional than some — a survey of the life and works of Mikhail Bulgakov, and an overview course of Soviet Russian literature from 1917 to 1941. Yet the fact that students have studied with a variety of faculty members in different disciplines lends even these courses a sense that they are in dialogue with more modern methodologies.

This appeals to me, as it raises the profile of cultural studies within the academic community, whilst retaining crucial features of a more traditional literary curriculum. Speaking with other members of the humanities community, in particular 'straight' historians, I am convinced that modern linguists have important things to offer. For instance, much teaching of literary texts is carried out by means of critical commentaries which instil in students sensitivity to texts, an awareness of historical context, and a proper scepticism about tradition and authority. These are not only the tools of literary study, but transfer well both across disciplinary boundaries in academia, and also into the working environment. Similarly, the study of literary texts can also be interpretative, involving the careful reading of a work in search of evidence for the case to be made. This is something that can be undertaken by even the most inexperienced undergraduate, a rewarding state of affairs for student and tutor alike. Perhaps the most impressive feature of such literary study is that it trains students to disagree with their teachers rather than replicate a certain critical agenda: a student can reasonably be asked to consider Pushkin's representation of Peter the Great in *The Bronze Horseman*, but trying to assess the long-term impact of Peter's reforms is altogether a task of another order.

Much of what I have written here is related to undergraduate teaching; ultimately, recent developments in research and scholarship are more likely to be felt in graduate teaching, something that will be an increasing feature of my academic life in the future.

## ANDY BYFORD

### **The Study of Culture within the British Modern Languages Degree**

I obtained my qualifications in ‘modern languages’ (degree in French and Russian, masters in Comparative Literature, doctorate in Russian Studies), in the period between 1995 and 2004, so my introduction to cultural history has been a largely ‘literary’ one. In the context of a British modern-languages degree, the term ‘culture’ is still most likely to be used as an appendix to ‘literature’, primarily in order to incorporate into the degree structure courses on other relevant cultural artefacts, such as theatre, cinema, art, music, philosophy, folklore etc. Scholars teaching the latter courses as a rule have a background in literary studies and continue simultaneously to teach language and literature.

Consequently, the approach to ‘culture’ within a modern-languages degree retains a certain ‘literary’ bias. Questions asked and methods used are often modelled, explicitly or implicitly, on the analysis, interpretation and theory of literary texts. In some cases ‘culture’ is reduced to a mere ‘background’ to literature. Otherwise, literary works still regularly assume the privileged role of ‘particularly interesting’ sources and references to culture in general. The impression is therefore one of a compromise, where language and literature are simply ‘renting out’ available space to the new venture called ‘cultural history’, largely in order to enable their own survival in these difficult times.

And yet, while language and literature clearly remain the traditional, ‘compulsory’ core of a modern-languages degree, courses on other cultural forms or on culture in general are

proving immensely popular among students and their number and variety is for this reason steadily rising. In the present 'customer-oriented' climate this trend is only likely to continue, most probably at the expense of some less popular literary and linguistic courses (e.g. those of older historical periods). Moreover, while the bulk of these 'cultural' courses today still focuses predominantly on artistic or intellectual forms, one can already notice a fairly unproblematic setting-up of courses (or parts of courses) on mass culture, including pulp fiction, the press, television, the internet, comic books, pop music etc.

The lack of a 'strong' disciplinary programme (whether linguistic or literary or cultural) has made the British modern-languages degree conveniently 'porous' and especially receptive to newly-emergent, cutting-edge developments in the study of culture, those only just 'appearing on the market'.<sup>1</sup> The use made of these developments is however both eclectic and selective, and often rather arbitrary (in the sense that priority would regularly be given to theories and methodologies coming from the country studied), and usually without much regard for methodological rigour. Nevertheless, students are, by and large, being introduced, if only patchily, to the variety of contemporary approaches to cultural history. The relatively 'lax' disciplinary attitude of modern languages has also led to a far greater acceptance of 'interdisciplinary' research projects at postgraduate level than is the case with many other degrees.

