



ПЕРУНЪ

ПЕРУНЪ: The Newsletter of the USC Slavic Department

Issue № 4 ♦ May 2023

Congratulations to all our contributors on their rich array of achievements! The end of the academic year is bringing with it two other momentous endings: Prof. Tom Seifrid is stepping down from his role as Chair and Susan Kechekian is retiring. Tom and Susan, we are deeply grateful for the professionalism and deep personal concern for our community that you brought to your jobs. Starting in August Prof. Colleen McQuillen will step in as Chair and Prof. Kelsey Rubin-Detlev will serve as Director of Graduate Studies #TrojanFamily #FightOn



Sally gave a touching toast to Tom at the department's end-of-year party.



We all celebrated Susan and raised a toast to her life's next chapter. (Photo credit L and R: Evgeny)

On to dispatches from the field!

Nikita Allgire presented parts of his dissertation research at this year's AATSEEL conference, on the PsyArt panel at the Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture, and at the ACLA conference in Chicago, where he also co-organized a panel on the topic of "Modernist Extra-Cinematic Montage." Nikita's review of *Viktor Shklovsky's Heritage in Literature, Arts, and Philosophy*, an essay collection on Russian Formalism, was published in *SEEJ* (66: 4 Winter 2022).

Andrzej Brylak published an article titled "Abyss of the Sea Where People Are Dying...or Not' — forms of disappearing in Leo Lipski's prose" in the special book-length issue of the journal *Emigration Archive*. His article is based on his archival discovery of the conceptual scheme developed by Lipski's editor during his work on his novella *Piotruś*. Writes Andrzej, "In my





interpretation the scheme allows the reader to look at Lipski's literary project through the Heideggerian concept of Gelassenheit."

Erica Camisa-Morale published the article "Every Lamentation is a Consolation. On Nikolai Karamzin's Death Poetry," in the journal *Il confronto letterario* (2022) 78: 247-70. She participated in the AATSEEL convention as a discussant on the panel "One World, Many Worlds: Investigating Nabokov's Visual, Literary, and Motorial Materials" that she co-organized with our own **Caitlin Giustiniano**. She says, "Thank you for this collaboration, Caity!" In the classroom Erica collaborated with our USC Libraries, specifically with the Cinematic Arts Library and the Architecture & Fine Arts Library, to make teaching of the past more interactive and tangible. She also collaborated with the USC group, [CHARM](#) (Collaborations in History, Art, Religion, and Music) and encourages us to check out their website.

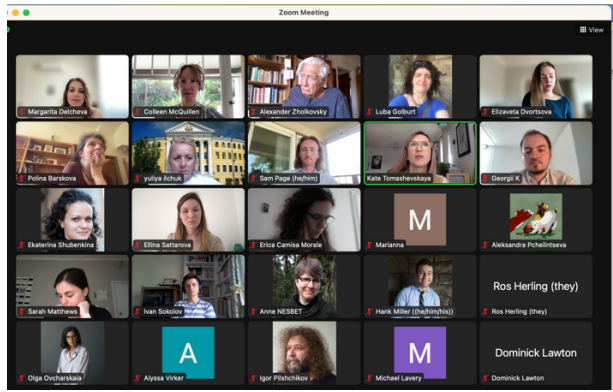
Natasha Dame reports that she co-authored a book chapter with her husband Matthew Dame that was published in the winter. Entitled "Multilingualism and Authenticity in Russian Heritage Language Teaching Practices," it appeared in *Authenticity Across Languages and Cultures. Themes of Identity in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, edited by W. Stadler, L. Will, and I. Eloff (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2022). She also completed the Advanced Faculty Teaching Institute "Getting Comfortable with Challenging Discussions" at the USC Center for Excellence in Teaching (January 2023-April 2023).

Evgeny Dengub's textbook *Etazhi: Second Year Russian Language and Culture* received the 2022 AATSEEL Best Book in Pedagogy Prize. This semester Evgeny co-organized two conferences: Gender-Inclusive Language Instruction Conference run by the USC Center for Languages and Cultures, and Professional Development of Russian Graduate Student Teaching Assistants at Harvard University. He co-presented "Rehumanizing the Humanities: Ungrading in the Language Classroom and Beyond" at the Conference on General Education, Pedagogy, and Assessment by American Association of Colleges and Universities. He also presented this talk as an invited webinar for ACTR. Evgeny participated in the AATSEEL roundtable "'Decolonizing' the Russian Language Curriculum: practical advice, created examples, further steps, collaboration among educators"; and he delivered two other talks: "The Present and Future of Russian Studies (co-presented with Dr. Merrill) and Humanistic Approaches to Russian (both at the conference "Where Are We Now? The Location of Modern Languages and Cultures" at Durham University, UK), and "Authenticity of Meaning-making in Language Classrooms" (STARTALK Spring Meeting, Baltimore, MD). Finally, Evgeny's review of Elena Minakova-Boblest's *Modern Russian Grammar in Use: A Systematic Reference and Practice Book* appeared in *Russian Language Journal*, 72.1: 196-198; and his review of Nila Friedberg's *Decoding the 1920s: A Reader for Advanced Learners of Russian* is forthcoming in the next issue of *Slavic and East European Journal*. This summer, in addition to his duties as Associate Director of the Middlebury College School of Russian, he will direct the Proficiency-Based Pedagogy for Russian sponsored by the Startalk federal grant.





