The Slavic Scene

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES & LITERATURES

Pilot and Professor John Mersereau with Alexander Ronen in 1993.

www.lsa.umich.edu/slavic

Letter From the Chair

Dear Friends

Our year began sadly with the death of our much loved friend and colleague John Mersereau, Jr. in January. His scholarship and writing enriched our understanding of 19th century Russian literature, especially the prose of the Romantic period and the evolution of the devices that were to become characteristic of Russian Realism. Many of us remember him as a richly informative, engaging and witty lecturer. For nearly thirty-five years he enlightened and entertained the scores of students in his very large Russian literature survey courses, while during his decade-long tenure as department chair in the 1960s our Slavic Department grew dramatically in the size of its faculty, its undergraduate curriculum, and its graduate program. It became one of the largest Slavic departments in terms of training a new generation of Ph.D.'s to fill college and university positions, as interest in the Soviet Union and in Russian culture soared nationally. Many of John's former students followed in his footsteps and chaired or now lead other Slavic Departments, Russian Departments, and Russian Studies Centers around the country, in no small degree as a result of the caring and supportive attitude toward students and colleagues that he exemplified for them. It is this aspect of his legacy that we are honoring through the creation of the John Mersereau, Jr. Memorial Fund for Students. Those of us who were in Ann Arbor (his former colleagues in the Department, CREES, and the Residential College, which he also directed for nearly a decade) gathered in early May to share our memories of John. Remembering his adventurous spirit, his many engaging hobbies (from gourmet cooking to farming to flying planes), his love of nature, his forthrightness, his charm and his delightfully sparkling sense of humor brightened our mood and tempered our sadness.

On a happier note, I can report that this was truly a banner year for our department in terms of scholarly work. Five of our colleagues completed major books. Jindrich Toman's *Photo/Montage in Print* was published by Kant in Prague in April. Within the next several months to a year, four other books will appear as parts of prestigious book series from major university presses: Michael Makin's *Nikolai Klyuev: Time and Text, Place and Poet* (from Northwestern University Press), Olga Maiorova's *From the Shadow of Empire: Defining the Russian Nation through Cultural Mythology in the Great Reform Era, 1855-1870s* (from University of Wisconsin Press), Mikhail Krutikov's *From Kabbalah to Class Struggle: Expressionism, Marxism and Yiddish Literature in the Life and Work of Meir Wiener* and Andrew Herscher's *Violence Taking Place: The Architecture of the Kosovo Conflict* (both of these from Stanford University Press). These are all strikingly original and insightful works exploring important figures and cultural developments in their larger political and social contexts. I recommend them to you for your personal reading plans over the next year or two.

Our graduate program continues to grow. In the Fall we will welcome three new graduate students. All three have outstanding undergraduate training and all three won very substantial Fellowship awards: two won Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships from the Department of Education, one also garnered a Fellowship from the Copernicus Endowment, and another won a multi-year Zvi Y. Gitelman Fellowship from the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies. These students will join the cohort of five who began last year and the more advanced students in our program. All are participating actively in our new interdisciplinary graduate study initiative. We continue to develop the faculty mentoring process which aids students in the construction and completion of their graduate reading lists and their preparatory research aimed at the projected areas of their dissertations. Our current cohort has been helping us immensely in figuring out the best way to run our complex program which must at the same time promote each student's individualized interdisciplinary program of study and prepare students for their teaching careers by ensuring comprehensive knowledge of at least one Slavic literature. There are still challenges ahead as we work through the details of our program, but we have much appreciated our students' willingness to contribute to its construction through their feedback and their new ideas.