It is essential to note, however, that crucial to the conception of 'culture' in the context of a modern-languages degree is its circumscription into a specific *national-linguistic* frame, in the sense that it is by definition studied as the culture of the people who speak the language to which the degree is devoted. This is something most often taken for granted as a 'natural', or at least institutional, *given* and there is generally very little reflection on how this 'axiom' affects the way culture is being studied in this context. The self-imposed, institutionally inevitable national-linguistic boundaries of a modern-languages degree structure mean that the kind of cultural history produced is never just a 'neutral' study of culture as such, but is, at the same time, invariably, also *the construction of a particular culture*.

A direct consequence of this fact is a kind of parochialisation and a mostly insufficient level of contextualisation and generalisation in the modern languages understanding of culture. One would perhaps expect the otherwise popular courses in 'theory' to provide an opportunity for a certain 'broadening of the horizons' here, but the kind of theory taught within modern languages still tends to lean

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<sup>1</sup> One might contrast the relative impermeability to new methodologies in English studies in at least some well-established British universities. [Editor].

mainly towards ‘literary theory’ and very rarely includes anything resembling a general social anthropology of culture which would relativise and open up the process of self-enclosure characteristic of nationally-defined cultures, something that current modern-languages degrees, on the contrary, by their very institutional identity, only end up reinforcing.

Indeed, in discussions that take place between and across disciplines and languages, representatives of a particular modern-languages degree, whether scholars or students, are usually incited to speak *for* the culture they are studying, to promote it in a way, to specify its distinctiveness and, given the struggle for limited funding, to emphasise its broader significance *in competition with other cultures*. This has meant that the institutional preservation of individual modern-languages degrees simply does not allow their representatives to present their work as ‘merely’ case studies within some broader analysis of cultural processes. This, of course, has a serious impact on how cultural history is studied within a modern-languages degree, how findings are presented to students (or anyone else for that matter) and how students themselves are encouraged to talk about the culture they are studying.

All of the above shows that a modern-languages degree can, and in fact already does, provide a productive framework for the study of cultural history and anthropology, but that the way the degree structure is organised at the moment also imposes some quite crucial limitations. The two critical obstacles to a more balanced study of culture within a modern-languages degree are evidently the latter’s ‘literary’ and ‘nationalist’ biases.

Indeed, the question arises whether the study of literature really needs to retain its traditionally privileged status or whether modern-languages degrees could instead become degrees devoted to the whole variety of cultural forms, all of which would be placed on more or less equal footing.<sup>1</sup> The tendency to protect the study of literature by making its courses compulsory (at least at the lower levels) or by providing a greater number of such courses relative to the syllabus as a whole, would have to be based either on the idea that literature possesses some special, sacred-like value, a notion rather difficult to maintain today, or on the idea that the study of literature has become something of an ‘endangered species’ that therefore requires special intervention, shielding it from the ruthless ‘market forces’, which appear to favour the more diverse study of cultural history. Secondly, one can ask whether the fact that a nationally-defined culture tends

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<sup>1</sup> The practical obstacles to this, in Britain at least, might include the fact that languages now have a very marginal position in schools, so that students might simply not know two or three European languages well enough for meaningful cultural comparison to take place. [Editor].

to *enclose itself* inside carefully protected cultural, historical and linguistic borders means that students and scholars of different national cultures also need to enclose their own study of these cultures within homologous boundaries.

One solution to both of the above issues would clearly be some sort of radical ‘opening up’ of the modern-languages degree structure, making only courses in the respective language itself compulsory, while enabling students to pick and choose flexibly from a wide choice of other courses on offer, taught by scholars from different backgrounds (literary, anthropological, sociological, historical etc.), all of whom would be committed to an interdisciplinary study of culture. Moreover, in addition to courses that would refer to a specific national culture, the syllabus would need to include generalising courses designed expressly to undo the inherent parochialism of individual modern-languages degrees by discussing cultural-historical phenomena across national as well as disciplinary boundaries. Such a solution might sound rather utopian, requiring an overly radical restructuring of modern languages departments, of their degree structures as well as recruitment strategies. Nevertheless, a gradual and at least partial restructuring of the modern-languages degree in (more or less) this direction is far from inconceivable and might already be said to be taking place, if only in a rather limited and at times ambiguous way.

