

**ПЕРУНЬ: The Newsletter of the USC Slavic Department**

Issue № 6 ♦ May 2024

*Note from the Editor*

This spring semester was not an easy one: it began with our department being displaced from its offices in Taper Hall for a month and ended with police in riot gear on campus in response to student protests. Through it all, the members of our community have supported each other and continued making impressive contributions to our professional field. Thank you for your patience, grace, and kindness. A special thanks go to **Deborah Russo**, who kept the whole department operating smoothly despite the many challenges thrown her way. On to the inspiring news of your accomplishments!

-CM



**Andrzej Brylak** gave the presentation “‘Abyss of the Sea Where People Are Dying...or Not’ — forms of disappearing in Leo Lipski’s prose” as part of the AATSEEL stream *Beyond Horizon: Alternatives and Transgressions in Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Polish Culture*. He was recently interviewed for Third Channel (Trójka) of the National Polish Radio about the recent protests on American campuses. Listen to his [commentary](#) in the episode from May 8th.

In March Andrzej hosted a conversation with Adam Michnik, Editor-in-Chief of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, during which they discussed democracy in Poland, the political role of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, and Russia’s war in Ukraine.

**Erica Camisa-Morale** co-organized a stream on *Death & Dying in Eurasia* for the AATSEEL convention with our own Simon Garibyan and Kate Tomashevskaja. Within the stream, she presented findings on a little-known anonymous poem, “О смерти,” composed at the end of the seventeenth century in her paper “Death Speaks: New Findings on the Anonymous Poem



'oh Death'." In March she and Sara Dickinson gave a joint presentation titled "In Search of a Voice: Ekaterina Shakhovskaya" at one of the monthly meetings of the working group *The Other 19v*. In April she co-organized a show-and-tell with librarians Derek Meneses Quezada and Sophie Lesinska: this event showcased the Slavic-related material hosted in the USC Libraries. She and Caity Giustiniano shared their experiences using the holdings for teaching and research, respectively. Later that month Erica served as a discussant in the workshop *Monuments Fall*, which was organized by the History Department and co-sponsored by Slavic. Finally, Erica has concluded her position as a Dornsife General Education Fellow at USC and is off to a two-year Mellon Fellowship of Scholars in the Humanities at Stanford University, which starts in August 2024. Good luck, Erica! We'll miss you.



From left to right: Yulia Dubasova, Assel Uvaliyeva, Erica Camisa-Morale, Caity Giustiniano, and Sarah Matthews showed solidarity at the California Slavic Colloquium.

**Yulia Dubasova** presented her paper "'The Old Tale Will Be Resurrected': Blood Libel in the Works of Fyodor Sologub" at the California Graduate Slavic Colloquium, which was held at UCLA in April. Additionally, her review of Thomas Gaiton Marullo's book *Fyodor Dostoevsky—In the Beginning (1821–1845): A Life in Letters, Memoirs, and Criticism* was published in *SEEJ* Volume 67, Issue 4 (Winter 2023).

In February **Elizaveta Dvortsova** organized a panel on modernist poetry for the AATSEEL Conference in Las Vegas and presented her paper "Shape of Poetry: Iconic Effects in Russian Modernist Verse." She also served as a chair for the panel "Crossings in Time and Space" during the conference "Sergei Parajanov at One Hundred: Chimeras of Nation, Form, and Being" at USC. In March Liza delivered another presentation on Russian poetry – "Sound of Silence: The Struggle of Form and Content in Symbolism" at the NeMLA Convention in Boston, for which she received a Graduate Student Caucus Travel Award from the organization. Last month she presented excerpts from her dissertation as a paper "Make It Polemical: The Literary Debates in the Official Soviet Press of the 1960s" at the BASEES Convention in Cambridge, UK, receiving financial support for the trip from the GSG Professional Development Fund. Liza was awarded the Gold Family Graduate Fellowship from USC Dornsife for Summer 2024.



**Caity Giustiniano** is defending her dissertation on May 16<sup>th</sup> and has accepted a job as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Russian Studies at the University of Richmond. At Richmond in the Fall she will be teaching Intermediate Russian and Bolsheviks, Bombs, and Ballet. In the second semester she will teach the continuation of Intermediate Russian, a special topics course on Russian children's literature, and Introduction to 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature. Under the supervision of Dr. Brylak Caity submitted an English translation of Zośka Papużanka's short story "Pan Parasol" (Mr. Umbrella) to *The Polish Review*. The translation is currently under review.

Photo, from left to right: Caity, Professor Sally Pratt, and Sarah Matthews.