There were new developments in our undergraduate program as well. Our brand new concentration in Polish Language, Literature and Culture (in its first year) is off to a great start, with three students finishing the major and others signed up. We also have launched a minor in Ukrainian Language and Culture, which will feature courses on literature and cinema, as well as interdisciplinary work on history and contemporary social and political issues. This minor joins the group which we already have in Czech, Polish, and Russian language and culture. Another new minor, in Cultures and Literatures of Eastern Europe, is designed to meet the interests of students who want to learn more deeply about our area of the world, but whose majors in other disciplines do not allow them the time to pursue the study of a Slavic language. This minor will allow them to choose at least five courses from among those on Russian, Polish, Czech, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, Ukrainian and East-European Jewish culture, augmented by cross-cultural courses which cover several geographic areas (for example, cinema, folklore, and literary and cultural periods and movements). You can read more about these new minors within the newsletter.

Best wishes for a relaxing and pleasant summer!

Herbert (Herb) Eagle *hjeagle@umich.edu*

Feature

An Interview with Professor Olga Maiorova

By Olga Maiorova

You're from Russia. Tell us what it was like to be brought up there.
Throughout my teenage years, I sought to define myself in a way that differed from my parents' occupations. My father was a journalist and my mother a literary scholar – and I did my best to prove myself in areas as remote as possible from their interests. I entered a high school known for its in-depth, high quality program in mathematics and applied myself to preparing for college studies in astronomy. But one summer subverted all my plans. When I was in high school, my parents allowed me, for the first time in my life, not to spend my three-month vacation in a "Pioneer camp," with its numerous "war games" and lengthy expositions of Soviet ideology. Instead, I stayed home and took advantage of my parents' rich library. From then on I knew that I would study Russian literature for the rest of my life. Another formative experience was provided by the eight years that I studied literature at Moscow State University (as an undergraduate and then a graduate student). What made my curiosity for literature yet sharper and transformed me into what I am today were lectures by some outstanding scholars (particularly Boris Uspensky and Alexander Chudakov) and my encounter with a group of very talented students, many of whom are still my close friends and colleagues.

What about the University of Michigan attracted you? Where did your academic interests originate?
Common to both the University of Michigan and my alma mater in Moscow is an atmosphere of intellectual pursuit, freedom, and curiosity. It might sound strange that I apply the word "freedom" to Soviet academia. But even in the Soviet times real scholarship, though controlled by the regime, sometimes succeeded in escaping external impositions and transcending ideological boundaries. Also, just as in my alma mater, this unique atmosphere at Michigan comes from the interaction of professors and students. I highly value and thoroughly enjoy my interaction with graduate and undergraduate students, who always provide fresh inspiration for my work. In short, it is the University culture that makes me feel at home here.

What do you hope to impart to your students?
I just mentioned how much I owe to Boris Uspensky, author of outstanding works in Slavic linguistics, literatures, and cultures. I vividly remember him in the classroom: always thoroughly prepared for each lecture and always arriving to a session with a frighteningly extensive folder of notes. Yet he, nonetheless, did not recite from the notes but turned each session into a breath-taking intellectual exploration. I think this is the only thing students need – to have a teacher who tries to invite and guide them through an intellectual journey. Lev Tolstoy defines professors as people who copy notes from one notebook to another – this is a negative example the great writer instilled in me.

What areas of research would you like to address in particular?
While during the early years of my professional career, in Russia, my publications were primarily devoted to imaginative literature, subsequently, as I have gained a deeper understanding of the Russian intellectual landscape, my research has become broadly interdisciplinary. I combine study of literature with exploration of ideology, as expressed in political tracts, popular historiography, visual arts, and public ceremonies. My next book project, already underway, seeks to trace how Russians' perceptions of Central Asia have evolved since the beginning of the nineteenth century. In this work, I focus on the politics of representation and cultural appropriation, that is, on how fictional literature, travelogues, painting, and art photography reflected and influenced the collective vision of the region.

Pending the Regent's approval, Olga Mairova will be promoted to Associate Professor with tenure effective September 1.

Olga Maiorova is Assistant Professor of 19th-century Russian literature. Details on her forthcoming book can be found on page 11.