### EKATERINA MELNIKOVA

**1** I studied at the History Faculty of St Petersburg State University and the Ethnology Faculty of the European University in St Petersburg, so my responses refer primarily to my experience of these two institutions.

In my opinion, the ethnology and anthropology programmes at both universities were at a considerable distance from contemporary developments in their respective fields. But I am by no means convinced that a ‘basic’, ‘core’ university programme ought to aspire to keep pace with the very latest scholarly trends.

The basic programme can, and should, change; but it seems to me that any changes do not necessarily need to reflect new academic fashions, but rather should reflect the transformation of the discipline’s very fundamentals, of the

*background* with which all anthropologists become familiar during their education. I shall attempt to elucidate this position.

One of the basic tasks of an education in a fundamental sense (that is, an education aimed at training academics, not specialists in ‘applied’ fields) is, I think, to give all students with a particular specialisation a unitary body of knowledge about the elements of their subject. In an ideal world, any anthropologist who has completed an equivalent course in Russia, the CIS, Europe or America, should have the same ‘foundation’. By ‘foundation’ I do not just mean a defined set of terms or themes which are supposed to elicit a certain ‘response’ from a specialist anthropologist. The associations these terms trigger in his or her mind should also be the same. Anthropologists should have a common understanding of the contribution that each classic text made to the history of the discipline, and an understanding of every theory which has influenced anthropology’s path towards its current state. In a certain sense, the task of the basic degree course is to create a universal knowledge base. This does not, of course, mean that further development of the student’s knowledge and skills will be restricted; it simply means that all specialists should share a defined, basic level of knowledge. In other words, core courses should ideally be the same in every university throughout the world. Of course, an ideal is not something that can necessarily be reached, but it is something to which one should aspire.

So far as I can see, the basic programme offered by the Ethnology Faculty at the European University does, in the main, meet Western standards. But if we consider it in its capacity as a ‘fundamental’ programme, that is, one which aims to give specialists their primary training, then it is too short. A year to a year and a half is not enough time to fulfil all the requirements which I believe a fundamental programme of this kind should include. It goes without saying that new anthropological trends should be represented in the programme. The range of specialised options should be ready to react to any new or changed modes of thinking, ideas or methods. There should be a wide variety of specialised courses, and they should always be changing, developing in tandem with ‘actually existing’ science. Of course, students from a given section, faculty, or department will not be able to take all of the specialist options. But the very selection ought to some extent to reveal the basic trends in contemporary science, and show that changes are occurring. And every student should, of course, be able to choose a number of topics which attract his or her interest, just as a professional researcher does.

Unfortunately I am not aware of a single anthropology programme offered today which equips students to consider the current status of the discipline. Specialised options are usually repeated year after year, becoming well-worn, and, as a result, outdated. One could

compare core courses with Cognac: longevity is a mark of quality. But the specialist option is more like a Beaujolais: at its best when young. Leave it a year and there will already be a new one to replace it. But alas, just as our researchers and teachers still don't drink much Beaujolais, they also don't often bring in new specialist options, and are unwilling to include controversial topics reflecting the latest academic trends in their university's degree programmes.

2

This is a complicated question, although it does not seem so at first. The main problem concerns the criteria for evaluating education. Within the field of higher education in anthropology and ethnology, I would say that the best such criterion is the number of world-class specialists who have graduated from a particular institution. By this measure it does not matter what proportion of his or her knowledge and skills the student received directly from lectures, and what proportion he or she absorbed independently or through contact with colleagues. One needs to *know* how to use the latter two sources of information: and that is something that one has to learn.

