

Перунъ

ПЕРУНЪ: The Newsletter of the USC Slavic Department

Issue № 7 ♦ December 2024

Note from the Editor

December is an appropriate time to reflect on comings and goings, beginnings and endings, and especially so given that this December marks the last month of **Alik Zholkovsky's** 40-year career as Professor in our department and January will be his first month as Professor Emeritus. I'll save my sentimentality for his retirement party, which will be in late January or early February (TBD), and for now I'll express how much inspiration I take from his extraordinary professional accomplishments. Check out his website [Новое на сайте](#) for a chronicle of his latest publications and talks, including the release of his 2015 monograph *Напрасные совершенства и другие виньетки* as an [audiobook](#)! I also find great inspiration in the collective achievements of our department and I'm happy to share the most recent ones in this issue of Перунъ.

-CM

Nikita Allgire had a busy and productive fall semester as an incoming Dornsife Postdoctoral Fellow in General Education. He taught two original courses for the GESM program, "Soviet Science Fiction between the Arts and Sciences" and "Formal Devices in the Creative Act." In November he presented at ASEES on a panel devoted to late Soviet cultural production and participated in a roundtable marking the centenary of Soviet philosopher Eval'd Il'enkov. Over the summer, he received a research fellowship from the American Psychoanalytic Association (APsA), which should help with a current book project based on his dissertation. Not least of all, he and Laura got happily married at the end of September in a small family ceremony!



While in Boston for ASEES, Nikita made sure to visit the Poe statue and to catch up with dear colleagues.





Also participating in the ASEEEES conference, **Andrzej Brylak** bookended the panel “Humanity’s Liberation or Decline?: Representations of Technology in East/Central European Cultures in the Early 20th Century” as Chair and Discussant.

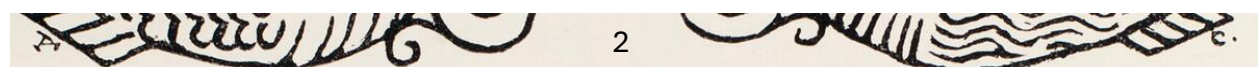
Evgeny Dengub participated in two sessions at the ASEEEES 2024 conference: “Contemporary Perspectives on Assessment Strategies in Language Learning: Rethinking Assessment and Embracing the Change II” and “Learning While Teaching Russian: Supervision and Mentorship at the Undergraduate and Graduate Levels,” sharing insights on innovative approaches in language pedagogy and mentorship. During the summer, Dr. Dengub co-led the 2024 Russian Online Language Pedagogy Summer Workshop, a three-day online event organized by the NFLRC at the University of Hawaii, which brought together online Russian language teachers from across the country. Dr. Dengub also delivered a keynote address on *meaning-making in the language classroom* at the California World Languages Project meeting at Stanford University, engaging with over 100 K-12 teachers and presenting strategies to enhance student engagement and creativity in language learning. Additionally, he attended the MLA ADE-ALD Summer Seminar and was invited to serve on the selection committee for the highly selective MLA Edward Guiliano Global Fellowships.

Dmitrii Kuznetsov presented a paper on the productive qualities of forgetting in Maria Stepanova’s *Pamiati pamiati* at ASEEEES, and he published several film reviews in KinoKultura.



Sarah Matthews defended her dissertation “The Metaphysical Materiality of Vladislav Khodasevich and T.S. Eliot’s Poetry” and started her new job as Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Russian and Slavic Studies and the University of Arizona. She also shared a photo of her Polish class celebrating the end of the spring semester at Solidarność. Left to right: Andrzej Brylak, Lena Petrova-Libgober, Sarah Matthews, Caitly Justiniano, and Dmitrii Kuznetsov.

In July **Colleen McQuillen** presented material from her book project *Mining the Earth, Fueling Modernity* at the third and final meeting of the Russian Ecospheres Network, an international research group funded by the German government. After the conference, which was held at the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe in Leipzig, she moved from theory to praxis in Freiburg, where Lomonosov himself studied the





art and science of mining. She descended 200 meters down the Reiche Zeche silver mine, where she sloshed through muddy waters, scaled slippery ladders, and beheld the bizarre world of the earth's underground slimes.