Classroom Spotlight

Two New Minors Being Offered

We are pleased to be offering two new undergraduate minors. As we consider the interests and variety of our students, it is critical that the department offer courses that pique the ever changing and expanding curiosity of our student body.

As the only North American university to offer a minor in Ukrainian Studies, we continue to set the pace for this area of study. Please contact Svitlana Rogovyk, our Language Program Coordinator for more information, at srogovyk@umich.edu.

Minor in Cultures & Literatures of Eastern Europe

By Michael Makin

This program has been designed specifically for students who have either become interested in Slavic Studies later in their academic careers and are thus unable to complete a language requirement; or are in a demanding concentration program that does not include flexibility to take on an extensive course of language study but are interested in the literatures and cultures of Eastern Europe.

The minor is divided between Russian Studies, and Polish, BCS, Czech, Eastern-European Jewish studies, and cross-cultural Slavic studies. Students must take courses from both of these groups, and may choose to specialize in Russian studies, or in one or more other areas of Eastern and Central European culture. Thus, a student completing this minor will have acquired relatively detailed knowledge in at least one area of the Department's specializations, while also having been exposed to the diversity of cultures found between the Danube and the Pacific Ocean.

Minor in Ukrainian

By Svitlana Rogovyk

Studying Ukraine in a comparative perspective will broaden the University of Michigan curriculum on strategically important parts of the world. The academic Minor in Ukrainian is a vibrant and multi-faceted program that integrates Ukrainian studies into broader intellectual and policy agendas while promoting research and scholarly work on contemporary Ukraine in the United States. Its curriculum will educate academics, diplomats, journalists, businesspersons, and future specialists on the history, language, literature, and politics of Ukraine. In addition, study of Ukraine brings an important comparative perspective to international and interdisciplinary studies at the University of Michigan taking into account the fact of Ukraine's being a historical meeting place of several major cultures: Slavic, Jewish, Austro-Hungarian, and others.

The Minor in Ukrainian is a great opportunity for students in many fields of undergraduate studies to supplement and make more coherent their knowledge in targeted concentrations such as Russian and East European Studies, Russian, Polish, Hebrew and Jewish Cultural Studies, History, Environmental Studies, Political Science, and Sociology.

Congratulations Graduates

Mila Shevchenko

Ph.D. in Slavic Languages & Literatures

Mila has accepted a position as Instructor of Russian Language and Literature in the Department of German, Russian, and East Asian Languages at Bowling Green State University

Slavic Graduates

Rachel Enoch Bachelor of Arts, Polish
Adriana Rewald Bachelor of Arts, Polish
Natalia Maska Bachelor of Science, Polish
Stephen Day Bachelor of Arts, Russian
Danielle Gill Bachelor of Arts, Russian
Ksenia Krivtsov Bachelor of Arts, Russian
Katherine Oshman Bachelor of Arts, Russian
Jenna Ritten Bachelor of Arts, Russian
Erik Steel Bachelor of Arts, Russian
Kendra Williams Bachelor of Science, Russian

Sofia Mitas Minor In Czech Language, Literature, & Culture
Michelle Floyd Minor In Czech Language, Literature, & Culture
Caitlin Gdowski Minor In Polish Language, Literature, & Culture
April Lehman Minor In Polish Language, Literature, & Culture
Adam Pindral Minor In Polish Language, Literature, & Culture
Alison Shea Minor In Russian Language, Literature, & Culture
Matthew Groves Minor In Russian Language, Literature, & Culture
Brendan Klein Minor In Russian Language, Literature, & Culture
Corey Kosch Minor In Russian Language, Literature, & Culture