I don't think that any educational programme is capable of accommodating the whole complex of methods, approaches, skills, and knowledge that the specialist will require for his work. Academic work changes, individuals' preferences adapt, new books are written, and new theories are born. It is difficult for me to answer the question as to what kind of knowledge and skills I lack that I might have acquired during my education. I don't feel that anything is lacking. If something proves necessary at a given point, I will be able to pick it independently.

3

To be honest, I know nothing about anthropology courses as such; that is, I never completed one (forgive me if I seem to contradict myself). St Petersburg State University's ethnography and anthropology department runs a course in ethnography. It is the only course, at least in St Petersburg, which gives as comprehensive a coverage as one could hope for, embracing the whole world. In other words, it offers courses on the peoples of Siberia, Central and South-Eastern Asia, the Middle and Far East, America and Africa, the Caucasus and so forth. Many of these courses are given by first-rate specialists in the ethnography of these regions. There is little anthropology in them, since their task is descriptive. The descriptions are organised in a more or less systematic manner, covering geography, language, social structure, religion, economics, clothing, architecture and cuisine. However, contemporary anthropology does not ascribe particular importance to the individual region. It is not research themes as such that determine a given region's scientific value. And the department has very few high-quality courses devoted to the methodology of anthropological research. In the European University's Ethnology Faculty anthropology is only one possible

path of study, and the number of courses devoted to it is also small. This being the case, it is difficult for me to think of anything that could be removed from the syllabus.

I think that the core courses in anthropology should include one on questions of popular religion. It is also essential to have a course on methods of field research. In courses on the historiography of anthropology, half of the workload should consist of seminars based round the discussion of various significant works. There should be a separate course on questions surrounding the construction of identity. Separate courses could also be offered on the politics of memory and on national development. There is potential for interesting interdisciplinary courses, for example on historical anthropology and sociology. I believe that visual anthropology should also be included in the syllabus.

P.S. Any publication takes time. After the Russian version of my answers was published, but while the English version was still in preparation, courses on field methods, the construction of identity, and the anthropology of religion were added to the curriculum of the Ethnology Faculty at the European University, St Petersburg. Life moves on.

## PAVEL RYKIN

1

As far as I can see, the epistemological changes in the social sciences (ethnology and anthropology in particular) discussed in the first issue of *Anthropological Forum*, have had very little impact on the general state of Russian ethnological research. Debates characteristic of Western academia — about the relationship between description and interpretation, ‘global’ and ‘local’ theories, and synchronic and diachronic development — have only very recently begun to elicit a response from Russian specialists, and even then primarily amongst academics who clearly aspire to Western methodological norms. The majority of the ethnologists I have encountered remain convinced that ethnology is a primarily historical, descriptive discipline mainly concerned with ‘traditional cultures’, a discipline which could certainly not be described as a modern phenomenon. This conviction is fostered and legitimised by the ethnology programmes taught at the majority of Russian uni-

### Pavel Rykin

Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences/Institute of Linguistic Research, St Petersburg

versities, including St Petersburg State University, where I studied history from 1995 to 2000. We were taught ethnography with old Soviet textbooks from the seventies and eighties, and did not stray from the theoretical models they laid out. (I still remember to this day how we were drilled on the differences between the terms, 'ethnos', 'ethnikos' and 'ethnic group', and how the universal applicability of the famous formula, 'tribe — people — nation' was drummed into us). We were told practically nothing about the developments in contemporary Western ethnology; we learnt the occasional (but even then isolated) fact about Western ethnology from separate specialised courses. It is not surprising that my contemporaries and I were quite sure that all of ethnology could be reduced to a single, rather boring variant, as set out in our academic programme. A few of my colleagues even dropped ethnography a year or two into the course, transferring to other departments where it was, as they put it, 'more interesting'. The only reason I did not do so myself was that I already was studying in another department (Russian history), although I followed closely how things were done in the ethnology department because of my specific interests. It was only later that I managed to divest myself of my low opinion of the pace of development of ethnological issues, and that was when I started to read beyond the syllabus, particularly works by contemporary Western ethnologists (Marshall Sahlins, Clifford Geertz, Eugene Cooper and others).

