

ПЕРУНЪ: The Newsletter of the USC Slavic Department

Issue № 1 ♦ December 2021

Greetings!

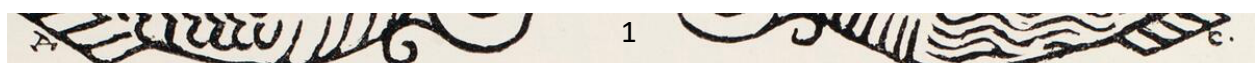
Many thanks to everyone who found time to submit news dispatches for this inaugural issue of ПЕРУНЪ. Перун, which may be translated as thunderbolt, is the name of the pagan Slavic thunder god. It is also the penname of Vadim Nevskii, who contributed illustrations to Russian satirical journals from the years 1905-1907. His monogram graces the heading above, which was taken from the Russian Satirical Journal Collection housed in the University of Southern California Digital Library. On to the news, presented alphabetically by contributor's last name.

Nikita Allgire reports that his essay [“All or Nothing: The Literary Significance of Proper Names”](#) was published on the NYU Jordan Center blog in September.

Andrzej Brylak presented two conference papers this fall and served as a discussant at three events. In October he gave a talk titled “Beyond the Institution. Hereticizing Catholic Tropes in Polish Studies Scholarship” at the ‘Politics of Culture’: Harvard-Toronto Workshop for Junior Faculty in Polish Studies. His November talk, “Post-Holocaust Transubstantiation and Leo Lipski's Atheistic Catholicism,” was at the first Leo Lipski Conference at Warsaw University. Andrzej served as discussant for a book talk with Michał Paweł Markowski, author of *Polska, rozkosz, uniwersytet (Poland, Bliss, University)*, at the Conrad Festival in October and it is available to watch on [YouTube](#). He was also a discussant for two ASEES panels, “The Individual in Transnational Perspective” and “Postcolonial Ecologies in (Post-)Soviet Cinema and Literature,” in person and online respectively.

Erica Camisa Morale's article [“Andrei Platonov and Boris Pil'niak: The Pursuit of the Happy Man”](#) was published in *Philological Class* (2021 vol. 26, №1). She is a member of the Working Group “Books, Texts, and Images” sponsored by the USC Levan Institute for the Humanities and in December she delivered the online talk “The Cinematographic Imagination of Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading*” for this group.

Over the summer **Natasha Dame** attended a virtual conference organized by the Folklore Studies Association of Canada and presented a paper “Laughing it Out: Russian Jokes about Covid-19.” One of her previous articles, “The Search for Narrative Control: Music and Female Sexuality in Tolstoy's *Family Happiness* and *The Kreutzer Sonata*,” was selected for republication in the volume *Short Story Criticism on “Kreutzer Sonata” by Leo Tolstoy*, edited by Rebecca Parks (Gale, a Cengage Company, 2021).





Evgeny Dengub's new second-year Russian language textbook [Этажи](#) (co-authored with Susanna Nazarova) came out in October 2021 from Georgetown University Press. Designed for one academic year of instruction, *Etazhi* engages students with highly relevant topics to internalize new vocabulary, expand their grammatical reach, and deepen their cultural understanding of Russian speakers. The volume *The Art of Teaching Russian*, co-edited by Evgeny, Irina Dubinina, and Jason Merrill, received an honorable mention for the Kenneth W. Mildener Prize from MLA. It offers practitioners current research, pedagogical thinking, and specific methodologies for teaching the Russian language and culture in the twenty-first century. Evgeny has also been appointed associate director for language programs of the Middlebury College Kathryn Wasserman Davis School of Russian. In recent years, he oversaw the testing program at Middlebury's Russian School, and directed the STARTALK institute for teachers of Russian.

In May, **Simon Garibyan** participated in the international conference «Кино как объект внимания» organized by GUKiT, (Санкт-Петербургский государственный институт кино и телевидения). His paper “Ashik Kerib is Dead, Long Live Ashik Kerib: Necropoetics in the Cinema of Sergei Parajanov” earned the award for best presentation among MA students. Simon also attended the GoEast film festival in Wiesbaden, Germany, and wrote a film review on the Kazakh film *Ulbolsyn* directed by Adilkhan Yerzhanov (2020). His review was published in Issue 73 of *KinoKultura* (July 2021).

Dmitrii Kuznetsov and Anna Sbitneva co-organized the panel “Identity at the Crossroads” for ASEES, and they both presented papers on it. Dmitrii's paper was titled “Alexander Ilyanen's ‘I finn’: Performing a Hybrid Identity”. **Olga Seliazniova**, who defended her dissertation over the summer and is now a postdoc at Florida State University, was the discussant. Dmitrii reports that he submitted an article titled “Klara Milich: The Spectres of Transmediation,” which treats transmediation as a strategy of haunting and as a form of spectral presence and border crossing. The piece is for a special issue of the journal *Apparatus: Film, Media, and Digital Cultures of Central and Eastern Europe*.



Anna Sbitneva, Dmitrii Kuznetsov, Olga Seliazniova, and colleague Anton Svyarenko at ASEES.





As part of his dissertation research, **Joseph Nakpil** attended the online conference "Tarkovsky Revisited: Dialogue Between the Moving Image and Other Arts," in December. The event was organized by the University of Porto, Portugal.