Ashley Bieniek

Caitlin Gdowski

Undergraduate Award Winners

Thomas Hooker Bachelor of Arts, History with Honors
Alfred G. Meyer Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Paper in Russian and East European Studies
Xin Yuen Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, Minor in Russian Language, Literature, & Culture
Prize for Best Paper Written in a Slavic Language Learned at the University of Michigan
Amy Wilson Bachelor of Arts, Creative Writing & Women's Studies
Slavic Department Prize for Best Paper Written in a Student's Native Language
Ashley Bieniek Bachelor of Science, Evolutionary Anthropology
Excellence in Polish Language Studies Award
Nicole Simovski LS&A Undeclared
Excellence in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian Language Studies Award
Takamichi Kono Bachelor of Arts, Chinese Studies
Excellence in Ukrainian Language Studies Award

Natalia Maska

Erik Steel

Xin Yuen

In Memory

Farewell to Our Dear Friend and Former Leader, John Mersereau, Jr.

By Herbert J. Eagle

When last we all saw him, at our Departmental party in the fall, he was his usual cheerful, witty and engaging self. He lived his life to the fullest to the very end. He was not only an eminent scholar, among the most prominent experts on Lermontov and on Russian Romanticism and the author of five books and many articles, but an inspiring undergraduate teacher and an influential mentor to generations of graduate students at Michigan. He was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1972.

He led the Department as its chair from 1961 to 1971, the decade in which it rose to prominence among graduate departments of Slavic Languages and Literatures in this country, in no small measure as a result of his wise leadership. From 1977 to 1985 he was Director of the Residential College and helped build that experimental liberal arts college into the excellent four-year undergraduate college within the University that it is today. Before retiring from regular teaching, he led our Slavic Department again from 1986 to 1989. As a Professor Emeritus he taught from time to time in the 1990s and he continued his research and writing up until the end of his life. Our last conversations with him were, in part, about his latest book manuscript on 19th century Russian literature.

John was a delightful and charming person with many interests beyond academia. He grew up in a rural area in the Santa Cruz mountains of California and never lost his love of nature. He was a farmer and he and his wife Nanine ("Bimi") bred and raced horses, another subject of our last conversations. While Director of the Residential College, John learned to fly planes and not only bought his own small plane, but built a runway for it on his farm. He enjoyed gourmet cooking and with friends opened the first authentic French restaurant in Ann Arbor in 1965.

Most of all, he was an outgoing, warm and generous person who always sought to help his colleagues in the Department (and later in the Residential College) and his students. Many of us were especially fortunate to have been his students and colleagues.

On May 3rd, the Slavic Department and the Residential College held a gathering to honor John's memory and share our stories about him.

John Mersereau, Jr. Memorial Fund for Students

Our late friend and colleague, Professor John Mersereau, Jr., touched the lives of countless students during his 33 years on the faculty at the University of Michigan, including two terms as Department Chair. In honor of his dedication to improving the educational experiences of students, we have established the **John Mersereau, Jr. Memorial Fund for Students**. This fund will provide support for our students to facilitate their research or to bridge financial gaps that arise from unforeseen circumstances. We are asking you to help us honor the legacy of Professor Mersereau by making a contribution today. Please use the enclosed envelope and write Professor Mersereau's name on the "Gift In Memory of" line. Thank you for your support.

Professor Mersereau's Obituary
(as it appeared in the Ann Arbor News)

Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Director of the Residential College, University of Michigan (retired). Born 1925 in San Jose, California, he was raised by his parents John Sr. and Betty in Berkeley and Los Gatos during the great Depression. Still a child, 'Bud' Mersereau picked prunes on his hands and knees while he built character alongside his older brother Charles. They each made a dollar or two a day and realized that acquiring an education would be of paramount importance to bettering their lives. John graduated alone in the eighth grade in a one room schoolhouse in the Santa Cruz mountains and then with honors from Los Gatos High School in 1941. He was accepted by The University of California in 1942 as an N.R.O.T.C. Cadet, graduated in 1945, and served aboard the cruiser U.S.S. Phoenix, where he saw occasional action in the South Pacific during WWII. He returned to Berkeley in 1946 and earned an M.A. in Russian in 1950. While working on his Ph.D., he met and married Nanine 'Bimi' Landell in 1953. John was awarded a Ford Fellowship and the young couple spent time in London and Paris. Later, after returning to the States, John became an instructor for the Slavic department at the University of Michigan in 1956. He earned his Ph.D. from U.C. Berkeley in 1957 and served as the Chairman of the University of Michigan Slavic department from 1961-1971. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1972. From 1977-1985 he served as The Director of The Residential College, resuming the Chairmanship of the slavic Department until July 1989, when he retired Professor Emeritus. He said he had the best job in the world. Considered the foremost authority on the great Russian poet Lermontov, Professor Mersereau wrote five books, four monographs and twenty five articles primarily about Russian Romantic Authors. He also penned the hilarious "*How to Grill a Gourmet*," based on the true story of how he and several close friends started Ann Arbor's first authentic French Restaurant, La Seine, in 1965.