And so it was that I learnt about the important developments in ethnological research paradigms from extracurricular work, rather than through my official education, which did not give these any attention. In the light of this there is reason to believe that on the whole our education system is hardly keeping pace with such changes (there are welcome exceptions, but they do not alter the general picture), although it goes without saying that it ought to pay them significant attention. The gap between how the subject is taught and how research is actually carried out is rather wide, especially when it comes to issues which Russian ethnographic discourse completely ignores. For my part I had to invest a great deal of effort in order to get to grips with the particular tendencies in contemporary ethnological thought which interested me, tendencies of which my studies had left me entirely ignorant (for example interpretative anthropology, ethnicity theory, and social constructivism).

It is worth pointing out, however, that there is at least one intriguing, if slightly strange, point of convergence between Russian ethnography programmes and current issues in contemporary ethnology: the significant emphasis given to the descriptive element of research. This is a phenomenon which can be clearly detected in both Russian and foreign ethnology, although the way in which the emphasis developed in each case differs greatly. While Russian ethnology

simply inherited a tendency towards description from pre-revolutionary and Soviet times, in Western anthropology it appeared (or rather reappeared) under the influence of postmodernism during a crisis of confidence in the so-called ‘interpretative bias’ which had been so prominent in the social sciences from the late 1960s. Any convergence, therefore, seems to me entirely coincidental, a product of the primitive character of ethnological theory in our country, and not of any essential epistemological relationship.

2

I believe that the advantages and disadvantages of my education were determined by the nature of our education system in general. Ethnography in Russia is still seen as an essentially historical discipline, and it is taught in universities by the history faculties. Correspondingly, the way that ethnologists’ training is organised means that the information they learn about their basic specialisations is integrated with historical material from various fields. For example, ethnography students at St Petersburg University are required to attend lectures on Russian history, world history, archaeology and a few other historical disciplines, along with students from other departments in the history faculty. As a result they receive a fairly rigorous training in Russian and world history which qualifies them to teach most history options in schools. (I know several graduates from the ethnology department who have successfully found themselves work as school history teachers). One of the benefits of the Russian ethnography education is undoubtedly the fact that it provides such a broad knowledge of general history, significantly widening the student’s cognitive horizons. But this benefit is also a fundamental drawback, since it isolates ethnology from its contemporary epistemological context and locates it in a group of subjects that are extremely remote from ethnology’s current concerns — concerns which bring ethnology closer to philosophy, sociology and (to a lesser extent) linguistics, than to history as we usually understand it.

The border between ethnology and the other social sciences, as well as philosophy, has recently all but disappeared — to such an extent that it is often difficult to state precisely to which department one or another academic should naturally be affiliated. Revealing examples of this phenomenon are Claude Lévi-Strauss and Pierre Bourdieu, who liked to refer to his fieldwork in Algeria as *‘fieldwork in philosophy’*. But philosophy, sociology, and linguistics are the very fields about which Russian ethnology graduates tend to have a very limited understanding. They are allocated the most insignificant (if any) space in ethnology programmes, which means that the recently qualified ethnographer is condemned to fundamental ignorance of the key movements in his field — an ignorance that by no means all graduates will be prepared, or able, to overcome. When I started to familiarise myself with contemporary Western ethnological work, I became aware of my lack of knowledge in precisely these three disci-

plines, and spent a significant amount of time rectifying it. I am sure that degree courses ought always to include material on the epistemological advances to the theoretical foundations of contemporary ethnology, without which I am convinced that mutual understanding between Russian and Western academics cannot be possible.