Elizaveta Dvortsova started the spring semester by successfully passing the qualifying exams and becoming a PhD Candidate. She presented her paper "Poetic Pictures: Iconic Images in Russian Literature" at the NeMLA Convention at Niagara Falls, and gave a second paper "Nothing to Discuss: An Episode from the 1960s Literary Polemics" at the California Slavic Colloquium. The CSC paper was related to her primary research and she writes that it, "hopefully, will be transformed into a paragraph of dissertation" (lol—CM).



USC had an outstanding showing at the California Slavic Colloquium! Thanks to everyone who tuned in to show support.

In February **Simon Garibyan** organized a screening of Anna Melikyan's film *About Love* (2015) for the Russian conversation club (Русский чай). In April he delivered a lecture about Soviet film history in a course taught by Dr. Shushan Karaperian (Armenian Heritage: History, Arts, and Culture). He and other members of OSEES organized a screening Lana Gogoberidze's film *Some Interviews on Personal Matters* (1978), which was followed by a talk by Prof. Lilya Kaganovsky (UCLA). This May he is presenting the paper "Can the Dead Soldier Speak? Necropoetics in the Visual Art of Sergei Parajanov" at a workshop being held at Columbia University's Harriman Institute.



Conversation during the interlude between the Gogoberidze film screening and Prof. Kaganovsky's talk.

Dmitrii Kuznetsov reports that he is the recipient of an Oakley Endowed Fellowship for 2023-24 and of the USC Graduate School Summer Research and Writing Grant. He writes that he "was also honored to be invited (by our alumna Olga Seliashniova!) to give a talk at Florida State University titled "Decadence and Symbolism: The End of Time and The Promise of Transcendence." He was one of the OSEES members who organized the Gogoberidze film screening, which was followed by Prof. Kaganovsky's talk "Dysphonia as an Art Practice: Muratova, Tarkovsky, Gogoberidze." At AATSEEL Dmitrii presented a paper titled "Zombies of Perestroika in 'Theatre of Horrors' by Andrei Ivanov."

Sarah Matthews passed her qualifying exams in January to join the ranks of ABD (All But Dissertation). At AATSEEL she presented her paper "«Ведь каждая вещь, как я вижу, рассчитана на большее внимание, чем ей здесь уделено...но, как улыбнётся, если вдруг кто-нибудь нарушит обычный порядок, помолчит и послушает.» Eсopoetry & Olga Sedakova's Leningrad Samizdat Publications." Sarah received the inaugural USC Center for Languages and Cultures Teaching Excellence Award for Assistant Lecturers, as well as the Teresa





Wilson Endowed Fellowship from USC Dornsife for Summer 2023. The good news kept rolling in when Sarah learned that she also received a Provost Top Off Travel/Research Award from USC's Graduate School. To cap off the semester, she earned the Ph.D. Academy Certificate in Communication, Leadership, and Management.

Colleen McQuillen's article [«Голос материи» Зенкевича: палеонтология в эпоху модернизма](#) came out in *Новое литературное обозрение* (Issue 179, 1/2023) and is part of the cluster [Естественные науки в культуре русского модернизма](#) that she co-organized and edited with USC Slavic alumnus Frederick White. She co-organized a symposium on “Hybrid Modernities” at her old haunt, the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she presented the paper “Communities in Circulation: The Graphic Art of Aleksandra Korobkova in Tatar-language Journals.” Colleen accepted an invitation to join the editorial board of a new series “East European and Eurasian Ecologies” published by Academic Studies Press.

Jo Nakpil organized a panel for AATSEEL titled "Community and Creativity Under Pressure: Soviet Filmmaking During the Brezhnev Era," which was chaired by Ellina Sattarova. Jo also presented a paper "Tarkovsky and Japan: Tracing a Subtle Taste," drawn from the dissertation, on that panel.