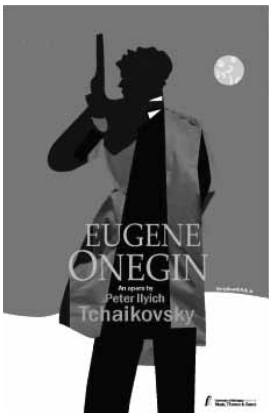
Professor John Mersereau, Jr. (1925–2009)

John was an animal lover, loved to travel and had a wide variety of interests including reading, haute cuisine, haymaking, cooking, back packing, skiing, and flying and was a member of the Commanderie De Bordeaux and Who's Who. John Mersereau Jr. is survived by his wife 'Bimi', brother Charles, daughter Daryl, son-in-law Tony, son Jacques, daughter-in-law Christi, granddaughter Mikal and grandson Santana. John was one of the nicest people you would ever want to meet. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. He would appreciate any gifts be made to the Humane Society.

Highlights

Khagi Symposium on Eugene Onegin

By Sofya Khagi



Occasioned by the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre, & Dance's performance of Tchaikovsky's opera "Eugene Onegin" (Power Center, November 13-16, 2008, director Joshua Major), the Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures presented a Symposium on Eugene Onegin (November 13, 2008). The symposium featured two speakers: Professor John Wiley, SMTD Dept. of Musicology, who discussed Tchaikovsky's operatic adaptation; and Sofya Khagi, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Slavic Languages & Literature, introducing Pushkin's original novel in verse.

In Alexander Pushkin's (1799-1837) novel in verse Eugene Onegin (1823-1831) a youthful, dreamy, provincial Tatyana falls in love, and in a letter declares herself to a bored dandy Eugene. Following his rebuff of Tatyana and the death of his friend Lensky in a duel, Onegin departs from the countryside. Years later, with Tatyana married and a part of Petersburg high society, Onegin in turn falls in love with her. Though still loving him, Tatyana resolves to remain faithful to her husband.

Eugene Onegin accompanied Alexander Pushkin through much of his adult life, changing with him as he grew to maturity as a poet. The eight chapters of the work are composed in 14-line stanzas in iambic tetrameter with a regular rhyme scheme—the Onegin stanza. The verse exhibits effortless grace but is at the same time perfectly crafted rhythmically, euphonically, and rhyme-wise. In the spirit of the long narrative Romantic (Byronic) poem, Eugene Onegin fuses lyric, drama, and novel; boasts a highly intrusive narrator; is written in a shifting play of moods and tones—mostly in a chatty everyday language but also in a lyrical, ironic, romantic, or parodic parlance; and emphasizes Schlegellian fragmentariness as an embodiment of authenticity. The spiritual mobility of Romantic irony is at the center of the work. Interpreting dandyism not solely as a social but also an aesthetic phenomenon, Pushkin insists on diverse, disorganized form and digressions, adopts a chattering style to seem nonchalant, employs humorous rhymes and numerous understatements, and builds the whole form of Eugene Onegin on the tension between energy and restraint. It is ultimately the ever-so-effortlessly graceful and ironic author-dandy who wins in this timeless story of twisted fate and misplaced love.