3

I have already put forward some of my views on the content of ethnography programmes above. I think that it would be useful to include a number of introductory courses dedicated to the history and contemporary status of those social sciences which are closely related to ethnography (sociology, linguistics and cultural studies). These courses should give the student a background knowledge of the theoretical foundations and the main issues of the disciplines listed, as well as their basic methodologies. It would also make sense to dedicate more time to the history of ethnology in particular, both in Russia and abroad (preferably adopting a comparative approach). Knowing the history of the discipline would allow the recently qualified ethnographer to formulate or confirm his or her position vis-à-vis current theories in ethnographical research. At the same time, I think it would be advisable to reduce the number of courses in general history, the sheer quantity of which derives from the outdated notion that ethnology belongs to the category of historical disciplines. In the light of the major transformations in the scope of ethnology as a subject, it is essential that we change our educational standards in order to bring it into line with new intellectual issues, and by doing this make it easier for the student to assimilate these issues in the course of their education.

## GAYANE SHAGOYAN

### Education in Anthropology and the Social Sciences

2

I was a student at the Ethnography Faculty of the Yerevan State University at the height of the transition period (1990 to 1995), and the programme we followed was being restructured as we went along. Difficulties naturally arose — not so much with the choice of textbooks or academic preferences as such, but more with access to current scholarly literature, particularly journals and new publications. I remember with gratitude the landmark publication produced just at the right moment by the Institute of Social Anthropology in Oslo — nine volumes

#### Gayane Shagoyan

Institute of Archaeology  
and Anthropology,  
National Academy of Sciences,  
Yerevan

of the collated seminal texts in anthropology.<sup>1</sup> As far as methodology or emphasis on any particular theoretical orientation are concerned, I should point out that we actually gained in this regard, rather than lost out. The information we took on board was not infused with value judgments of the kind, ‘this is good, that is bad’ (one can detect how influential was the recent experience of rejecting Marxism; everything was becoming transient and unclear). Instead we took a historical approach — ‘this is how it was...’ For example, a course in the history of ethnological thought (taught by Levon Abrahamian) was framed as a battle of ideas about man and society, in which we did not so much study as relive every ethnological ‘eureka!’. Looking back on my education with hindsight, I would say that it was essentially post-modern (again, I think, unconsciously); we simply listened to the voices of the great ethnologists and debated with them<sup>2</sup> without favouring any particular one, adopting pluralism as the only possible approach.

4

I would like to look in detail at this last question, since to a certain extent it is the fundamental one, which defines the first three: after all, any discipline needs to experience demand as well as to have some potential for application (if only in order to find the funds to survive), if it is to avoid turning into a ‘glass bead game’ which might end up justifying its existence on aesthetic grounds; in which case it would be closer to the arts than the sciences. ‘Descriptive’ ethnology is on the way to becoming more of a literary genre focused on fieldwork material, where it is not the ethnographical facts that are important, but their transposition into a written text.

In general it can be said that recently ethnology has been undergoing a process of dichotomisation. On the one hand ethnological research has emphasised description which, though originally conceived as a fieldwork method, has gradually become an aim in itself, to the detriment of analysis, or any kind of conceptual framework (in order to escape accusations of any sort of ‘ism’; this is one of the particular manifestations of postmodernist pluralism). On the other hand, society’s demand for ethnology has facilitated the development of ‘applied anthropology’ which in turn minimises the theoretical-cognitive aspect of research and truly sets in stone the range of tasks the researcher must tackle, strictly limiting the scope of fieldwork that can be recorded, while at the same time introducing a number of new fieldwork methods (for example, the focus group technique, a new system of participant observation that differs from the traditional one, and so forth).

<sup>1</sup> It was the anthropologist Hülya Demirdirek who was responsible for this generous endeavour.

<sup>2</sup> For example, during a course on the origins of ethnology (taught by Yuri Mkrtyumyan) we literally sorted through the classic texts, in groups of ‘authors’ and ‘opponents’.

