



Workshop

Some Aspects of Melodramatic Adaptation in Russian and Japanese Cultural Encounters

March 17 (Fri), 2023, 16:00-18:30 (JST)

Slavic-Eurasian Research Center at Hokkaido University,
Meeting Room 403 (both in-person and online via Zoom
meeting. Registration for online participation is [here](#))



Language: English and Russian

Keynote Lecturer

Oksana Bulgakowa

(Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz)

Speaker

Daisuke Adachi (SRC, Hokkaido University)

Organizers

北海道大学スラブ・ユーラシア研究センター (SRC)
「国際的な生存戦略研究プラットフォームの構築」プロ
ジェクト (SRC)
科研費基盤研究(B)「ロシア・旧ソ連文化におけるメロド
ラマ的想像力の総合的研究」(研究代表者: 安達大輔)

Contact: adaisuke@slav.hokudai.ac.jp

Oksana Bulgakowa, “Melodramatic Things and Bodies of Memory in the Soviet Japanese Stories about Individual Loss and Collective Traumas”

In his seminal study on melodramatic imagination Peter Brooks analyzed the specific mode of expression in connection to the anxiety created by the guilt experienced in the historical situation of suspension (the radical break after the French Revolution) when the law – social, moral, natural, rhetorical – falls silent and a new form of enactment and demonstration, the melodrama, arises. The French revolution is far away, but the melodrama is still alive, and its narratives, heroes and aesthetics migrated from the theatre to literature, film, and TV. What transformation did happen on the way from one historical period to another, from one media of expression to the next and from one cultural space (Russia) with the specific affective order to another (Japan)? I will concentrate on the function of melodramatic things that organize or re-structure the narratives and trigger the affective memory using the examples of some classical Soviet films and three Soviet melodramas with Japanese motifs: *Hello Children* (1962), *Moscow My Love* (1974) and *The Melodies of the White Night* (1976; the last two pictures are Soviet-Japanese co-productions). I will analyze how these films re-invented the function of things in the stories of individual loss and collective historical trauma.

Daisuke Adachi, “The First Japanese Translation of Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata*: From the History of Melodramatizing Adaptation of Russian Classical Text in Modernizing Japan”

After the abolition of Edo regime and long-time rule of the samurai in 1868, the Meiji period began with the restoration of the emperor's power. Under the pressure from imperialist countries, Japan was developing an intensive modernization in broad areas of society, including culture, following the models of Western countries. Although until then Japan already had a long and rich tradition of novels and storytelling inherited from the Edo period, writers and critics demanded a new literary tradition that should be suitable for the emerging new nation. They wanted to leave the melodramatic tradition, considering it as a remnant of the culture of former regime. The psychological and objective description that they did not find in the melodramatic tradition were searched for in foreign literature. Thus, the transition from Japanese melodrama to the translation of foreign literature played an essential role in the formation of modern Japanese literature. In my presentation I would like to show that the “transition” was in fact not at all straightforward. My analysis of the first Japanese translation of Lev Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata* will show that traditional melodramatic imagination was recycled in the reception of Russian literature that was new and foreign to Japanese audience, being adapted to the new social situation and national ideology. Melodrama had a great influence in the process of formation of the new Japanese literary tradition, in which the straightforward development from melodrama to realism did not take place.