Colleen McQuillen's article "["Radically Distributed Collaboration: The Russian Modernist Enterprise 'Contemporary Art'"](#)" was published in August 2021 on the *Modernism/modernity* Print Plus Platform, the peer-reviewed online journal of the Modernist Studies Association. Over the summer she and Fred White (a USC Slavic alumnus) convened an online workshop devoted to the topic of Natural Sciences in Early Russian Modernist Culture, the fruits of which they submitted to *Новое литературное обозрение* for publication as a thematic cluster of articles. In October Colleen gave an invited talk entitled "Art as Analysis, Or How Can Shklovsky Address Climate Change?" at a workshop devoted to Viktor Shklovsky's *In 60 Years: Works on Cinema* and held at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Colleen participated online in the first meeting of the Russian Ecospheres Network in December. The Network, comprised of 14 international scholars in the humanities, applied for and received funding from Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (The German Research Foundation) in the sum of 110.000€ for conferences, workshops, and publications related to ecology in Russian culture and history.



Andrzej Brylak, Erica Camisa Morale, Sarah Matthews, Yonni Kim, Caity Giustiniano, Liza Levina, and Susan Kechekian at the department Halloween party on Colleen and Sean's back deck. Susan won the prize for Best Costume!

In May **Elena Petrova** delivered the paper "Pushkin and Sterne" at the National Museum of Aleksandr Pushkin academic conference «Студенты Пушкину» in Moscow. In October she participated virtually in two conferences at which she gave papers: the first paper «*Среди 'цариц сердца' Пушкина была какая-то еврейка...*»: о еврейском вопросе и брюсовских комментариях к «Гавриилиаде» was for the Moscow State University (Faculty of Journalism) international academic conference «Брюсовский Пушкин: Памяти Николая Алексеевича Богомолова. Первые Богомоловские чтения»; and the second paper "*Evgenii Onegin and Foma Opiskin: Sternean Eccentrics in Russian Literature*" was for the ASEES Central Slavic Conference.



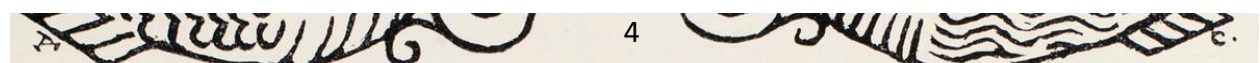
Sally Pratt has been doing the arduous, behind-the-scenes work of peer review, which entails reading the scholarly work of others, offering anonymized feedback to the author, and making recommendations to the editor about the work's readiness for publication. In the second half of 2021 she refereed several book manuscripts for academic presses and reviewed a proposed cluster of articles for a major Slavic journal.

Kelsey Rubin-Detlev has been on a year-long American Council of Learned Societies fellowship, which has funded work on her new monograph project on the Bible in eighteenth-century Russia, is coming to an end this December. She spent two months in the Fall as a visiting fellow at the University of Oxford's Bodleian Libraries, which hold a number of important Russian and Slavonic editions of Scripture largely from the turn of the nineteenth century. Kelsey reports, "As always, the experience of working hands-on with original source materials was transformative." She gave an invited talk drawn from her recent research on the Bible as part of the Russian literature seminar series run by the Sorbonne in Paris. Kelsey has also been busy with her collaborative project to create a digital database of the correspondence of Catherine the Great. She writes, "We have just released a new pilot version with a completely redone web interface, 800 additional letters, and extensive prosopographical, geographical, and bibliographical reference material. You are very welcome to [explore the site](#), and we would be happy to hear your thoughts."

In addition to co-organizing with Dmitrii the ASEES panel "Identity at the Crossroads" dedicated to hybrid identities in post-Soviet literature, **Anna Sbitneva** presented her paper "Viktor Pelevin's New Cold War: How (Not) to Weaponize Identities in the Struggle for World Dominance" at the conference. She also virtually attended a German film festival goEast and got a [review](#) of one of the films in the program, *40 Days of Silence* by Saodat Izmailova, published in *Kinokultura* (July 2021). Anna remarks, "In some peculiar way it feels like securing a student visa to America and actually coming to LA are my greatest accomplishments this year." Indeed, our graduate students living in Russia had to exert herculean efforts involving visits to US consular offices in third countries to get their visas, which was both stressful and time-consuming.

Tom Seifrid's article "Nina's Endings: Some Subtexts of Nabokov's 'Spring in Fialta' appeared in *Nabokov Online Journal* in late 2020. He just finished writing a piece called "Russian Formalism and the Novel," to be part of the *Oxford Handbook of the Russian Novel*, edited by Justin Weir and Julie Buckler. The volume is slated to be published by Oxford University Press in 2022. He is now working on an article on performativity in Soviet literature. Tom has served as a peer reviewer for several book manuscripts and journal articles, and performed tenure and promotion reviews.

Over the summer **Peter Winsky** filed his dissertation, "Dostoevsky through the Lens of Orthodox Personalism: Synergetic Anthropology and Relational Ontology as Poetic Foundations of Higher Realism" and was awarded his PhD from UCLA Slavic. He presented a paper entitled "Dostoevsky and the Apotheosis of Fictional Being" at the ICCEES World Congress. His article "'I Opened to My





Beloved, But My Beloved Had Withdrawn': The Anthropological Foundations of Prince Myshkin's Failure in *The Idiot*' was published in the collection *The Anthropology of Dostoevsky: Man as a Problem and as a Subject of Reflection in Dostoevsky's World*.



At the end of the fall semester Anna and Lena joined Colleen and Evgeny for a day of sorting books in the Slavic Library. We expect to complete refurbishment of the space early in the spring semester.



Stay tuned for more updates in Issue №2, which will come out in May 2022.

