

Department of Romance Studies  
Department of English Studies

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

***The Russians Abroad:  
Russian Literature in Recent French and English Fiction***

**University of Mannheim, Germany, 8-10 June 2016**

If measured by their impact on French and English novelists, Russian authors surely take pride of place among the writers of the world. Adapting Fyodor Dostoevsky's famous quote "We have all come out of Gogol's 'Overcoat'", it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that some of the most notable French and English authors are deeply indebted to Russian literature. From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in particular, Russian literature has influenced a plethora of French and English novelists in a variety of ways.

To name but a few examples: In *La bête humaine* (1890), Émile Zola opposes Dostoevsky's notion of a crime committed on the grounds of rational reflection, and in "Wressley of the Foreign Office" (1887), Rudyard Kipling takes recourse to the puppet-like type of civil servant coined by Nikolai Gogol. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, André Gide and Marcel Proust as well as Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and Katherine Mansfield engage fruitfully with Russian authors, thus shaping their own modernist aesthetics. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, finally, the South African Nobel Prize laureate J.M. Coetzee devotes a novel to Dostoevsky, *The Master of Petersburg* (2004), while fourteen French authors embark on a literary journey on the Trans-Siberian Railway infused with references to Russians as diverse as Boris Pasternak, Osip Mandelstam, Venedikt Erofeev, Leon Trotsky and Michail Bakunin.

This conference accordingly seeks to explore the impact which Russian literature has had on the French and Francophone novel as well as on the English novel of Great Britain, Ireland and the Commonwealth since the 1980s. Questions for research may include but are not limited to the following:

- To what formal and/ or thematic aspects of Russian literature do the novelists refer?
- What main issues do the authors address in referring to Russian literature?
- What kinds of intertextual references do they employ?
- Are there historically and culturally specific forms of engaging with Russian literature?

And finally,

- How can this obvious fascination for Russian literature be explained?

Due to the double focus, conference languages will be French and English.

Abstracts of no more than 300 words for 30-minute papers, plus a short CV, should be sent to Prof. Dr. Cornelia Ruhe (ruhe@phil.uni-mannheim.de) **and** Prof. Dr. Caroline Lusin (clusin@mail.uni-mannheim.de) by 15 October 2015.