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Project Summary: Because much of my research previously has been on 20th-21st century Russian culture, I had expected the focus of my work after the Piedmont Workshop to rest primarily on integrating issues of Soviet era environmental challenges into my courses. To that end, I have developed a component on “environmental madness” to my Freshman Seminar on the “Mad Russian” (Fall 2003) which will include a look at the death of the Aral Sea, Khrushchev’s devastating Virgin Lands campaign, and, of course, Chernobyl. I have also spoken with David Cook about the possibility of doing an international film series with an environmental theme, and as director of Russian and East European Studies REES, I have begun discussion with colleagues in Environmental Studies about cosponsoring an event. However, to my surprise after the Workshop and as I read in preparation for those revisions, I was drawn more and more to the question of environmental context in pre-Soviet Russia. My feeling about the importance of the context of the late 19th-early 20th was confirmed by my reading of *Into the Wild* at the suggestion of workshop participant Vince Murphy. A book about the real-life story of Christopher Johnson McCandless, an Emory graduate, who gave up nearly all his possessions to encounter the wilderness of Alaska. McCandless died in that wilderness. But among his very few possessions, were books. And it appears that a number of those books—surprisingly-- were by 19th c-early 20th century Russian authors Gogol, Tolstoy, Pasternak. McCandless was not a Russian studies major. What in these Russian works possibly touched the young McCandless?

A careful reading of late 19th-early 20th century culture in Russia reveals a consistent search for identity, and one that is integrally tied to the vast spatial expanse called “Russia.” In many ways, the contested category of nature is a paradigm in Russian culture for the contested category of Russian identity. In contrast to Western Romantic and Modernist writers and artists who often looked eastward for inspiration, Russian Romantics and Modernists found inspiration in their own immense space that bridged Europe and Asia. Because economic and social modernization meant typically Westernization for Russia, the resulting encroachment on nature from urbanization and industrialization was often perceived in the context of threatened national identities. Many scholars have noted the close relationship of Russian the writer Anton Chekhov with landscape painter Isaac Levitan in the 19th century. But scholarly observations about this often ignore the basic affinity both artists have to issues of environmental preservation and degradation. As in Chekhov’s play *The Cherry Orchard*, threatened extinction of the natural environment offers a paradigm to dynamics of social transition in 19th century Russia. The call to return to a simpler way of life would be perhaps most visibly raised by Leo Tolstoy in the late 19th/early 20th century, and he would find disciples throughout the world, including Emory’s own Christopher Johnson McCandless.

As part of the requirement of the Piedmont Workshop, I offer a select list of works I read this summer and a tentative syllabus of my course that will be offered Fall 2003. Vinnie Murphy and I have spoken too about the possibility this academic year of staging

part of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* outside in a wooded area at Emory. This staging could conclude with audience performance of "The Elm Dance." Thanks to Peggy Barlett, I know about this dance. Created from a traditional Latvian folk song, the words and movements call for the healing of the Elm. A dance of resolve to end the suffering of the forests, the Elm Dance was used by eco-philosopher Joanna Macy to break through to the grief of people suffering from Chernobyl.

Overall, I find that my earlier sensitivity to environmental issues and desire to address them in courses I teach has been greatly intensified after the Piedmont Workshop. Although I have started with a major revision of my "Mad Russian" course this Fall, I am committed to integrating more environmental themes in my course this year and in the years ahead.

Summary of Bibliography:

I approached my projects from three directions: bibliography on matters specific to the Russian environment, on ecofeminism, and on landscape painting. For the first, I discovered that the six-page bibliography on the Soviet union and ecology from the online bibliographic service ABSEES and "Environmental Issues in Eastern Europe and Eurasia: A Look at Recent Scholarship" in the AAASS Newsletter are particularly useful, and I have included a number of readings from these bibliographies in my revised course on "The Mad Russian." Models of Nature: Ecology, Conservation, and Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia by Douglas R. Weiner (Bloomington: Indiana U Press, 1988/2000) and the anthology The Soviet Environment: Problems, Policies, and Politics, ed. John Massey Stewart (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992) earn special attention as resources, and Murray Feshbach's work with Alfred Friendly, Jr. Ecocide in the USSR: Health and Nature under Siege (NY: BasicBooks, 1992) offers haunting insight into the situation in the former USSR.