However these two tendencies, which at first glance hardly seem to be compatible, are not always opposed. The historical development of ethnological research in Armenia in the post-Soviet period has shown how these two approaches can successfully complement one another and combine to form a whole greater than the sum of its parts — the optimal variant not only for ensuring the survival of ethnology under the conditions of a transitional, crisis economy, but also for providing an experimental basis on which ethnology can continue its scholarly development in the current intellectual climate.

In the context of the proposed discussion, the second and fourth questions are closely interlinked. For example, a group of Armenian ethnographers who had experienced hard times financially and who had had particular difficulty finding opportunities for fieldwork expeditions, were commissioned by the World Bank to investigate ‘Poverty and Survival Strategies in Armenia’, in the midst of a severe economic crisis, energy shortages and, I must add, political meltdown. It was an American anthropologist, Nora Dudwick, who led the team as the World Bank representative, and this first experience of joint Armenian-American anthropological work became a kind of school and laboratory both for the Armenian ethnographers and for the ‘American commissioning anthropologists’, who encountered both the advantages and the disadvantages of the Soviet school of ethnography face to face. The project (like many subsequent projects commissioned by international non-academic organisations with a practical remit) pursued a goal which was thoroughly concrete — to formulate economic reforms in a period of rapid change. For this reason, the choice of theoretical and analytical frameworks and methods of collecting information depended on determination of the most effective way of solving specifically empirical problems. The concrete and practically focused nature of this project not only liberated the researchers from any academic prejudice regarding ‘obsolete’ or ‘ultramodern’ methods, but also frequently required the participation of other specialists. These in turn enabled another academic virtue to be developed; that is, they enabled new foundations for interdisciplinary investigations to be built, and a somewhat different coterie of adjacent disciplines to be formed (such as law, medicine, pedagogy, ecology, demography and statistics).

This experience may be worthy of a separate analysis. However for the purposes of this response I would like to focus on some of the consequences of this kind of collaboration: phenomena which have emerged as a side product of practical projects, but which are also important in defining the theoretical preferences of a school of local ethnology.

In addition to the usual commentaries and lengthy reports from local ethnographers, the organisations commissioning applied anthropo-

logical research (as I will refer to these projects) also asked for transcriptions of interviews recorded on Dictaphones. The requirement for written transcriptions arose not as a tribute to post-modernism, but rather as a necessary measure to help the researchers' international partners, who did not speak Armenian, to obtain translations of primary material — the interview texts. After almost seven years of regular investigations,<sup>1</sup> a large database of interviews had accumulated, many of which took the form of oral autobiographies collected from people below the so-called poverty line. Texts like these effectively became a fixed document to the transition period. On the basis of these and similar materials at least two methodologically interesting major anthropological studies on poverty have been produced: the first in Armenian, *Patmut'yunner aghk'atut'yan masin* [Stories on Poverty]<sup>2</sup> (Yerevan, 2001: H Kharyatyan (editor), A. Gulyan, A. Marutyan, H. Pikichian, G. Shagoyan, L. Abrahamian); and the second in English, *When Things Fall Apart: Qualitative Studies of Poverty in the Former Soviet Union* (Washington 2003, N. Dudwick, E. Gomart, A. Marc, K. Kuehnast). These publications were produced independently of one another, although both were financed by the World Bank. The first, published in Armenian, was inaccessible to American ethnologists; the second, in English, was published two years after the first. Neither consisted of reports or summaries of investigative projects; instead they gave an anthropological exposition of material which had already been used to develop practical recommendations. In this way both groups of researchers from different scholarly backgrounds nonetheless were able to produce anthologies with similar approaches and which considered similar problems, on the basis of interview work. The American authors, drawing from wide-ranging and extensive material (they used World Bank investigations of poverty in various former Soviet Union republics) quoted at length from the interviews in order to describe and analyse the situation in former USSR states; while in the Armenian anthology the informant and researcher contributed 'texts of equal status', and the same problem was examined from different points of view: the 'observer's' text became an object of scrutiny for another 'observer'. The interviews were printed without commentary in the first part (containing 33 full autobiographies and a host of revealing quotations from other interviews), and were arranged thematically, according to the question posed; the second part contained analytical articles based on material from the anthology, written by the researchers who collected it. The topics covered were determined retrospectively, on the

<sup>1</sup> Between 1994 and 2000 seven such investigations were conducted and their findings summarised in the supplementary 'Stories on Poverty' project in 2000–2001 (see below).