**Dmitrii Kuznetsov** presented a paper titled "Fake People, Real Stories: On the Role of Fictionalized Ego-Narratives in *Venerin volos* by Mikhail Shishkin" at AATSEEL, as well as writing two film reviews for *KinoKultura* - about Anna Melikian's *Chuvstva Anny* and Andrei Zaitsev's *14+ Prodolzhenie*. **Sarah Matthews** gave two conference presentations this semester: "Vladislav Khodasevich's Object-Oriented and Object-Driven Poems" at AATSEEL in February; "Ecopoetry & Elena Shvarts' Leningrad Samizdat Publications" at BASEES in April.



Current and former graduate students, faculty, and staff gathered at Professor Emeritus **Marcus Levitt's** keynote address at AATSEEL. The organization bestowed upon Professor Levitt (front row, center) the prestigious award for "Outstanding Contribution to Scholarship."





For AATSEEL **Colleen McQuillen** organized and participated in the roundtable "New Horizons in Slavic Graduate Education." Also in February she co-organized (with **Ellina Sattarova**, Shushan Karapetian, and Aniko Imre) the international conference "Sergei Parajanov at One Hundred: Chimeras of Nation, Being, and Form" and conducted a hat decorating workshop at the event to honor Parajanov's own millinery craft (see photo of Kate Tomashevskaja and Colleen modeling their fanciful hats at the workshop, which was held at the Dornsife Institute for Armenian Studies).

In April Colleen was happy to host the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Workshop on Russian & Eurasian Modernisms (this year's topic was Women, Innovation, and the Making of Modernity) at USC for the first time, and she presented material from her book project at the Workshop under the title, "How Larisa Reisner Undermined the Bolshevik Discourse of Modernization in *Iron, Coal, and Living People*." Over the spring semester she gave three invited talks also on her book project about fin-de-siecle Russian natural resource narratives: she delivered a talk by Zoom as part of the Eurasian Ecologies lecture series at Yale University in March; the following month she presented for the Society of Fellows at Columbia's Heyman Center for the Humanities; and then she gave a talk at Princeton as part of its conference on Modernism and Its Environments. Colleen's article "Perception of Surroundings: Materiality and Affect in The Russian Kustar Arts Revival" has gone into production at *Russian Review* for the July issue (Vol. 83, No. 3) and will appear in the online journal by the end of May.

**Lena Petrova-Libgober** gave the paper "Jewish women and taboo Russian texts: blasphemy, prostitution, and sexual freedom" at the AJS conference in San Francisco, and she received an AJS Travel Grant from the Michael H. Baker Family to do so. At AATSEEL she presented a paper co-authored with Neta Kleine (Yale University), "Pushkin Meets Agnon: Jewish Bodies, Voracious Femmes Fatales, and Subversions of Antisemitic Tropes." She also gave an individual paper titled "Compelled voyage meets compelled residence: New approach to Pushkin's Southern exile."

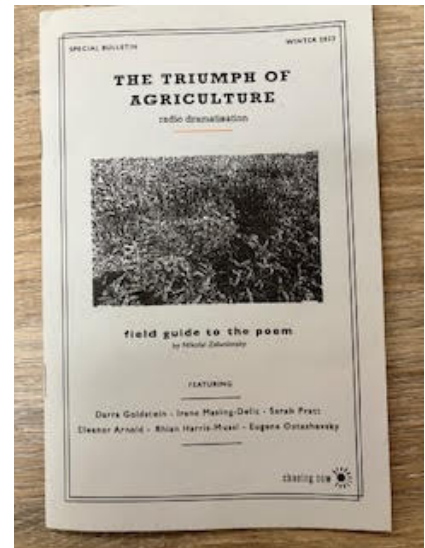


In April Lena gave two invited lectures at The Schwalb Center for Israel and Jewish Studies University at the University of Nebraska-Omaha: "Conjuring Literary Jewish Witches: The Cauldron of Antisemitism in 19th C. Russia" and "Pushkin's Jewish femmes fatales: Demonic sexuality and extraordinary freedom."



**Aleksandra Pchelintseva** successfully passed her MA exam. She has also completed STARTALK Institute for Teachers of Russian program and will be receiving a stipend upon its completion. Aleksandra presented her first research paper at AATSEEL titled “Compulsion to Repeat: The Familial, the Traumatic, and the Uncanny in Vladimir Bitokov’s *Mama, I’m Home*,” and contributed to *KinoKultura*’s issue 84 (April 2024) with a review of Armen Akopyan and Dmitrii Tarkhov’s film *Asterrarium*. She also received an offer from Lewis University (Illinois) for the position of Russian instructor in their summer language program.