At ASEES Colleen participated with fellow Ecospheres Network members in a roundtable about their work, and she also served as a discussant for a panel on posthumanism in post-Soviet culture. In October she was honored to be elected president of AATSEEL, a role that she assumes in February 2027. Until then she'll be in training as President Elect.

Photo: Philipp Kohl (LMU Munich) and Colleen McQuillen pose, happy and clean, before going down the silver mine.



Chloe Papadopoulos published an invited [book review](#) of Svetlana Evdokimova's edited volume *Dostoevsky's The Gambler: The Allure of the Wheel* in *The Russian Review* (while it will be part of the first issue of 2025, it is already available online). Her peer-reviewed book chapter, "Too Dragged Out, Can't Understand a Thing': The Impatience of Youth in *Demons*" in *Funny Dostoevsky: New Perspectives on the Dostoevskian Light Side* (Bloomsbury Academic, eds. Irina Erman and Lynn Ellen Patyk) came out in June. For ASEES Chloe co-organized a two-part roundtable on Decolonizing the Curriculum, presenting on one of the roundtables about the integration of contemporary Ukrainian voices in a survey course on Russian prison literature. She also presented on an early version of a book chapter on war, money, and almsgiving in Alexander Ostrovsky's *Koz'ma Minin Sukhoruk*. Chloe also gave Перунъ a hot scoop of news that has yet to be announced: she was elected to the Executive Board of the North American Dostoevsky Society in a unanimous vote at ASEES. She will begin her role as the Society's Communications Chair on January 1, 2025, and she will be transitioning from Assistant Editor of the Society's official blog (*Bloggers Karamazov*) to Editor as part of her new position.

Lena Petrova-Libgobber became a PhD candidate in August and received the Graduate Certificate in Jewish Studies. She got a position as a student worker at the USC Shoah Foundation. She gave two presentations at ASEES: a paper entitled "Petr Viazemskii and the 'Jewish Question' in the Russian Empire," and she participated in the roundtable "Philosophy of Love," where she spoke about the response to the family crisis by Tolstoy and Rozanov. In December she attended the AJS virtual conference with a talk titled "Russian Empire Discovers Two Queens: How Wives of Ahasuerus and Kazimir





Destabilized the State.” Lena also received two grants to support her work: the USC Graduate School Travel/Research Award and the ASEES Graduate Student Travel Grant.

Over the summer **Sasha Pchelintseva** taught Beginning Russian at an intensive language program at Lewis University while also leading classes in Russian folk dance. This semester, she contributed as a committee member to the organization of USC’s upcoming Language & Career Week, scheduled for early March next semester. In addition, she was awarded a Teaching Innovation Grant from CLC, which she plans to use to create a series of educational videos on universal grammatical concepts. Sasha also participated in the 56th ASEES conference, where she presented her research on Vasilii Trediakovskii’s *Ezda v ostrov Liubvi* during a roundtable focused on the Philosophy of Love.



Photos: Sasha Pchelintseva training Russian-language students in the art of folk dance.

Sally Pratt served as a discussant for an ASEES panel affectionately called “Dear Old Viazemsky” by the participants, but actually entitled “Petr Viazemsky: Liberation as Ethic and Aesthetic Praxis.”

Kelsey Rubin-Detlev received a Level II Digital Humanities Advancement Grant from the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#). The two-year project began in October 2024 and aims to build the infrastructure needed to scale up *CatCor: The Digital Correspondence of Catherine the Great* to completion; in addition to a new editing environment potentially integrating AI-generated translations into English, the project will create a new interactive knowledge graph and analysis platform to allow scholars and the public to explore Catherine’s letters and map her world. Kelsey’s article, “[Mme de Graffigny and the Archduchess: Indirect Correspondence between the Court and le monde](#)” appeared in *Modern Languages Open* in November 2024, and her invited review of Mikhail Velizhev’s *Chaadaevskoe delo: ideologija, ritorika i gosudarstvennaia vlast’ v nikolaevskoi Rossii* appeared in the Spring 2024 issue of *Slavic Review*. She gave a presentation at the 2024 ASEES Convention in Boston about biblical motifs in the poetry of Russia’s first woman to support herself by her writing, Anna Bunina. Kelsey also presented her NEH project at an



Arts and Humanities Funding and Resource Convening for California's 37th Congressional District, organized and attended by Congresswoman Sydney Kamlager-Dove. Finally, she was honored to be invited to join the editorial board of the journal *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*.