John Wiley, a renowned Tchaikovsky scholar, the author of *Tchaikovsky's Ballets* (Oxford University Press), *A Century of Russian Ballets: Documents and Eyewitness Accounts, 1810-1910* (Oxford University Press), and, most recently, *Tchaikovsky*, a fresh biography of the composer (Master Musicians), as well as scores of related articles, discussed the finer points of Tchaikovsky's work. Premiered at the Maly Theater in 1879 and at the Bolshoi Opera in 1881, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's (1840-1893) "lyrical scenes" would become his most renowned opera. Tchaikovsky's work features a lush score, including famous Lensky's and Prince Gremin's arias, Tatyana's letter scene, and folksongs of the countryside.

As Dr. Wiley emphasized in his insightful analysis of the opera, in the absence of a conventional (hero-villain-conflict) operatic plot, Tchaikovsky's work instead stresses the importance of character, time, and fate. The first scene's imported texts already subtly foreshadow what is to come. Musical associations bind the principal characters to their destinies, e.g., Onegin is associated with the key of G major, while Tatyana is associated with D-flat major, emerging during the letter scene and powerfully returning in Act III. Moreover, G and D-flat are opposite each other on the tonal spectrum, driving forth the dissonance of their characters. E minor conveys the motif of fate, highlighted with Lensky and reemerging when Tatyana voices her final rejection of Onegin. Besides the dramatic significance of keys, dramatic weight is carried by dances. Act Two and Act Three both begin with two extended dances, the folksy waltz and the regal polonaise, respectively, marking a shift from the provincial countryside to the high society of Saint Petersburg.

If irony is prominent in Pushkin's novel, Tchaikovsky's operatic version of the classic privileges lyricism, intimacy, and nostalgia. A tale of love and loss, the work remains a vibrant sample of Romantic music.

Staying Connected

Love Letter to Life in Russia

By Joy Ziegeweid

"You're an American! Why do you live in Russia?" I have spent five of the last ten years in Moscow and traveled extensively throughout Russia, and though I am asked frequently, I still do not have a fully satisfactory answer to the question "Why Russia?"

Some of the answers are easy. I love the intonations of the Russian language and its endless affectionate diminutives. I love the banya, the steam baths that make your skin feel smooth as butter. I love the travel opportunities and the internationalism of living abroad in a major city that attracts skilled and unskilled labor from around the world. I love (and sometimes loathe) Moscow's crazy architectural pastiche. I love the stunning collections of Russian art at Moscow's Tretyakov Gallery and St. Petersburg's Russian Museum. I love early Soviet satirical literature.

Some of the answers are more difficult and more abstract. I belong in Moscow, despite the fact that a Wisconsin farm girl does not really belong in the heart of ancient Muscovy. I am occasionally taken aback at the way I have acquired the capacity to see the world through Russian eyes. There is a satisfaction to having gradually realized over the years that despite major differences, Russians and Americans have certain considerable similarities, especially the great-power mentality stemming from vast territory.

Joy Ziegeweid, University of Michigan (2007) pictured here in Adygeya with the Caucasus Mountains behind her.

Without a doubt, earning a graduate certificate in Russian and East European Studies was a significant part of my education at the University of Michigan, and it greatly influenced my path back to Moscow following my graduation from Michigan.

A CREES Research and Internship Fellowship allowed me to take an unpaid summer internship at the Institute for Urban Economics in Moscow and begin work on my master's thesis on post-Soviet provision of municipal utility services. A FLAS fellowship not only helped further improve my Russian language skills but also allowed me to complete both my master's degree and graduate certificate with comparatively little debt. In addition to the varied and generous funding opportunities, the academic support I received from CREES-affiliated faculty for combining the seemingly disparate fields of urban planning and Russian area studies was invaluable.