**Sally Pratt**’s essay, “Zabolotsky’s Omniverse: From the Village of Sernur to Outer Space,” was published in *The Triumph of Agriculture: A Field Guide to the Poem by Nikolai Zabolotsky* to accompany a radio dramatization of the poem put on by Chasing Cow Productions, which is an Arts and Filmmaking Collective in West Dorset, UK.



**Kelsey Rubin-Detlev** was invited to submit the full manuscript of her monograph-in-progress on the Bible in eighteenth-century Russia to the Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment series based on peer review of her book proposal. Her invited review of Vera Proskurina’s *The Imperial Script of Catherine the Great: Governing with the Literary Pen* appeared in *Vivliofika: E-Journal of Eighteenth-Century Russian Studies*. She also gave a paper entitled “The Modernity of Bible Reading in Eighteenth-Century Russia” at the Western Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Conference. A planned series of events for which she serves on the organizing committee (spearheaded by our Slavic librarian, Sophie Lesinska, and our own Colleen McQuillen), “Voices of Freedom, Voices of War: Arts and Culture in Contemporary Ukraine” received full funding from USC Visions & Voices. Keep an eye out for this upcoming programming in Spring 2025!

**Kate Tomashevskaja** passed her PhD Qualifying Exams on May 9 and will start work on her dissertation, which is tentatively titled, “Eastern European Horror Story: The Emergence of Horror Cinema in Poland and the Former Soviet Union.” She was awarded an array of grants and fellowships to support her research: USC’s Center for Ethnographic Media Arts Fellowship (2024-2025); DAAD-HSK Scholarship for Education and Training in Germany (summer 2024); a USC Graduate School Research Award (winter 2024); a Ralph and Jean Hovel Memorial Summer Travel Award and a VSGC Summer Research Grant (both for summer 2024). Kate published two



film reviews in *Kinokultura* (issues 83 and 84): one on Oleg Khamokov's *Knots* (2022), and the other on Roman Mikhailov's *Snow, Sister and Wolverine* (2019). With Erica Camisa-Morale and Simon Garibyan Kate co-organized the AATSEEL stream "Death and Dying in Eurasian Culture," and she gave the paper "Traumatic History in Soviet Horrors: Fyodor Petrukhin's *Dina*" at AATSEEL. She presented "Horrors of the Siberian Frontier: National and Transnational in Yakut Found Footage Movies" at NeMLA's 55th Annual Convention; and "Resonance of Memory: Historical Trauma and Contemporary Anxieties in Valery Rubinchik's *Savage Hunt of King Stakh*" at the BASEES Conference. Kate topped all of this off by organizing a film screening event in April: "Exploring Violence and Wartime Representation in Cinema: Mantas Kvedaravicius' *Barzakh* (2011) and *Mariupolis* (2016)."

**Assel Uvaliyeva** published a film review on *Tradition* at *KinoKultura*. She also presented her paper "Stories of the Steppe: Mother figure and Ecological Consciousness in *The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years*" at the California Slavic Colloquium. Assel received the Melikian Center Award at ASU to study Tatar language this summer, and most recently she successfully passed her MA exam.

#### Looking Ahead to Academic Year 2024-2025

We are eager to welcome six new members to our scholarly community in August 2024. **Dr. Chloe Papadopoulos** will join us as an assistant professor; **Dr. Nikita Allgire** will be housed in Slavic as a Dornsife General Education Fellow; and **Prof. Simon Morrison** (Princeton) will be affiliated with Slavic as a Visiting Scholar. Joining the graduate student cadre are **Mahshid Hosseinian** (M.Sc. in Russian Studies, University of Tehran), **Hanna Navitskaya** (MA in Creative Writing, Higher School of Economics - Moscow), and **Ekaterina Tarasova** (MA in Russian and Comparative Literature, Higher School of Economics - Moscow). We congratulate **Hanna** on being awarded a Wallis Annenberg Endowed Fellowship, which is one of the premier fellowship programs in USC Dornsife College and is designed to recruit the best graduate students to our world class Ph.D. programs. The Wallis Annenberg Endowed Fellowship program forms an exceptionally talented and diverse interdisciplinary community of scholars researching issues of women and the family, and threats to their well-being.

*Перунъ, 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 this newsletter's heading, which was taken from the Russian Satirical Journal Collection housed in the University of Southern California Digital Library.*