Ellina Sattarova's review of Ivan Tverdovskii's *Panic Attacks* was published in the July issue of *KinoKultura*. At ASEEEES she participated in the roundtable on cultural biopolitics in post-Soviet Russia; and she presented a paper titled "Forget Me (Not): Traumatic History and Failed Filiation in Kantemir Balagov's *Beanpole*."

Kate Tarasova published a short article "An Unknown Contemporary Response to Mandelstam's Poem *Zverinets*" ([Неизвестный Прижизненный Отклик на Стихотворение Мандельштама "Зверинец"](#)) co-authored with Oleg Lekmanov in the journal *Quarta*, no 3 (13), 2024, ed. Valery Shubinsky.

Kate Tomashevskaja joined the USC in-person posse at ASEEEES where she presented on "Kharitonov's *Craving Passion* and Teptsov's *Mister Designer*: Russian Modernism and Imperial Russia in Soviet Horror Cinema" for a roundtable. She also co-organized the roundtable "Fictional Realities and Constructive Imaginaries: Committing the Past to the Present." For the ASEEEES Virtual Convention, Kate gave a talk titled "Historical Conflicts and Contemporary Anxieties in Polish Horror Cinema About Wars" for yet another roundtable. Over the summer, Kate completed the Intensive Course "Deutsch Erleben" at Humboldt University of Berlin, and she now has a CEFR Level B1 certificate in German.

Assel Uvaliyeva also used her summer for language study: she completed an online Tatar language course at Arizona State University. She went on to co-organize and participate in an online reading group focused on Tatar texts, written in Arabic-based script during the fall semester. At the 2024 ASEEEES convention, Assel organized and presented on a panel exploring "Nuclear threats in literature, film, music and video games." Her talk, titled "Nuclear Trauma and the Uncanny: Displacement of Fear in Rollan Seisenbayev's 'The Day the World Collapsed,'" examined the implications of nuclear testing in Kazakhstan through the lens of contemporary literature.

A Look Ahead: Spring 2025 Calendar of USC Slavic Events

Candidates for the position of assistant professor of modern Russophone literature will be on campus the following dates and their job talks will be at 2:00pm:

January 24, January 31, February 7, and February 14.

February 28 Lecture: [Michal Markowski](#) (University of Illinois at Chicago), "Russian Terror, Polish Novel. Dostoevsky, Brzozowski, and the Politics of Modern Life." Taper 309K, 2:00pm.





March 5 Visions & Voices event co-organized by SLL and Doheny Libraries:
[Voices of Freedom, Voices of War in Ukraine: Creative Workshops](#)
[Voices of Freedom, Voices of War in Ukraine: Readings and Conversations.](#)

Accompanying the event will be an exhibition of 15 laser-cut portraits titled "[Pioneering Women in Ukraine](#)" and an online discussion with organizers Margarita Vaysman and Dasha Nepochatova, as well as the artist Olena Marchyshyna.

March 28-29 Scholarly Conference "Russian Afterlives of the Early Modern" (read the overview on our [website](#)).

Confirmed external speakers include: Luba Golburt (Berkeley), Erik Zitser (Duke), Ilya Vinitsky (Princeton), Oleg Lekmanov (Princeton/HSE), and Erica Camisa-Morale (Stanford). Internal speakers include: Thomas Seifrid, Ellina Sattarova, Chloe Papadopolous, and Sasha Pchelintseva. An interdisciplinary roundtable discussion about reception studies will include Kelsey Rubin-Detlev, Rebecca Lemon (USC English), and Frederic Clark (USC Classics).

April, date TBD. Annual California Slavic Colloquium at Stanford University.

In addition to our weekly Russian Conversation Hour, Lena Petrova-Libgober plans to launch a weekly **Polish Conversation Hour**. Porazmawiajmy po polsku!