<sup>2</sup> This slightly awkward translation is the title of the official English version of the book. [Editor].

basis of each author's academic preferences; none of them was allocated in advance (before the material was collected), or was directly addressed in the questionnaire. By way of an afterword, there was an article written by a researcher who did not take part in fieldwork, providing a commentary on both the material presented as well as the researchers' own texts. Finally, a detailed thematic index 'compared' all of the texts, inviting the reader to reconstruct and review the book in a different order, to raise and examine new questions on the basis of the same material. The approach proved so rewarding that in subsequent projects, the same group of researchers<sup>1</sup> continued to use this principle.<sup>2</sup> And so it was precisely applied anthropology (with the blessing of the World Bank) that in this case enabled a post-modernist approach to develop, not as a tribute to a fashionable academic trend, but for practical convenience, and to allow wide-ranging academic opportunities to be exploited.

There is a stereotypical idea that applied anthropology, a decidedly unfashionable approach,<sup>3</sup> more often parasites itself on existing knowledge than contributes to its development. However it was none other than applied anthropology that managed to facilitate a re-grouping of new scientific approaches during the transition era, a period characterised by the 'rejection of "grand" theories (Marxism, structuralism etc.)', and to stimulate the emergence of approaches that were free from the axiological preferences of particular schools or fashionable trends. At any rate, that is what our experience leads us to believe.

Applied anthropology also benefited from the post-modernist description method in other cases, aside from the 'data collection' described above: it has, for example, fostered post-modern fieldwork methods, including the anthropologist's direct participation in what he or she describes, that is, participant observation in the literal sense of the phrase (the anthropologist might milk cows with an informant, weed the vegetable garden with him or her, and so forth). Our English colleague Monica Janowski, for example, has conducted a project of this kind, 'Constraints and Potential in the Development of Rural Non-farm Activities in Armenia' (financed by UN-FAO). Just as the field worker in the World Bank projects served, figuratively speaking, as a 'transformer' for a Dictaphone, converting the

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<sup>1</sup> On the basis of this work the group even formed a kind of independent organisation, and was registered in 1997 as the "Hazarashen" Armenian Centre for Ethnological Studies'.

<sup>2</sup> Another book, *Artagaghte Hayastanic* [Emigration from Armenia] (Yerevan, 2003, in Armenian), published by the same centre, has the same structure; the research and publication were funded by the Open Society Institute.

<sup>3</sup> In the former Soviet Union that is, where the term 'applied anthropology' is often used disparagingly, to mean 'market-driven' research (i.e. research driven by the thematic agendas of research grant awards, etc.) [Editor].

spoken text into a written one, in Monica Janowski's project the researcher 'transformed' video recordings. In so doing she encountered a common problem in visual anthropology: by focusing on the subject sitting directly in front of the camera, one misses everything on which the lens has not focused, but which has nonetheless not ceased to exist. Similarly, during participant observation, the researcher cannot be with every member of a family at the same time, and so must choose who and what should be considered most important and most worthy of attention (the extent to which any such division of subjects into 'worthy' and 'not worthy' is justified, is another matter).

As we have seen, a discussion of such methods of collecting field material raises almost the whole complement of questions discussed in the second round of the *Forum*. It can also be said that the examples I have given bring us back to the first question in our debate, in that education in social anthropology has no need to chase after the changes outlined in the preamble, since they will catch up with the researcher themselves and dictate new rules; it is only necessary to teach future anthropologists to be sensitive to the changes.

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