Elena Petrova had two articles published: “Teoriia V.B. Shklovskogo o razvitii romannoï formy: k voprosu o sviazi «Kandida» i «Tristrama Shendi»” *Vol'terovskie Chtenia: Sbornik Nauchnykh Trudov*, volume 7, 2022, pp. 132—45; and “Sternianstvo V.B. Shklovskogo i stanovlenie V. Kaverina kak pisatel'ia na primere povesti «Revizor» i romana «Skandalist». K voprosu o roli «uchitel'ia»”. *Professor, syn professora. Pamiati N.A. Bogomolova*, edited by O. Dovgii, A. Sergeeva-Kliatis. Moscow, f-t Zhurnalistiki MGU im M.V. Lomonosova; Vodolei, 2022, pp. 384—401. Lena was also admitted to YIVO-Bard Summer Program in Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture, from which she received a grant to cover part of the expense.

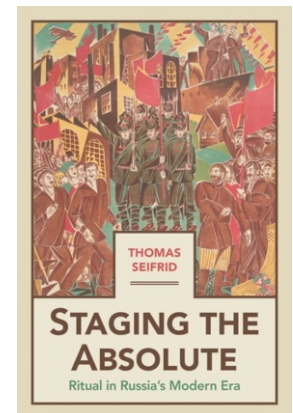
Kelsey Rubin-Detlev's article, “Dostoevsky and Epistolary Intimacy,” appeared in *SEEJ* 66.4 (Winter 2022), and her invited review of Ruth Pritchard Dawson's *Catherine the Great and the Culture of Celebrity in the Eighteenth Century* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2022) is soon to appear in *Canadian Slavonic Papers/Revue canadienne des slavistes*. She signed a contract for a Russian translation of her monograph, *The Epistolary Art of Catherine the Great* (Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment, 2019), to be published in the series Contemporary Western Rusistika (Academic Studies Press). Her digital humanities project, *CatCor: The Digital Correspondence of Catherine the Great*, was awarded the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (BSECS) Prize for Best Digital Resource 2023. She was also an invited participant in a roundtable discussion of “Catherine the Great—A Celebrity across Time” at the Institute of Languages, Cultures and Societies at the School of Advanced Study, University of London. Last but not least, she is very much looking forward to being back around the department in person next semester!





Ellina Sattarova's article on necrorealism ("The Non-Final Cut: The Biopolitics of Necrorealist Cinema") was published in *Russian Literature*. She says, "It still shows up as pre-proof, but the peer review process is complete, and the article is out there in the world." She served as chair and discussant on an AATSEEL panel organized by Jo Nakpil ("Community and Creativity Under Pressure: Soviet Filmmaking During the Brezhnev Era") in February. Last but not least, she was invited to deliver the Inaugural Pitt Slavic Alumni Lecture and presented the most recent version of her work on Fedorchenko (the title of the talk was "Aesthetics, Biopolitics, and Empire in Aleksei Fedorchenko's *Angels of Revolution*"). As part of the visit, she also met with Pitt's current PhD students to share her experiences as a recent alumna of the program.

Tom Seifrid's newest book [*Staging the Absolute: Ritual in Russia's Modern Era*](#) (University of Toronto Press 2024) is also out in the world. It argues that an array of practices and beliefs came together to define an essential aspect of Russian and Soviet culture in the twentieth century: the persistent desire to interrupt – or disrupt – history. Drawing on sources that define the nature of public rituals, the book reveals the pervasive presence of the impulse to impede history in Russia's modern era and the realization of the idea in the form of the Stalinist show trials of the 1930s. Congratulations, Tom!



Kate Tomashevskaya attended the BASEES Conference at the University of Glasgow in March and presented a paper titled "Valentin Kataev's Time, Forward: Portraying 'Asia' and 'Asian' in Soviet Production Novels." She also served as chair of the panel "The (neo)imperial imaginaries of nature and environment in contemporary Russian media." She gave the paper "Anti-academic humanities in the samizdat magazine *Chasy*" at the AATSEEL Conference and delivered related talk "Science in the Paradigm of Confrontation Between Official and Dissident Cultures in the Samizdat Journal *Chasy*" at the California Slavic Colloquium. Kate also secured two grants: one from USC's Visual Studies Research Institute and the other from the Ph.D. Academy.

Peter Winsky presented two conference papers: "Sympathy from the Devil: Dostoevsky's Compassionate Approach to Atheism and It's Contemporaneous Application" at the Symposium "What's New about the New Atheism? The Enduring Relevance of Russian Philosophy: Inaugural Conference of the Northwestern University Research Initiative for the Study of Russian Philosophy and Religious Thought" and "The Strange World of Dostoevsky's Orthodox Ontology: Demons and Cosmic Consciousness in the Late Novels" at the Weird Russian 19th Century Symposium hosted by Rutgers University. He also launched the [NURPRT Forum](#), a website devoted to open discourse on questions of Russian Philosophy and Religious Thought.

In August, our department will welcome two incoming graduate students: **Julie Ammons** (University of Montana) and **Yulia Dubasova** (St. Petersburg State University).





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.

