

focus is British intelligence and politics; the Soviet side appears only briefly, and then in relation to the elucidation of British government policies.

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Michael S. Gorham. *After Newspeak: Language Culture and Politics in Russia from Gorbachev to Putin*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014. Illustrations. Tables. Bibliography. Index. vii + 234 pp. \$75.00 [cloth]; \$24.95 [paper].

In the media-driven environment in which 24-hour cable news services and Internet sources provide unprecedented access into world events, *After Newspeak* thoughtfully chronicles the developments within the language culture and use of Russian in the years leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the tumultuous two decades following. In offering a “cultural history of the Russian language from Gorbachev and glasnost to Putin and the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies” (22), Gorham goes well beyond an analysis of the linguistic transformations of the Russian language toward an insightful portrait of the relationship between language and politics that has developed in post-Soviet Russia.

Framing the work as a whole are three interdependent forces that shape language use: language ideologies, linguistic economies, and communication technologies; these are carefully laid out in the introduction. Infusing his choice of these categories with an appropriate amount of linguistic and cultural studies theory, Gorham succinctly defines the parameters of his study, particularly in regards to the application of “language culture” and his implementation of Fairclough’s “moderate form of ‘social constructivism’” (7). He offers several dominant themes that are embodied within the Russian national language ideology: folklore, literature, history of the language, and religious perspectives. Gorham continues by arguing that these linguistic ideologies and the relative value of a particular discourse are best understood in the context of economies of language, which are “more directly linked and influenced by shifting trends in a specific political, economic, and cultural context” (16). Finally, he considers the category of technologies of communication, and the relationship between language and culture in the move from the printed word to digital forms of communication, noting the growing dominance of the Internet and increasing use of electronic technologies as the means of transmitting information and models of language.

Six chronologically organized chapters follow the introduction and supply the linguistic and cultural contexts for Gorham’s presentation of the “close relationship between the politics of language and the language of politics” (22). Chapter 1 provides the historical background necessary to provide context for his study of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century language in the remaining five chapters. By examining language use from the Soviet period, Gorham shows that the seemingly disparate examples of the nineteenth-century Russian literary language and the political discourse of Soviet-era classics both relied on some kind of central authority, whether political or cultural. Thus, the onset of an unprecedented use of unfettered speech inherent in Gorbachev’s policy of glasnost, Gorham contends, summarily rejected the prescriptive use of speech both politically and culturally in favor of more democratic forms of expression.

After presenting an overview of the use and meaning of the word “glasnost,” Chapter 2 examines language use during the Gorbachev era of Perestroika of the late 1980s, drawing examples directly from Gorbachev’s speeches and writings, as well as from contemporary print media and party doctrines. Gorham demonstrates how the meaning and performance of glasnost changed from the control and dissemination of information to a much more far-reaching ideology embracing open and independent speech.

Set in the years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, chapter 3 is devoted

to the particular and precipitous degradation of the Russian language in the wake of the free speech (*svoboda slova*) movement of the Yeltsin years. Inextricably tied to the loosening of government control over communication technologies, the sharp rise in the use of slang, vulgarisms, and loanwords created a Russia marked by “linguistic lawlessness (*iazykovoi bezpredel*)” (95). Here, Gorham might have made the useful distinction between “profanity” and “obscenity” in describing and identifying the use of Russian *mat*—a term which embraces both classes of lexicon—since most of his examples are instances of usage of obscenities. With the resurgence in the prominence of the Russian Orthodox Church in post-Soviet society, an examination of the particular use of profanity might produce interesting results. Nonetheless, the evidence provided of uses of foreign loanwords, criminal argot, and vulgarisms in post-Soviet Russian are striking, and Gorham does well to include them as “more ‘organic’ and authentic expressions of Russianness” that mark a new political and linguistic era (97).

Chapters 4 and 5 are, in many senses, in dialogue with each other. The former describes the development of a range of “purist” discourse that arises in the wake of the contamination of the Russian language, claiming to be a link to national and language identity, and then examines the trend of self-monitoring and normalization of usage promoted by the Russian media. The latter discusses the attempts of the Putin administration to continue the process of legislating language policy in the direction of order and away from its lawless state; both chapters, however, demonstrate the limitations of attempts to legislate language use. Language, Gorham argues, played a key role in creating Putin’s image and reputation domestically and abroad. He concludes, however, that proliferation of and access to technology in the 2000s compromise Putin’s efforts to control and “restrict alternative discourses of authority” (165).

Such technological “threats” to Putin’s authority are the focus of the sixth and final chapter of the book. Here, Gorham posits that the Internet and cyber media have played a crucial role in thwarting—so far—Putin’s attempts to control technologies of communication. As the presence of the Russian political opposition grows more and more visible on blogs, websites, and chat rooms, Putin must consider increasingly punitive measures to control or restrict the language of cyber and social media. Gorham concludes that, short of instituting China-like restrictions on Internet access, Putin will need to act reactively to the quickly evolving cyber space in legislating language policy.

The months following the publication of *After Newspeak* only served to reinforce the import and relevance of Gorham’s work; the annexation of Crimea, the civil war in Ukraine, and the shooting down of Malaysian flight 17 all underscore the importance of accurately understanding and interpreting the language used to describe and analyze the day-to-day events and changes in Russia. This volume provides both the theoretical underpinnings and also the practical examples of language use to create a vivid and relevant portrait of language culture and use in modern Russian. As such, it is essential reading for anyone working with contemporary Russian media, culture, or press who wishes to understand the meaning of the written or spoken word beyond the limits of dictionary definitions.

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Ilja A. Seržant and Björn Wiemer, ed. *Contemporary Approaches to Dialectology: The Area of North, North-West Russian and Belarusian Dialects*. Slavica Bergensia, vol. 12. Bergen: Dept. of Foreign Languages, University of Bergen, 2014. 402 pp. \$25.00 (cloth).

This book is a product of the conference dealing with northwestern Russian and Belarusian dialects which took place in 2011 at the Norwegian University Center in St. Petersburg. Although not officially dedicated to him, the volume is a fitting tribute to the memory of the Russian di-

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