

## *The Dostoevsky Bicentenary in the UK*

The bicentenary of the birth of Dostoevsky was marked in the UK by a number of public events and media broadcasts. Here are some of the highlights.

### **Public events**

In February the Russian cultural centre Pushkin House in London hosted Alex Christofi in conversation online with Sophy Roberts (author of *The Lost Pianos of Siberia*) about his new book *Dostoevsky in Love*.

May saw two online events: On 6 May, Sarah Hudspith and Olivia Santovetti gave a presentation for the Ilkley Literature Festival on the resonances between Dostoevsky and contemporary Italian author Elena Ferrante, entitled “Illuminating the Chaos and Obscurity: Dostoevsky and Ferrante in Dialogue”. The presentation is [available to watch on YouTube](#).

Then on 24 May St Antony’s College, Oxford hosted an online roundtable on the theme “Dostoevsky at 200”, with speakers Yuri Corrigan, Lynn Ellen Patyk and Alex Christofi, with Caryl Emerson as discussant and Oliver Ready as chair.

Several public online events took place at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London (UCL-SSEES). The first of these was a graduate student panel, co-hosted with the University of Toronto, on 28 October, and co-chaired by Kate Holland and Sarah Young. The speakers were Kristina Polakova, presenting her research into the pathetic aesthetics of rain in Dostoevsky’s works, Rachel Sims analysing spiderly forms and the panopticon in *Notes from a Dead House*, Christina Karakepeli discussing domestication as re-creation in Greek translations of Dostoevsky, and Dmytro Memari Fard speaking on aspects of politicization in the first full translation into German of Dostoevsky’s complete works. It is [available to watch on YouTube](#).

This event was followed by a roundtable on 29 November devoted to “Dostoevsky, Russia and nationalism in the global era”, co-hosted with the University of Leeds and featuring panellists Ani Kokobobo, Lynn Ellen Patyk, Vlad Strukov, Vera Tolz and Jennifer Wilson. The co-chairs were Sarah Hudspith and Sarah Young. A week later the UCL-SSEES graduate student Saffy Mirghani presented her research on Dostoevsky’s influence on 20<sup>th</sup> Century African American writers.

On 9 November the British Library hosted an online panel on the subject “The Living Dostoevsky: Adaptation and Translation”, with Alex Christofi, Viv Groskop, Elizabeth Newman and Oliver Ready.

Finally, the University of Bristol hosted Kate Holland in a public lecture on “Temporality in Dostoevsky’s Imperial Imagination”. This talk is [available to watch on YouTube](#).

### **Dostoevsky on the radio**

The BBC featured three radio programmes on Dostoevsky in November, which are all available to listen online. The first was an edition of the BBC World Service programme [The Forum](#), discussing *The Devils*, with guests Carol Apollonio, Sarah Hudspith and Tatyana Kowalewska. Next, BBC Radio 4’s flagship arts programme [Front Row](#) examined *Crime and Punishment* with guests Kevin Birmingham and Sarah Hudspith. On the day of the bicentenary itself, BBC Radio 4 broadcast a programme entitled “[Dostoevsky and the Russian Soul](#)”, presented by former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and featuring a number of British scholars including Sarah Young.

*Sarah Hudspith*  
University of Leeds