My interest in ecofeminism led me to works such as Sacred Custodians of the Earth?: Women, Spirituality and the Environment ed. Alaine Low and Soraya Tremayne (NY: Berghahn Books, 2001); Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature ed by Karen J. Warren, Indian U press, Bloomington 1997; Feminism & Ecology by Mary Mellor (Ny: New York University Press, 1997); Ecofeminism and the Sacred , ed. Carol J. Adams: NY: Continuum, 1993); Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space, by Stacy Alaimo (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).

And my need to more closely examine landscape painting and the concept of the sublime in painting included examination of Russian sources on Russian painting, as well as Roald Nasgaard's The Mystic North: Symbolist Landscape Painting in Northern Europe and North America 1890-1949 (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 1984) and On the Sublime: Mark Rothko, Yves Klein, James Turrell (NY: Guggenheim Museum Pub, 2001)

PIEDMONT PROJECT: ITEMS ENLARGED IN BOLD FACE HAVE ENVIRONMENTAL EMPHASIS

Course Syllabus

Russian 190/Freshman seminar: The “Mad Russian”—Confronting Stereotypes

Fall 2003

Juliette Stapanian Apkarian

WEEK 1 Introduction: Defining “madness” and “stereotypes” in the Russian context

Video clips: Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoon with Boris and Natasha, and The Addam’s Family (the “Mamushka”),

Introduction to geography and peoples of Russia (handout)

WEEK 2 Ivan the Terrible/the ‘Mad Tsar’ vs. Russia’s ‘Holy Fool’

Video Clips from “Russia: Land of the Tsars”, Sergi Eisenstein’s Ivan the Terrible
Readings: Gogol’s “Diary of a Madman”, “Nose”; medieval texts: “Brother Isaac” and
“Oleg’s Death and Olga’s Revenge,” “The Life of St Michael, a Fool in Christ,”
Kurbsky’s letter to Ivan

WEEK 3 Peter the Great and Catherine the Great: the “Mad” rush to Westernize Russia

Readings: Pushkin: The Queen of Spades, “**The Bronze Horseman**”
(Nature assaulted); Peter Chaadaev “Apology of a Madman” (“The Legacy of
Peter the Great”, 1837)

WEEK 4 Transgressing Boundaries: the Challenge to Western Rationalism

Readings: Dostoevsky’s Crime and Punishment, first half of novel
Film clip from Pierre Chenal’s adaptation of the novel

WEEK 5 Challenging Western Rationalism (cont’d)

Readings: Crime and Punishment, second half of novel; **excerpts from
Tolstoy’s War and Peace (Space over Time)**
Film: excerpts from Bodaryev’s film adaptation of War and Peace; Woody
Allen’s “Love and Death”

WEEK 6 Rasputin the “Mad Monk” vs. Lenin : Russia and Revolution

Film clip: Rasputin the Mad Monk
Reading: Nabokov's The Eye
Excerpts from Lenin's "What is to be Done"

WEEK 7 Madness and Creativity: The Russian Avantgarde

Reading : **Zamiatin's WE (The crystal palace vs. the Green City)**, Daniel Kharms and the Absurdists (handouts)

WEEK 8 Stalin and the Madness of Terror:

Reading: Bulgakov, Master and Margarita

WEEK 9 Stalin cont'd

Readings: Master and Margarita Part 2; excerpts from Solzhenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago

WEEK 10 Environmental Madness:

Readings:

Chekhov & Levitan: "The Cherry Orchard"

Tolstoy: How much land does a Man need

Pasternak: excerpt from "Dr. Zhivago"

Excerpts from The Soviet Environment: Problems, policies, and politics (ed. Stewart) ; Models of Nature: Ecology, Conservation, and Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia (Weiner)

Slides: the landscapes of Isaac Levitan

WEEK 11 Environmental Madness Con'td: Cheliabinsk, Chernobyl, Baikal

Film clip from Tarkovsky's "Stalker"

Readings: excerpts from "Sarcophagus" (Gubarev) The legacy of Chernobyl (Zhores Medvedev); Ecocide in the USSR: Health and Nature under Siege (Feshbach and Friendly); A Soviet Sea Lies Dying (Ellis, Turnley)

WEEK 12 The Cold War : James Bond confronts the Mad Russian

Reading: Excerpts from Tom Clancy: Red Rabbit

Film: Fail Safe/Air Force One

Music: Russians Love Their Children Too (Sting)

WEEK 13 The Fall of the Evil Empire

Pelevin: Omon Ra

WEEK 14

WEEK 15 Oral presentation of Projects