After graduation, I won a Russian-sponsored Alfa Fellowship for professional development that allowed me to return to Moscow, which then led to a position in the Moscow office of Mott MacDonald, a British engineering and consulting firm where I have worked for the past two years.

The irony of this love letter to my life in Russia is that I will be moving to New York this fall to attend Columbia Law School. Much as I enjoy living in Moscow, it is time for new academic and professional challenges. My years in Russia have given me a renewed appreciation for the rule of law and helped propel me toward this next phase in my career. Though I will be back in the United States for the foreseeable future, I expect that I will find a way to put my Russian skills to use in New York until my next trip back to the Motherland.

Faculty Books In Print

Jindřich Toman Speaks on His Recent Monograph, *Photo / Montage in Print*

Jindřich, what is your newest book about?
My long-term interest has been European culture of the 1920s and 1930s—Czech, German, Russian…—and the present book is basically situated within that scope. It deals with the (temporary) victory of photography over the "drawing hand," i.e., with the dramatic spread of photography and photomontage into print media. There is much about dust jackets, illustrated magazines, postcards, and similar photography-based print products.

But you are not a historian of photography or art historian, are you?
I am not—much of what is in the book could have definitely been treated by, say, a professional historian of photography. But the problem is that with some notable exceptions photography historians have not always been very interested in this kind of material. I am essentially arguing that there is photography beyond studios and vintage prints— mechanically reproduced, mass printed images in books, magazines, postcards and so on. I don't think that such things normally gain you much reputation, but times might be changing and some scholars may welcome this as a contribution to the study of visual culture. In the end, I am probably a historian—of a special kind—of visual culture—of a special kind. Indeed, I tried to ask and answer questions such as why photography became popular on book and magazine covers, what did it mean for a book designer to illustrate a poetry collection with photomontages, and such things. But even then, there is really no agreement on whether these are visual-culture questions. I am not really worried, though—it is obvious that both books and photography are prominent in Czech culture. The way they intersected in it raises interesting questions. In the end, you end up with a project, not an academic field of study, and once you have a project, you have to execute it—by hook or crook, nobody cares what you have a diploma in.

So is this an interdisciplinary project?
By the usual lingo yes, but I don't particularly like this word—it's a by now unbearable cliché from grant applications, although we might be well beyond it—I recently read a job description requiring expertise in trans-disciplinarity and post-disciplinarity (both at the same time!). Earlier, I coined the term adisciplinarity—it sounds a bit like undisciplinarity, and that is not so bad a mis-association. I lectured on this once in London, and after the lecture a lady came and said she knew a very good anarchist bookstore, of which there no longer are so many, in the neighborhood. What associations were passing through her mind, I can only guess… do I look like an anarchist? At any rate, good, exciting projects automatically lead to adisciplinarity.

The material looks ephemeral…
That's correct—it's all about paper we throw away. I visited the estate of a book collector who had all the books I was looking for, literally thousands of books, but it turned out he collected them for their literary qualities and was systematically throwing dust jackets away… It was a horrible disappointment. And it was so difficult to gain the confidence of the heirs, they first thought I was a dealer. But elsewhere I was luckier. Prague's antiquarian bookstores remain a goldmine—and a place of unexpected encounters. Collecting, in this sense, can be a very "creative" enterprise, to use another cliché. You are ripping objects out of their context to argue for new contexts—those created by questions asked in your project. Of course, the burden of proof is on you—you always run the risk of merely obscuring things.

Have there been any discoveries?
Quite a few. I think I have succeeded in discovering a postcard that qualifies as an unknown picture poem, which is a legendary genre in the Czech avant-garde of the 1920s. Also, I found forgotten typophotos on postcards by Karel Teige, a Czech avant-garde author. I also uncovered such treasures as the magazine *Workers' Physical Culture* from the 1920s, and I put together little known works by Heartfield from his Czech years, and found *Ghastly Evening News*, a parody of tabloids from around 1930 with satirical photomontages. But more importantly, I could argue for a specific visual culture of photomechanical reproduction in which the avant-garde was one among many constitutive elements.

