

Roundtable Multilingual Literature in Conflict Zones 13 May 2025

Journal of Literary Multilingualism & LangueFlow
langueflow.eu

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Affect and Ambiguity in the Post-Soviet Multilingual Graphic Narrative

My work, both academic and creative, argues that graphic narratives and other primarily visual media allow for more affective engagement with texts. The graphic narrative is especially useful as a medium for thinking through conflict zones.

In my talk, I will discuss how geopolitical conflicts, especially between Ukraine/Russia, are embodied in questions around multilingualism in my graphic work: particularly, in the memoir *Soviet Daughter: A Graphic Revolution* (Microcosm, 2017), based on my great-grandmother's secret memoirs of her life in the former Soviet Union, and two short non-fiction comics on Ukraine, "There Are No Easy Answers in Ukraine" for the popular online platform *The Nib* (2022) and "Code Switching: Trials and Tribulations" for the academic journal *Concentric* (2023).

As I will show, questions of language — here, Russian, Ukrainian, or English — embody the difficulty and ambiguity of Russia's imperial past and present, filtered through a vulnerable politics of the personal.