



“Post-Soviet Eco-poetics” and “Retroactive Anticolonialism”: Theorising Central Asia’s Decolonial Aesthetics

Lunch Talk with Dr. Tamar Koplataдзе, University of Oxford

26 May 2025, 11:30 – 13:00

Slavisches Seminar, Nadelberg 8, Seminarraum 13

In her talk, Dr. Tamar Koplataдзе introduces decolonial cultural movements in Central Asia and discusses their implications for anticolonial movements beyond the region. Her analysis will focus on the eco-poetics of Hamid Ismailov’s novella „The Dead Lake“ (2015), showing how inextricably it intertwines questions of identity, nature and music. While uniquely shaped by Kazakh flora and fauna, as well as the local traditions of *akyr zaman*, *zar zaman* and *aitys*, Ismailov’s ecomusical language transcends the boundaries of nationality and citizenships. In doing so, it evokes solidarity with the various human and non-human beings and landscapes of Central Asia.

The talk further proposes two intertwined concepts for the analysis of decolonial movements in Central Asia and potentially beyond: „retroactive colonialism” and „post-Soviet eco-poetics”. Highlighting Central Asian cultures’ turn towards postcolonial revisionism and activism in its ecological and supraethnic dimensions, Tamar Koplataдзе proposes a truly inclusive, locally developed decolonial vision in the post-Soviet space.

During the talk, a sandwich lunch and coffee will be served.



Tamar Koplataдзе is Associate Professor of Postsocialist Literature and Culture at the University of Oxford. She is the author of *Postcolonial Identities in Central Asian and Caucasian Literature* (OUP), the first monograph on postcolonial literature from the Caucasus and Central Asia. Her current book, *Post-Soviet Eco-poetics* examines ecocritical culture from the former post-Soviet space, notably Central Asia and Siberia. Dr Koplataдзе's other contributions include the prize-winning article ‘Theorising Russian Postcolonial Studies’ and appearances on public platforms including the BBC.