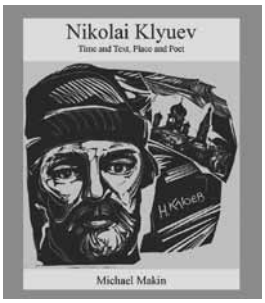
And disappointments?
Yes, a big one. People flip through the book, look at the pictures, and don't read the text. But that's something everyone who does illustrated books knows well—I have just joined the club.

Jindřich Toman's *Photo/Montage in Print* Prague: Kant, 2009.

Forthcoming Books by Faculty

Nikolai Klyuev: Time and Text, Place and Poet

Professor Michael Makin's book on Nikolai Klyuev is the first book in English to examine this enigmatic poet's life and work. Klyuev (1884-1937) is an important but not well understood figure in twentieth-century Russian poetry. The allusions in his work to folklore, mysticism, politics, and religion, in addition to occasionally arcane vocabulary and difficult syntax, require extensive elucidation. Klyuev rose to prominence in the early twentieth century as the first of the so-called "new peasant poets" before being arrested and exiled in 1933, then shot in 1937 – a victim of Stalinist hostility both to his cultural ideology and to his homosexuality. Makin's feat is particularly notable because Klyuev was often elusive in his own accounts of his life, so a major element of this book is an effort to elucidate the poet's strategies of self-mythologization. *Nikolai Klyuev: Time and Text, Place and Poet* is an insightful guide to both the life and work of an important poet still relatively unknown to a Western audience.



Prof. Michael Makin's book will be published by Northwestern University Press.

From the Shadow of Empire: Defining the Russian Nation through Cultural Mythology in the Great Reform Era, 1855-1870s

This book, by Professor Mairova explores the dramatic changes in Russian national self-perception that marked a crucial historical period, when expansion of the public sphere, emancipation of the serfs, and other social transformations made national cohesion and wider participation in political life conceivable for the first time in Russian history. The study examines the broad spectrum of competing constructs of the nation offered by private individuals during the reform era. It demonstrates the formative influence of historical myths in rhetorically constituting the Russian nation and analyzes a rich variety of sources—novels, poems, newspaper articles—to illuminate the major modes of national myth-making. The book provides lively illustrations of how an increasingly vocal corps of nationalists used cultural mythology to justify their programs for Russia's transformation and symbolically resolve problems which the government refused to address. Contrary to some scholars' assumption that Russian national identity was subsumed under that of the empire, this study argues that the broad range of rival representations of the nation produced during the reform era fostered a vivid sense of national self based on shared historical memories.

Prof. Olga Mairova's book will be published by Wisconsin University Press.

From Kabbalah to Class Struggle: Expressionism, Marxism and Yiddish Literature in the Life and Work of Meir Wiener

This forthcoming publication by Professor Mikhail Krutikov is an intellectual biography of the Yiddish scholar and writer Meir Wiener (1893-1941). It traces his peregrination from Austria to the Soviet Union and his intellectual evolution from a German poet and a student of Jewish mysticism to a Marxist Yiddish literary scholar, whose work defined the state of the field in the pre-war Soviet Union. It will be published by Stanford University Press, in the series "Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture."

Violence Taking Place: The Architecture of the Kosovo Conflict

Professor Andrew Herscher's book is the first history of the architectural mediation of political violence in the former Yugoslavia and a theoretically innovative architectural history of political violence more generally. Tracing intersections of violence and architecture from socialist modernization, through nationalist and so-called ethnic conflict, to postwar reconstruction, the book offers new perspectives on the Kosovo conflict, the relation of architecture and violence, and the NATO bombing of the former Yugoslavia. It will be published by Stanford University Press, in the series "Cultural Memory in the Present."

The Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures
3040 Modern Lang. Bldg.
University of Michigan
812 E. Washington Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1275
(734) 764-5355

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